



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 1

October 20, 2008

Mr. John D. Porcari  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Dr.  
PO Box 548  
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Porcari:

Representatives from your agency will be briefing the Montgomery County Council tomorrow on the recently released Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) for the Purple Line Study. Accordingly, I wanted to share with you in advance some concerns which I hope they will be able to address.

As you are aware, communities abutting the Georgetown Branch Trail are extremely concerned about the impact of the Purple Line on the character and appearance of the future Capital Crescent Trail and on the adjacent properties. Although some alteration in the trail experience is to be expected, MTA must make the maximum effort to ensure that the Capital Crescent Trail will be an enjoyable, peaceful resource for its users by providing adequate screening, landscaping and access to the completed trail. For example, please consider the addition of privacy fencing where appropriate and shrubbery and plantings that provide year-round cover. In addition, noise and vibrations from the Purple Line, although expected to be low, must be reduced to the greatest extent possible.

Another concern is the proposed extension of tail tracks into the Woodmont East plaza. I fought successfully for the inclusion of a public commons in the Woodmont East development plan, to serve as a community gathering place in the midst of a vibrant urban area. The intrusion of several hundred feet of trail tracks and light rail cars into this space would detract significantly from the plaza's appeal and utility. I have been told by MTA officials that they are examining alternatives which will allow for shorter tail tracks. I strongly urge MTA to limit the extension of tail tracks as much as possible; ideally, the tracks should end immediately outside the Apex building.

Finally, Montgomery County purchased the Georgetown Branch right-of-way for \$10 million to provide both a light rail alignment as well as a recreational hiker-biker trail. I was pleased to note that the AA/DEIS states that "[t]he Purple Line, if constructed in the Georgetown Branch right-of-way, would include construction of a permanent trail." (Page 4-22). However, on Page 5-2, the DEIS states that "...it is assumed that a separate funding program would be undertaken by Montgomery County for implementation and maintenance of the trail (e.g., local or state funding sources)." This statement has raised immediate concerns in the community as to whether, given the County's difficult financial circumstances, the Purple Line might be built

without the Capital Crescent Trail. Therefore, I respectfully request that MTA provide additional assurances that the Capital Crescent Trail will be built concurrently with the Purple Line and constructed in keeping with the needs and expectations of the many residents whose homes abut the trail and the thousands of recreational users who have come to rely on this extraordinary local resource.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response. If you have any questions, please contact me or my aide, Miti Figueredo, at (240) 777-7828.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Berliner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" and last name "Berliner" clearly distinguishable.

Roger Berliner  
Councilmember, District 1

cc: Mike Madden, Maryland Transit Administration