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**Sent:** Tuesday, May 31, 2016 11:19 PM

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**Subject:** [soeca] Purple Line Meeting - Sen. Raskin follow up

FYI - State Senator Jamie Raskin sent this letter to Maryland's Transportation Secretary as a follow up to last week's Purple Line Meeting.

Marianne Quinn

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May 31, 2016

Secretary Pete Rahn Department of Transportation P. O. Box 548 7201 Corporate Center Drive,  
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Greetings. I want to thank you and the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) for providing the opportunity for the Wayne Avenue community and Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP) to begin meeting and exploring the details of the Purple Line alignment along Wayne Avenue. As you are aware, the Wayne Avenue community has been deeply interested in the planning process and heavily engaged in the Purple Line project since its very earliest stages. Local residents—many of whom are parents of children who go to Sligo Creek Elementary and Silver Spring International Middle School (I am father of an alum)—and school administrators have engaged with MTA, Montgomery County and elected officials for several years to provide their input. I am pleased that MTA and PLTP have continued to provide opportunities for the public to be involved in the various aspects of planning and implementing this project.

However, I am sorry to write now that I am dismayed by the number of complaints and disturbing reports I have received about the latest community meeting which was held on Thursday, May 26. Although I was not present that night, I sent my Chief of Staff, Alice Wilkerson, who was present for the entire duration of the meeting and confirmed the accuracy of these complaints and reports about a flawed and sometimes insulting process and numerous matters of substance left unaddressed.

Although the meeting was framed as an update on the project, the first hour dealt with subject matter previously presented to the community and no new information was offered until well into the presentation. As if this were not frustrating enough, I also understand that officials repeatedly dismissed as out of order straightforward factual questions from the audience designed to clarify information being presented during the slide show. Furthermore, several people reported to me that, during the Q&A session, many questions were not answered directly and follow-up questions were not permitted. When an obviously frustrated community member spoke out of turn, an MTA official dismissed her with an insulting comment (“someone get that woman a cookie”) which did not help the communications process and inflamed a lot of people in the community. Many in attendance walked out after hearing that comment and have since written me to say they feel it indicates MTA is not truly interested in hearing the concerns of the community. I know that you are in fact interested in public input and this kind of response reflects poorly on the administration.

On matters of substance, there are many valid concerns that the Wayne Avenue community has raised and I trust that MTA will work diligently to answer them. Meantime, there are two issues which I believe need to be addressed immediately:

1) Can you please confirm that there are no plans, either at this time or in the future, to change the one-way traffic restrictions in force on Cedar Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue in Silver Spring? The power point and maps presented at the meeting apparently showed two-way traffic operating on these roads and the MTA and PLTP representatives could not definitively confirm that this depiction of two-way traffic reflected a typo or a planning error as opposed to a glimpse of a future operating decision. Can you also reassure us by confirming that, if MTA or PLTP wished to open these roads up to twoway traffic, it would be a decision made by Montgomery County itself?

2) The community has posed significant questions regarding pedestrian safety at the intersection of Dale Drive and Wayne Avenue, especially relating to the safety of school children both during the construction process and once the Purple Line is completed. The safety of our school children is obviously of utmost concern to our community and I would like to know what MTA and PLTP's detailed plans are for protecting pedestrians, especially the smallest ones, during both the construction process and upon completion. If these plans have not been developed yet, can you please specify which official local parents and school administrators can contact with their concerns going forward and what opportunities we will have to provide constructive input? Will MTA move forward with a pedestrian safety plan if school administrators have not seen or endorsed it first? Please also provide me with a timeline of when these plans will be developed and if and when they will be presented to the community.

I appreciate your attention. A timely response to these questions would allow me to share your answers with interested members of the community so important questions lingering from Thursday night are not left unattended. I also recommend that MTA develop or reinforce protocols for successful community meetings and work on ways to meaningfully address community concerns. As you know, tensions are running high regarding this project and the more we can improve communication and interactions between state officials and the community, the better the process and results will be for everyone involved.

Thank you for taking the time to hear and address these concerns and please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any of these issues in further detail.

Very truly yours,

Jamie Raskin

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Posted by: Marianne Quinn