



**Questions from Park Hills Panel Discussion
10/13/10**

1. What are the criteria that will be used to determine whether or not to build a station at Dale and Wayne?

We intend to continue to work with the community and County about what they want.

2. I understand that the Council voted not to build a station at Wayne Dale in the initial construction phase. If the Council voted to build a station there in the future, could you describe whether the construction of a station would be a "big deal," or whether a station could be built fairly quickly.

Addition of the Dale Drive Station at a later date will only require the construction of the station platform and amenities. No widening of the roadway will be required. It is anticipated that these activities could occur with minimal disruption.

3. How does the proximity to a stop affect property values?

Proximity to a light rail stop has been shown to raise residential property values (e.g. San Diego, Boston, Portland, Philadelphia). Unlike commuter rail, there is not a penalty for living near a light rail line, but not near the station. This is because commuter rail is (unlike LRT) loud and dangerous.

4. What homes/commercial property from Dartmouth, Greenwich, Dale and Schuyler will you be taking through eminent domain to: (a) separate parent drop offs from bus movements; (b) maintain and improve parking for staff and faculty; (c) keep staff and faculty parking separated from bus movements; (d) and prevent additional traffic from entering the Sligo Creek Elementary School area. Also, if in the initial construction phase the Purple Line is built so that a Dale Station can be put in at a later date, will there still have to be significant alterations to the school entrance and the re-routing of the school buses from their existing drop off points?

No homes will be taken. Where property is taken, it will not be for any of the reasons listed above, but to provide room for the left turn lanes and the Green Trail. The traffic pattern of the school buses and parent drop offs will stay the same.

The entrance will still be accessed off Wayne Ave by parents, and school buses will still circulate through Schuyler. Due to the widening for a left-turn lane in place of the station platform, the school's entrance must be relocated either with or without the station. The MTA has worked with the schools and, at the request of the school, has redesigned the school staff and faculty parking lot. The relocation of the driveway further east will help reduce congestion and conflicts at the intersection of Dale and Wayne, while maintaining full access to the driveway.

5. How much property will be taken - exact footage amounts, i.e. how much widening and for what distance? Please compare with and without the proposed Dale station.

The plans right now are conceptual. The MTA can meet with individual property owners to go through on a more detailed level what the impacts to their property will be. Some of what the MTA will be taking is the roadway right-of-way. (The road widening with, and without, the proposed station will be the same). Because the amounts are different for every parcel this is not the right forum to address exact footage amounts. We can answer these questions for each street address individually. However, I would note that



we are not yet in Preliminary Engineering, and so any quantities may be subject to change.

6. What sort of compensation can residents along Wayne Ave expect with their property values decreasing due to the increased traffic density brought on Wayne Ave by the train and car traffic, and the loss of a sizable portion of their front yard?

Increases in traffic will come with time and population and job growth, not from the Purple Line.

7. If there is a stop at Dale and Wayne, which residential streets will need to be used for arrival and departure of Sligo Creek Elementary and Silver Spring International Middle Schools' combined population of approximately 1,400 students and staff?

Traffic patterns for the schools will not need to change. The only change will be the relocation of the entrance to the faculty and staff parking lot farther to the east. This will make access into and out of the lot easier since there will not be a conflict with the cars queuing at the Dale Drive signal.

8. Seems like there is a lot of room for a right-of-way between Dale and Sligo to go along the north side of Wayne, not down the middle. Seems like there would be less traffic interference if it was to be done this way. So, why not?

Light-rail running on the side of a roadway presents a different set of challenges for traffic operations than running in the street. For example, this option would require an additional signal at the SSIMS parking lot driveway which could add delay for traffic.

In order for the light rail to operate on the north side of Wayne Ave a traffic signal would be required for the light rail to cross to the north side, then another signal for the light rail to re-enter the media further east, both delaying operations.

Shifting the Purple Line alignment east of SSIMS to a dedicated alignment on the north side of Wayne Ave would require the acquisition of additional property to accommodate a minimum of six lanes (two for the Purple Line and four for Wayne Ave) instead of the current four lanes plus a left turn lane at Sligo Creek Parkway. This shift in alignment would also require adding additional traffic signals to allow the Light Rail Vehicle to cross the westbound lanes of Wayne Ave.

9. It appears that the widening of Wayne next to Whole Foods is too close to the building to allow for the 13' wide buffer (5') and trail (8'). How wide will the buffer and trail be at the point next to Whole Foods?

MTA plans to maintain the current width of the buffer and trail next to Whole Foods.

10. Given that the light rail tracks – unlike those for Metro – will be unheated, what measures will needed to keep the rail lines clear during severe winter weather? For example, is it possible that during particularly bad snow and/or ice storms that the Purple Line will need to be run 24 hours to keep the tracks clear?

*As Gary Erenrich indicated at the meeting in October 2010, Wayne Avenue is a county-maintained street, so Montgomery County will work with the MTA on what is proper for snow removal procedures. We will look along the whole line as we go along in design. It would be similar to regular snow removal. Regular street plowing (the same as is done for cars) will be sufficient for the street-running sections of light rail. It is possible that extended snow events may require the light rail to run 24 hours a day to keep **off-street***



trackage clear. MTA will work to minimize these occurrences, including the study of keeping 24-hour operations to off-street segments only.

11. In MTA's architectural history technical report dated 9/08 (page. 2-40), you discuss the impact of light rail on Montgomery Blair High School at 313 Wayne Ave. (fyi, Montgomery Blair HS moved from this site in 1998). It states that "A small portion of the parcel will be regarded to accommodate the Purple Line." What portion? What additional portion will be taken if a stop is built at Dale and Wayne?

*The amount of property taken is approximately 0.13 acre along Wayne Avenue. **This is the same with or without the station.** However, I would note that we are not yet in Preliminary Engineering, and so the number could change.*

12. In your socio-economic technical report (page 6-20), you considered adverse impacts to the environmental justice communities on 3 schools. You do not consider the impact on Silver Spring Elementary, which is 45% black or Hispanic; or the SS Int'l MS, which is 68% black or Hispanic. Why?

We do not believe we have adverse impacts to the school.

13. On your travel demand forecasting tech report, you state that route Ride On Bus15 will be removed. What impact will the increased walking distance to Purple Line stops have on disadvantaged communities? Would original heavy rail line offer greater benefits and have a higher benefit-cost ratio than this line?

Exclusion of the Dale Drive station will require a longer walk for local transit users. The original heavy rail line did not have a specifically identified alignment so detailed analysis was not developed. Whether it would have provided greater benefits depends on what benefits you are considering.

14. How did you arrive at the projection that this line will carry in 2030 more than twice as many daily riders than the Baltimore light rail now carries? 64,800 is the estimated daily ridership for the Purple Line, which is 16 miles and has 21 stations; 34,700 is the actual ridership for the Baltimore light rail, which is 30 miles long and has 33 stations.

Ridership in Baltimore is not relevant to the Purple Line. Ridership projections are not a function of how long the light rail line is, but of the markets. Ridership projections are developed based on where people are trying to go, the levels of congestion on existing roads, the cost of parking, and how convenient the transit service is (in location, frequency of service, and connecting services).

Note: the new refined ridership numbers are approximately 60,000.

15. Given that the Sligo Creek watershed is located along a flood plain, how will the Purple Line's operations be affected in the (inevitable) event that Sligo Creek flooding makes the Wayne Avenue alignment impassible?

If the roadway is impassable – there will be no traffic on it – no light rail, no cars, no buses.

16. In light of recent metro accidents and a new regime at FTA to increase oversight and safety standards for mass transit, what impact will this have on the layout of the Purple Line (if any) or on the type of trains or safety procedures MTA will follow?

The Purple Line would meet any required safety standards. Since we don't know what these standards would be (if they are developed) we cannot say what the impact would be.



17. Where will MTA locate the power traction substation along the Wayne Avenue alignment?

The locations of the TPSSs have not been finalized, but currently the MTA is looking at one on Bonifant Street, near the SSTC, and the next one near the station at Manchester. However, I would note that we are not yet in Preliminary Engineering, and so this may be subject to change.

18. What emergency procedures will be employed to remove non-functioning or broken-down light rail cars from the Wayne Avenue corridor? Given the negative impact on traffic in the event that the Purple Line would break down in the middle of Wayne Avenue, what would be the typical length of time needed to remove a non-functioning light rail car?

Though specific operations have yet to be determined, it is typical for a light rail line to push or pull a disabled train with either the preceding or following train to the nearest maintenance yard, or to a siding. It is important to remember that on Wayne Avenue there are other lanes for traffic. It would be worse for the Purple Line if a car breaks down on the tracks, because that would block the Purple Line.

19. What natural and other hazards (e.g., debris on the rails) can interfere with the proper functioning of the light rail system? What preventive measures will be employed to keep the Purple Line from succumbing to these hazards?

Trees falling on and knocking down the overhead wire system will stop the system. During Fall, wet leaves on the tracks can negatively affect traction. This is a known issue with any rail transit system, and there are numerous approaches to combat it. These would include brushes to wipe the leaves off the tracks, washing the railhead, and applying sand to increase traction.

20. Now that the Purple Line Functional Master Plan has been completed – and revised – what additional studies will MTA produce in order to supplement the Master Plan?

As you note, the Functional Master Plan has been completed, no additional studies have been requested by the County Council.

21. Purple Line costs, when matched against anemic county and state revenues, strongly suggests that cost-cutting measures will almost certainly need to be employed. If so, which ones?

The MTA has not identified any cost cutting measures.

22. Various Wayne Avenue improvements (lighting, sidewalks, streetscape beautification), as discussed in prior Park Hills Civic Association meetings with the MTA Purple Line project team, will come from county - not state – budgets. Given the recent severe budget cuts enacted by the County, how likely is it that the County will not be to pay for these improvements?

This is a question for the county. Sidewalks and station amenities are part of the Purple Line project and will not be cut.

23. Widening Wayne Avenue from 48' to 72' will likely require burying utilities (electric, phone, cable TV) given the limited right-of-way remaining in residents' front yard space for erecting utility poles. If, however, utility cables will not be buried, will the county or state then be purchasing right-of-way easements for the placement of utility poles?



Any utility work required for the Purple Line will be the MTA's responsibility, but the County will be working with them. Whether or not the overhead utilities will be relocated underground has not been decided at this time. Easements will be acquired by the MTA, Montgomery County, and/or the utility companies for utilities as needed.

24. To what extent is the MTA in discussion with the Federal Transit Administration over the Purple Line? Given the degree of federal funding, what will the extent of FTA's oversight of the Purple Line? What type of input will the FTA have over the Purple Line Functional Master Plan in order for the state to receive federal funding?

The FTA has extensive oversight of all New Starts projects. We coordinate with them closely. A Project Management Oversight Consultant has already been hired and started working on the project.

The Functional Master Plan is complete. FTA will not have any input on the County Master Plan. Federal funding has no bearing on this, or vice versa.

25. The economic and ridership numbers for the proposed Dale Drive station are very different from any other station on the Purple Line: partly because a different ridership model, which more than doubled the catchment area, was used. Will this put the entire project at risk from federal funding? Has the FTA asked any questions about the models you've used to project ridership numbers?

This question reflects a complete misunderstanding of the travel demand modeling. It is unclear to what the question is referring. One model was used – it has been extensively reviewed and vetted by the FTA. All catchment areas are the same size. The model uses employment and housing projections from the approved county zoning.

26. What will the hours of operation of the Purple Line be on weekdays vs. weekends?

As stated in the AA/DEIS, the hours of operation will mirror the Metro system because so many of our riders will be using the Purple Line to get to and from the Metro.

27. How will the fare structure work – will there be free transfer to other buses and/or Metro? Will this light rail have an honor fare system like the light rail in Baltimore? Will it be part of the Smart Card system?

It will be part of the Smart Card system. Fares for the Purple Line will initially replicate existing Metrobus fare structure and policies. Purple Line transfers to Metrobus will be free while transfer to Metrorail would be full distanced-based fares, although if using a SmarTrip or other electronic fare medium, the fare would be calculated as distance-based fare using the trip's origin station on the Purple Line. Transfers to other local services will be equal to existing bus-to-bus transfer policies.

To speed up boarding and alighting, a proof-of-purchase payment method is assumed with tickets purchased from ticket vending machines at stations. Passengers would board through multiple doors to speed loading. Roving, on-board fare inspectors would be required to reduce the incidence of fare evasion, as is typical of most light rail systems in the United States.

28. The impression is given that the Purple Line will be integrated with Metro. Does this mean that fares will be tailored to Metro as well - including rate increases? Or will fares be controlled by the state? How much is it predicted to cost to buy a ticket from the Fenton station or the proposed Dale station and travel to either Bethesda or College



Park? Would it be cheaper to simply to walk to the Silver Spring Metro and board Metro red/green line trains to get to College Park?

See question 27.

29. Ride On 15 appears to be largely used by minorities who transfer to other buses downtown Silver Spring. What will the Purple Line fair structure be, and will those who use RO15 - which will go away if the Purple Line goes down Wayne - be disadvantaged by not being able to transfer for free to other ride on buses and/or metro?

See question 27.

30. Why is there not continuous bus service that follows this route already from Silver Spring to U of MD?

There is – the J4 provides this service, but it is slow and unreliable.

31. The presence of trains at a proposed Dale station and a need for left turns, especially at peak times, would create new traffic issues at the school crossing. How will this be managed?

Pedestrians, including students, will continue to cross Wayne Avenue at the signalized marked pedestrian crossing at the Dale Drive intersection. The station area will actually provide a refuge in the median for pedestrians who are unable to cross the entire street at one time. The MTA needs to continue to work with the County traffic and schools on these types of issues during Preliminary Engineering. The MTA is going to work with everyone so that it is safe and that there is access to the Purple Line.