



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item # January 8, 2009

December 22, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Rollin Stanley, Director, Planning Department *RS*
Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Vision/Community Based Planning Division
John Carter, Chief, Design Division *UAC*
Mary Dolan, Master Plan Supervisor, Green/Environmental Planning Division *MD*
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FROM: Tom Autrey (301-495-4533), Supervisor, Move/Transportation Planning *TA*
Katherine Holt (301-495-4549), Senior Planner, Move/Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Purple Line Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) - Study Review and Recommendation On Locally Preferred Alternative

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Transmit Comments to the Montgomery County Council

This memorandum is prepared for the Planning Board's January 8, 2009 public hearing and worksession on the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) for the Purple Line. Staff proposes to make a short presentation on our recommendations before taking two hours of public testimony. Thereafter, we will ask the Planning Board for recommendations. Our staff and MTA staff will be available to answer questions as you proceed through the decision-making process.

Staff requests the Planning Board to vote on four categories, in the following order:

- mode
- alignment and design options
- further analysis for MTA to include in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
- recommended further actions for Montgomery County government

Planning Board recommendations will be sent to the County Council for their consideration; the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee is scheduled to discuss this matter on January 22. We also intend to send a copy of your recommendations to the MTA.

Below is a summary of staff recommendations, intended as a guide for your decision making. The attached staff report provides study background and highlights the issues and rationale for the staff recommendations.

Staff recommends Planning Board support for the following elements of the Purple Line:

Mode

1. Select Light Rail Transit (LRT) for the Purple Line.

Alignment and Design Options

2. Select the Medium Investment LRT Alternative that uses the master planned Georgetown Branch right-of-way and features a surface alignment on Wayne Avenue, with two modifications as noted below:
 - a. Incorporate the High Investment LRT design for the Capital Crescent Trail through the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue.
 - b. Eliminate the Dale Drive station.
3. Defer decision on the Preinkert/Chapel Drive Design Option to Prince George's County.
4. Expand the Capital Crescent/Georgetown Branch trail width from 10' to 12' in locations where the additional width can be accommodated without additional right-of-way acquisition or significant cost increases.

Further Analysis to be Included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement

5. Conduct detailed study of the portion of the Medium Investment LRT Alternative between the Silver Spring Transit Center and Sligo Creek to address:
 - a. pedestrian safety and station accessibility
 - b. forecast ridership at the Silver Spring Transit Center and Fenton Street stations
 - c. transit, vehicle queueing, and parking operations in shared lanes, including options to minimize adverse economic effects on retail businesses along Bonifant Street
 - d. cost effectiveness and feasibility of the at-grade and tunnel options
 - e. Wayne Avenue Green Trail design
6. Develop design details for the Capital Crescent/Georgetown Branch Trail that include:
 - a. detailed plans for all access points, including the connection to the Rock Creek Trail
 - b. retaining walls and security or privacy fencing,
 - c. loss of trees screening residential neighborhoods and landscaping (including shade trees)
 - d. aesthetic treatments for the bridges crossing Rock Creek (including coordination with the National Park Service)
 - e. signing and marking
 - f. bicycle facilities at Purple Line stations, and
 - g. a public plaza at the Woodmont East terminus

7. Prepare a phasing plan for the Purple Line along University Boulevard in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads area that identifies how LRT implementation will be coordinated with establishment of the wider master planned typical section.
8. Provide continuous sidewalks and/or shared use paths on both sides of roadways that carry the Purple Line alignment.
9. Include mitigation strategies for the following impacts:
 - a. Wetlands and Waters of the US, with impacts and mitigation identified by watershed
 - b. obtain Parks Department approval for proposed mitigation sites in parkland
 - c. noise impacts at wheel squeal locations
 - d. historic resources – including mitigation for the impact for Falkland Apartments
 - e. Parks Department property impacts, including the Brookeville Maintenance site
10. Provide additional details on alternative LRT vehicle technology and operations appropriate for the alignment to facilitate development and review of mitigation, funding and operations/maintenance strategies. Provide additional analysis of energy and emissions characteristics of alternative LRT vehicle types.

County Governmental Actions

11. Include station area planning in the Purple Line Corridor Land Use Master Plan proposed in the Department's FY 10 budget.
12. Establish a transit infrastructure financing committee to identify and secure local funding for expansion and maintenance for system improvements, including Metrorail, MARC, the Purple Line, and the Corridor Cities Transitway.
13. Reserve rights-of-way as needed through the development approval process for all options identified in the AA/DEIS until a Locally Preferred Alternative is approved by the Federal Transit Administration.