

**Town of Chevy Chase  
Purple Line Mitigation Advisory Group (MAG) Meeting  
Thursday, February 4, 2010**

**Minutes by Joan Rood and Warren Rizzi**

MAG Members Present: John Burnes, Joan Rood, Andy Hill, Rich Brancato, Leslie Hill, David Salzman, Jacob Bardin, Council member Pat Burda and MAG Chair Mary Anne Hoffman

Town Residents: Don Coble, Lynn Lichtenstein, Dedun Ingram, Susan Blacklow, Willie Blacklow, Peter Winglee, Don MacGlashan, Eric Klein, Mark Ward, N.M. Sera, Howard Feldman, Steve Keeble, Joe Frankl, Pam Browning

**Purpose of Meeting**

Chair Mary Anne Hoffman explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the State's proposed Purple Line alignment (Trail north of the tracks further from our Town, with the tracks on the south closer to our community) and whether there are any compelling reasons the alignment should be reconsidered. State officials have made it clear they will stick with the northern Trail alignment unless there is "a compelling reason" to reconsider the alignment.

The Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA) currently proposes placing the trail north of the light rail tracks; however, Montgomery County's Purple Line Functional Master Plan currently calls for a trail to the south of the tracks. It also calls for single tracking while the MTA's current proposal is for double tracking. Thus, the MTA's proposed plan would require an amendment to the County's Purple Line Functional Master Plan. The goal of this meeting was to develop comments MAG will recommend the Town Council send to the Montgomery County Planning Board and the MTA concerning the Town's position on the proposed alignment. To this end, MAG members presented short papers discussing the comparative impacts of a northern and southern Trail alignment. Each report is listed below with a link to the analysis.

**Likely Impacts of Proposed Northern Trail Alignment vs. the Alternative**

[Visual Impact](#) – Andy Hill and Joan Rood

[Noise and Vibration Impact](#) - Rich Brancato and David Salzman

[Impact on Terrain and Water Runoff](#) - John Burnes

[Trail Access](#) – Andy Hill and Joan Rood

[Safety and Quality of Trail Experience](#) - Jacob Bardin and Leslie Hill

## Resident Comments at the Meeting

Following MAG's discussion of the impact reports, residents offered these comments:

John Coble, 44<sup>th</sup> Street, summarized results of an unofficial poll he posted on the Townneighbors listserv: 28 residents responded. 20 people wanted southern Trail alignment, 5 people wanted north side trail alignment, and 3 did not prefer either.

Lynn Lichtenstein, 4209 Rosemary Street, stated she believes mitigation measures are extremely important and that the DEIS did not adequately address these measures. The group should assume that the state wants to put the trail on the north side and plan mitigation efforts accordingly. She would like a large retaining wall between the train and residents' homes. She would like to see the station moved to the west side of Wisconsin Avenue as well.

Dedun Ingram, 4411 Elm Street, said the Town needs to advocate for adequate retaining walls between the proposed rails and the Town borders -- including finding out what angle the walls will be built and how much land the State is planning to take from private property for the train and during construction. She is concerned with water issues because the amount of water will increase when trees are removed from the Capital Crescent Trail. The water problems emanating from Bethesda will increase and Coquelin Run, which is already at capacity, will be negatively affected. She reiterated the need for a more detailed noise report and agreed strongly that distance does make a difference and this plays directly into placing the trail on the north or south side. If the trail is on the south side it could absorb more of the noise. She cited concerns with all aspects of noise coming from the train: bells, horns, announcements, braking and said the State needs to include this in its report. She suggested that the Town hire a sound engineer to measure noise in backyards of Elm Street residents. She is also concerned about light pollution from the train and stations and said sound walls should be high enough to block light.

Susan Blacklow, 6912 Oakridge Avenue, asked MAG to provide a more detailed summary/report of their meetings and to show clearly how they came to a decision or why they were asking residents about specific mitigation questions.

Councilmember Pat Burda noted that MAG endeavors to post detailed minutes on the Town website for this purpose.

Peter Winglee, 7003 Hillcrest Place, said he prefers the southern trail alignment but it still will not be very attractive. He said MAG should look at mitigation efforts that will improve the Trail experience. It is not enough to just have it placed on the south side but it needs to promote a nice trail experience as well.

Don MacGlashan, 4114 Woodbine Street, asked if the State had taken into account the reflective nature of the noise – that is, when the noise bounces off buildings and into the Town. He agreed that water runoff is a serious issue.

Eric Klein, 4411 Elm Street, noted that his fellow high school students are not regular/normal pedestrians. “They will try to find the quickest and fastest route from Town to B-CC . They constantly are talking to each other, on cell phones, and listening to iPods. The safety of high schoolers needs to be addressed and a safe crossing route should be presented,” Klein said.

### **Resident Comments Sent Prior to the Meeting**

The Chair reported that 28 Town residents emailed comments in response to Town’s yellow postcard alerting residents to the first mitigation issue MAG will consider: the State’s plans to locate the Trail to the north of the Purple Line tracks, further away from the Town.

Only half of those responding actually commented on the proposed alignment, but of those who did:

- most prefer the Purple Line further away from the Town and the trail closer
- most say **access to the trail** and the **safety of crossing an active train line** are their biggest concerns
- and many point out that putting the trail closest to the Town will offer the better trail experience

Other respondents expressed concern about noise and vibration, views from the Town, light pollution and how emergency vehicles will access the tracks/trail.

Other resident suggestions not related to the alignment question will be discussed at future MAG meetings.

### **MAG Recommendations to the Town Council**

MAG members agreed there are at least six compelling reasons the northern Trail alignment should be reconsidered by MTA: 1) the proposed alignment’s impact on the

Trail, 2) on crossing safety 3) on views from the Town 4) on noise and vibration 5) on terrain and water runoff and 6) on access to the Trail. The Group decided to recommend that the Town Council ask MTA to complete sufficient preliminary engineering on both a north and south Trail alignment adjacent to the Town – with the Trail fully optimized and elevated on each alignment – to allow a more thorough analysis of these six areas of concern. In addition, MAG agreed to recommend that the Town ask the Montgomery County Planning Board to delay amending the Purple Line Functional Master Plan to allow for the MTA’s proposed alignment until the State can conduct sufficient preliminary engineering on both a fully optimized northern and southern Trail alignment. Currently, MTA appears to have conducted minimal analysis of an alignment that would put the Trail to the south of the proposed rail tracks. Mary Anne Hoffman and Pat Burda indicated they would draft communications for the Town Council to consider sending to the State and the Planning Board. Meanwhile, MAG’s concerns about technical insufficiencies in the State’s *Noise and Vibration Technical Report* of the AA/DEIS will be relayed to MTA.

The Committee also decided not to ask the County to reconsider single-tracking on the Purple Line segment adjacent to the Town and to table a resident’s recommendation that the Town hire a noise consultant to conduct a noise study. Rather, MAG first wants to give MTA a chance to correct deficiencies in its noise and vibration analysis.

### **Next Meeting**

Due to vacation schedules and spring break, the date of the next Committee meeting is uncertain. However, the Committee will meet in either the second half of February or the first half of March to discuss issues concerning the width of the proposed trail.