

**ITEM 7 - Action**  
October 21, 2009

Review of Comments Received and Acceptance of Recommended Responses for Inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Assessment for An Amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP to Include the Purple Line Light Rail Project and the Transportation Components Associated with the "Return to L'Enfant" Development Over I-395

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** Accept recommended responses to comments received for inclusion in the air quality conformity assessment for an amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the Purple Line and the key transportation components of the "Return to L'Enfant" development over I-395, and the amendment to the 2009 CLRP and the FY 2010-2015 TIP.

**Issues:** None

**Background:** These draft documents and web-based information were released for public comment on September 10, and the public comment period for these documents ended on October 11. Public comments are posted as received on the TPB web site.

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## MEMORANDUM

October 15, 2009

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board

**FROM:** Ronald F. Kirby  
Director of Transportation Planning

**SUBJECT:** Review of Comments Received on the Amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP to Include the Purple Line Light Rail Project and the Transportation Components Associated with the "Return to L'Enfant" Development Over I-395

### Background

At the September 17, 2009 meeting, the Board was briefed on the draft Air Quality Conformity Assessment for an amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP to Include the Purple Line Light Rail Project and the Transportation Components Associated with the "Return to L'Enfant" Development Over I-395. At the September 10, 2009 CAC meeting the draft conformity assessment, and amendment to the 2009 CLRP and FY 2010-2015 TIP, and associated web-based information on the amendment were released for a 30-day public comment period which closed on October 11, 2009

Public comments submitted by individuals, organizations, and businesses were posted as they were received on the TPB web site at <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp>.

### Comments and Response

Four comments expressing support for the Purple Line project were received through October 11. Copies of these comments are attached.

Since all of the comments received are in supportive of the Purple Line project and no issues or questions regarding the proposed actions by the Board have been received, no response to the comments is required.

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## Transportation

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**Submitted By:** An Organization  
**Name:** Craig Simpson  
**Agency / Organization:** Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689  
**Location:** Forestville, MD  
**Subject:** Support of Purple Line

**Position:** Comment on adding the Purple Line

**Comments:**

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 encourages this body to approve air quality testing for the Purple Line in June using the best practices available, add the Purple Line to the CLRP in the fall and support federal funding for the project. ATU Local 689 is a labor union representing 7,500 active members and 2,500 retired transit workers.

**PDF/Doc File:** [ATU 689 Statement in Support of Purple Line TPB.pdf](#)



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# AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 689

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## **Statement of Support** **Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the** **Purple Line Light Rail** **Project in Montgomery & Prince George's County, MD**

Craig G. Simpson, Political & Legislative Representative  
June 15, 2009

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 strongly supports the medium investment Light Rail alternative directly connecting Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park, University of Maryland, Riverdale Park & New Carrollton.

This proposed line would provide a direct connection to the two Maryland sections of the Metrorail Red Line (at Bethesda & Silver Spring) thereby alleviating pressure on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA)'s downtown core capacity. The Purple Line will also connect with Metrorail at the Green Line at College Park and Orange Line at New Carrollton providing alternative Metrorail connections outside of downtown Washington, D.C.

This critical east-west transit link will greatly expand the mass transit option for tens of thousands of residents in the inner suburbs at the same time as providing important connections to job centers for residents throughout the region.

While our union is an enthusiastic supporter of bus rapid transit (BRT) and bus priority measures, we have carefully examined studies conducted and have concluded that light rail is the appropriate mode for this corridor and that the connection to downtown Bethesda is more productive than an alternative connection via BRT to Naval Medical/NIH. The light rail transit option will bring in more new transit users than other modes studied and cut average transit travel times more than other modes.

After thoroughly examining the environmental mitigations proposed and the environmental benefits created, we also find that light rail transit is the best alternative for reducing carbon emissions. Further, building the light rail line will insure that the bike trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring will be completed and upgraded, thereby adding an additional transportation mode to the corridor.

We have also looked closely at the economic benefits of the light rail transit option and find it to be superior to other options. After examining the data, we have concluded a light rail line in this

corridor will encourage transit oriented development around a number of stations thus discouraging sprawl. It will also help to stabilize and revitalize some of the older neighborhoods along the corridor.

ATU Local 689 encourages this body to approve air quality testing for the Purple Line in June using the best practices available, add the Purple Line to the CLRP in the fall and support federal funding for the project.

ATU Local 689 is a labor union that represents 7,500 active members at WMATA and another 2,500 retired members.



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**Submitted By:** An Organization  
**Name:** Cheryl Cort  
**Agency / Organization:** Coalition for Smarter Growth  
**Location:** Washington, DC  
**Subject:** Support Purple Line Amendment

**Position:** Comment on adding the Purple Line

**Comments:**

We strongly support the Purple Line Light Rail directly connecting downtown Bethesda with Silver Spring, Langley Park, the heart of the University of Maryland on Campus Drive, Riverdale Park and the New Carrollton transit center. We ask the TPB to include this important project as an amendment to the 2009 CLRP.

**PDF/Doc File:** [CSG Purple Line CLRP 6-3-09.pdf](#)



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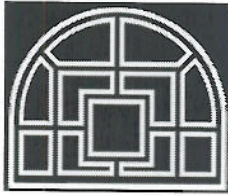
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## COALITION FOR SMARTER GROWTH

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### Statement in **Support** of Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the **Purple Line Light Rail Project** in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland

Cheryl Cort, Policy Director  
June 3, 2009

Please accept this statement on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. We are an eleven-year old regional organization working in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia and were founded by this region's leading conservation groups. We are focused on ensuring transportation and development decisions are made with genuine community involvement and accommodate growth while revitalizing communities, providing more housing and travel choices, and conserving our natural and historic areas.

We strongly support the Light Rail alternative directly connecting downtown Bethesda with Silver Spring, Langley Park, the heart of the University of Maryland on Campus Drive, Riverdale Park and the New Carrollton transit center. We ask the TPB to include this important project as an amendment to the 2009 CLRP.

Our endorsement follows detailed analysis of the study findings including the bus alternatives cited by the Town of Chevy Chase. We recognize the local concern over the near-term loss of trees. We are an environmental organization and we know that your community is filled with strong environmentalists. It is our conviction that the light-rail alternative along the Georgetown Branch right-of-way is the best and greenest alternative. It is critical for protection of our environment.

The LRT option moves the most people in the shortest time, diverts more auto traffic, consumes less energy, emits less pollution and greenhouse gases, and is far more effective at promoting revitalization and other non-auto trips by walking and biking. The classic Chesapeake Bay Foundation report, *Network of Livable Communities*, demonstrated that a network of transit and transit-oriented development would significantly reduce driving and traffic, while also reducing the loss of land, forests and filtering so necessary for saving the Bay.

Global warming is the greatest environmental threat that we face. And rising energy prices – inevitable with less oil and world growth – threaten our economy, competitiveness and national security. Both require that we reduce energy and emissions from transportation. Transportation alone accounts for about one-third of total greenhouse gas emissions and is among the fastest increasing sources. Over the last few decades, the amount of driving -- vehicle miles traveled -- increased three times the rate of population growth. A primary cause of this disproportionate increase in driving is due to the spread-out patterns of development and community designs that require more and longer vehicle trips. These sprawling patterns of growth also destroy farmlands and woodlands that help store carbon.

In California, the state legislature and the governor signed a law that addresses how transportation and land use must be changed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (SB375). The legislature found:

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“Greenhouse gas emissions for automobiles and light trucks can be substantially reduced by new vehicle technology and by the increased use of low carbon fuel. However, even taking these measures into account, it will be necessary to achieve significant additional greenhouse gas reductions from changed land use patterns and improved transportation.”

The investment in light rail will help anchor our older communities, enhance property values, and bring new housing and business opportunities. The permanency of high quality light rail on this alignment will foster job growth in Silver Spring and Prince George’s County, while connecting workers to jobs in Bethesda and the Red Line Corridor -- creating an option that will reduce traffic. While we are confident that light rail is the appropriate technology for this corridor, we also strongly support increased investment in conventional and rapid bus service in suburban Maryland and the region. It is a perfect complement to the Purple Line light rail service.

We also recognize the impact of transit investments on communities like Langley Park. That’s why we are actively working to support preservation of affordable housing and assistance to local businesses and urge state and local policies and funding for these programs.

In conclusion, we enthusiastically support the Purple Line light rail option that offers the most direct connection between New Carrollton and downtown Bethesda. The high quality light rail service offers great benefits to the community and our region in terms of transportation choices and speed, energy efficiency and emissions reduction, and economic development. The Purple Line light rail should be a top priority for Maryland and our region.

Thank you for your consideration.



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**Submitted By:** An Organization

**Name:** Harry Sanders

**Agency / Organization:** Purple Line Now

**Location:** Silver Spring, MD

**Subject:** Purple Line

**Position:** Comment on adding the Purple Line

**Comments:**

My comments in support of adding the Purple Line to the CLRP are in the uploaded file being submitted below.

**PDF/Doc File:** [TPB May2009.doc](#)



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## Notice of Proposed Amendment to the 2009 CLRP to include the Purple Line Light Rail Project in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

The Purple Line is a needed, regional asset because it

1. Provides significant **travel time savings** for transit riders going to key Regional Centers In Montgomery and Prince George's County
2. Is an **alternative to driving** on the most congested portion of the Beltway
3. Provides direct **connections** to four Metrorail stops, three MARC lines, and Amtrak
4. Provides **economic stimulus** for Transit Oriented Development in areas that need redevelopment or better land utilization
5. Is a **Regional "Connector "** by directly linking both sides of the "Regional Divide"
6. **Helps with Climate Change** by encouraging cleaner transit trips and Smart Growth
7. Encourages people to **reduce their car ownership** by offering vast number of transit connections

By building the Bethesda to New Carrollton portion of the Purple Line, we lay the basis for regional extensions to Largo, Tysons Corner, and Alexandria (via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge).

However, we need your help. There is some well-funded opposition to this project. We ask you to --

1. Approve air quality testing for the Purple Line in June using the best practices available
2. Add the Purple Line to the CLRP in the fall, and
3. Help mobilize the region in supporting and advocating for more transit funding in the upcoming federal transportation reauthorization bill.

Harry Sanders, President, Purple Line Now, [sandersh@verizon.net](mailto:sandersh@verizon.net)



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**Submitted By:** An Individual  
**Name:** Wayne Phyllaier  
**Agency / Organization:**  
**Location:** Silver Spring, MD  
**Subject:** Trail users support the Purple Line

**Position:** Comment on adding the Purple Line

**Comments:**

I support the Purple Line light rail AND the Capital Crescent Trail. There is strong support for the Purple Line among trail users. This is reflected by the strong endorsements given to the Purple Line by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, the Maryland Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the College Park Area Bicyclist Coalition. Two other regional trail support groups, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail and the Montgomery Bicycle Advocates, have indicated they do NOT oppose the Purple Line so long as the trail remains in the corridor as planned in the Purple Line DEIS. The WABA endorsement states in part: "Trails Can Co-exist with Rails It is important that bicyclists reject the assertions that the trail and transit are incompatible and that having transit near the trail will devastate the trail. Efforts to build a trail network will be severely undercut if decision makers become convinced trails should never be built alongside transit. For example, we cannot expect local government to complete the Metropolitan Branch Trail alongside the CSX and Metro Red Line between Silver Spring and Union Station if politicians are only hearing that trails cannot share the same corridor with rails." A very vocal group of local residents centered in Chevy Chase attempts to portray the majority of trail users as opposed to the Purple Line. But the trail groups that have a regional interest refuse to support the "Save the Trail" efforts. Groups with a regional interest know the Purple Line will complete the Capital Crescent Trail into Silver Spring and connect it to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. This is essential for completing the trail network to serve the entire region. The Purple Line will help create more livable communities, and is good for the Capital Crescent Trail. Please add it to the regional transportation plan. Sincerely, Wayne Phyllaier [www.finishthetrail.com](http://www.finishthetrail.com)



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