

Residential Wayne Ave Group for Purple Line Design

That includes:

*Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens' Association
Park Hills Civic Association
East Silver Spring Citizens Association
Sligo Branview Community Association
(Signators listed at conclusion of letter)
Contact via AnneMEdwards@Gmail.com*

7 March 2014

*Ms Françoise Carrier
Planning Board Chair
Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission
Via email: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org*

Dear Ms Carrier,

We write to ask urgently that the upcoming Mandatory Referral include protections from specific Purple Line plans that must be improved before they are contracted or they will do serious injury to our neighborhoods and home values along the Wayne Avenue corridor.

We write as the "Residential Wayne Avenue Group for Purple Line Design", a co-operative of four large residential groups that blanket Wayne and its environs from downtown Silver Spring to Long Branch.

Most of the problems we present in this letter have become publicly known only within the last year. Some were not clear even when we filed our FEIS comments last autumn. Because of the short time since these problems have become apparent, and because decisions will be forced by the rapidly approaching P3 contracting, we need the help of the Planning Board.

We have been faithful to the Purple Line's "public input" process but, these new discoveries and deadlines mean citizens can no longer do this alone. We are committed to resolving issues by mutual agreement. We cannot have decisions made by default in this pressured time, nor subject to the different priorities of a for-profit corporation.

And we find ourselves colliding with builders of the Purple Line on core values. That is no reflection on them or their intentions or their performance. But it is a fact that there are things they think we should live with, that we simply cannot.

For the purpose of this urgent time-sensitive request, we are limiting this list to the Purple Line issues most critical to us that directly involve construction and therefore, P3 contracting.

We ask you, please, to secure these points for us as part of the County's Memorandum of Agreement with Maryland for Purple Line construction.

Please contact us for any additional documentation or information.

- I. **DOUBLE DOWN ON EFFORTS BY OFFICIALS TO RELOCATE WAYNE AVE SUBSTATION**
- II. **REQUIRE HUMAN-SCALE HEIGHTS ON RETAINING WALLS**
- III. **REQUIRE TOUGH NOISE STANDARDS NEAR BEDROOMS**
- IV. **REQUIRE TOUGH VIBRATION STANDARDS FOR ABUTTING STRUCTURES**
- V. **REQUIRE MINIMUMS ON QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND CITIZEN APPROVAL ON APPEARANCE OF ALL PERMANENT STRUCTURES**
- VI. **REVIEW BUS/TRAIN/CAR INTERFACE PLANS TO AVOID BOTTLENECKS (additional submission included from the Sligo/Branview Community Association)**
- VII. **PUT CITIZENS AT THE TABLE FROM HERE FORWARD**

I. DOUBLE DOWN ON EFFORTS TO RELOCATE THE Power Substation for the “Wayne-mile” to a new, more acceptable location

We want Purple Line to put the two megawatt electrical power substation it certainly needs somewhere else along Wayne Avenue in a more appropriate location than Cloverfield at Wayne.

That location is in full view of dozens of stand-alone homes and a structure there would block the light and sight of the residence of 200 seniors within 40 feet of that location.

FACT: A mechanical installation larger than any nearby home, no matter how it is disguised, will lower the values of the properties within sight of it.

FACT: A large unoccupied building is dangerous anywhere as a magnet for CRIME.

FACT: There are alternative locations which can successfully host the substation if there is greater official determination to make one of them work.

The area voted this plan unacceptable as soon as it became public last spring and residents went to work with the Purple Line to look for a better plan. It is important to note that we have been scrambling on this issue because NO ONE knew about this location or size of the installation until mid-April of 2013:

Not one adjacent stakeholder, including the seniors’ residence, was ever contacted or informed;

Not one officer of either of the large adjacent civics was ever informed, and we checked back through five years of officers and those who handled PL issues;

Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Councilwoman and PL supporter for ten years turned to PL officials at a public forum on June 19, 2013, and said, **“Why didn’t I know about this?”**

We approached Purple Line immediately in April of 2013 for relief and were as positive as we could be. We made suggestions to PL for viable alternative locations and begged PL to give us an idea of its own.

We asked PL, and PL committed, not to respond just “yes” or “no”, but to give us the details if they didn’t like an idea in the event that the citizens’ political will or rigorous cooperation among county agencies would make the difference in making another site “work”. We don’t have that yet.

Since April of 2013, PL has been very clear that its “preference” remains its first location. They have met with us only twice. Each time, they offered slim returns on the inquiries and sought to move immediately into a collaborative design phase for the original location.

It is March of 2014 and we still have not received detailed analyses on the locations we suggested starting last April. And PL has never made a single suggestion of its own for an alternative location.

With no judgment passed herein at all on Purple Line’s intentions or operations, we would not be coming to you if it had been demonstrated that officials had really tried to move this thing. The burden to find an alternative cannot be carried by citizens alone.

Growing numbers of residents want the substation moved to a more suitable place. They believe that our government and its officials, and such good engineers, should be able to make an alternative work.

SUBSTATION ALTERNATIVES: The following summarize the suggestions we have given to PL for alternatives starting last April. We have been clear that we are wide open to a better idea.

1. Bury the substation and put a park on top. This is a major commitment of money and skill but it preserves the area for other uses and removes the blight and crime magnet.

Precedents exist for this in the US and in Europe. MTA/PL reported back in Jan 2014 that this option did not work (A) in one location because of lack of access space or (B) because another county agency would not to redraw some of its own plans or (C) in some locations because of “water table” issues, which the residents countered that MTA/PL would have to conquer elsewhere when it builds tunnels for other neighborhoods.

2. Possible sites that residents have identified to Purple Line

- a) Property for sale in much less visible location, with few nearby homes, on Wayne (new idea, new on market, winter 2014)
- b) Property for sale on Dale within stone’s throw of Wayne (new idea, new on market, winter 2014)
- c) Properties off Dale adjacent to county’s school property (identified April 2013)
- d) On county property on the south slope just east of the original Blair HS Bldg (Jan 2014) with full access from Wayne Avenue and nearer to the Dale Drive station
- e) Under the school parking lot at Wayne and Dale, which has to be rebuilt anyway, coordinating a redesign of the school’s west entrance to fit the new arrangement (April 2013)

