

## Purple Line Projected to Have Good Ridership But ....

Dec. 19th, 2007

On Monday December 3<sup>rd</sup> the Maryland Transit Administration released ridership information for various Purple Line (Bethesda to New Carrollton) options. This was the first time ridership data had been presented in this study even though Governor Glendening kicked off the Alternative Analysis/EIS in 2002.

The medium/high end versions of the light rail options were projected to have a ridership level of 42,000 to 47,000 riders per weekday. This is quite comparative with other light rail lines now moving through the federal FTA New Starts process.

I should be happy but what concerns me is – why do we learn only after five years of study that ridership will probably be acceptable for the federal FTA process? I don't know the best answer, but it is my belief is that some government entity needs to develop a more sophisticated sketch level analysis tool to predetermine the viability of transit options. It doesn't need to meet FTA official standards but it should be able to provide guidance as to projected ridership and time savings. That entity should be either the state jurisdictions or the COG/TPB. For years I had hoped that this would be the result of the COG/TPB Regional Mobility Study. But, I now feel the state jurisdictions would likely have a more vested interest and be more aggressive in the use of a sketch level ridership tool.

Best wishes for the holiday season.

Harry Sanders

President Purple Line Now

[sandersh@verison.net](mailto:sandersh@verison.net)

301-587-1323

## The Purple Line and Eastern Silver Spring

DECEMBER 3, 2007

- **PURPLE LINE TAKES GREAT LEAP FORWARD: MTA SHOWS PROJECT IS COMPETITIVE AND WILL ATTRACT HIGH RIDERSHIP:** The Maryland Transit Administration's ridership forecasts of approximately 45,000 surpass ridership numbers of many existing and proposed light rail projects across the country. The average daily ridership for competing light rail proposals now moving through the Federal approval process is 31,400. In addition, the overall cost effectiveness seems likely to satisfy Federal Transit Administration (FTA) standards. A positive rating from FTA depends on a complex formula considering ridership and other factors including projected cost. Federal funding will not be provided for any project that does not have a positive rating.
- **IMPROVED MOBILITY FOR OUR CITIZENS:** Light rail is far more popular than buses because it provides a smoother and quieter ride and generates less pollution than diesel buses, improving air quality for transit riders and residents. For residents of East Silver Spring the Purple Line will provide easier access to jobs and education. They will be able to travel west to Bethesda and the Shady Grove Metro Red line or east to the UMD College Park campus in about 15 minutes.
- **IMPROVED PROPERTY VALUES:** Many people who prefer to reduce both their car dependency and global warming emissions will find eastern Silver Spring to be an attractive place to live precisely for the easy access to transit which can take them east or west, as well as downtown Washington. The Purple Line will encourage reinvestment in neighborhoods in close proximity to the line.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION:** Purple Line *NOW!* is committed to working with members of all communities to ensure MTA addresses the concerns of residents. PLN has supported the study of a tunnel through eastern Silver Spring, but also believes that surface operation of the Purple Line would be compatible with high quality residential neighborhoods. There are many examples around the world of surface lines passing through desirable residential neighborhoods. We hope civic associations in eastern Silver Spring will work with MTA and PLN to familiarize their members with the variety of light rail options by viewing videos and taking field trips to cities that have successful transit lines.
- **YOU CAN HELP:** Purple Line *NOW!* is made up of volunteers supported by environmental, community, business and labor groups concerned about traffic, sustainability and the quality of life in our communities. You can help us move the Purple Line into construction by writing letters to the editor or elected officials, raising or donating funds, testifying at hearings and many other ways. Sign up to help at: [www.PurpleLineNow.com](http://www.PurpleLineNow.com) or email [purplelinenow@gmail.com](mailto:purplelinenow@gmail.com)

Purple Line Now!

P.O. Box 7074 - Silver Spring, Md. 20907-7074 - [www.purplelinenow.com](http://www.purplelinenow.com)



2)

**Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation**  
PO Box 5574, Arlington, VA 22205, 703 271-0895,

Statement to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
by Allen Muchnick, President, December 19, 2007

I'm Allen Muchnick with the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST). We continue to oppose amending the TIP and CLRP to add VDOT's I-66 "Spot Improvements" project. This project violates TPB objectives, ignores better-performing and more-cost effective traffic-management alternatives, is strongly opposed by Arlingtonians, has had a sham public process, fails to adequately analyze traffic and environmental impacts, and would worsen, not improve, regional traffic congestion, highway safety, incident management, emergency evacuation, transit ridership, ridesharing, vehicle miles traveled per capita, and global-warming emissions..

The I-66 project involves neither "spots" nor "improvements". Moreover, changes of this nature were not even mentioned in VDOT's March 2005 Idea-66 Feasibility Study Final Report, although VDOT had already secretly concocted this project as a scheme to construct major segments of a third westbound I-66 travel lane, using Frank Wolf's federal earmarks, without considering any alternatives or studying the project's many adverse environmental or traffic impacts.

VDOT misrepresents this project as involving only operational improvements and has been pursuing a NEPA Categorical Exclusion when it should conduct at least a proper Environmental Assessment. The true purpose of this unnecessary, counterproductive, and unwarranted project is to expand I-66 capacity for untolled, single-occupant vehicles. It would worsen traffic congestion on connected westbound highways, along eastbound I-66, and at nearby Arlington and Fairfax County intersections, but VDOT is purposefully evading meaningful traffic analyses. Moreover, this project would create two new westbound bottlenecks at the low-volume Glebe Road and Sycamore St exits, where three westbound lanes would drop down to two.

Claims that these "spot improvements" would facilitate emergency evacuations are bogus; the added lanes and wide outside shoulders would be mandatory exits at Glebe Rd and at Sycamore St, and their construction would fail to provide a continuous wide inside shoulder and would actually extensively narrow that shoulder. As long as VDOT is pursuing I-66 "spot improvements", the TPB should require VDOT to study a spot improvement alternative that would simply provide a continuous 12-foot wide inside shoulder along I-66 inside the Beltway.

We ask the TPB to require VDOT to report back to the TPB in early 2008 on the results of its current "spot improvements" study, including fair and objective analyses of the impacts of this project on regional traffic and on the environmental mitigations, required under the 1977 Coleman Record of Decision, to provide wetlands, wildlife habitat, public open space, and parkway aesthetics within VDOT's right-of-way for I-66. At that time, the TPB should revisit the issue of whether the I-66 "Spot Improvements" project should remain in the CLRP and TIP.





**“Time to Celebrate Progress Benefiting the Many”  
Statement of Robert O. Chase  
To the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
December 19, 2007**

In checking to see who's been good this year, Santa is not alone in finding that a lot of good transportation things actually did happen.

Thanks in great part to Delegate Tom Rust, Virginia has historic new statewide and regional funding, dedicated Metro funding, a fourth I-95 lane, new Route 28 interchanges, the Gainesville interchange and other improvements of great public benefit.

The District transformed an old bridge into a newer, safer structure.

The most profound accomplishment may be the green light for Maryland's Intercounty Connector linking nearly two million people in the region's second and third largest jurisdictions. That is huge!

On the environmental and public health side, an entire hot summer passed with only a single code red violation registered on a single monitor. Twenty years ago most monitors averaged 17 violations per summer.

And there's more good news. Next month this body can approve a 56-mile, transit and HOT lane system that will guarantee I-95 transit users and car poolers 50-60 mph, rush hour travel from Fredericksburg to the District and Tysons Corner.

You also can approve westbound I-66 improvements to help thousands of District and Arlington residents get to work easier in the morning, and outer jurisdiction residents get home earlier at night, while keeping thousands of regional travelers off Arlington's neighborhood streets.

And today's signing of the new energy bill means higher future CAFE standards, healthier air and fewer greenhouse gases. With apologies to our friend Mr. Replogle, better technology, not more litigation, clearly is the key to better air quality.

Today and in the future you will continue to hear from handfuls of people opposed to this progress. But the hundreds of thousands of persons who will benefit from this progress can't be here. That's why you're here -- to look out for the interests of the many.

Far from being highly controversial, the Intercounty Connector, I-66 and other improvements all enjoy broad public support and broadly benefit the public.

So, as we conclude 2007, take time for self-congratulation on progress made.

But also remember the new Wilson Bridge took 20 years to build; the ICC nearly 50. Many similarly important improvements are needed and can't wait decades to complete.

So Happy Holidays to all. Celebrate, and return in the New Year re-dedicated and re-energized to make even more things important happen that benefit the greater public good.

P.O. Box 6149  
McLean, VA 22106-6149  
tel 703-883-1830  
fax 703-883-1850  
www.nvta.org