May 7, 2007

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

John Carter, Chief AC

Community Based Planning Division

Mary Dolan, Acting Chief (C) Countywide Planning Division

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief

Transportation Planning

FROM:

Tom Autrey, Supervisor

**Transportation Planning** 

SUBJECT:

Purple Line Functional Master Plan Draft Purpose and Outreach

Strategy Report and Update on Purple Line Draft Environmental

Impact Statement / Alternative Analysis (DEIS/AA)

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Begin the Purple Line Functional Master Plan process by approving the Draft Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report.

2. Authorize the staff to establish both a Master Plan Advisory Group and a Technical Working Group to provide input on work scope, coordination issues, strategies, reports, and plan recommendations.

#### BACKGROUND

One element of the Planning Department's FY 07 (and proposed FY 08) Work Program is the development of a Purple Line Functional Master Plan. The Plan will provide policy guidance for Transit Impact Area Sector Plans, and other planning efforts (including development review) by formally establishing an alignment, mode, and station locations along a corridor within the County extending from Bethesda to the County boundary in the Takoma – Langley Park area.

The Purple Line Functional Master Plan effort will be closely coordinated with the development of a Purple Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Alternative Analysis (DEIS/AA) by the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA). As such, the plan schedule focuses on community outreach and staff analysis as a prelude to providing input to the Planning Board and County Council concerning the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative by the Maryland Department of Transportation. Once a Locally Preferred Alternative is selected, it is anticipated that the Purple Line Functional Master Plan will either confirm that selection or provide a solid rationale for any variation from the selected alternative – as well as any variation from previously adopted plans.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DRAFT PURPOSE AND OUTREACH STRATEGY REPORT

The accompanying draft report essentially sets the stage for the beginning of the Master Plan activities by:

- Identifying adopted plans that include the Purple Line as part of the plan's transportation element;
- Summarizing past studies that examined the Purple Line in some form or context:
- Acknowledging the critical role of the current DEIS/AA in the identification of impacts of alternative alignments and as the prelude to the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative under the Federal Transit Administration's "New Starts" funding process;
- Identifying both the statutory basis for Functional Master Plans and also current Master/Sector plans that could be amended as a result of the adoption of a Purple Line Functional Master Plan;
- Briefly exploring issues being examined in the DEIS/AA now underway

   in the context of adopted plans as well as in the context of concerns
   raised during the current outreach efforts by citizens, stakeholders, and
   technical staff;
- Identifying alternatives retained for detailed analysis;
- Presenting a proposed outreach strategy that expands upon, but does not duplicate that established by the MTA;
- Presenting a schedule for completion of the Master Plan effort.

# RECENT RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS TO THE ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS

The MTA conducted a Community Focus Group meeting on Monday, April 23, 2007 at the Silver Spring Library and announced that they were recommending the following changes to alternatives under consideration in the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) and in East Silver Spring:

#### Sligo Avenue

The MTA Project Team announced that it was recommending dropping any further consideration of either a tunnel or at-grade alignment of either Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit along Sligo Avenue. The tunnel alignment was dropped because of cost and increased distance, as well as community opposition. The at-grade option was dropped because of major traffic and property impacts as and community opposition.

#### **Tunneling Method**

The MTA Project Team is recommending that deep tunneling techniques be used as opposed to "cut and cover" techniques. Total costs between the two methods are viewed as similar and the deep tunneling will result in fewer impacts.

#### Fenton Village Area

The MTA project team is recommending that the previous alignment that was delaying further consideration of the redevelopment of County Parking Lot 3 be eliminated and another (deep tunnel) alignment immediately south of Lot 3 be used to access (also via a deep tunnel) the Silver Spring Avenue / Thayer Avenue easement.

#### **Bonifant Street**

An at-grade alignment along Bonifant Street to Fenton Street and then Wayne Avenue is now under consideration. This alignment is being closely evaluated with respect to the connection at the Silver Spring Transit Center.

#### **CSX Right of Way**

The MTA project team is recommending that the Purple Line enter the Silver Spring CBD from the west, on the south side of the CSX right of way because of existing development along the north side of the right of way. This alignment relates to the proposed Falkland Chase development and existing Locational Atlas Historic Site.

#### **Brookville Road**

One option under consideration at the eastern end of the Georgetown Branch Master Plan alignment was to use Brookville Road. The MTA is recommending that this option be eliminated because of travel speeds and conflicts, right of way requirements, and possible conflicts with the Purple Line yard and shop layout in this area.

# <u>Capital Crescent Trail Between Pearl Street in Bethesda and a Point 400 Feet</u> West of Jones Mill Road

The MTA project team is recommending that the trail in this segment only be located on the north side of the right of way, instead of the south side as is depicted in the Georgetown Branch Master Plan. This change will provide for better vertical separation consistent with the topography – in general providing for a better compatibility with the rail or bus operation.

## Sligo Creek

The MTA project team is recommending that the crossing of Sligo Creek and Parkway be done on an aerial structure only. At one point, a tunnel was being considered. The impact on the park area is still currently estimated to be approximately one acre.

#### PURPLE LINE PROJECT SCHEDULE

The MTA Project Team estimates that the Purple Line DEIS/AA will be completed and public hearings held in spring 2008. The selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative will be made sometime in late spring or summer 2008. Construction of the Purple Line (after Final EIS / Preliminary Engineering, a Record of Decision and Final Design) would follow within a time period now estimated as beginning in spring 2012 and extending until or through summer 2015. The MTA Project has been invited to the Planning Board meeting on May 17, 2007. The Project Team will provide a brief update on the DEIS/AA study – including the recent recommendations as well as the project schedule.

# DEVELOPMENT REVIEW DURING THE PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Staff continues to review applications for consistency or conflicts with alignment and mode options under active consideration by the MTA project team. Every attempt is made to advise applicants as early as possible of the on-going study about the DEIS/AA and (now) Functional Master Plan that is underway, the specifics of the alignment alternatives, and the need to maintain close contact and coordination with the MTA staff and Planning Department staff.

The recent recommendations by the MTA study team reduces the number of alignment alternatives under consideration in East Silver Spring and in combination with the recommendation to avoid any cut and cover tunneling, also reduces potential impacts upon existing property owners. It can be reasonably anticipated, however, that there will be applications that will be submitted that will conflict with some aspect of the Purple Line. As in the past, it is the staff's intent to work with the applicant and MTA to resolve any potential issues in recognition

of the importance of the Purple Line, its role as a key element of adopted plans, and the ongoing alternatives analysis and major investment study.

#### SUMMARY

The referenced Draft Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report marks the beginning of the development of a Purple Line Functional Master Plan that will provide policy guidance along the entire corridor, from Bethesda east to the County line in the Takoma – Langley Park Crossroads area. Establishing a Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) and a Technical Working Group will help to insure the timely development of the Functional Plan given the MTA process and set the stage for land use plans for individual station areas.

TA:tc

CC: Gwen Wright

Glenn Kreger Judy Daniel Dan Hardy

Mike Madden - MTA

MAY 2007

# PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

PURPOSE AND OUTREACH STRATEGY REPORT



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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

# PURPOSE AND OUTREACH REPORT (DRAFT)

# **PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN**

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# PURPOSE AND OUTREACH REPORT PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION

This Purpose and Outreach Report for the Purple Line Functional Master Plan describes the rationale or need for the Plan, the geographical and demographic characteristics of the area covered by the Plan, an overview of current major issues related to the Purple Line alignment and mode (Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit), and the proposed schedule and outreach strategy for the Plan.

#### PROJECT HISTORY

#### Related Adopted Plans

Adopted Plans that include the Purple Line in some form include:

Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment – Approved and Adopted January 1990

This Plan provides for the designation of the Georgetown Branch right of way as suitable for use as the Silver Spring and Bethesda Trolley and the Capital Crescent Trail between Silver Spring and Bethesda.

Bethesda – Chevy Chase Master Plan – Approved and Adopted April 1990

This Plan reconfirms a light rail and trail combination over the Georgetown Branch alignment between the Silver Spring and Bethesda Central Business Districts (CBDs) as described in the *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment – January 1990*.

Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan – Approved and Adopted July 1994

This Plan reconfirms the connection of light rail service to the Silver Spring CBD using the Georgetown Branch right of way, with a terminal located near the south entrance to Metro in the Bethesda CBD Metro Core.

Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan – Approved February 2000 and Adopted March 2000

This Plan reconfirms the Georgetown Branch Transitway as part of the design consideration for the new Transit Center in the Silver Spring CBD. The Plan does not preclude consideration of a Purple Line north or east of the Silver Spring Transit Center but does call for the Sector Plan to be revisited to consider any

changes to right of way or easement acquisition, land use, design, and zoning recommendations, should it be determined that it would be desirable and feasible from a regional perspective. This is important with respect to this Functional Master Plan in that one purpose of the Functional Master Plan is to provide more specific policy guidance on a Purple Line alignment east of the Silver Spring Transit Center. This policy guidance will be adopted to a large extent in concurrence with the state and federal decision-making schedule and will therefore be in place to guide land use and transportation decisions during Purple Line implementation.

East Silver Spring Master Plan – Approved and Adopted December 2000 and Takoma Park Master Plan – Approved and Adopted December 2000

Both of these plans include recommendations to provide rail transit stops along University Boulevard and at New Hampshire Avenue and at Piney Branch Road if a rail transit system is approved for the route along University Boulevard. Maps in both plans depict an alternative rail alignment connecting the Silver Spring Transit Center with a Takoma / Langley Transit Center.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Prior Related Study Efforts**

A number of prior studies focused on how to connect the east and west segments of the Metrorail Red Line. These studies include the following:

East - West Transitway Feasibility Study (Montgomery County Department of Transportation), April 1986

Georgetown Branch Corridor Study Final Report (Montgomery County Department of Transportation), May 1989

Georgetown Branch Major Investment Study / Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), 1996.

Georgetown Branch Transitway Terminal Stations Study (WMATA), June 2001

Metrorail Purple Line Loop from Silver Spring to Medical Center Metrorail Stations Review (M-NCPPC), January 2003

Purple Line (Bethesda to New Carrollton) – Transit Oriented Development Assessment, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), January 2003.

Purple Line (Silver Spring to New Carrollton) Line and Grade Study, Washington Area Metropolitan Areas Transit Authority (WMATA), February 2003.

<sup>1</sup> See Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan, February 2000, page 100, for full discussion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See East Silver Spring Master Plan, December 2000, page 83, and Takoma Park Master Plan, December 2000, page 103.

Capital Beltway / Purple Line Study – Findings and Recommendation Report, Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and MTA, March 2003.

Jones Bridge Road – Purple Line Busway Alternatives Analysis (M-NCPPC), June 2003

The above studies are important in that each addresses, in varying degrees, the feasibility of alternative alignments and modes for enhancing east - west travel by public transit, a key strategy set forth in the *General Plan Refinement*.<sup>3</sup> Of particular importance is the *Georgetown Branch Corridor Study Final Report* that was completed in May 1989. The *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment* of January 1990 recommendations are based specifically on the recommendations and findings of the May 1989 study.

#### **Current Study Effort**

The current Purple Line Study is being conducted by the MTA as part of the Federal Transit Administration's "New Starts" project planning program for fixed guideway facilities. This study is examining the relative merits of different alternative alignments for either Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit between the Bethesda and New Carrolton Metrorail Stations. Exhibit 1 depicts the study area.

There are multiple stages to the "New Starts" process and the part that includes the analysis of the alternatives that is currently underway is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Alternatives Analysis (DEIS/AA). The initial definition of alternatives began in the fall of 2004. The current schedule calls for the completion of the DEIS/AA in the spring of 2008. Additional detail on the alternatives under consideration in the DEIS/AA is presented in the following section of this report and also on the study web site at: <a href="https://www.bi-countytransitway.com">www.bi-countytransitway.com</a>

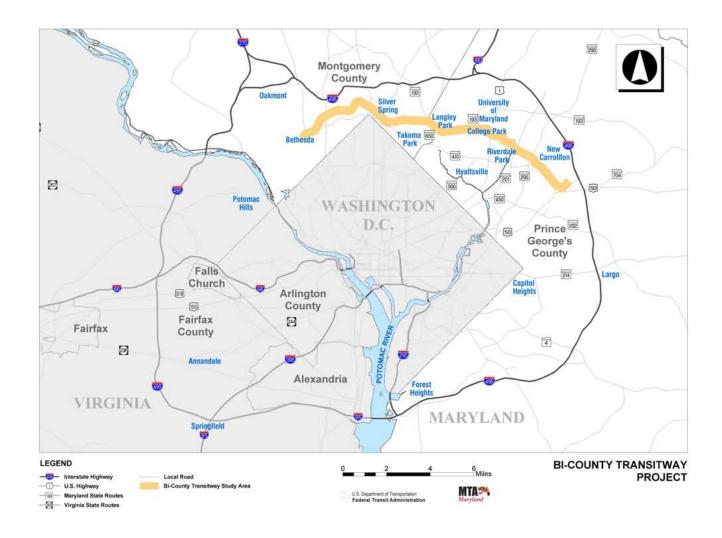
It is important to note that this Purple Line Functional Master Plan will rely heavily on the data collection and analysis that is to be provided by the DEIS/AA. In that regard, the Master Plan schedule that is presented in the last section of this report is dependent upon (in part) on the completion of certain elements of the DEIS/AA.

#### Other Ongoing Planning Efforts

Montgomery County and Prince George's County have begun joint pre-planning work for a Takoma – Langley Park Plan that will address land uses in the vicinity of a future Purple Line station at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> General Plan Refinement of the Goals & Objectives for Montgomery County, December 1993, page 63.

## **EXHIBIT 1 - PURPLE LINE (FORMERLY BI-COUNTY TRANSITWAY) STUDY AREA**



All currently proposed alignments include a transit station at this location.

#### PURPOSE OF THE PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Purple Line Functional Master Plan is to identify the specific alignment and station locations within Montgomery County so that existing and future Master, Sector, Station Area and other plans will have adopted policy guidance as to the location, mode, function and general operational characteristics of the Purple Line.

#### Statutory Basis For Functional Plans

The statutory basis for Functional Master Plans is found in the Maryland Code. More specifically, Title 7 of Article 28 states:

"The Commission may make and adopt and from time to time amend, and the district councils may approve and amend, functional master plans for the various elements of the general plan, including but not limited to master plan of highways, mass transit that includes light rail and bus ways, hospitals and health centers, parks and other open spaces, police stations, fire stations, and utilities."

#### The statue also notes:

"Each functional master plan or amendment thereto, shall be an amendment to the general plan if so designated by the appropriate district council."

#### Master Plans Affected By The Purple Line Functional Master Plan

Once approved and adopted, the Purple Line Functional Master Plan would (if so designated by the District Council as noted above) stand as an amendment to the following plans in Montgomery County:

- Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment Approved and Adopted January 1990
- General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland – Washington Regional District within Montgomery County, as amended
- The Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, as amended
- Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan Approved and Adopted April 1990

- Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan Approved February 2000 and Adopted March 2000
- Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan Approved and Adopted March 2005
- East Silver Spring Master Plan Approved and Adopted December 2000
- Takoma Park Master Plan Approved and Adopted December 2000
- Bethesda CBD Sector Plan Approved and Adopted July 1994

#### Issues In The Context Of Adopted Plans

There are a number of issues (alignment, mode, etc.) related to the Purple Line that are currently being examined in the DEIS/AA effort led by the MTA. It is important to note major issues that exist *in the context of adopted plans* and the MTA effort now underway. Of particular note are the following issues:

#### Study Area

The current adopted plans include a facility (the Georgetown Branch Trolley) that begins just west of the Bethesda Metrorail Station near Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue and ends near the Silver Spring Metrorail Station south of Ripley Street.

The DEIS/AA process that is currently underway includes a facility that begins just west of the Bethesda Metrorail Station near Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue and ends at the New Carrolton Metrorail Station in Prince George's County (see Exhibit 1). The last major station stop in Montgomery County is in the Takoma / Langley Park International Crossroads Area at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue.<sup>4</sup>

This expansion of the study area is important for a number of reasons (land use, ridership, cost, etc.) but most importantly from a planning and policy perspective in that there is no adopted plan (including the regional Transportation Planning Board's Constrained Long Range Plan for 2030) that includes a specific Purple Line alignment east of the Silver Spring Transit Center.

This Purple Line Functional Master Plan will therefore include an area and alignment that extends from Bethesda to the Takoma / Langley Park International Crossroad Area.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The ultimate station location in the Takoma / Langley Crossroads area could be in Prince George's County as the county boundary is in this area.

#### Double or Single Track

The Georgetown Branch Trolley track between Bethesda and Silver Spring is a distance of 4.4 miles (22,585 feet). Of the 22,585 feet of track, only 8,320 linear feet consists of double track.

All of the light rail alternatives being examined in the DEIS/AA now underway include a double track corridor.

As a result, the Functional Master Plan will either confirm or modify what is currently a single-track alignment (going east) over the following (approximate) segments.

- Pearl Street through Columbia Country Club to a point just west of Connecticut Avenue (MD 185)
- Beginning just west of Jones Mill Road and extending over Rock Creek Park
- From Stewart Avenue south along the CSX right of way to Springwood Drive South
- Apple Avenue to just south (or east) of Colesville Road

#### Mode

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment includes a recommendation that the service be provided by trolley or light rail vehicles. The DEIS/AA being conducted by the MTA is examining both light rail transit (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT).

The Functional Master Plan will either confirm LRT as the preferred mode or introduce BRT as an option in some manner (e.g., phase and/or segment). The Functional Master Plan is not expected to consider heavy rail (Metrorail-type cars) or any other mode other than LRT or BRT. The ultimate decision as the preferred mode will be based upon a number of factors, including the analysis provided in the DEIS/AA and the subsequent selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative by the State with input from local policy makers and extensive public input.

#### Alignment

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment includes an alignment that extends from Bethesda to Silver Spring using the Georgetown Branch and CSX right of ways for both the Trolley and the Capital Crescent Trail. Conceptual working drawings of this alignment as currently included in the development of the DEIS/AA by the MTA are presented in Appendix A for reference.

The DEIS/AA process is considering one other major alternative alignment between Bethesda and Silver Spring. The alignment under consideration would use Jones Bridge Road instead of the Master Plan alignment for the segment between Bethesda and the point where Jones Bridge Road and Jones Mill Road intersect, after which the alignment would join the Master Plan alignment, continuing into Silver Spring. The Planning Board and County Council reviewed this alignment is some detail in 2003. Both the Planning Board and Council are on record as opposing the Jones Bridge Road segment of this alignment.

As noted previously, the MTA analysis is considering alignment alternatives east of Silver Spring in areas where there is no Master Plan guidance for a specific alignment of the Purple Line. These alternative alignments are briefly reviewed in the next section of this report.

#### Station Locations

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment includes the following stations along the alignment:

- Bethesda Terminal Station
- East West Highway Station (Future or Second Phase Station)
- Chevy Chase Lake / Connecticut Avenue Station
- Jones Mill Station (Future or Second Phase Station)
- Lyttonsville Station and Shop/Yard
- Woodside (16<sup>th</sup> Street Station Also a Future or Second Phase Station)
- Spring Street Station (Local Station Non-Peak, Evening, and Weekend Service Only)
- Silver Spring Terminal Station

The DEIS/AA process has identified potential station locations along the Master Plan alignment that include:

- Bethesda Terminal Station
- Chevy Chase Lake / Connecticut Avenue Station
- Lyttonsville Station and Operations and Maintenance Facility
- 16<sup>th</sup> Street Station (either north or south of 16<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Silver Spring Transit Center

This Functional Master Plan will either confirm or modify the station locations noted in the Georgetown Branch Master Plan and will also recommend station location and characteristics east of Silver Spring to the County boundary near the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and University Boulevard (MD 193).

Exclusive Right of Way and Grade Separation Along The Alignment

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment envisions a trolley operating over a right of way shared with the Capital Crescent Trail from Woodmont Avenue to Talbot Avenue, just north of Rosemary Hills Elementary School. The trolley and trail would cross over Connecticut Avenue based upon the recommendations in the Plan. The DEIS/AA that is now underway includes alternatives that feature both at-grade and aerial crossings of Connecticut Avenue.

The Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment also recommends that the trolley and trail go across Jones Mill Road in a tunnel. The DEIS/AA includes one build alternative (Jones Bridge Road BRT) that assumes an at-grade crossing of Jones Bridge Road.

One of the most challenging design aspects of the plan involves how to access the CSX right of way to connect with the Silver Spring Transit Center. The *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment* recommends an underpass to access the east (or north) side of the CSX right of way. The DEIS/AA is examining alternative concepts that include alignments on either the east (or north) or west (south) sides of the CSX right of way with the east side access provided by either a tunnel or an aerial structure.

More generally, the adopted *Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment* recommends a trolley that operates over an exclusive right of way (excluding any consideration of the trail). The DEIS/AA includes some BRT and LRT alternatives that are either using a shared right of way in a dedicated lane or an exclusive right of way with at-grade crossings.

This Functional Master Plan will either confirm or modify the previous recommendations related to the issues of right of way exclusiveness and grade separation at conflict points.

#### Other Issues

In addition to the differences between the Georgetown Branch Master Plan and other adopted plans and the current DEIS/AA, there are additional issues related to alignment and mode that will be addressed along the entire segment — the segment between Bethesda and Takoma Park / Langley Park. These issues include:

#### Neighborhood Impact

The DEIS/AA process has identified neighborhoods that could be affected by one or more potential alignments. This issue is a particular concern in East Silver Spring and along Jones Bridge Road. The outreach effort will need to continue

and build upon the effort conducted by the MTA as it finalizes the DEIS/AA. Efforts will be made to insure that each neighborhood is afforded ample opportunities for input prior to all applicable study milestones.

#### Development Activity

While this plan (as a Functional Master Plan) will not recommend changes in existing zoning, it will result in adopted policy guidance for the protection of the selected alignment, something that does not currently exist east of the area where the Silver Spring Transit Center is located. Community outreach efforts need to include entities that have an interest in the alignment location and configuration – both in neighborhoods and in commercial and industrial areas.

#### Trail Compatibility and Connectivity

There are a number of stakeholders that are concerned that the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) will not function as well if the Purple Line is built in the same right of way. The MTA project team is currently addressing this important issue and those findings should be included as part of the outreach effort so that these individuals and group can respond.

#### Input On Alternatives Analysis Outside of Formal Hearing Process

The current schedule calls for the DEIS/AA to be completed sometime in Spring 2008. Upon completion, data (e.g., travel time savings, environmental and neighborhood impacts, costs, etc.) will be made available. Once available, the outreach process for the Functional Master Plan will be used (in addition to the DEIS/AA public hearing process and formal Mandatory Referral Public Hearing) to provide an informal setting for questions and input at a neighborhood or area level similar to the Focus Group sessions employed by the MTA throughout the DEIS/AA process. These sessions would take place after the publication of the DEIS/AA but before the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative. The sessions could be held in conjunction with the MTA outreach effort or separately. The overall objective of the sessions would be to provide a mechanism for neighborhood input on the DEIS/AA in advance of formal hearings.

#### Environmental Protection and Park Impacts

The outreach process will need to include public, private, and non-profit stakeholders with a focus on environmental protection and limiting park impacts. The Purple Line under any option will involve construction activity in or near forested and park areas, stream valleys, residences, and other sensitive areas.

#### Community Facilities and Historic Sites

The outreach process will also include organizations with an interest in community facilities and historic sites that could be displaced or impacted by the Purple Line.

#### Funding, Schedule, and Phasing

While it is not anticipated that the Functional Master Plan will address funding specifically, the outreach effort should solicit input on phasing of the project. The DEIS/AA process has clearly established this issues as one of concern to stakeholders and given the known funding constraints, it is important to get more formal input on this issue from stakeholders and the public in general.

#### DEIS/AA Alternatives Retained For Detailed Study (ARDS)

While the Purple Line Functional Master Plan will rely on prior studies in reaching recommendations on alignment and mode, it will be particularly reliant on data and analysis developed as part of the on-going DEIS/AA process.

This section summarizes the alternatives that have been retained for detailed study (sometimes referred to as "ARDS") and that include the entire segment within the County – from Bethesda to Takoma Park / Langley Park via Silver Spring.

Alternative 1 – No Build

This is the "baseline alternative" that assumes the status quo.

Alternative 2 – Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

This alternative features upgraded transit service with improvements that are not capital intensive. Examples include more frequent service with limited stops, signal prioritization, enhanced shelters and passenger information systems, queue jumpers to improve travel time, etc. The improvements would be for bus service that would operate over existing streets in outside lanes shared with other traffic.

Alternative 3 – Low Investment BRT Via Jones Bridge Road<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Beginning with Alternative 3, only the "Primary Alignment" east of the Silver Spring Transit Center is described. In fact, there are also "Design Options" associated with each of the build options that could be matched with the different base or primary assumptions, especially when considering alignments east of the SSTC. For the most part, the "Design Options" would not be expected to <u>materially</u> affect the <u>relative</u> merits of each alternative with respect to capital cost or travel time.

This alternative is characterized by BRT service operating in shared lanes via Jones Bridge Road until it crosses Jones Mill Road and enters the Master Plan right of way. One design "option" of this alternative is to have the west terminal point at or near the Medical Center Metrorail Station instead of the Bethesda Metrorail Station. "Low Investment" in this case refers to the capital cost investment relative to other alternatives and for the most part is a reflection of the extent the alignment is separated from conflict points. In this alternative for instance, the crossings at Connecticut Avenue, Jones Mill Road, and Georgia Avenue (after exiting the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC) are all assumed to be at-grade. The primary alignment for this alternative east of the SSTC is along Wayne Avenue at grade to Flower Avenue, Piney Branch Road and then University Boulevard to the planned Takoma Park / Langley Park Transit Center.

#### Alternative 4 - Medium Investment BRT Via Master Plan Alignment

This alignment consists of BRT service operating over the Master Plan alignment into Silver Spring but using 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (crossing Colesville Road at grade) to access the SSTC. Eastbound the alignment uses Wayne Avenue to access Fenton Street and then Sligo Avenue, proceeding east at grade to the International Crossroads area via Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard (MD 193).

#### Alternative 5 – High Investment BRT Via Master Plan Alignment

"High Investment" BRT consists of service over the Master Plan alignment into Silver Spring with aerial grade separation provided at Connecticut Avenue along with the construction of a tunnel north of Kansas Avenue to gain access to the north side of the CSX right of way. East of the SSTC, the alignment goes under Georgia Avenue to access a tunnel that would be constructed between Thayer and Silver Spring Avenues. This alignment would surface near East Silver Spring Elementary School and cross Sligo Creek on an aerial structure before heading on to Flower Avenue and University Boulevard, eventually utilizing a grade separated crossing of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650).

#### Alternative 6 – Low Investment LRT Via Master Plan Alignment

This alternative assumes at grade crossings at Connecticut Avenue (MD 185), an aerial crossing of the CSX right of way to the north (or east) side of the tracks, and accessing the SSTC via Second Avenue and Wayne Avenue, crossing Colesville Road and later Georgia Avenue at grade before continuing east on Wayne Avenue. The Second Avenue and Wayne Avenue (west of Georgia Avenue) segment of this alignment (for LRT only) have recently been dropped from further consideration by the MTA because of the relatively poor connectivity it provides with the SSTC and the conflicts posed by the at grade crossings at Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue. As of this writing, conceptual alternatives include consideration of using Bonifant Street or Ripley Street to access Wayne

Avenue. Moving east, this alignment crosses Sligo Creek Parkway and then continues to the Takoma Park / Langley Park Transit Center via Flower Avenue (MD 787), Piney Branch Road, and University Boulevard (MD 193).

Alternative 7 – Medium Investment LRT Via Master Plan Alignment

The primary alignment for this alternative is the same as Alternative 5 – High Investment BRT Via Master Plan Alignment.

Alternative 8 - High Investment LRT Via Master Plan Alignment

The primary alignment for this alternative is the same as Alternative 5 except that east of the SSTC this alternative would use a tunnel under Sligo Avenue to access Piney Branch Road and points east.<sup>6</sup>

#### Potential Station Locations In The DEIS/AA

The DEIS/AA process at this point has identified the following potential station locations:

- Bethesda Terminal Station
- Connecticut Avenue / Chevy Chase Lake Drive / Newdale Road
- NIH/National Naval Medical Center (Alternative 3 Only)
- Lyttonsville Place / Brookville Road / LRT Operations and Maintenance Site
- 16<sup>th</sup> Street (on either the north or south side of 16<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC)
- Fenton Street Area (concept location no specific location identified)
- Flower Avenue and Arliss Street Area (location is alignment dependent)
- Takoma Langley Crossroads (the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard)

At this point in the process, there has been no attempt to identify stations by phase as was done in the Georgetown Branch Master Plan Amendment.

## Schedule For Completion of DEIS/AA

As previously noted, the MTA has recently announced that the DEIS/AA will not be complete and ready for review until the late winter or spring of 2008. Once the DEIS is available for review, local government entities and agencies (along with the state) have an opportunity to analyze the data and the analysis of the alternatives; attend and hold public hearings on the DEIS; and recommend to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The MTA has recently recommended dropping further consideration of any alignment (surface or tunnel) along Sligo Avenue. A potential alternative is a deep tunnel from the Transit Center to Wayne Avenue.

FTA a specific alternative (alignment and mode) for consideration as a "Locally Preferred Alternative" (LPA). The review of the DEIS and the recommendation of a LPA would, based upon the current schedule, likely take place sometime in the summer of 2008.

# <u>Coordination of Purple Line Functional Master Plan Effort and The Purple Line</u> DEIS/AA and LPA

The alternatives development and analysis that will be used for this Purple Line Functional Master Plan is in large part being conducted through the Purple Line DEIA/AA process. There have been instances in the past (e.g., the analysis of the Jones Bridge Road alternative undertaken by M-NCPPC) where a recommended alternative has been eliminated outside of the DEIS/AA process and there may possibly be future recommendations that develop as part of the Functional Master Plan process. In general, however, the alternative development and analysis is an activity that the MTA is conducting in close coordination with both the FTA (under its New Starts process) and local agencies.

Given the above, the following allocation of activities is expected between the two efforts:

- The MTA will continue to work toward completion of the DEIS/AA. This and the subsequent timely selection of a LPA are critical to providing guidance for policy and development activity along any selected alignment. Of particular concern is the absence of Master Plan guidance for a specific alignment east of the Silver Spring Transit Center.
- It is recommended that this Functional Master Plan effort include an outreach strategy that complements MTA's community participation process (see following section).
- The County Council should consider the Functional Master Plan for approval as soon as possible after the selection of a LPA – given the established review process for plan adoption.

#### PROPOSED OUTREACH STRATEGY AND PROCESS

An effective outreach strategy takes into account the demographics and other characteristics of the area as well as known issues related to the area and plan. The study area of the Functional Master Plan falls within three planning areas – Bethesda/Chevy Chase, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park (see Exhibit 2). A brief profile of these areas in presented in this section of the report, along with a discussion of the outreach strategy.

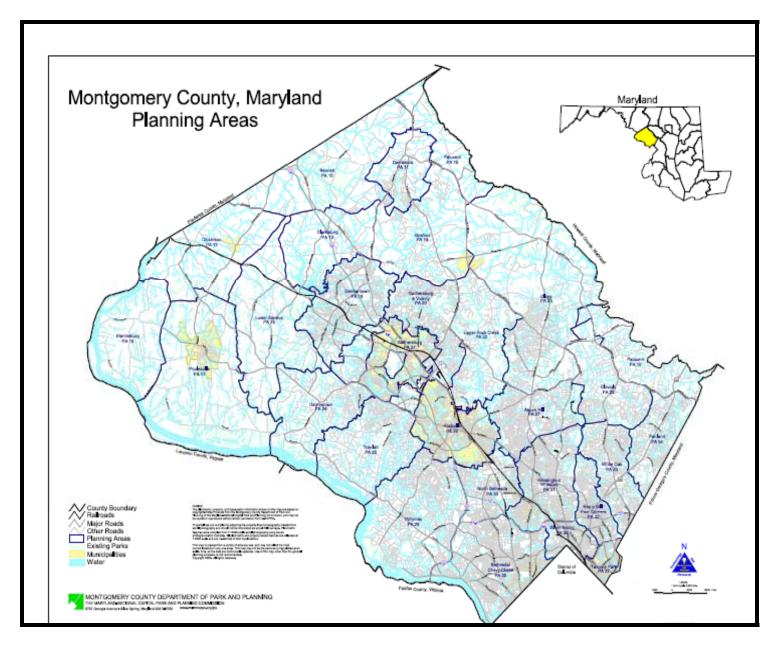


Exhibit 2

#### Profile of Study Area

A summary of key demographic variables as well as selected work location and commuting characteristics is presented in Exhibit 3. This data reflects the following:

- The population density is significantly higher on the east side of the study area.
- The population in the east side of the study area is much more diverse.
- Almost half of the population in the study area works in the County.
- Transit mode share is higher than the County as a whole and on the eastern side of the area is almost double the County average.
- Transit travel times for work trips are shorter and compare better (i.e., are shorter) with auto travel times in all three planning areas when compared to the County as a whole.
- Auto ownership rates and household income are significantly lower on the east side of the study area.

With respect to the Outreach Strategy, the demographic profile indicates a need to be proactive in seeking input from residents, business, owners, and other stakeholders throughout the study area. The outreach effort should also be proactive in its efforts to reach population segments that may have found it difficult to participate in past planning process The area is more dependent upon public transit than the County as a whole and currently benefits from a transit network that is more competitive with the auto for work trips than the rest of the County. A relatively large percentage of the population will have an interest in the outcome.

Given the high mode share for transit, the outreach effort should be structured in a manner that solicits input on bus service adjustments that would be needed to serve the stations along the Purple Line as well as input on the Purple Line alignment and station locations.

#### Proposed Outreach Strategy and Process

Based on the demographic make-up of the community and technical complexity of this Plan, the proposed outreach strategy and process will include and engage as many stakeholders as possible, with particular attention to persons that currently rely on public transportation.

This Plan will not recommend zoning and/or land use changes, but will result in policy recommendations to protect the Purple Line transit alignment. The outreach strategy of this planning effort should therefore complement the ongoing outreach activities of the Purple Line Study, which include focus groups that are held for the communities surrounding each of the ten proposed Purple Line Stations.

**EXHIBIT 3 – STUDY AREA PROFILE AS COMPARED TO COUNTY OVERALL** 

Variable	County Overall	Bethesda – CC Planning Area	Silver Spring Planning Area	Takoma Park Planning Area
Population				
Population				
Total	931,000	92,600	35,860	29,655
Density / Sq. Mile	1,877	4,578	7,770	8,810
Population Age 65 Or	,		·	·
Over	11.2%	18.4%	9.9%	9.9%
% Non-White	36.0%	12.4%	44.3%	54.2%
% Speak English Less Than "Very Well"	9.7%	3.8%	8.7%	11.3%
Labor Force Location & Work Trips				
% Working In Montgomery Co.	59.9%	44.9%	40.6%	42.8%
% Working In Prince George's County	5.1%	2.5%	6.7%	10.3%
% Driving To/From Work Alone	72.0%	61.4%	56.5%	56.8%
% Taking Public Transit To/From Work	15.5%	18.5%	29.2%	30.2%
Average Commute Time (Min.) To Work - Overall	31.0	28.5	30.3	30.8
Average Commute Time (Min.) To Work – By Car	29.4	26.8	27.3	27.6
Average Commute Time (Min.) To Work – By Public Transit	48.5	39.3	39.6	38.5
Housing				
% Households Speaking Spanish	12.5%	9.6%	10.8%	20.9%
% With Either One or Two Persons In Household	54.3%	63.7%	70.1%	52.8%
Average Number of Cars Per Household	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.5
Income				
% With 2004 Household Under \$70,000	41.0%	24.5%	54.3%	64.1%
% Of Households Spending More Than 30% of Income On Housing	57.6%	52.3%	52.3%	57.8%
Under \$70,000  % Of Households Spending More Than 30% of Income On				

Source: 2005 Census Update Survey; Research and Technology Center. M-NCPPC April 2006

In addition to these focus groups, MTA also holds ongoing public meetings to gather further input into the planning process. It is anticipated that the MTA will produce a DEIS/AA and select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by Fall 2008. This Functional Master Plan will be used in part to preserve the LPA.

MTA and M-NCPPC staff will work together on streamlining outreach activities to best fit the proposed goals of each project. In order to fully engage all community stakeholders the following outreach activities are suggested as part of this master plan process:

- Continue the Focus Group Approach Established By MTA: Work with and
  educate community organizations on each agency's planning process. Explain in
  the discussion that certain communities will also require the development of a
  Transit Station Sector Plan to guide land use and zoning (e.g. Takoma/Langley
  Crossroads Sector Plan). Communicate how each planning process specifically
  affects their communities. These activities would occur as directed by MTA's
  current schedule.
- Establish an MPAG: The planning board will solicit membership during Spring/Summer of 2007, to create an official Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) for this planning process. The MPAG would consist of interested community leaders, who are willing to communicating the activities of this planning process back to their respective communities and solicit their feedback. The responsibility of MPAG members is limited to the production of the Functional Master Plan. Specific responsibilities of the MPAG would include the following:
  - Evaluate the results of the DEIS/AA process
  - o Develop consensus on key issues in advance of the selection of the LPA.
  - Provide input to the draft Functional Master Plan,
- Establish a TWG: Because of the technical nature of this planning effort, a specific group of representatives from state and local agencies will serve on a Technical Working Group (TWG). The following agencies will be encouraged to participate: MTA, Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), City of Takoma Park, Prince George's County Planning Department, Prince George's DPWT, and WMATA.
- Provision of additional outreach meetings and activities. Many of the communities affected by this Plan are multi-lingual, multi-cultural and have significant income and auto-ownership disparities when compared to the county. The unique nature of these communities' demands unconventional planning approaches and dedicated resources to fully implement successful public outreach. M-NCPPC staff proposes, in addition to the proposed outreach activities suggested above, the following strategic activities to engage these communities:

- Canvassing: M-NCPPC staff will distribute informational brochures and flyers describing this planning effort at grocery stores, existing bus stops and other suitable and highly visible locations.
- Translating Information: All significant written information regarding this planning effort will be translated in Spanish and possibly other languages, as needed.
- Community Events and Meetings: On-site community meetings and major community events provide opportunities to educate and engage the public. M-NCPPC staff will use these opportunities to further engage and educate the public on the activities of this Plan.
- Planning Process Education: Educating the public on planning concepts will be incorporated into meetings whenever possible.
- Public meetings: The M-NCPPC staff will present findings and draft recommendations to the general community following completion of the major milestones of this planning process. The general public meetings are intended to provide another opportunity to obtain community input. At least two major public meetings will be held throughout this planning process.
- Use of Technology: Particular attention to using a wide variety of techniques to communicate with the public should be implemented. Newer, as well as more traditional approaches, will be used to disseminate information. Technology offers various ways to obtain public comment as well as a means to distribute information. A Website and Blog will be used to encourage an ongoing dialogue with the community, the MPAG and M-NCPPC staff. Additionally, all significant information will be available in Spanish as well as other languages determined on an as needed basis.

A list of the organizations included as part of the current Focus Group exercises currently being conducted by the MTA is presented in Appendix B, along with additional groups that would be contacted as part of an expanded outreach effort.

#### PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR THE PURPLE LINE FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

A preliminary schedule for the completion of the Purple Line Functional Master Plan is presented below. It is based upon the current schedule of the DEIS/AA process and the Outreach Strategy proposed in this report.

**May 2007** – Planning Board Review and Approval of Draft Purpose & Outreach Strategy Report

May 2007 – Advertise For MPAG and Technical Committee Membership

**July 2007** – Planning Board Approves MPAG Membership

**September 2007** – MPAG Reviews and Approves Draft Purpose & Outreach Strategy Report and Schedule

October 2007 - Planning Board Approves Final Purpose and Outreach Report

**November 2007 – March 2008** – Staff develops Initial Staff Draft of Functional Master Plan. Focus Is On Segment Between Bethesda and Silver Spring.

April 2008 – Initial Staff Draft Plan Reviewed By TWG & MPAG.

May 2008 – MTA releases DEIA/AA

June 2008 – Review and Analysis of DEIS/AA by staff.

**July – August 2008** – Staff analysis and recommendation provided to neighborhood groups, TWIG, and MPAG for input. DEIA/AA Public Hearing possibly held in this time period.

**September 2008** – Staff and MTA presentation to Planning Board. Planning Board forwards recommendation on Locally Preferred Alternative to County Council.

**October 2008** – Council Forwards Recommendation to MTA on Locally Preferred Alternative

**November 2008** – MTA Selects Locally Preferred Alternative

**December 2008 – January 2009 - Staff Draft Functional Master Plan is finalized.** 

**February 2009** – Planning Board Approves Staff Draft Plan as a Public Hearing Draft

**March 2009** – Planning Board Public Hearing Held On Purple Line Functional Master Plan

**April – May 2009** – Planning Board Reviews Draft Plan and Hearing Testimony

**July 2009** – Planning Board transmits Final Draft Plan to Council for consideration and to the County Executive for comment and fiscal analysis.

#### **APPENDIX A**

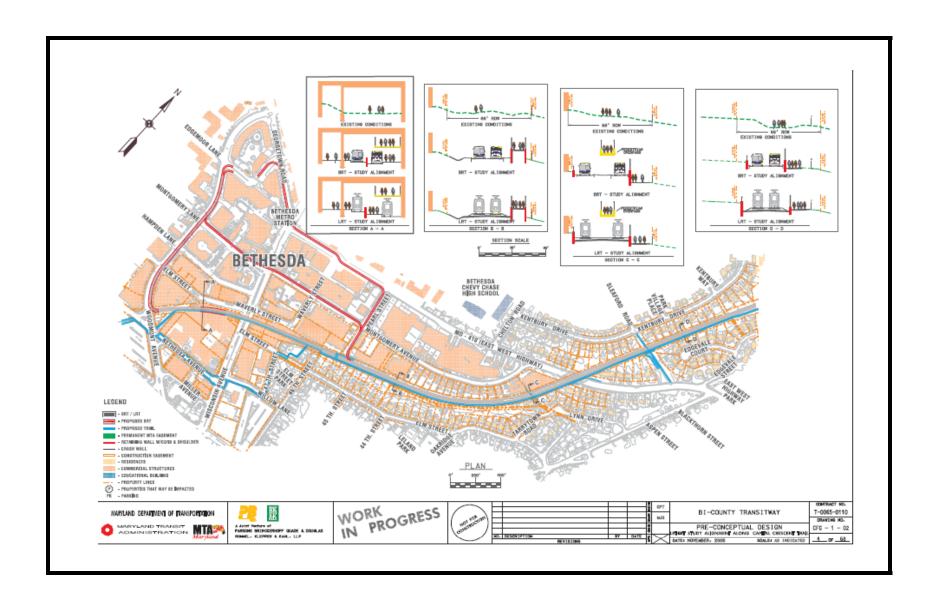
#### **MASTER PLAN ALIGNMENT**

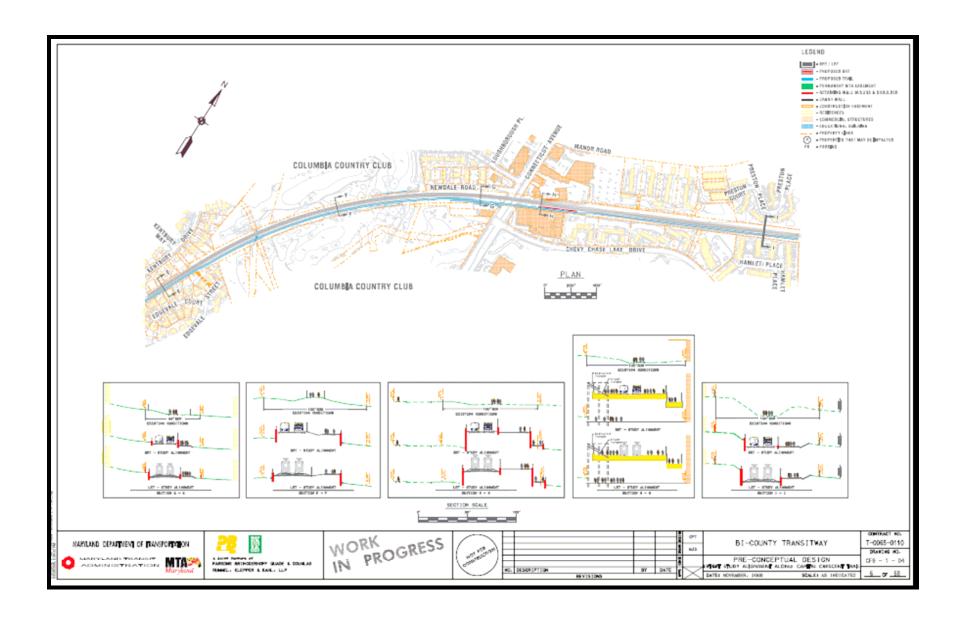
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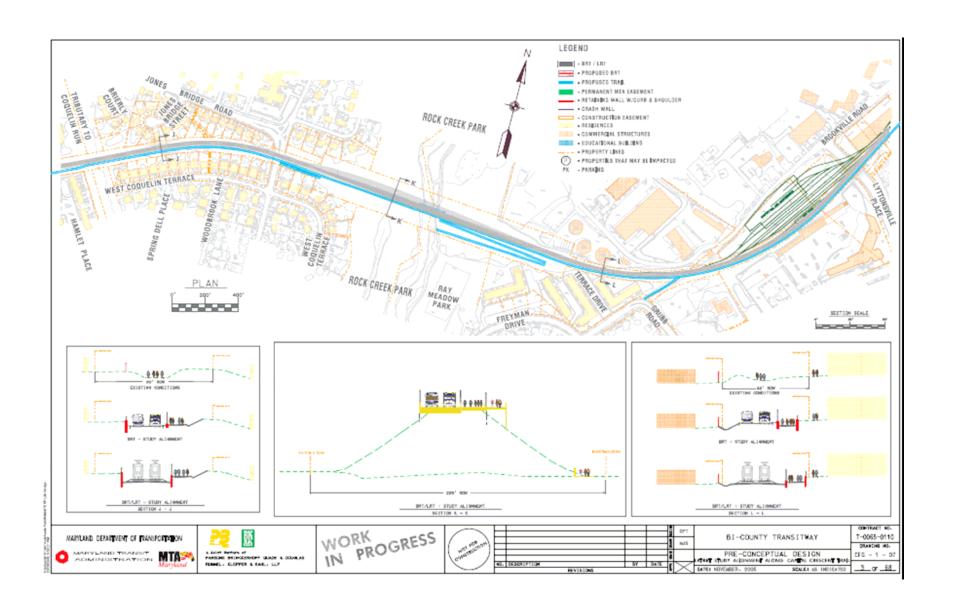
#### **SHOWN IN CURRENT DEIS/AA**

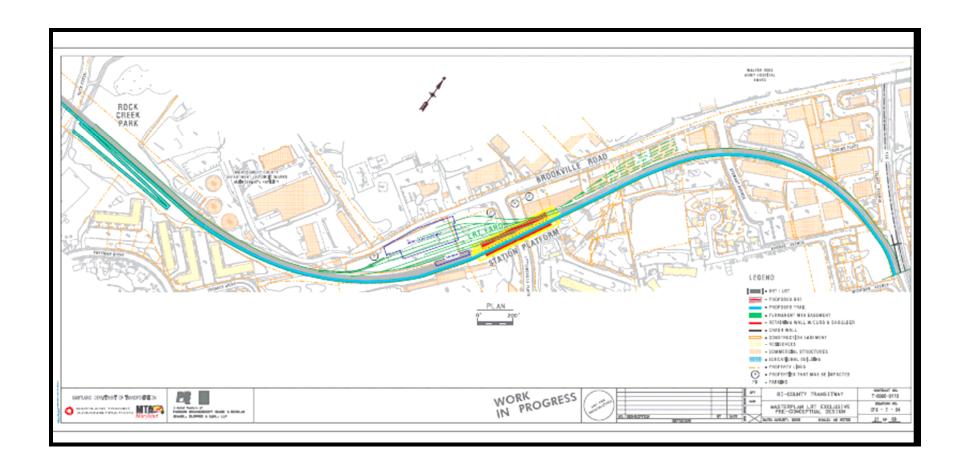
Note: With respect to the segment along the CSX right of way north or west of the Silver Spring Transit Center, the following drawings include alternative alignments (north and south) for accommodating the required separation within the CSX right of way into the Silver Spring Transit Center.

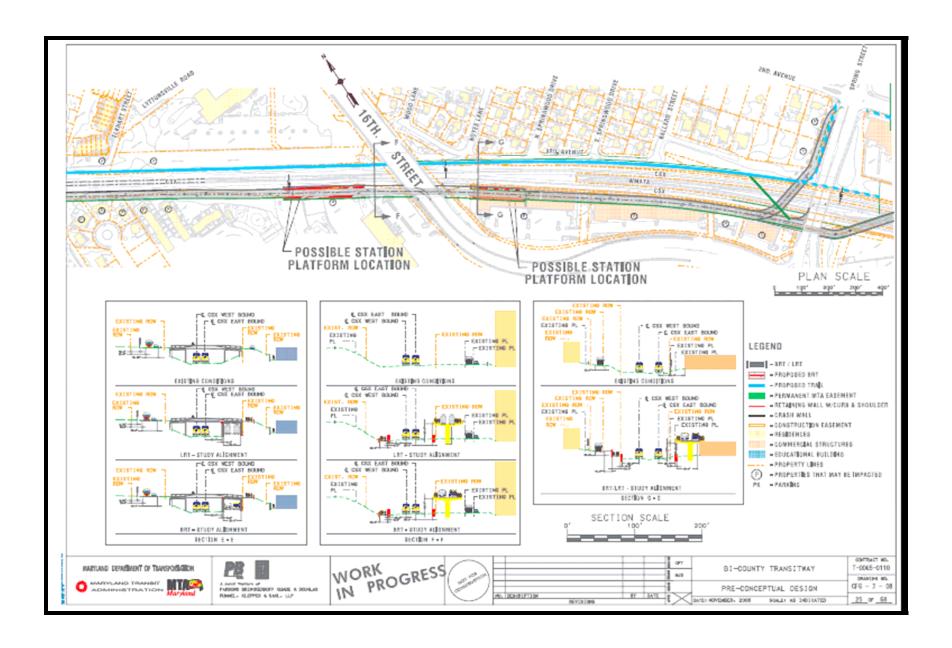
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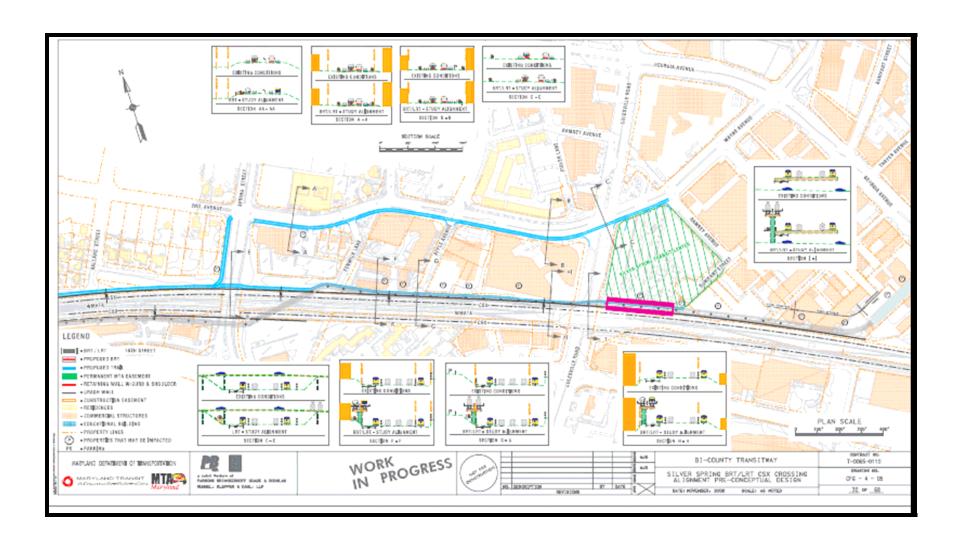


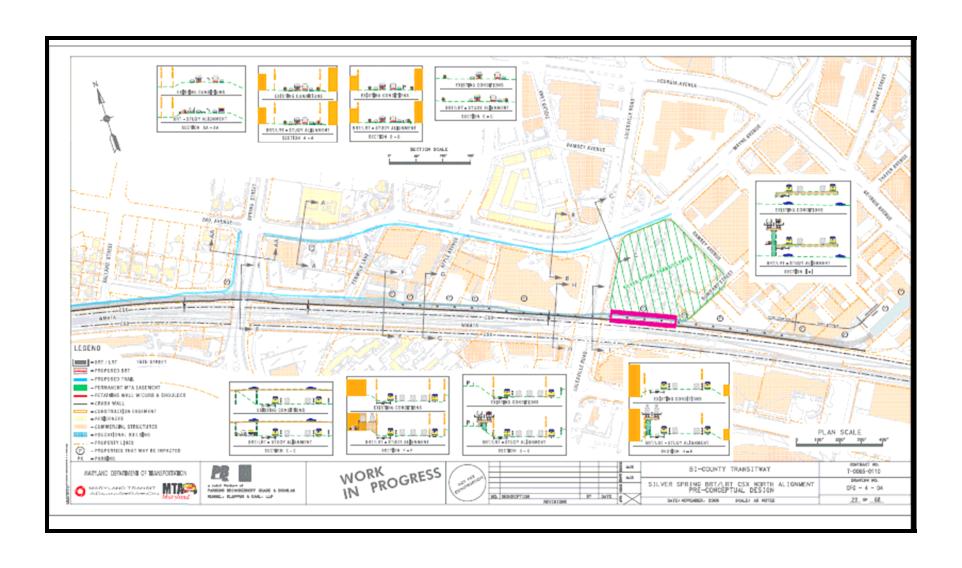












## **APPENDIX B**

# FOCUS GROUP ORGANIZATION USED BY MTA IN DEIS/AA

## **PROCESS**

#### **Master Plan Community Focus Group**

Chevy Chase Hills Civic Association Chevy Chase Lake Apartments Chevy Chase Land Company Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Columbia Country Club Coquelin Run Citizens Association East Bethesda Citizens Association Eight One Zero One Elm Street-Oakridge-Lynn Civic Association Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Coalition Hamlet Citizens Association of Chevy Chase Hamlet House Condo Hamlet Place Owners, Inc. Jones Mill Road Citizens Association League of Women Voters Montgomery County Northern Chevy Chase Citizens Association Preston Place T.H./C.C.L. Riviera of Chevy Chase Condo Rock Creek Forest Citizens Association Rollingwood Citizens Association Town of Chevy Chase Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

#### **Jones Bridge Road Community Focus Group**

Battery Park Citizens Association **B-CC Chamber of Commerce** Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. Christopher Condominium City Homes of Edgemoor HOA East Edgemoor Property Owners Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Coalition Hamlet House Condo Hamlet Place Owners, Inc. Hawkins Lane Hist. Dist. Local Advisory Panel Hawkins Lane Historic District Howard Hughes Medical Institute Jones Mill Road Citizens Association Manor Care - Chevy Chase National Naval Medical Center Nat'l. Inst. Health, Office of Community Liaison North Chevy Chase Elementary School North Chevy Chase Elementary School, PTA Northern Chevy Chase Citizens Association Preston Place T.H./C.C.L. Rock Creek Forest Citizens Association Rosemary Hills PTA The Chevy Chase Land Company The North Chevy Chase Swimming Pool Assn. (NCCSPA) Town of North Chevy Chase Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Village of North Chevy Chase Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

#### **CSX / Lyttonsville Road Community Focus Group**

Action Committee for Transit **Barrington Apartments** Claridge House Apartments Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Friendly Gardens Lyttonsville Citizens Association Maisel Hollins Development Company North Woodside Park Sutton Condo Rock Creek Forest Citizens Association Rosemary Hills Primary School Principal Rosemary Hills Primary School PTA Round Hill Apartments Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Silver Spring Regional Center Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Directorate of Public Works Woodlin Elementary School Principal Woodlin Elementary School PTA Woodside Civic Association Woodside Mews HOA Woodside Mews Homeowners Associations Woodside Way Community HOA

#### **Downtown Silver Spring Community Focus Group**

Alexander House Cameron Hills HOA **Discovery Communications** Elizabeth House Residents Association Falklands Chase Foulger-Pratt - NOAA Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Hollins Partners, LLC Lee Development Group Lofts 24 Metro Plaza Montgomery Preservation, Inc. Silver Spring Advisory Board Silver Spring Historic Society Silver Spring Regional Center Silver Spring Traffic Coalition

#### **East Silver Spring Community Focus Group**

Alexander House Between the Creeks Neighborhood Association Bonaire Homes Association Carolyn Homes Association Department of Housing & Community Affairs District Courthouse DPWT/DTS/Commuter Services East Silver Spring Citizens Association East Silver Spring Elementary School First Baptist Church Friends of Sligo Creek **Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce** Hartford-Thayer Condo Historic Takoma Hodges Heights Citizens Association **Indian Springs Citizens Association** Linden Civic Association Montgomery Preservation, Inc. North Takoma Citizens Association North Woodside-Montgomery Hills Community Association Park Hills Civic Association Parkside Plaza Condo Association Pineway Towers Condo, Inc. Save Our Sligo Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association Silver Spring Advisory Board Silver Spring Carroll Neighborhood Association Silver Spring Historic Society Silver Spring In'l Middle School

## East Silver Spring Community Focus Group (cont.)

Silver Spring Regional Center
Silver Spring Thayer Opposed to the Plan
Silver Spring Traffic Coalition
Sligo Branview Community Association
Sligo Creek Elementary School
Sligo Park Hills Citizens Association
St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church
Top of the Park Condo
Woodside Forest Civic Association

#### **Takoma-Langley Community Focus Group**

Action Langley Park **CASA** of Maryland Cool Spring Terrace Civic Association Department of Housing & Community Affairs Eighth Precinct Civic Association Field Rep. for Congressman Van Hollen Langley Park/McCormick Elementary School Latino Affairs Liaison, Prince George's County Lewsidale Citizens Association Long Branch Business League (LBBL) Maryland's International Corridor CDC Montgomery County Business Development Specialists New Hampshire Estates Civic Association New Hampshire Estates Elementary School Prince George's Council Member, Second District Puente. Inc. **Quantum Companies** 

Quantum Companies
Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board
St. Camillus Catholic Church
Takoma-Langley Crossroads Development Authority
West Hampshire Civic Association

#### Additional Outreach Contacts Not Currently On MTA Mailing List

Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center Advisory Board
Recreation Advisory Board
Impact Silver Spring
Community Action Board
Adventist Social Services
Recreation Advisory Board
Boys and Girls Club
Langley Park Recreation Center
Spanish Catholic Center
Identity, Inc.
Takoma East Silver Spring (TESS) Center
Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association
Boat People S.O.S.
Long Branch Community Center Advisory Board
Clifton Park Baptist Church