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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Chevy Chase Calls for Hard Look at Purple Line Costs**

**CHEVY CHASE, MD (October 21, 2013)** -- The Town of Chevy Chase has called for an entirely new environmental impact statement for the Purple Line, including a hard look at the project's estimated costs, which the Town asserts "have skyrocketed."

In comments made by Mayor Patricia Burda to the Maryland Transit Administration regarding the proposed Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the Town states that "...fundamental changes in projected costs require either a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that reconsiders the identification of reasonable alternatives for the Purple Line corridor or a supplemental DEIS with updated, correct cost estimates and comparisons based on this information."

The Town's comments also noted that "A DEIS with flawed cost information, and a subsequent project selection based upon flawed (cost) information, can only be repaired at the draft level rather than in a final environmental impact statement since the FEIS only compares the selected project with a 'no build option.'"

In June 2007, the estimated costs of the project were cited by MTA as approximately \$1 billion; in 2009, with the announcement of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), costs had risen to \$1.517 billion. Today, with the issuance of the FEIS, costs are currently projected at \$2.151 billion, with some of the LPA elements actually removed. The concerns the Town expressed in 2008 regarding the estimated costs of the light rail project alternatives have been substantiated by these subsequent cost estimates.

The Town's comments also address the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) uncertainty in providing up to 50 percent of the capital costs of the project. Currently, the project's cost-effectiveness rating has dropped from a "medium" to a "medium-low." If the overall project rating also drops to a "medium low" because of doubts about local funding and project cost increases, FTA could well decline to fully fund the project.

The Town of Chevy Chase's comments note "The project is at significant risk of this happening as long as cost estimates for the project continue to climb."

Adding to the uncertainty over funding the Purple Line is the uncharted area of the proposed Public Private Partnership that would have private companies design and operate the project, with the State of Maryland and local governments footing the bill.

At the conclusion of its comments, the Town calls for a new process. “We believe that MTA should initiate a new DEIS or prepare a supplemental DEIS so that reasonable project alternatives can be evaluated and compared based on correct information, and so the environmental justice effects of strained resources in the Purple Line corridor can be properly analyzed.”

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