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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE ASKS STATE TO MAKE BUS RAPID TRANSIT
OPTION TRUE BRT FOR FAIR COMPARISON WITH OTHER
ALTERNATIVES**

The Town of Chevy Chase has sent a letter to Maryland Secretary of Transportation John D. Porcari requesting that the Maryland Transit Administration amend its ongoing Purple Line Alternatives Analysis to make Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Jones Bridge Road a true BRT.

Modifying the State's plans to include improved routing and traffic signal priority treatments will make it into a true BRT, with reduced running times likely to maximize ridership, the Town asserts.

"Only by making these modifications will you have a low-investment Bus Rapid Transit alternative that can fairly be compared with other alternatives currently being studied," Chevy Chase Mayor Linna Barnes wrote to Porcari. "The State needs to be fully informed of all feasible alternatives prior to its selection of a preferred alternative.'

With several transit projects across the State of Maryland competing for federal funding, the Town says for the Purple Line to be a serious contender, it must be competitive with regard to cost and ridership projections.

"The alternatives being studied and subsequently to be evaluated by the State, should seek to maximize ridership while minimizing cost," said Mayor Barnes.

The Town is concerned that the Jones Bridge Road alternative – the only one to provide direct service to BRAC (NNMC), NIH, the approved high-density residential development in the North Woodmont area *and* Bethesda Metro – is not being studied in a manner that will allow for its full and fair comparison with the other alternatives.

The Town of Chevy Chase has retained an independent transportation consultant to review the process, findings, and impacts of the Purple Line Alternatives Analysis currently being performed by MTA. That analysis of five Purple Line options using the Capital Crescent Trail and one using Jones Bridge Road, will form the basis of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) now scheduled for release in August 2008, selection of a Preferred Alternative for the Purple Line by the State of Maryland, and finally, determination by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as to whether the Preferred Alternative is eligible for federal funding.

The Town and its consultants estimate that the total cost of providing a true Bus Rapid Transit system which uses Jones Bridge Road and serves both BRAC and the north Woodmont community, still falls substantially below the total cost for providing BRT or

Light Rail Transit (LRT) along the Capital Crescent Trail. Cost is a key ingredient in the FTA funding formula and a lower-cost alternative has a greater chance of receiving federal funding.

They also believe that the JBR BRT can be done in a safe and environmentally-friendly manner using the latest BRT technology with peak-hour buses running every six minutes or 10 per hour. In fact, the consultants feel that introducing a BRT on Jones Bridge Road may reduce overall traffic levels in the area as some drivers, existing and future, switch to transit.

“If we can provide the public transit this area needs while protecting a valued community resource like the Capital Crescent Trail, it’s a win-win proposition,” said Mayor Barnes. “But public transit that costs too much and attracts too few riders isn’t likely to get a single federal dollar.”

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Attachment: Town letter to Porcari and Executive Summary