



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

February 27, 2009

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

John D. Porcari
Secretary

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Deputy Secretary

Ms. Kathy Kristiansen
Ceekaye@aol.com

Dear Ms. Kristiansen:

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

The MTA has evaluated a number of tunnel and surface options in both the downtown and east Silver Spring portions of the Purple Line corridor. Two of the longer tunnel options along Wayne Avenue were not carried through the ongoing Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) process. These tunnel options consisted of one that was underground through downtown Silver Spring, returning to the surface near Mansfield Road, and the other option that continued easterly beyond Sligo Creek. The Sligo Creek tunnel option was dropped from further consideration because of very high construction costs compared to its benefits, and the potential lack of stations between the Silver Spring Transit Center and a point near University Boulevard where this tunnel option would come to the surface. The tunnel option that would extend to east of Mansfield Road along Wayne Avenue was also not carried through the AA/DEIS primarily due to the anticipated adverse impacts to the community. The tunnel portal and widening associated with this option would have substantial impacts to several homes located along the south side of this portion of Wayne Avenue and would require the displacement of much more park and school property than a portal at Cedar Street.

While you and some of your neighbors support the longer tunnel option to Mansfield Road since this alternative would keep the Purple Line off most of Wayne Avenue, the impacts of this option need to be carefully evaluated and weighed against potential benefits. The tunnel portal just east of Mansfield Road would have a significant visual impact on this area of the community and would require the acquisition of additional residential property because of the additional space required for the walls of the portal. The attachment to this letter shows an aerial drawing of the location. Where the travel lanes are along the side of the portal, vehicle turns into driveways would be limited to right-in and right-out only, which would be a major impact to those residences. The residences on Wayne Avenue east of Mansfield Road are situated well above the level of the road, and widening into their property would result in the elimination of most of their driveways while also requiring the construction of retaining walls in their front yards.

Additionally, widening on the north side of Wayne Avenue due to the tunnel portal area would require the acquisition of property from both Sligo Creek Park and the school playing fields. Much of the existing parking for the playing fields, as well as on-street parking along this portion of Wayne Avenue, would also be removed. Beyond the tunnel portal, this option calls for dedicated transit lanes to be built for the remaining length along Wayne Avenue where the Purple Line would operate on the surface. This design would significantly increase the need for widening this segment of Wayne Avenue (up to a total width of approximately 82') as compared to the current Medium Investment alternatives. As a result, under this tunnel option the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway at Wayne Avenue would become a total of six lanes wide to incorporate the necessary left turn lanes. Further, no parking on Wayne Avenue would be permitted at any time. The tunnel option does provide travel time savings but the costs and impacts are substantially increased.

Because of the high cost of underground stations, the surface alternatives are the only options, with a station at the county's new library site. A station at this location would provide important benefits in terms of improved transit accessibility and development focus for the local area, and is also strongly supported by Montgomery County. This part of downtown Silver Spring is currently undergoing redevelopment as a more urban mixed-use area, and the station would add activity and vitality.

With respect to traffic operations along Wayne Avenue, current traffic delays are largely due to the vehicles queuing to make left turns at the signalized intersections. The Medium Investment light rail and bus rapid transit alternatives that would operate on the surface of Wayne Avenue in lanes shared with auto traffic would add separate left turn lanes at signalized intersections. This would improve traffic conditions under the No Build alternative by allowing the through moving traffic to continue. More importantly, Medium Investment alternatives along Wayne Avenue would minimize widening as well as residential property acquisition.

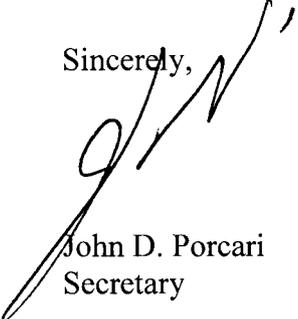
Concerns have also been expressed about safety for pedestrians and school children at the Silver Spring International Middle School and the Sligo Creek Elementary School. I would note that, based on the experience of many other cities that have a light rail system running on the surface of roadways, the operation of light rail on a street has been shown to be less dangerous because the movement and location of the light rail vehicles are predictable. Streetcars have operated on urban streets for decades, and are often used by children to get to school. Light rail may act as a traffic calming feature on Wayne Avenue where cars and other vehicles often exceed the posted speed limits, particularly in the eastbound direction.

We understand that the station at Dale Drive has been the subject of much debate. The MTA agrees that the station at Dale Drive could be dropped, should a surface route on Wayne Avenue be selected. However, we would recommend that the surface-running alternatives for the Wayne Avenue alignment be designed so that a Dale Drive station could readily be added in the future if desired by the community.

Ms. Kathy Kristiansen
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Thank you, again, for your correspondence. I appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns. If you have any additional questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Michael Madden, the MTA's Project Manager for the Purple Line, at 410-767-3694 or by email at mmadden@mtamaryland.com.

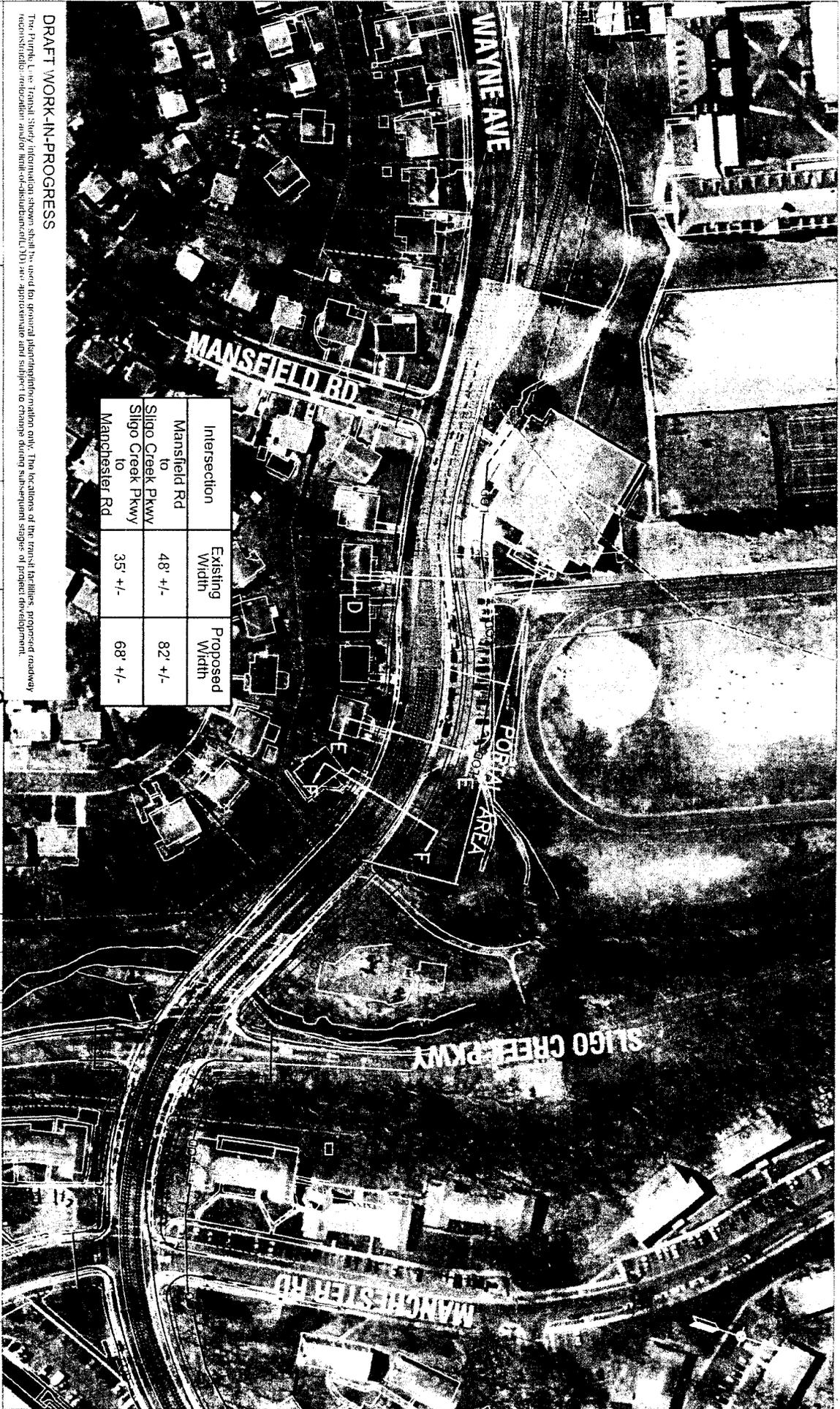
Sincerely,



John D. Porcari
Secretary

Enclosure

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



Intersection	Existing Width	Proposed Width
Mansfield Rd to Sligo Creek Pkwy	48' +/-	82' +/-
Sligo Creek Pkwy to Manchester Rd	35' +/-	68' +/-

DRAFT WORK-IN-PROGRESS
 The Purple Line Transit Study information shown shall be used for general planning information only. The locations of the transit facilities, proposed roadway reconstruction, and other information are not to be used for any other purpose and are subject to change during subsequent stages of project development.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 ADMINISTRATION

PR

IN

PROGRESS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	W/C
1	LRT HIGH HYBRID-MANSFIELD PORTAL	FEBRUARY, 2008		

PLAN SCALE 1"=100'