

Town of Chevy Chase
Purple Line Mitigation Advisory Group Meeting with Maryland
Transit Administration
Saturday, December 5, 2009

Minutes by Rich Brancato

Group Members Present: Mary Anne Hoffman, Chair; Pat Burda, Council Liaison; Jacob Bardin, Rich Brancato, John Burnes, Joan Rood, Andy Hill, Leslie Hill

Absent: David Salzman

Maryland Transit Administration Representatives: Michael Madden, Purple Line Project Manager; Jacobs Engineering consultants

The Mitigation Advisory Group (MAG) asked the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to meet with us so that the MAG members could:

- . Understand MTA's current plans for the Purple Line light rail project
- . Understand MTA's process for addressing community mitigation issues/concerns
- . Walk the right of way and get additional input from the Purple Line Project Manager
- . Establish a tone of cooperation/partnership with the State in order to secure the best possible mitigation measures if the Purple Line comes to the Town's northern border

Meeting Summary:

1. Introduction of MAG Members and MTA representatives
2. MTA representatives presented the details of their work on the design of the Purple Line to date. Mr. Madden emphasized that the objective of the MTA is to design a Purple Line that is "the best it can be" for the citizens, the communities along the line, and other important environmental and energy use considerations within the funding formula presented by the Federal Transit Authority (FTA). He also made it clear that there are many stakeholders on the Line and that the MTA will need to balance all interests. He stressed that with the exception of the track alignment and right-of-way, the physical design of the Line is only at the preliminary conceptual engineering stage. The next phase will be to request the go-ahead to move forward with Preliminary Engineering and the further development of the Environmental

Impact Statement. Over the next 2 years the process of more detailed engineering will be done in concert with the communities along the line.

The committee gained significant information during the discussion, including:

- . Current plans do not call for taking any property along the Town's border; if needed during construction the State will pay homeowners for temporary easements. The surveying of all property lines along the right-of-way will begin soon.
- . The current access points to the right-of-way from the Town at Elm Street Park and Lynn Street are included in MTA's conceptual design.
- . The Pedestrian Trail is part of the design and is planned to run through the tunnel leading to the Bethesda Station. As initially planned, the trail would begin to elevate around 44th Street until it is completely above the train tracks somewhere between 45th and 46th Streets. The Pedestrian Trail on the Purple Line is owned and will be maintained by Montgomery County, and the MTA will design and build the Trail to meet the requirements of the County. The State is in the process of ascertaining the feasibility of sinking the tracks in the Tunnel to allow a higher ceiling above the Trail. It is also looking into alternative federal funding options for the Trail portion of the project.
- . The State is required to have a forest preservation plan that would protect the tree canopy next to the Line. It is possible to have trees that overhang the Trail and do not interfere with the operation and safety of the transit-way, according to MTA. The MTA people said that there can't be trees with canopies hanging near the trains' overhead wires; however, trees with much higher canopies can still be technically over the tracks. This means any trees on residents' property lines with high canopies would not necessarily have to be removed, but may need to be pruned to keep lower limbs off of the overhead wires.
- . By law, any water runoff the project creates must be taken care of by the State.
- . Grass, instead of concrete/asphalt, to reduce water run-off is in the current plan for the track bed and is included in the current project cost estimates. Whether or not grass is suitable for the track bed will be further evaluated during future engineering review, so there is a possibility that portions or all of the track bed may be concrete/asphalt.
- . The train track is being planned, if possible, to be below the pedestrian path grade (a couple of feet) to reduce noise and visual impact.
- . The trains' speed along the right of way will be an average of 31 mph. It may be slower along the Town's section of the project because of the track curvature in the Town and the need for the train to be slowing coming into the Bethesda Station. The State will tell MAG what the speed will be at Lynn Street path, where an at-grade crossing is planned.

The walk of the trail was postponed due to the inclement weather.

3. Next Steps –

MTA will meet with the Mitigation Advisory Group at its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, January 7, 2010 or will schedule a time early in January if there is a conflict. At that time, MTA will share the findings of its study which determined that the Pedestrian Trail should be located to the north, rather than the south side, of the transit-way.