



MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Martin O'Malley, Governor • Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
John D. Porcari, Secretary • Paul J. Wiedefeld, Administrator

December 17, 2007

Mark Gabriele, President
Seven Oaks/Evanswood Citizens' Association
831 Woodside Parkway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Kathleen Samiy
Purple Line Task Force Chair
622 Bennington Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Alan Bowser, President
Park Hills Citizens Association
409 Deerfield Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Chris Richardson
Park Hills Citizens Association
402 Deerfield Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Gabriele, Ms. Samiy, Mr. Bowser and Mr. Richardson:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Purple Line and for a copy of the resolutions submitted by both the Seven Oaks/Evanswood Citizens' Association and the Park Hills Citizens' Association. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns and questions regarding the project's potential impact to your communities.

First, I want to apologize for taking so long in formally responding to your letter. We are trying to be responsive to your request for additional analysis relative to the Wayne Avenue alignment alternative and as you are aware, we have presented information in response to your resolution at various community meetings held over the past two months in the Silver Spring area. Unfortunately, work in preparing for our December open house meetings has required most of my attention over the past month or so. In addition, it has taken additional time to carry out a more focused traffic analysis for Wayne Avenue.

I thank you and your association for taking such an active interest and significant role in the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) ongoing study and planning process for the proposed Purple Line. I certainly appreciate your concerns and the effort you have spent in ensuring that your community remains a safe and attractive neighborhood to live in for the foreseeable future. There remain a number of concerns and issues with respect to the Purple Line alternatives through east Silver Spring that need to be more fully addressed. I would urge you and your neighbors to consider in your assessment of the Purple Line alternatives through Silver Spring that in addition to impacts, there are potential benefits that an investment such as the Purple Line can bring to many communities, including the downtown and east Silver Spring communities that you reside in and travel through everyday. I am not asking you to put aside your individual concerns or opposition to a Purple Line alignment through your community. Instead, I would ask that we work together to focus on the ways that a transit alternative along Wayne Avenue can be designed so that it fits into your community as best as possible, while also meeting the project's far reaching and long term goals.

I would also like to point out that at this stage of our study, we have not determined if even the shorter Wayne Avenue tunnel option to Cedar Street would be cost effective. I raise this point because if the current tunnel option for Wayne Avenue is determined to not be affordable or cost effective, then why study in detail a longer and more costly tunnel option. Therefore, at this time we evaluated your suggested tunnel options from a cost only basis, not on the basis of all relevant factors as requested in your community's resolution. As mentioned in previous discussions concerning cost effectiveness and funding for the Purple Line, the Federal Transit Administration Procedures and Technical Methods for transit planning provides that "Where the resources needed to build and operate an alternative clearly exceed the amount of funding that can realistically be anticipated, that alternative may be eliminated despite its potential transportation or other merits." All cost estimates were developed on an average cost per mile basis.

A brief response to the portion of the resolution requesting that the MTA consider two other tunnel options for the Wayne Avenue alignment follows:

1) Tunnel East from Fenton Street connecting with at-grade option from the Silver Spring Transit Center.

In order to provide sufficient depth below Wayne Avenue in the vicinity of Fenton Street for constructing a tunnel beneath Wayne Avenue, the grade for the light rail would have to be lowered significantly at Fenton Street. The existing grade along the eastern portion of Bonifant Street is approximately 4.5%. Our analysis indicates that it is not feasible to connect a tunnel alignment at Fenton with the at-grade alignment along Bonifant Street. The underground tunnel alignment would have to be extended to the west edge of the Silver Spring Transit Center, which would require the closing of Dixon Avenue. Montgomery County has already made it clear to the MTA that the closing of Dixon Avenue would not be permitted. In addition, extending this tunnel would likely increase the cost of the proposed Purple Line station at the new Silver Spring library site by

approximately \$60 million. We point out this additional cost because based on our analysis of the ridership estimates, a station at the new library site would be beneficial for the community and for the project as a whole. Montgomery County also supports a station at this location.

2) Tunnel Option East of Cedar Street

Extending a tunnel alignment beneath Wayne Avenue east of Cedar Street will require lowering the tunnel below Sligo Creek. The elevation of the existing land east of Sligo Creek rises rapidly, thus requiring the length of the tunnel to be extended east to Piney Branch Road. This additional length of underground tunneling is required because of the need for the vertical alignment to tie into the existing grade, which is much higher than Sligo Creek. The eastern tunnel portal would have to be located within in the Piney Branch Road area, in the vicinity of Barrion Street. East of Cedar Street, this tunnel option beneath Wayne Avenue would increase the length of the tunnel from approximately 1,500 feet required for the Plymouth Street tunnel, to approximately 7,500 feet. Based on our assessment, adding this amount of tunnel would increase the cost for constructing the current underground option to Cedar Street by approximately \$170 - \$180 million.

In addition, the at-grade station planned for the vicinity of Arliss Street between Flower Avenue and Pine Branch Road would become an underground station under this tunnel option. The additional cost for an underground station would likely add \$60 - \$70 million to the project, depending on the depth of the station, access required for the station and soil conditions. Further, as you are aware, we are currently considering locating an additional station along Wayne Avenue near Dale Drive. If this portion of the alignment were also in a tunnel, an additional \$60 - \$70 million would likely be required for this Wayne Avenue tunnel option. These additional costs for underground stations are included due to current ridership levels expected to from these two stations.

In summary, increasing the cost of the Wayne Avenue alignment by \$290 - \$320 million, even if a few minutes of travel time savings could be realized, would not be acceptable from a cost effectiveness standpoint.

In response to that portion of the resolution concerning the request for a traffic impact analysis of the alternatives under consideration that would travel along the Wayne Avenue corridor, presented below is a brief overview of the analysis completed to date. In addition, attached is a memorandum dated November 26, 2007 that reviews existing conditions, future (2030) No-Build conditions, and

Purple Line build alternatives conditions under the various options being considered for Wayne Avenue.

3) Traffic Analysis

A traffic analysis that is being carried out for the Purple Line study includes both the existing and the future (2030) traffic conditions, and includes analysis of all roadways that the alternatives would travel on. Traffic analysis has also been conducted for the “No-build” alternative. The traffic analysis relative to the Purple Line alternatives using Wayne Avenue includes the following key tasks:

- Traffic counts at each signalized intersection
- Capacity analysis at each signalized intersection to determine “level of service (LOS) and delays
- Development of a VISSIM traffic simulation model
- Projection of traffic conditions to 2030, based an agreed upon growth rate
- Comparison of travel times
- Qualitative assessment of parking impacts
- Qualitative assessment for localized traffic diversions

It is important to note that Wayne Avenue is a signalized Montgomery County arterial, which is defined as “a road meant primarily for through movement of vehicles at a moderate speed, although some access to abutting property is expected.” In other words, Wayne Avenue functions as more than just a residential street and therefore, traffic flows and congestion along this roadway are already significant and the MTA does not view street-running transitway alternatives on Wayne Avenue as an inappropriate use of this particular travel corridor.

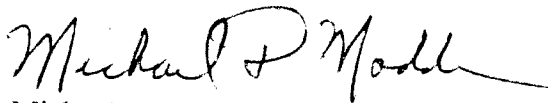
Wayne Avenue is currently striped with three travel lanes in each direction between Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue, two lanes in each direction between Georgia Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway, and one travel lane in each direction between Sligo Creek Parkway and the eastern terminus at Long Branch – Wayne Park. In addition, there are several existing time-of-day and time-of-week restrictions for on-street parking in the eastbound and westbound curb lanes along Wayne Avenue. Field observation found that the available on-street parking is most heavily utilized between Cedar Street and Dartmouth Avenue.

The attached memorandum discusses our current summary of transportation impacts for Wayne Avenue under each of the options under consideration. The MTA has not made a determination as to which of these options in terms of shared lanes, dedicated lanes, turn lanes and parking lanes will be recommended for the Wayne Avenue alignment. We are continuing to evaluate these options on the basis of transit operations, travel times, costs, impacts to auto traffic, potential for traffic diversions, and impacts to the surrounding community. We will be glad to work with your community associations as we further consider and refine

the alternatives and their operations along Wayne Avenue, prior to making a final determination.

Thank you again for your active involvement in our study and planning process for the proposed Purple Line. I would like to suggest that at the next meeting with the Seven Oaks/Evanswood Citizens' Association, scheduled for January 17th that we review with the attendees the attached traffic summary. In addition, we could also show the VISSIM traffic model developed for Wayne Avenue, besides responding to your questions and concerns. If you have any additional questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-767-3694 or mmadden@mtamaryland.com.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Madden
Project Manager, Purple Line

Attachment

cc: Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Councilmember, District 5
Tom Autrey, Transportation Coordinator, Transportation Planning, M-NCPPC
Gary Stith, Director, Silver Spring Regional Service
Gary Erenrich, Special Assistant to the Director for WMATA Affairs, DPW&T
Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, County Executive Office