



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

January 13, 2009

Mr. Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Mr. Phil Andrews
Council President
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Messrs. Leggett and Andrews:

We, the undersigned members of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, write today to express our unequivocal support for the construction of the Purple Line. By creating an east-west transit project that links communities such as Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park, and College Park, the Purple Line will catalyze continued economic development in each of these communities, ease access to job opportunities throughout this corridor, support transit-oriented development objectives and help to combat continued sprawl, and support the environmental conservation objectives that are the shared values of our Board and indeed of our community. The development of an east-west, suburb-to-suburb link in this corridor that would connect existing spokes of the Metrorail, MARC and Amtrak systems is long overdue and we believe that the State should move to advance the Purple Line through the federal planning and funding processes as quickly as possible.

We want to emphasize the critical need to build the best possible alignment from the start, therefore, the Purple Line should be constructed as a light rail transit system. The advantages of Light Rail Transit (LRT) over Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) include attracting more riders, shorter travel times, shift more automobile trips to transit and therefore would offer a greater reduction of automobile generated air pollution in the corridor, do more to meet accessibility and mobility objectives and would provide the greatest user benefits. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), comparing Medium LRT to Medium BRT would generate 62,600 daily boardings compared to 51,800, provide a 9 minute ride compared to 19 minutes from Bethesda to Silver Spring, and provide 19,200 new trips to transit relative to the No Build Alternative, compared to 15,300.

Finally, we encourage the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), state and county officials to ensure that this project study and evaluate as much tunneling in Silver Spring as is practicable and as can be accommodated without rendering the project uncompetitive under cost effectiveness criteria or reducing the utility of the project. We feel that if done correctly, without limiting user benefit or adding undue impacts to communities, tunneling could offer significant


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opportunities to move the Purple Line faster through congested areas and neighborhoods to reduce impacts on traffic, local communities, residential properties and facilities.

As the project moves forward, we strongly encourage the MTA to continue to work to identify and to detail to the communities through which the alignments under consideration would pass the full impacts of these alignments. We are concerned that the DEIS now under consideration is insufficient in its treatment of the impacts of alignments on residential properties and community facilities and amenities – particularly because it does not provide close analysis of the extent of street widening that the various alignments would require -- and we hope that environmental and other impacts on Silver Spring communities and resources such as Sligo Creek Park and the Capital Crescent Trail will be minimized.

We thank you and the staff of the MTA for the work that has been conducted to date on the Purple Line project and stand ready to assist with the continued development of this project in any way possible. We stand ready to assist in working together to maximize the benefits and minimize the impacts to downtown Silver Spring and its many communities that will be served by Purple Line light rail.

Sincerely,



Darian Unger
Chairman

cc:

Councilmember Michael Knapp
Councilmember Roger Berliner
Councilmember Marc Elrich
Councilmember Valerie Ervin
Councilmember Don Praisner
Councilmember Nancy Floreen
Councilmember George Levanthal
Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg