

Park Hills Community Expresses Concern about MTA's Proposed Purple Line Alignments

4 of 10 PHCA Members Do Not Support Either of the Proposed Purple Line Routes in East Silver Spring

At its February 28, 2008 General Meeting, the Park Hills Civic Association in east Silver Spring expressed its concern about the Maryland Transit Administration's proposed Purple Line alternative routes through the east Silver Spring neighborhood. Both of the proposed alignments—East Silver Spring North and East Silver South—directly impact the residential community.

41% of PHCA members voting said that they did not support either the proposed Wayne Avenue or the Silver Spring/Thayer alignments for the MTA's "Purple Line" transit system. 64% of voters who indicated a "second choice" preference supported the Silver Spring/Thayer alignment in Park Hills.

33% of PHCA voters, however, expressed a "first choice" preference for a Wayne Avenue alignment, while 24% expressed a "first choice preference" for a proposed Silver Spring/Thayer alignment.

In response to a question about alternative "above grade" or "below grade" options, 65% of PHCA voters supported a "below grade" option, if the State of Maryland decided on Wayne Avenue as a part of its "preferred alternative" for the transit system linking Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

59% of the PHCA members do not favor a transit station at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Dale Drive.

In other results, 50% of voters said that they would prefer light rail rather than bus rapid transit if the Purple Line was routed through the Park Hills neighborhood. 64% of PHCA members would prefer "shared lanes" as opposed to "dedicated lanes" for transit, if the State of Maryland decided on a Wayne Avenue alignment through the Park Hills neighborhood. Also, while most PHCA members expressed a preference for light rail transit options, nearly as many also expressed support for transportation system management (TSM) improvements.

In an open discussion preceding the vote, PHCA members expressed a broad range of views in support and in opposition to proposed mass transit modes alignments in the neighborhood. Speakers discussed:

- Additional traffic congestion in downtown Silver Spring and in the Park Hills neighborhood, with above ground transit.
- Apparent interference by the Montgomery County Council in the neighborhood's affairs, on the eve of the civic association vote, particularly its specific reference to an "above grade" alignment on Wayne Avenue, **before** the MTA has released its own Alternatives Analysis and Detailed Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS).
- Community opposition might lead to loss of State and Federal funding.
- Dedicated versus shared lane options.
- Desirability of reaching University of Maryland by public mass transit.
- Difficulty in making an informed judgment without having more information.
- Dramatic and enduring changes to the neighborhood, including impact on houses on Wayne Avenue, and impact on property values.
- Federal funding and competing demands for transit dollars.
- Importance of environmentally friendly, energy efficient transportation for the future.

- Improvement of existing transit modes, Metrobuses and Ride-On.
- Improvement of Wayne Avenue related to possible Purple Line alignment.
- Inadequate information provided by the Maryland Transit Administration regarding costs, benefits, and impact.
- Left turn lanes.
- Minimal benefits to the PHCA community, with significant neighborhood impacts.
- Need to improve existing transit modes, Metrobuses and Ride-On.
- Need to serve transit-dependent populations who commute to employment.
- Pedestrian safety around the elementary and middle schools.
- Possibility of routing the Purple Line along Colesville Road and University Boulevard, rather than through established neighborhoods.
- Possible major expansion of the intersection at Wayne and Dale.
- Questionable ridership estimates.
- Restricted access to neighborhood streets.
- Support for mass transit, the Purple Line, particularly if it were underground and linked to Metro.
- Support new investment in the Long Branch and Takoma/Langley communities while also supporting the transit-oriented development of Silver Spring and Bethesda.
- Zoning implications (increased density).

Voting Results

1. For the Purple Line, MTA will recommend one of the following options - which do you prefer?
 - Mass Transit (26)
 - TMS Improvements (19)
 - No Build (12)

2. If the Purple Line goes thru Silver Spring, which route is your preference?
 - None of the Above (24)
 - Wayne Ave (20)
 - SS/Thayer (15)

3. If the Purple Line goes through our neighborhood, which type of transit do you prefer?
 - Light Rail (30)
 - BRT (15)

4. Should the route thru our neighborhood be above or below ground?
 - Below ground (41)
 - Above ground (13)

5. If the Purple Line goes on Wayne Avenue, do you prefer shared or dedicated lanes?
 - Shared (36)
 - Dedicated (20)

6. Do you want a stop at Wayne & Dale?
 - No (33)
 - Yes (23)