

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #8

MEMORANDUM

June 17, 2009

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby *RFK*
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Summary of Public Comments Received on the Amendments to the 2009 CLRP

On May 14, 2009 the TPB initiated a 30-day public comment period on two projects that were proposed for addition to the 2009 Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) and the FY 2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): the Purple Line Light Rail Project in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and the "Return to L'Enfant" project on and above I-395 between E Street NW and Massachusetts Avenue NW in the District of Columbia.

The public comment period ended on June 13, 2009. Seventy-three comments were received during the course of the comment period. These comments included 68 emails from citizens opposed to the portion of the Purple Line that impacts the Capital Crescent Trail, four comments from advocacy groups and citizens in favor of the Purple Line in general. These comments were made available for review online at <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp>.

Since the close of the comment period, an additional nine comments have been received. Eight of those were citizen emails opposed to the portion of the Purple Line that impacts the trail, and one was from a local transit union in support of the Purple Line. These additional comments were also made available for review on line.

No comments were received on the "Return to L'Enfant" project submitted by the District of Columbia.



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Acting Secretary

June 17, 2009

The Honorable Charles A. Jenkins
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. – Suite 300
Washington DC 20002

Dear Chairman Jenkins:

Transportation Planning Board staff have forwarded all of the comments received to date for the Proposed Purple Line Transit Constrained Long Range Plan amendment. The Maryland Department of Transportation wrote a letter dated June 10, 2009 that summarizes the history of the Capital Crescent Trail as it relates to the project and how the project proposes to address those concerns. We believe that the information contained in this letter addresses all those comments that have been received after that date. We invite those who made comments about the trail to read that memo. We appreciate the expression of support for the value of the trail and agree that is a resource that should not only be protected to the extent that it can be, but enhanced as well. We are confident that the design we are advancing will be compatible for both trail and transit users.

To that end, please keep in mind the following points:

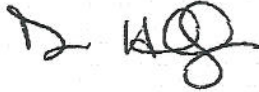
- Of the entire 16-mile project, 3 miles of right-of-way was purchased by Montgomery County for the purpose of building a transit connection;
- The Purple Line Transitway will not replace the trail. There will be both a trail and a transitway;
- The current trail system does not connect the Bethesda and Silver Spring central business districts. The Purple Line Project will build and complete this connection;
- As with all construction projects, there will be some impacts. However, every effort will be made to minimize those impacts as well as to enhance the trail as a true community resource. The Maryland Transit Administration has made a commitment to work with the community to come up with a trail design to make that possible;
- The Purple Line project will connect four major activity centers in two counties (Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton), four Metrorail Lines, three MARC lines and Amtrak and in so doing providing an equitable alternative for travel to the work, educational, shopping or recreational opportunities offered in these areas and will, we believe, enable new economic opportunities.

My telephone number is _____
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY Users Call Via MD Relay
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

The Honorable Charles A. Jenkins
Page Two

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Lyn Erickson at 410-865-1279, toll-free at 888-713-1414 or via email at lerickson@mdot.state.md.us. Of course, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Donald A. Halligan, Director
Office of Planning and Capital Programming

Attachment

cc: Ms. Lyn Erickson, Manager, Regional Planning, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mr. Ronald Kirby, Director, Department of Transportation Planning, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Ms. Heather Murphy, Deputy Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Nixon, MPO Manager, Regional Planning, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation
Ms. Diane Ratcliff, Director, Office of Planning, Maryland Transit Administration
Mr. Greg Slater, Maryland, Director, Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, State Highway Administration



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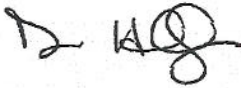
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Ms. Diane Ratcliff, Director, Office of Planning, Maryland Transit Administration
Mr. Greg Slater, Maryland, Director, Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, State Highway Administration

Debbie Leigh

From: bill4md16@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 1:22 PM
To: Debbie Leigh
Subject: from Delegate Bronrott for June TPB meeting
Attachments: Purple Line - organizational support - as of January 2009.doc; Purple Line - Washington Post editorial - 11 16 08.doc; Purple Line - Washington Post editorial - Forward Purple Line - 01 04 09.doc; Purple Line - Gazette editorial - 12 10 08.pdf

Hello Debbie:

Attached are four short handouts for distribution tomorrow (Wednesday) to my TPB colleagues for the purpose of Action Item 8 (Purple Line Light Rail Project). I would greatly appreciate your photocopying and distributing these to the TPB members!

If you have any questions, please call me at my office at 301-896-0003.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Delegate Bill Bronrott
Maryland House of Delegates

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. [See yours in just 2 easy steps!](#)

6/16/2009



MONTGOMERY-PRINCE GEORGE'S PURPLE LINE LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

Organizational Supporters of Bethesda - New Carrollton Light Rail Purple Line

Businesses and Institutions:

1. American Automobile Association, Mid Atlantic Region
2. Atlantech Online
3. Baltimore-Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce
4. Banneker Ventures
5. Behnke Nurseries
6. Bud Miller Associates
7. Chevy Chase Land Company
8. College Park Gateway Properties
9. Colonial Parking
10. Draiman Properties
11. EagleBank
12. Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
13. Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce
14. Greater Washington Board of Trade
15. Gateway Georgia Avenue CDC, Inc.
16. Greenfields, Inc.
17. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery County
18. Hyatt Regency Bethesda
19. Innovative Business Interiors
20. KCE Structural Engineers
21. Landmark Companies
22. Lee Development Group
23. Maryland's International Corridor Development Corporation
24. McShea & Co.
25. Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
26. The Michael Companies
27. PH Rockwood Corp.
28. Phillips International, Inc.
29. Prince George's County Board of Trade
30. Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce
31. Quantum Companies
32. Sandglass Dynamic Web Solutions, Inc.
33. Statland and Katz, Inc.
34. Stonebridge Associates, Inc.

35. Stout and Teague, Inc.
36. Suburban Hospital
37. Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Auth., Inc. (CDA)
38. Toole Design Group
39. Universal Janitorial
40. Washington Adventist Hospital

Trade Unions and Labor, Minority or Women's Advocacy Organizations:

1. AFL-CIO - Washington DC Metro Council
2. United Food and Commercial Workers - Local 400
3. Amalgamated Transit Union - Local 689
4. CASA of Maryland, Inc.
5. Latino Economic Development Corporation of Md.
6. League of United Latin American Citizens, Montgomery County Chapter
7. UFCW - Local 1994 MCGEO
8. NAACP - Montgomery County Chapter
9. National Organization of Women, Maryland Chapter
10. Progressive Maryland
11. SEIU, Local 500
12. Washington DC Building and Construction Trades Council

Civic Organizations:

1. Action Langley Park
2. Allied Civic Group
3. Calvert Hills Citizens Association (College Park)
4. College Park Woods Civic Association (College Park)
5. Gateway Coalition (Silver Spring/D.C.)
6. Greater Colesville Civic Association
7. Indian Springs Civic Association
8. Kemp Mill Civic Association (Wheaton)
9. Long Branch Neighborhood Initiative
10. Linden Civic Association (Silver Spring)
11. Locust Hill Citizens Association (Bethesda)
12. North College Park Citizens Association (College Park)
13. North Woodside/Montgomery Hills Civic Association
14. Northern Chevy Chase Citizens Association
15. Park View Citizens Association (Chevy Chase)
16. Progressive Cheverly
17. Rock Creek Coalition
18. Silver Spring Advocates
19. South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association
20. South Four Corners Citizens Association
21. Templeton Knolls Civic Association
22. West College Park Citizens Association
23. Wheaton Citizens Coalition

24. Woodside Civic Association (Silver Spring)
25. Woodside Forest Civic Association (Silver Spring)
26. Yarrow Civic Association (College Park)

Municipalities or Other Government Entities:

1. Town of Brentwood
2. City of Bowie
3. City of College Park
4. Town of Edmonston
5. City of Greenbelt
6. City of Riverdale Park
7. City of Takoma Park
8. Montgomery County Council
9. Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett
10. Montgomery County Planning Board
11. Prince George's County Council
12. Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson
13. Silver Spring Regional Advisory Board
14. Silver Spring Urban District
15. Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee
16. Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

Transit, Environmental and Planning Advocacy Organizations:

1. Action Committee for Transit
2. American Institute of Architects - Potomac Valley Chapter Smart Growth Committee
3. American Planning Association, National Capital Area Chapter
4. Chesapeake Bay Foundation
5. Chesapeake Climate Action Network
6. Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
7. Citizens Planning Association of Montgomery County
8. Clean Energy Partnership
9. Clean Water Action
10. Coalition for Smarter Growth
11. Environment Maryland
12. For A Rural Montgomery
13. Montgomery Countryside Alliance (formerly Solutions Not Sprawl)
14. Maryland League of Conservation Voters
15. Maryland Public Interest Research Group
16. Maryland Transit Coalition
17. Natural Resources Defense Council
18. Friends of Maryland
19. Prince George's Advocates for Community-Based Transit
20. Sierra Club, D.C. Chapter
21. Sierra Club, Montgomery County Group

Educational Institutions and Student Organizations:

1. Clean Energy of UMD
2. Community Roots
3. University Commuters Association of the University of Maryland
4. Intelligent Transportation Society of Maryland, U.Md. Student Chapter
5. Rethinkcollegepark.net
6. Student Government Association of the U. of Md.
7. Graduate Student Government of the U. of Md.
8. Hispanic Heritage Coalition
9. Latino Student Union
10. Black Student Union
11. NAACP
12. Residents Hall Association
13. MaryPIRG
14. University of Maryland, College Park
15. University of Maryland, University College

Bicycling and Pedestrian Advocacy Organizations:

1. National Center for Bicycling & Walking
2. College Park Area Bicyclists Coalition
3. Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
4. Perils for Pedestrians
5. Washington Area Bicyclist Association

Other Civic Organizations:

1. League of Women Voters, Montgomery County Chapter
2. Voters for a Better Blair

THE WASHINGTON POST STRONGLY ENDORSES PURPLE LINE & LIGHT RAIL!



Full Speed Ahead

The long-proposed Purple Line reaches a critical juncture.

A KEY REPORT on Maryland's Purple Line should clear up any lingering doubts about the transitway's viability. The study, conducted by the state, concluded that multiple variations of the line meet federal funding requirements and that any of the proposed options would have a minimal impact on the environment and nearby homeowners. The report underscored the need for the transitway by depicting how an already agonizing commute will worsen dramatically in coming years.

The focus now shifts from whether the line is feasible to how it should be implemented. There are many details to debate as the public comment period begins, including the specific route of the transitway.

But the most important decision is whether the state should back a busway or light rail. Bus rapid transit is cheaper in the short term but would attract fewer riders than light rail, and it would transport them less effectively. We support light rail but look forward to a vigorous public debate in coming months.

In Prince George's County, there's near-universal support for the 16-mile east-west transit line, which would stretch from Bethesda to New Carrollton. In Montgomery County, there are small but vocal pockets of resistance, particularly in Chevy Chase. Council member Marc Elrich (D-At Large) has raised the most serious objections. Mr. Elrich says that a busway, which would cost about \$600 million, would attract a similar number of riders as light rail for half the

price. At a time when many jurisdictions are competing for scarce transportation dollars, Mr. Elrich argues that the federal government is unlikely to pay for the more costly option.

The report does conclude that bus rapid transit is more cost-effective than light rail. But those numbers are based on estimates through 2030. Light rail requires a bigger capital investment initially but is sturdier and, in many cases, more cost-effective in the long run. If Metro, which has operated for more than 30 years, is any indication, the Purple Line is likely to operate far beyond 2030. Light rail also provides more flexibility in the probable event that ridership exceeds estimates — just add more rail cars. Even critics of light rail acknowledge that the trains will be significantly faster than buses.

The Purple Line provides a one-time opportunity to connect Prince George's and Montgomery and spur smart growth in the region's suburbs. The current fiscal crisis shouldn't limit the project's ambitions nor sway the state to support an option that is less effective in the long term. If the state decides to support light rail, we're confident that local leaders who have been cautious in their support of light rail, including Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), will use their considerable influence to champion the project. It will take strong and unified support from the community to bolster the state's case for federal dollars.

*"Light rail...is sturdier...
more cost-effective in the long run...
provides more flexibility...
significantly faster."*

*one-time opportunity to connect
Prince George's and Montgomery
and spur smart growth in the region's suburbs."*

"The Purple Line provides a

Forward, Purple Line

Maryland officials should unite behind light rail.

The Washington Post editorial
Sunday, January 4, 2009

Since 1986, the Soviet Union has collapsed, two Bushes have been elected to the White House and exactly zero miles of the Purple Line have been constructed in Maryland. For backers of the project, under consideration since that year, it might seem as if it's easier to topple a communist empire than to get 16 miles of transit line built. But -- and we say this with considerable caution -- it seems as if the obstacles that have held up the project are receding and the line, which would connect Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County, is closer to becoming a reality.

Recent developments encourage our optimism. In October, a key report found that there are multiple Purple Line routes that would meet federal funding standards while having a relatively minimal impact on the environment. The six-year state study, known as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, found that bus rapid transit would be cheaper but that light rail would have better ridership numbers and quicker travel time.

Last month, Montgomery County planners endorsed light rail. They found that light rail, which could cost as much as \$1.6 billion, is more cost-effective in the long term and has a greater capacity to handle ridership. They recommended that light rail run along the Georgetown Branch Trail in Silver Spring and Chevy Chase, a path popular with walkers and cyclists. The Planning Board will send a final recommendation to the County Council in coming weeks.

The surge of support for light rail has riled opponents of the route, who contend that rail would disrupt the trail and bring blight to their neighborhoods. They argue that bus transit is a less intrusive option that is more likely to be funded by the federal government. But few projects are as attractive to federal funders as the Purple Line, which would ferry thousands of federal workers and has one of the highest ridership estimates of proposed transit projects in the country.

It's become evident at recent public hearings that community support is coalescing around light rail. The onus is on Montgomery officials and state leaders to support the route. The County Council, which will vote to recommend a route late this month, is expected to overwhelmingly support light rail. The vote is important, as is the intensity with which county leaders lobby state officials behind closed doors. Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) is expected to choose a final route and to start seeking federal funding this year.

If the project is delayed further, it won't be because of a lack of planning or public support -- it will be because of a failure of political leadership. Maryland officials must resist the relentless lobbying of light-rail critics and unite behind the route to present the strongest case for federal funding. Two decades of dithering is long enough.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

LETTERS • OPINIONS

Page A-26

Advance the Purple Line

The time is fast approaching for key decisions on one of the most important transportation projects of the first quarter of this century, the Bethesda to New Carrollton transit link known as the Purple Line.

This 16-mile route, which would slash travel times on an east-to-west corridor inside the Beltway, is arguably the most hotly contested project in the Maryland suburbs since the Intercountry Connector, the east-west toll road being built north of the Beltway.

Questions remain about the path a Purple Line should follow, whether it is a bus or rail system, how to cover the billion-dollar-plus price tag in lean budget times and impacts on nearby land and the environment.

There should be no dispute about the need and demand. Not only will a reliable and efficient public transportation system provide an incentive for commuters to park their cars, the nearly two dozen stops along the line will afford easier connections to the larger network of Metrorail, bus transit centers and MARC commuter rail.

Without the relief valve that a transit line could provide, drive times on the Beltway between Bethes-

da and College Park, for example, are projected to nearly double in the next 25 years to almost an-hour-and-a-half. A Purple Line ride is expected to take less than 40 minutes, and there would be at least one station stop on the University of Maryland's main campus.

With last week's federal approval of a Metrorail Silver Line, connecting with the Orange Line and running 23 miles to Washington Dulles International Airport, attention can turn to other pieces vital to the build out of a holistic, regional rail and bus system that allows seamless transfers between trains and buses.

Proximity to a transit line also opens attractive residential and commercial development opportunities in Montgomery and Prince George's counties in keeping with long-stated government "Smart Growth" initiatives that encourage building around transit stops in more urban areas.

Ever since the possibilities of a Purple Line or downcounty Bethesda-to-Silver Spring trolley line re-emerged in the 1980s, the concept has stoked a sometimes unsavory class-warfare discussion, pitting poorer communities that would benefit from easier transit connections against wealthier neighborhoods that fear intrusions. An unyielding "not-in-my-backyard" sentiment is detrimental to the bigger

picture of managing growth and congestion in a metropolitan region. Studies have shown there are options to build a transit line without wiping out popular trails used by hikers and cyclists or decimating to a Connecticut Avenue golf course that could be bisected by the project.

In recent weeks, lobbying has intensified to get the project in the queue for federal and state funding after another period for public comments comes to a close early next year. Support appears to be coalescing among a key group of state legislators from Montgomery and Prince George's counties, as well as the Montgomery County Council, for a light rail line rather than busways.

A rail system carries much higher upfront costs but promises greater flexibility for expansion. Absent firm cost estimates — a dozen years ago the price was around \$250 million and has increased almost sixfold — a rail system appears to be the better choice at this time.

Chances of winning federal dollars are enhanced by unified support of elected leaders and the communities they represent. With a new federal administration looking to pour billions of dollars into transportation projects and infrastructure, a loud voice of support for the Purple Line will carry far. Derailing this project should not be an option.



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

June 3, 2009

The Honorable Charles A. Jenkins, Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. --Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Amendment to CLRP for Purple Line

Dear Chairman Jenkins:

The Bowie City Council would like to formally endorse the proposal to amend the Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) for the purpose of including the Purple Line as a funded project. The City understands that the recent request from the Maryland Transportation Secretary's office will downgrade the MD 3 project from a CLRP project to the Illustrative List as a "Study". The City Council is encouraged to see the benefits of enhanced transit service that the Purple Line will bring to Prince George's County as part of a multi-modal approach to transportation planning.

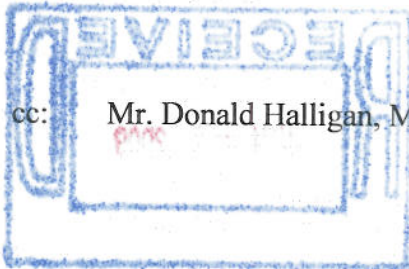
The City Council would also like to request that the MD 3 project be re-inserted into the CLRP as quickly as possible in the future. The project planning process took many years until a consensus could be achieved, and residents of both Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County are anxious to see improvements to the roadway. The City would like to see the project expedited when it reappears in the CLRP.

We thank you for your consideration of the City's comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

cc: Mr. Donald Halligan, MDOT Director of Planning and Capital Programming





City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

June 3, 2009

The Honorable Beverly Swaim-Staley, Acting Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: Amendment to FY 2009 CLRP for Purple Line

Dear Secretary Swaim-Staley:

The Bowie City Council would like to formally endorse the proposal to amend the Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) for the purpose of including the Purple Line as a funded project. The City understands that the recent request from your office will downgrade the MD 3 project from a CLRP project to the Illustrative List as a "Study". The City Council is encouraged to see the benefits of enhanced transit service that the Purple Line will bring to Prince George's County as part of a multi-modal approach to transportation planning.

The City Council would also like to request that the MD 3 project be re-inserted into the CLRP as quickly as possible in the future. As you know, the project planning process took many years until a consensus could be achieved, and residents of both Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County are anxious to see improvements to the roadway, which are needed to relieve current traffic congestion and to support pending development in the area. The City would like to see the project expedited when it reappears in the CLRP.

In the meantime, the City Council respectfully requests your cooperation in moving ahead with funding for other important, albeit smaller and less expensive projects in lieu of the MD 3 project, such as:

- (1) the MD 564 T-intersection project at Chestnut Avenue north of the bridge over Amtrak in Old Town Bowie. The Maryland State Highway Administration is familiar with this dangerous intersection near the Town Green, which the State agreed many years ago to realign and reconstruct under the Neighborhood Conservation Program. Our current cost estimate is approximately \$2 million.

MAYOR G. Frederick Robinson MAYOR PRO TEM Todd M. Turner

COUNCIL: Dennis Brady ♦ James L. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Trough ♦ Geraldine Valentino-Smith CITY MANAGER David J. Deutsch
City Hall (301) 262-6200 FAX (301) 809-2302 TDD (301) 262-5013 WEB www.cityofbowie.org

Letter to Acting Transportation Secretary Swaim-Staley re: CLRP Amendment

- (2) the MD 197/Evergreen Parkway intersection upgrade, including a sidewalk retrofit between Evergreen Parkway and Mitchellville Road. This project, which lies in the heart of the Bowie New Town Center, has been partially designed by the District 3 office and is awaiting funding. The intersection was the scene of an unfortunate pedestrian fatality.
- (3) the MD 197 median traffic calming project, between MD 450 and Rockledge Drive, including 3,000 linear feet of landscaped median. SHA's Highway Design Division created a concept plan working with the community several years ago under the Neighborhood Conservation Program. Speeding and traffic accidents continue to be a serious concern along this road.
- (4) the MD 978 (Hall Road) bridge over Collington Branch reconstruction. A Roadway Safety Audit conducted by SHA in 2008 revealed numerous deficiencies on Hall Road, including the need to replace the existing narrow, dilapidated bridge with a new, wider structure similar to the nearby Mount Oak Road bridge over the Collington Branch recently completed by Prince George's County. Within the next year, construction of a new County library will begin on Hall Road and safe pedestrian access must be assured.

We thank you for your support for transportation projects affecting the City of Bowie.

Sincerely,



Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robison
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, State Senator
The Honorable James Hubbard, State Delegate
The Honorable Marvin Holmes, State Delegate
The Honorable Gerron Levi, State Delegate
The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner, County Council Member
The Honorable Samuel H. Dean, County Council Member
Mr. Donald Halligan, MDOT Director of Planning and Capital Programming
Ms. Lyn Erickson, MDOT
Mr. Ronald Kirby, Metropolitan Washington COG
Mr. Michael Nixon, MDOT
Ms. Diane Ratcliff, MTA
Mr. Greg Slater, SHA