



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN  
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

August 31, 2017

Pete K. Rahn, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 548  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn,

Thank you for your leadership in getting the Purple Line project to this point. We believe the Purple Line will vastly improve our county's transportation system, create jobs, and lead to inclusive smart growth to better our communities. The project has certainly been a long time coming and we appreciate your and Governor Hogan's efforts in making it a reality.

However, as construction begins, it is important to recognize that the hardest work is now before us. That is the work of protecting neighborhoods that will be impacted by construction activities. The state must honor its pledges to the community and ensure an open and responsive public outreach process for whenever questions and concerns arise. We would like to learn more about how the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Purple Line Transit Constructors (PLTC) plan to relay updates and notices to communities that will be impacted by the work.

We know there will be unavoidable impacts. While we believe the Purple Line is clearly in the public interest, as the district councilmembers representing the areas most affected, we are going to fight for our communities every day to minimize the impact of the project's construction. It is critical that the state and the PLTC keep residents informed of potential impacts as far ahead of construction activities as possible and in as much detail as possible.

That is why the announcement of the immediate closure of the Georgetown Branch Trail caught many of us by surprise. *Is it absolutely essential to close all parts of the trail immediately, particularly on the day kids are returning to school?* We have heard many concerns from parents whose children have routinely used parts of the trail to get to school and believe both the state and county must do more to ensure alternative routes are safe.

We have a number of other questions about impacts the community is facing and how the outreach process will work going forward:

- 1) The March 2014 Purple Line Record of Decision (ROD) lists mitigation commitments from the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) that include: "MTA will work with Montgomery County

to designate, communicate, and sign detour routes for the Interim Capital Crescent Trail throughout project construction. MTA will also minimize the time of the trail closure.”

Does closing the Georgetown Branch Trail for four to five years, roughly the duration of the entire project, constitute minimizing the time of the trail closure? Are there changed circumstances MDOT feels requires the closure of the trail for this duration, despite previous assurances to the community? What authority does MDOT retain to assure that PLTC honors the terms of the ROD?

- 2) Can MDOT and the PLTC provide general tree removal plans along the Georgetown Branch Trail, construction access routes, daily construction start and end times, and what measures will be taken to protect pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Wayne Avenue and approaching the Silver Spring Library and downtown Silver Spring?
- 3) Do MDOT and the PLTC intend to activate the Community Advisory Teams (CATs) that were envisioned to provide a platform for dialogue between neighborhoods and project officials? When do MDOT and the PLTC plan to activate the CATs and how often will they meet?
- 4) Who can residents contact with questions about specific details of construction activities in their neighborhoods? This more granular level of outreach will be especially important for those who have follow-up questions or seek more information than what is covered in regular construction updates and notices.
- 5) If a resident needs to report a violation of any of the terms of the P3 contract, whom do they contact, and will those complaints be reviewable by state and county officials to assure equitable incentive payments?

We know the construction period will be challenging. But we must work together, with a laser-like focus every day to minimize construction impacts. Having an open and responsive public outreach process is fundamental to that task.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Roger Berliner  
Council President, District 1



Tom Hucker  
Councilmember, District 5

CC: Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Robert Chappell, CEO/Project Manager, Purple Line Transit Partners  
Mitch Lester, President/Project Manager, Purple Line Transit Constructors  
Senator Nancy King, Chair, Montgomery County Senate Delegation  
Delegate Shane Robinson, Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation