



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Acting Secretary

August 18, 2009

Mr. Mark Gabriele
gabriele@mac.com

Dear Mr. Gabriele:

Thank you for your email to Governor Martin O'Malley regarding the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) proposed Purple Line and the tunnel study for Silver Spring. Governor O'Malley received your message and asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

On August 4, 2009, Governor O'Malley announced the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Purple Line. I appreciate the active role that your community has taken throughout the MTA's study of this important transit initiative. However, I cannot agree with your statements that your community's concerns have been ignored, or that the MTA's analysis has been unprofessional or of poor quality in any way. I am familiar with the extensive outreach to all stakeholders along the proposed route, and with the unprecedented and outstanding studies conducted by the MTA involving every aspect of this project.

As you are aware, the MTA evaluated a number of tunnel and surface options in both the downtown and east Silver Spring portions of the Purple Line corridor. The MTA also conducted additional traffic studies and analyses to address specific community comments and questions. I would also note that the alternatives for the Silver Spring area were developed in direct response to community concerns. Examples of these efforts include developing alternatives that maintain parking for residents along portions of Wayne Avenue during off-peak hours, maintaining the current two lanes of traffic in each direction during peak periods, adding separate turn lanes at key intersections to address existing operational deficiencies, working closely with Montgomery County on the planned Silver Spring Green Trail, and refining plans to minimize property and access impacts to residences.

I can assure you that, even as the Purple Line project now moves forward into detailed design, we will continue to fully consider the potential environmental and community impacts of the Purple Line alignment in Silver Spring, as we will for all segments of the 16-mile Purple Line corridor. Your community provided input and review comments on the Wayne Avenue report at the May 20, 2009 MTA meeting. As a result, many of the concerns described in your letters will be addressed in the final version of the Wayne Avenue report that MTA shared with your community. Other concerns will be addressed as the alignment and station plans are further developed as part of the next design phase starting this Fall, Preliminary Engineering and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PE/FEIS).

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The State's LPA choice for the Purple Line reflects that a surface alternative for this project has been fully assessed and considered to ensure that this option will work and will not result in unacceptable community impacts. A streetcar-type light rail system, such as the one being evaluated for the Purple Line, is compatible with the character of Wayne Avenue. These systems operate safely in many similar community environments in cities across this country and around the world.

Thank you, again, for your thoughtful letter and for letting us know of your concerns. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to you and I encourage you to continue your active role in the planning and design process for the Purple Line. If you have any additional questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Michael Madden, MTA's Project Manager for the Purple Line, at 410-767-3694 or mmadden@mtamaryland.com.

Sincerely,



Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Acting Secretary

cc: Mr. Michael D. Madden, Chief, Project Development, Office of Planning, MTA
Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld, Administrator, MTA