



DATE: March 23, 2023  
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board  
FROM: Purple Line NOW Board of Directors  
RE: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Purple Line NOW advocates for the completion of the light rail line from New Carrollton to Bethesda and the Capital Crescent Trail from Bethesda into Silver Spring, with connections to the other bicycle/pedestrian trails along its route. Along with the Purple Line Corridor Coalition, we are also strong supporters of having the Purple Line light rail stations directly accessible by pedestrians, bicycles and other mobility aids into the neighboring communities and adjacent bus and Metro network stops to facilitate an integrated transportation system that reduces the need for automobiles and furthers the equity goals of the County.

We appreciate the staff's recognition that the Purple Line is a major component of our future transit network and its inclusion in this pedestrian Master Plan when evaluating the existing pedestrian conditions and in the recommendations, implementation, and monitoring goals. Since the current State-administered Purple Line contract only covers a small radius around the stations, Purple Line NOW strongly recommends the inclusion of all the suggested implementation goals that connect the transit locations with pedestrian and rolling connections into the adjoining business and residential communities. Also, we support the equity goals of having this light rail system, along with all other transit options, accessible to everyone along their length and from access points crossing its stations.

The following objectives are of special interest to us and the future riders of the Purple Line:

- Objective 1.4 expects 70% of the riders will walk to MDOT Purple Line stations. This is a crucial point since there are no parking spaces available at the non-Metro community stations. We want to make sure the surrounding communities have good connections to their sidewalk networks beyond the MDOT contract sidewalks. [page 11 of document 16 on website]
- Objective 2.4 anticipates increasing the comfort level for pedestrians to access Purple Line stations from 79 to 90-95%. We applaud this goal of making sure those within a walkshed distance of one mile have good access. [page 15 of document 20 on website, Purple Line walkshed distance specifics on pages 44-45/49-50]



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- Objective 4.3 hopes to decrease the difference between the access comfort along pathways to the MDOT Purple Line stations, currently rated at 73% from Equity Focus Areas and 81% from non-EFAs. This 8% differential is considerably worse for EFAs on the Purple Line than the pathway comfort to stations on the other transit lines reviewed, which are higher for EFAs than for non-EFAs: WMATA Red Line (85% EFA to 88% non-EFA) and MARC Brunswick Line (83% EFA to 88% non-EFA). [pages 18/23 and 58/63]

Purple Line NOW strongly supports the two following recommendations that address shortcomings in existing conditions:

- 1) Design, Policy and Programming systemic changes that identify, build, and maintain the **“pedestrian amenities - better, faster, safer and more equitably.”**
- 2) Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian capital improvements **“in a data -driven way based on equity, comfortable access, safety and other metrics.”**

It is our hope a major area for prioritizing improvements is where State and County investments are already being made to reach their highest potential. These recommendations should facilitate having new and improved connections to MTA Purple Line station areas from the surrounding communities in a timely manner to maximize the investment from its opening day. [Pages 60/65]

These include such key actions as changing Annual Sidewalk Program improvements from instigation by individual requests to using the limited resources to achieve the highest-priority connections that also improve equity. Local perspectives on how to build are to be sought, rather than permission to do a project. [Pages 63/68] Additionally, we strongly support the encouragement of nonmotor residential access to be as highly planned and funded as motor access, including pedestrian access always signalized at intersections with rail stations, community amenities, schools, and retail to allow pedestrian movement as easily as that of motor vehicles.

In conclusion, our major support is for recommendation B-7g:

**Fund off-site pedestrian and bicycle access improvements to transit stations as part of the main capital project or through a parallel effort.**

In order to have these accessibility options available from the opening day of the Purple Line, there is no time to waste! As a joint Maryland/Montgomery County project, the Purple Line pedestrian accommodations are a great place to start the cooperation that will be needed across jurisdictional and administrative boundaries to improve the pedestrian experience in our County, and hopefully, the State. We urge the adoption of this Master Plan and the implementation of its goals now!