



## Commission on People with Disabilities

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **Welcome and Approval of March 2019 Meeting Summary Minutes:**

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the March 2019 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken, and the March 2019 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

**Purple Line Silver Spring Transit Center Transit Plans and Coordination – Mike Madden, Purple Line Deputy Project Director, Maryland Transit Administration, and Carla Julian, Senior Manager Public Affairs / Community Outreach, Purple Line Transit Construction**

**Website:** <https://www.purplelinemd.com/en/>

**PowerPoint:** <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A&D%20Docs/CPWD/MCCPWDApril2019Final.pdf>

Mike Madden, Purple Line Deputy Project Director, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), gave an overview of the Purple Line project. The Purple Line project is a new 16-mile east-west light rail line that operates mostly on the surface with 21 stations and connects New Carrollton in Prince George's County and Bethesda in Montgomery County. It also provides a direct connection to four Washington Metrorail lines, three MARC commuter rail lines, Amtrak Northeast Corridor and regional and local bus services. Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) owns the Purple Line. MTA has contracted with a large consortium of contractors and engineers under the umbrella of Purple Line Transit Partners who are completing the design of the project and are building the project today. When the Purple Line opens, Purple Line Transit Operators will take over for a 30-year term. The project is scheduled to open by the end of 2022.

The light rail system is based on a newer, more moderate design that is completely different from Metro. The stations are like elaborate bus stops. The light rail cars are like old streetcars and are powered by overhead wires. You can walk or drive across the tracks. The light rail line will operate on dedicated lanes in mixed traffic with cars, buses, etc. The line begins in Bethesda with a connection to the Bethesda Metro station, continues east and connects to Silver Spring Metro Station, and continues farther east to Prince George's County and the New Carrollton Metro Station. It will also serve several major employer and activity centers and runs through the heart of the University of Maryland. The rail will connect to all three of MARCs commuter rail lines.

The design and construction project is valued at approximately \$2B. The design of the project is at 85% completion, construction is at 10% completion and is occurring all along the 16-miles of rail line, and vehicles are at 10% completion and are in the process of being assembled at this time.

The project is state and federally funded and must meet all ADA requirements and regulations in terms of design for the project, although there are other ADA features that will be included. Mike shared a list of ADA facts about the Purple Line Project: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A&D%20Docs/CPWD/PurpleLineADAFacts.pdf>.

The Purple Line vehicle design comes from Spain, but the rail cars are being assembled in New York. Only one train will operate at a time. They are 140-feet long and have wide doorways with level boarding for access for all patrons. The platform will be approximately 14-inches off of the ground with ramps that come up to the platform. Elevators and stairwells will be located at stations when needed. Stations have to meet certain lighting requirements and will feature closed-circuit television cameras, ticket machines, and fencing to create designated entrances and exits.

The Purple Line Art-in-Transit Program is making public art an integral element of the transit project and further enhancing the Purple Line's high-quality station, aesthetic treatments and landscape design. Art will be incorporated into stations as well as other project structures including bridges, fencing, lighting, etc.

The Purple Line will connect from the street-level at Wisconsin Avenue and Elm Street down to the existing Bethesda Metro Station. Riders will not have to go outside to use the Metro. There will be stairs or six high-speed elevators to take riders to the Bethesda Metro Red Line. Part of this station project is being funded by Montgomery County Government and is being built by Purple Line Transit Construction.

At the Lyttonsville Station, a bridge will be installed. Riders can access the Purple Line by taking an elevator or stairs, or they can walk to the station from Brookeville Road or access the station from the Capital Crescent Trail.

At the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC), the Purple Line will be located on an elevated bridge structure adjacent to the north side of the SSTC over Colesville Road and will feature side platforms and canopies. The station will have an elevator that connects to Metro, MARC, and all bus routes. This station is a critical element of the project and the contractors will have to work closely with WMATA, Montgomery County, all bus operators, and users / riders of this system. The new Capital Crescent Trail will connect to the SSTC.

There will be a Purple Line Station located at the Silver Spring Library. The Purple Line will then travel in mixed traffic in the middle lanes of Wayne Avenue. After the Purple Line goes past Sligo Creek, it will go into an underground tunnel between Manchester Towers and Kenwood House. Riders can access the station by elevator on Plymouth Street or at street level at Wayne Avenue.

Pedestrian safety is key for the Purple Line. A number of new traffic signals will be installed along the 16-mile line. Eight additional signalized intersections have been proposed in Montgomery County along with nine additional protected pedestrian crossings of roadways. Traffic signals at existing intersections will be renovated to include pedestrian count downs and, in some cases, fencing. All pedestrian crossings will be in compliance with ADA design criteria and all intersections were analyzed from a pedestrian safety standpoint.

The majority of the Purple Line runs along roads maintained by the State Highway Administration (SHA). In places where the Purple Line operates on County roads, those have been taken over by SHA.

Carla Julian, Senior Manager Public Affairs / Community Outreach, Purple Line Construction, gave an overview of construction updates (PowerPoint presentation pages 22 through 26. She noted that parts of the SSTC will be closed temporarily as work zones. Pedestrian access and sidewalks will remain open to provide access to the SSTC, but bus stops will be relocated in coordination with bus operators.

The floor was opened to questions.

**How will the bus stop relocation information be shared with the general public?** Emily Lucio, ADA Compliance Manager, said that she has attended several meetings about the Purple Line and it was noted that bus stops will be relocated all over the SSTC. People with disabilities need to have a good understanding of the temporary locations of those bus stops. Carla said the relocations are still being coordinated. Purple Line will be working with WMATA to create graphics. WMATA will be providing their own outreach to customers in the area and coordinating with the County. A representative from the County's Department of Transportation (DOT) said that one of his primary roles is to coordinate with the Purple Line. He said that buses will not be able to access the lower level of the SSTC during construction. Ride On will be resquencing their routes so they can loop the SSTC around during construction. That is the game plan currently and once the plan is finalized it will be communicated to Ride On patrons.

**There are concerns that people with disabilities, especially for persons who are blind, will have significant challenges navigating the area with the temporary bus relocations and construction.** Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind is located in downtown Silver Spring and the SSTC has a large number of riders who are blind or have low vision. Betsy Luecking, Staff, noted that when the SSTC was being built, this Commission developed and post walking instructions for individuals who could download and listen to them, if necessary, to orient themselves ahead of time. She suggested that the Purple Line create something similar. Mike said there will be signage posted as well as staff to assist individuals. It was suggested that tactile markers be installed during and after construction as well as eye beacons which would allow individuals to access recorded directions through their smart phone. There are also subscription services available that would allow an individual to connect to someone via camera that would assist them with navigation.

**How big is the gap between the train and the platform?** They do not know how wide the gap is, but it is designed to accommodate users of wheelchairs.

**Will paratransit (MetroAccess) users be able to ride free on the Purple Line?** Conditionally certified eligible MetroAccess users can currently ride Metro and Metrobus for free. Mike stated that the Purple Line is not part of Metro and will have a separate fare system. It will most likely be a flat fare. The goal is to offer a type of smart card so riders can easily transfer from one system to another. It was suggested that the Purple Line fare be subsidized for certified persons with disabilities. Mike said it would be something the Purple Line would have to study first as it has not yet been discussed.

**WMATA uses e-mail and text alerts to notify riders of elevator outages at Metro Stations. How will the Purple Line notify riders of elevators outages?** Mike said that the contractor must meet performance requirements and will be penalized financially for elevators that are not functional past a pre-determined amount of time. Beyond that, this is something the outreach team will have to take into consideration and incorporate into their planning. It was added that Metro has an elevator and escalation alert system where riders can sign up to receive outage alerts for their selected stations. An alert system will be necessary as it is difficult for people with disabilities and those who have significant challenges getting around in unexpected paths. Metro will arrange for bus transportation or other transportation for

individuals that cannot use a Metro station due to an elevator outage. It was asked if the Purple Line will offer a similar service. Mike said they still need to develop a plan for outages.

**How will Purple Line manage issues arising from inclement weather such as snow and ice?**

These can be a significant barrier for people with disabilities. There needs to be a plan in place especially as Purple Line stations are unmanned.

**What will the fare card machines look like?** Cindy Buddington, Commissioner, stated that fare card machines can be inaccessible to some if they are too high to reach, if there is a glare on the machine, and if the individual is not strong enough to press the buttons. It would be helpful to know what the fare card machine looks like and if it could be improved upon from what already exists to make it more user-friendly and accessible. Mike explained that staff will not be available to assist riders at Purple Line stations. Staff are only available during construction at the SSTC. Purple Line stations will be unmanned and barrier-free. In terms of the fare machines, he will mention the suggestions to the design team.

**Is the inclusion of bike lanes a requirement?** By Maryland law, bicycles are vehicles and bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles. In Maryland, bicycles are permitted on all roadways, except where they are specifically prohibited with signs. However, on roads where the posted speed limit is more than 50 mph, bicycles may use the shoulder adjacent to a roadway and enter the roadway only if making or attempting to make a left turn; crossing through an intersection; or the shoulder is overlaid with a right turn lane, a merge lane, a bypass lane, or any other marking that breaks the continuity of the shoulder. Purple Line is only operating on state-owned and operated streets. The State Highway Administration (SHA) has a Bicycle Policy and Design Guidelines Manual that bike lanes be included in the design on state roadways when they are being rebuilt. There will be no conflict between cyclists and riders getting on and off the Purple Line light rail cars.

[https://www.roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/bike\\_policy\\_and\\_design\\_guide.pdf](https://www.roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/bike_policy_and_design_guide.pdf)

**Will there be bus stops in the medians?** Purple Line is not building any floating or non-floating bus stops. Purple Line stations such as University Boulevard and Wayne Avenue will have stations in the middle of the road, separated by fencing so riders can only get to those platforms using signalized crossing. Any bus stops would be at the curb and not at the station.

**How will the Purple Line avoid gridlock if they are sharing roads with other traffic?** The Purple Line will stop at traffic lights just like cars, but there will be a few locations where it will have green or priority time. It is not intended to be high-speed rail and will only be able to travel no more than 15 miles per hour. The portion of the rail that will have exclusive right-of-way will be between Bethesda and Silver Spring with a ride time of 9 to 10 minutes.

Purple Line contractors were encouraged to discuss the project with people with disabilities to determine issues ahead of time as it is always easier to fix them before the system is implemented. ADA guidelines do not necessarily accommodate everyone's needs. This Commission and its Commissioners are available to provide input and site visits. Mike noted that there is quality assurance and resident engineers who will conduct inspections before the system is open to everyone. It was again said that it should be reviewed by people with disabilities as well.

For construction-related questions and concerns, contact PLTP via e-mail [outreach@pltcllc.com](mailto:outreach@pltcllc.com) or call the 24/7 hotline at 240-424-5325 (V). For general project questions and comments, contact MTA public outreach via e-mail at [outreach@purplinemd.com](mailto:outreach@purplinemd.com) or call 443-451-3706 (V), 443-451-3705 (Espanol). To receive construction notices, sign up online at [www.purplelinemd.com](http://www.purplelinemd.com).

### **Chair and Vice-Chair Report:**

Seth reported he presented the Commission's testimony before the County Council on Monday. He is working to set up individual meetings with Councilmembers.

Trish reported she testified before the County Council on Tuesday as an individual. She noted that the room was so full they were moving groups to different floors. There was tremendous advocacy for the developmental disability community and for children with Autism. Trish discussed the issues regarding bike lanes and persons with disabilities. Her testimony included a quote from the book "City on the Line" written by the County's new Administrative Officer Andrew Kleine. He previously worked for Baltimore City and noted in his book that bike lanes are for the elite and for those who live close to their jobs. Trish also Googled "bike lane danger" and found cyclists complaining that they cannot be seen. There were also comments that cyclists on side streets do not have to stop at stop signs. She added that she had an incident last week on Rockville Pike where she and her service animal were almost hit by a bicyclist while crossing the street. Betsy noted that the DC Metro Region has the second worst congestion in the U.S.

The ADA Mid-Atlantic Center is hosting a free four-part webinar starting on April 30<sup>th</sup> titled "[Promoting Independence and Access Through Responsible](#)". The first training is on sidewalk basics and will be taught by Melissa Anderson, PE, formerly a Transportation Engineer for the U.S. Access Board.

### **Legislative Update**

Neal Carter, Commissioner, reported the Maryland Legislative Session ended yesterday. The approved budget for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) includes \$42.5M or a 3.5% rate increase for Community Services that will help providers raise direct support wages and address other costs critical to providing quality services in the community. The DDA budget also includes \$12.3M for transitioning youth, \$817,000 for emergencies, \$5.1M for those in crisis resolution on the waiting list, \$1.5M for the waiting list equity fund, and \$5.1M for Low-Intensity Support Services. For more information, view <http://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Legislative-Overview.pdf>. The Maryland General Assembly also approved a bill to increase the state-wide minimum wage for companies with at least 14 employees from \$10.10 to \$15.00 by January 1, 2025, starting with an increase to \$11.00 on January 1, 2020. Larry added that for the first time MGA broke all direct service providers individually so direct service providers such as medical adult day also got 4% raises with specific line items. Trish added that Councilmember Gabe Albornoz said he will be convening a workgroup to address the DD supplement and working with the State to get federal matching Medicaid funds.

### **Ex-Officio Member Updates:**

Denise Isreal, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported the Call-n-Ride program was awarded a grant that lowers the payment for the lowest income category for riders. Those riders will only have to pay \$5.25 per month for a \$120 value in taxi rides. DOT has introduced plans for a pilot program to test a new on demand transit option in the Rockville, Glenmont and Wheaton service areas. The pilot program will allow riders to request trips from a designated pick up and drop off location using an app on their mobile phones. An 11-passenger bus will provide service within a pre-defined geographical zone at specific times of the day. Riders will be given an estimated time for pick up and drop off and directed to a nearby virtual bus stop. Fares will be the same as current Ride On fares. Denise has a PowerPoint that provides more detailed information and will send to Betsy so she can share with Commissioners.

## **Announcements:**

Joel Snyder, Commissioner, suggested that the Commission do more outreach to individuals who are blind or low vision and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and encourage them to apply to be on the Commission. Commissioners can forward vacancy notices to their groups and encourage individuals to apply. While the Commission interviews new applicants and makes recommendations to the County Executive for appointment, the County Executive ultimately decides who should be appointed.

Susan Hartung, Commissioner, reported that Bernie Simons, Deputy Director, DDA, presented before the Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC) on Monday. Bernie is considering piloting a Transitioning Youth program in Montgomery County to address the increased number of students transitioning out of school but are not being enrolled in DDA services. DDAC has created a new health and wellness subcommittee to address the issue of individuals who have medically complex needs and are developmentally disabled. Susan also reported that she testified before the County Council and advocated for the DD supplement to be given to all providers, instead of the 13 out of 32 that are currently in the budget. Last year, providers were to be held accountable that the money received from the DD supplement would be given to direct support providers in order for the staff to be paid 25% above minimum wage. It is Susan's personal opinion that agencies that did not give the supplement money to the direct support providers should not receive supplement funding this year, yet she advocated that the County work with those providers this year and provide the supplement with the stipulation that it be given to direct support staff.

Tom Liniak, Commissioner, reported that Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) hosted a breakfast last Thursday that featured an expert panel of companies who are innovating the workplace by employing adults with differing abilities. The event also honored the success of two JSSA clients and the forward-thinking companies who understand their potential. Congressman David Trone provided opening remarks. He has been working with JSSA as an employment client for five years. County Executive Marc Elrich and several County Councilmembers were also in attendance. JSSA announced that they have reached an agreement with Starbucks to provide an enhanced regional training center to train employees. The project will serve as a model in the DC area before being used nationally. JSSA also announced they are implementing a train-to-hire program with Sodexo. It is a first of its kind program where individuals can learn by doing and that will be their interview into the business.

Larry Bram, Commissioner, reported the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington held their annual Disability Resource Inclusion Fair for young individuals with disabilities and their families.

The World of Possibilities disAbilities Expo will be held this Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 3pm at the Hilton in Gaithersburg. Tickets are free.

Asha Clark, Commissioner, reported the Arc Montgomery County hosted a Respite Resource Fair in March that had approximately 350 attendees. They received a lot of positive feedback.

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 6pm to 7:30pm at the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Auditorium, Rockville, MD 20850

**Steering Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 5:30pm to 7pm at 401 Hungerford Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor 1A / 1B Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I  
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

**Montgomery County  
Commission on People with Disabilities  
May 2019 Meeting and Events Calendar**

**Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Full Commission Meeting**

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

EOB – 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Level Auditorium, Rockville

**Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Developmental Disability Advisory Committee**

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

HOB – 401 Hungerford Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor 1A Conference Room, Rockville

**Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Steering Committee Meeting**

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

HOB – 401 Hungerford Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor 1A Conference Room, Rockville

Accommodations upon request.

Questions? Staff Contacts:

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I  
240-777-1252 V, MD Relay 711,  
email [carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager  
240-777-1256 V, MD Relay 711,  
email [betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov)