



Comments—TPB—Purple Line and VMT Study
By Mahlon G. “Lon” Anderson, AAA Mid-Atlantic
October 21, 2009

- Good Afternoon—I’m Lon Anderson with AAA Mid-Atlantic and I’d like to briefly address two issues today.
- First, we urge you to approve the amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the Purple Line.
- The Purple line, in our estimation, can not be built soon enough. It’s at least a decade over due and will begin to make real this region’s promise to expand transportation options.
- Inclusion in the CLRP is one more vital step in the long road to funding, building, and ultimately riding the Purple Line. Go for it.
- Second, we would urge you to ditch, scotch, kill the Submission of the Value Pricing Grant Proposal rather than forwarding it to the Federal Highway Administration.
- We have real-life road pricing studies that will be underway in our region shortly—as soon as we have traffic on the Beltway HOT Lanes and on the ICC, and we should be able to glean great information from them.
- In fact, at least some of us are already learning from these projects.
- You must have seen the publicity on the proposed tolls on the ICC. Lead story in the Gazette—“Lexus Lanes Take Toll” (HOLD UP THE PAPER)-- there’s a hue and cry out there about the high tolls being proposed.
- And a couple of years ago when you—the TPB-- did a study of what charges would have to be on the proposed I-95-395 HOT Lanes to keep them uncongested, the proposed tolls were the lead story in the Post, Front page: 1-A. Bigger than Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Given this, you are proposing to go forward to seek a grant to study public acceptance of a GPS based VMT Tax that will raise between \$2.96 billion and \$4.79 billion, in place of our current gas tax which, Brookings says raises about \$420 million annually.
- And you want to spend money taxpayer money to find out how area motorists will feel about it?
- I have great news: I can save you and the taxpayers a lot of money.
- In an era when the MD and VA legislatures and Congress have refused, for more than 15 years, to pass even a nickel per gallon increase in the gas tax, You want to spend money studying public acceptance of what amounts to a \$2 to \$3 per gallon tax????
- Unequivocally, I will go on the record and say charges of this magnitude—10-15 cents per mile-- don’t have a snowball’s chance in hell of being enacted.

- Elected officials would have to have a death wish before they would agree to these charges.
- The charges for driving as proposed in the Brookings paper are so high that they are truly no longer tolls, they are fines, intended to penalize and discourage driving.
- Now wonder the paper estimates that these fines would result in 19.4 million fewer vehicle miles a day being driven in our region every day. Voter rebellion might be another result.
- And these driving fines would raise so much money that motorists would no longer just have to pay for the roads and transit system subsidies as they do now. As the Brookings study notes, "a significant portion of the funds raised should be returned to the jurisdictions..." that "...might reallocate the funds to uses unrelated to transportation."
- We have found the Financial Tooth Fairy that saves us financially, can pay for roads and rail, buses and bikes, and then pay for school and sewers and Lord knows what else. It's the motorists.
- You know, it's illegal for motorists to drive intoxicated. Apparently NO such rule exists concerning consumption while writing grant proposals.
- But at least you don't have to send such worthless imaginings forward. You can stop the embarrassment today by killing the proposal. Thank you

**Statement of Robert O. Chase
To the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
October 21, 2009**

☺ You have an ability to sense and
know higher truth. ☺

In a time of doom and gloom, the good news is that air quality continues to improve.

Despite mythology promoted by mysterious models and predictions that ground level ozone would prevent any new roads being constructed, air quality continues to improve. TPB staff was right all along and the critics were wrong.

In the 1980's the region averaged 17 Code Red violations per year. In this decade it's fewer than 3. This year it was zero.

Some credit increased transit ridership. However, TPB data shows that while daily transit trips increased by several hundred thousand since 1990, daily vehicular trips have increased by 10 million and VMT by 60 million. For every new transit trip there have been about 20 new vehicular trips.

In truth, most of the credit goes to better fuel and engine technology.

Also of interest is that as ozone and particulate levels are dropping, incidences of asthma and respiratory cases appear to be increasing. Does this mean higher ozone and particulate levels are actually healthy?

All of this is relevant because those who attempted to ride the ozone bandwagon to stop needed transportation improvements are now aboard the green house gas bandwagon for the same purpose.

However, as with ozone, the only real solution to GHG is not social regimentation but improved technology, which in the transportation sector means an alternative fuel fleet which most certainly will occur. The availability of less expensively fueled vehicles could actually heighten vehicle demand and use.

It's also important to note that GHG levels are highest at lower speeds, meaning more congestion equals higher GHG levels. Not that obstructionists care, but it happens to be true.

As the late John Adams said centuries ago, facts are stubborn things, inclinations, wishes and passions do not change the facts.

True in the past with ground level ozone. True in the future with GHG levels.

The question is whether area officials have the political will to be guided by the facts and build the transportation system we need, or opt to use an issue over which they have very little impact as another excuse to avoid tough decisions and settle for less?



The Vision of the Purple Line

The Purple Line is a needed, regional asset because it--

1. Provides significant **travel time savings** for transit riders
2. Is an **alternative to driving** on the most congested portion of the Beltway
3. Provides direct **connections** to 4 Metrorail stops, 3 MARC lines, and Amtrak
4. Provides **economic stimulus** for Transit Oriented Development
5. Is a **Regional "Connector "** by linking both sides of the "Regional Divide"
6. **Helps with Climate Change** by encouraging clean transit and Smart Growth
7. Encourages people to **reduce their car ownership**
8. Lays the basis for **regional rail transit extensions** to Largo, Tysons Corner, and Alexandria

In layman terms, the Purple Line is a long term vision that goes beyond ridership numbers and air quality conformity tests.

The Purple Line is a project that will allow our children and grandchildren and their children to make the decision to live in a transit-friendly walkable neighborhood that also has great job accessibility. For example, many neighborhoods of Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park, College Park and UMd, Riverdale Park and New Carrollton would be walkable to a Purple Line stop. They also would have access from the Purple Line to four other Metro lines, and three MARC lines. In addition to employment opportunities, leisure and entertainment centers with restaurants, theatres, sport venues and shopping are accessible in Bethesda, Downtown Silver Spring, the Takoma/Langley International Corridor, and on the College Park campus.

In voting today to put the Purple Line on the CLRP you are looking to the future, and future generations will thank you. And a BIG THANK YOU to Maryland DOT for staying with the project over the years.

Harry Sanders, President, Purple Line Now, sandersh@verizon.net

Action Committee for Transit

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P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring, MD 20907

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the TPB. I am Jim Clarke, Vice President for Legislative Affairs for ACT, the Action Committee for Transit. We represent transit riders in Montgomery County. Our group was founded 23 years ago to promote rail transit on what was then called the Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring. That project has since become the Purple Line between Bethesda and New Carrollton.

I am here today to speak the items regarding the Purple Line (agenda items 7 to9).

At the start let me make it clear that the continuation of the Capital Crescent Trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring along the proposed route of the Purple Line has and continues to be a key component of our support for the proposed Purple Line.

The Purple Line project, as will be presented by MDOT, has the support of the Governor of Maryland, both the Montgomery and Prince Georges County Executives, the County Councils of both counties and a number of municipalities in the Purple Line Corridor. The project is also supported by a broad cross section of organizations and citizens of both counties.

I would point out that the ridership estimates for the Purple Line are higher than for the Silver Line extension of METRO to Dulles Airport.

I need not emphasis to this group that there is an urgent need for an East-West transit connection north of the District of Columbia. And the Purple Line is just that, an East/West transit line that will cross four Metro lines as well as all three MARC lines.

I would also point out, that there is a crying need in this region to provide an alternative to the automobile and this, the Purple Line provides. Our members have spent many long hours at numerous points in Montgomery County passing out Purple Line information and the invariable comments from people are about how, when the Purple Line is built, it would provide them with an alternative to driving and especially it would provide an alternative to driving the Beltway.

In my case whenever we go to the AFI in Silver Spring my wife's enviable comment is, "If only we could take the Purple Line."

In conclusion ACT urges you to support the inclusion of the full Purple Line in the CLRP.

Thank you for opportunity to present our views.

Testimony presented to the Washington Area COG Transportation Planning Board
21 October, 2009.

Finish the Trail / Build Light Rail

I live in Woodside, north Silver Spring. I am a trail advocate active in several organizations including the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), and Purple Line NOW! I am speaking today in support of the Purple Line transit AND trail. I ask the COG Transportation Planning Board to please add the Purple Line light rail and Capital Crescent Trail to the COG Constrained Long Range.

Support for the Purple Line has increased among trail users as the Purple Line design has evolved in recent years. Over 10,000 of the "Save the Trail" petition signatures were collected and presented before spring 2003, over six years ago and long before many critical Purple Line design issues were settled in favor of trail users. Trail users had been told worst case assumptions that the trail would be severely narrowed or worse alongside transit in the corridor and would likely be ejected from the Bethesda Tunnel. But we now know the trail will be rebuilt to be at least 10' wide continuous over its entire length through the corridor and may even be wider than it is today in many places. We know the trail will remain in the tunnel. We know the trail will have bridges or underpasses at all major roadway crossings - safer than the existing at-grade highway crossings that are on the Interim CCT today. We know there will be good separation between the trail and transit, with a landscaped buffer and with transit possibly running on grass tracks. We know that modern light rail cars will be lower and quieter than the older light rail cars used in Baltimore. And most importantly, we know the MTA and Montgomery County are fully committed to completing the trail into downtown Silver Spring with the Purple Line.

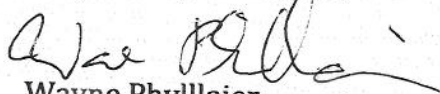
You have heard testimony about the CCCT trail traffic survey taken in 2006. I am well aware of that trail use survey - I coordinated the survey for the CCCT. The trail use measurements show the Interim CCT is grossly underused compared to the completed CCT. The 10,000+ weekly trail uses measured on the Interim CCT at Bethesda is less than 1/2 that measured on the paved, completed CCT between Bethesda and Georgetown (e.g. 23,000+ weekly uses measured at the Bethesda Avenue trailhead). The 2500+ weekly trail uses measured on the Interim CCT east of Rock Creek near Grubb Road was barely 1/10 that measured on the completed CCT. The trail must be paved and completed into Silver Spring to reach its potential.

We are still waiting for the trail to be built through my Woodside neighborhood into downtown Silver Spring after all of these years. Purple Line opponents have never been able to present credible plans for completing the CCT into Silver Spring as a safe and direct off-road trail without transit. The Purple Line will complete the CCT to benefit the larger community.

(over)

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is the most widely recognized volunteer organization dedicated to protecting the Trail. The CCCT follows the Purple Line very closely, and continues to take no position to either oppose or endorse the Purple Line. The CCCT would not hold to this neutral position if it believed the Purple Line would be unacceptable for the future Capital Crescent Trail. The Executive Director of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Eric Gilliland, has testified here at a previous meeting that WABA supports the Purple Line. The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MBPAC) has also endorsed the Purple Line. I am joined by many trail users who ask you to "Finish the Trail / Build Light Rail".

Respectfully submitted,



Wayne Phyllaier
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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Disclosure: I am Treasurer of Purple Line NOW! and I am also the Treasurer and a past Chair of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT). This statement is not endorsed by the CCCT. The CCCT continues to neither support nor oppose the Purple Line.