



**Bethesda Chevy Chase CAT Meeting #10
Virtual Meeting – February 7, 2023
Questions & Responses**

Below is a summary of questions and responses discussed during the February 7, 2023, virtual Community Advisory Team (CAT) presentation.

Question: The lighting at the Sleaford underpass appears to be on an inconsistent schedule. What is the schedule and what agency is responsible?

Response: Lighting is controlled by a photocell system, meaning it operates from dusk to dawn. If the system is not operating correctly, please contact our outreach hotline at 443-451-3706 (443-451-3705 Español) or outreach@purplelinemd.com.

Question: Who is responsible for landscaping maintenance at the Sleaford Underpass?

Response: The Purple Line oversees maintenance of the lighting, stormwater management facility and the stairs leading to the future Capital Crescent Trail (CCT). Montgomery County will maintain the trail and immediately adjacent areas. Please contact our team for issues that fall under the project's purview, and Montgomery County 3-1-1 for trash or debris in the area.

Question: Will there be security cameras at the Sleaford Underpass?

Response: Not as part of the Purple Line project, but closed-circuit television cameras will be installed at Purple Line stations.

Question: To help deter vandalism and improve the aesthetics of the Sleaford underpass, is it possible for a mural to be painted inside the tunnel? Is it even a viable option for the community to pursue this endeavor?

Response: The State generally does not permit private art exhibits on its properties, but the Purple Line does have an Art-in-Transit program to install several artistic displays at our stations. An assortment of right-of-way access, licensing agreements and other proprietary issues preclude the State from allowing installations on its thousands of sites. There are no plans to add art at the Sleaford underpass.

Question: When are the planned benches and trash containers scheduled to be installed at this site? As it is currently used by the community and trash containers and benches would be a welcome addition now as opposed to waiting another 4 years.

Response: We will be installing two benches and one trash can on either side of the underpass soon.

Question: Is there bike access for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) from Sleaford Road?

Response: Access to the trail from the Sleaford Road trail connection is via the constructed stairs. To the west of Sleaford at East-West Highway, there will be a ramp to the trail. To the east of Sleaford, there will be another at-grade connection near Kentbury Lane.

Question: What compensation is the project giving to Montgomery County for use of CCT land?

Response: The County and the State have a franchise agreement that allows the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to build, operate, and maintain the Purple Line within County right-of-way (ROW), which includes the construction of the trail. There is no compensation to the County under this agreement.

Question: Considering this further delay, can the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) reconsider opening the (CCT) prior to the completion of all track testing?

Response: We understand and share the desire to open the trail for the community. Connections such as this are an integral part of the Purple Line project. However, the light rail shares the path of the trail and is a key entry point for construction equipment and materials. We will continue to evaluate whether an opportunity exists to open the trail prior to the rest of the system opening, but we cannot promise an earlier trail opening will be possible at this time.

Question: The price of the project has increased overall. Has the price of the project's CCT work increased for Montgomery County as well?

Response: No.

Question: Are there renderings of the above-ground south entrance to the Bethesda Station?

Response: Renderings of our 21 stations are available at <https://purplelinemd.com/about-the-project/stations>. We do not have an accurate rendering of the south entrance to the Bethesda Station, but we do have a rendering of the underground station.

Question: Why don't you have drawings posted on the website?

Response: We are currently updating our website and will be including detailed drawings for each station. In the meantime, we are happy to provide any plans by request.

Question: Has the contract for the artwork at the Bethesda Purple Line Station been finalized?

Response: Coordination continues with the selected artist, Elena Manferdini, for the artwork planned at the Bethesda Station. We are formalizing new contracts that will carry through the installation of the artwork.

Question: The Fall 2026 completion date is "under review" and there are mentions of a 7-month delay to the schedule. What is the cause of this delay?

Response: The contractual deadline for revenue service has not changed. Local media correctly described a financial investing report projecting a potential delay, but we are holding frequent meetings with the project builder and concessionaire to mitigate any potential delays by adjusting sequencing of work and making other improvements to the construction process. Utility relocations are certainly one of the challenges we are working through. Building a complex transportation project through a 16-mile corridor of vibrant and active communities is never going to be an easy task. The Purple Line team is committed to implementing solutions addressing the challenges inherent on a project of this size, scope, and magnitude. We will continue to work through challenges until the day passenger service begins.

Question: How much night work can we expect in the Chevy Chase Lake area?

Response: We cannot predict exactly how much night work will occur in a specific area. Night work occurs, when necessary, based on construction activity. The project follows Montgomery County's noise waiver process when night work is required. If nightwork is planned, the project will complete that process, including issuing a public notification in advance of the work. One example of night work was when crews shut down Connecticut Avenue at midnight to place the 200,000-pound bridge carrying the

future Capital Crescent Trail. The night work was successful and minimized disruption to traffic. Added period

Question: Is the use of backup alarms necessary in the right-of-way?

Response: Yes, backup alarms are necessary and critical for the safety of anyone near the vehicle and especially construction workers on the job site. The alarms are required by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). During nighttime hours, white noise backup alarms are utilized if work is required to reduce disruption to residents.

Question: The pedestrian detour on Wisconsin Avenue is being ignored by pedestrians. What can be done for additional safety measures?

Response: Pedestrians should follow the signed detour around the closed sidewalk between Elm Street and Bethesda Avenue to avoid the work zone. We are working with Montgomery County and the Maryland State Highway Administration to also close the west sidewalk from Hampden Lane to MD 410, so that pedestrians will be on the east sidewalk a block before the work zone. We certainly share the concern that pedestrians don't always follow safety detours and signage.

Question: What is the projected timeline for the lane switch at Jones Mill Road? What is the timeline for the excavation on the west side of Jones Mill (behind W. Coquelin Terrace)?

Response: The lane switch is projected to take place by the end of this summer, subject to completion of utility work. Excavation on the west side of Jones Mill Road is currently projected to begin after that.

Question: Are there any updates on the Lynn Drive underpass and a pedestrian pathway in the area? When will this happen?

Response: Work on the Lynn Drive underpass is projected to begin in a few months. The existing pedestrian pathway will be closed to the public throughout construction of the Purple Line. Montgomery County will complete construction of the final project following completion of the light rail.

Question: There has been an uptick in the number of vehicles using the trail behind Hamlet Place. Can wind fencing be installed for dust control? There is also an erosion problem with trees falling over, can something be done about this?

Response: Vehicles on the trail are permitted for construction and hauling. Our environmental team conducted a site visit to investigate the erosion issue and determined that it is outside of the Purple Line's project limits. Should you wish additional information, you can contact the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) at 301-699-2255 or info@montgomeryparks.org.

Question: When will the noise walls be erected between the Bethesda Enclosed Trainway and East-West Highway underpass?

Response: Installation of these noise walls is projected to begin later this spring.

Question: Can specifics please be provided about the noise wall installation along the former Georgetown Branch Trail in the area of East-West Highway? What is the design of these walls?

Response: Our noise walls are concrete panels that slide into foundations that have already been constructed. The panels are prefabricated with various architectural finishes.

Question: What regulations and best practices are being followed to reduce noise in residential neighborhoods both during construction and operation?

Response: We are closely monitoring operations during construction to ensure the project is abiding by all County noise restrictions. We also follow the County's process for any noise waivers required for

work outside of normal construction hours. The noise wall will significantly decrease any noise during operations, and the light rail system is much quieter than heavy rail.

Question: We remain concerned about the MTA’s inability to provide more information on the means to avoid constant activation of the warning device at the entrance to the Bethesda portal. At a minimum, at this time, the MTA should be able to provide us with more information on best practices that are followed elsewhere regarding warning devices.

Response: We cannot commit to adjusting the audible wayside alert system at this time. The safety of workers, inspectors and pedestrians is our first priority. We will conduct a thorough safety review once the system is under testing with real-time operating conditions, which is a few years away. At that time, we will determine what, if any, type of adjustment is warranted. We have heard the community loud and clear that this is an important issue. Our core principles include focus on the customer and commitment to safety.

Question: Will the fares match metro? Can I use my SmarTrip card?

Response: Setting of fares is established by State law, but we have not set rates at this early date. The Purple Line will be fully compatible with the MTA fare system. We intend for the Purple Line to accept a SmarTrip card for payment and we are working to address compatibility issues.

Question: What happens when the LRVs sit dormant for a period of time? Do they develop problems?

Response: The vehicles are maintained and exercised regularly at the manufacturer’s site in Elmira, New York. They are also covered under warranty with the manufacturer.

Question: When will the Talbot Ave bridge open to traffic?

Response: Work is currently underway on the bridge, with the next step of pouring the concrete deck this spring. Crews are also working on the approaches along 4th Avenue and Talbot Avenue, which must be coordinated with Rosemary Hills Elementary School and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Ideally, the bridge will open to the public this year. We realize that an earlier projection of opening the bridge to traffic this spring was overly optimistic.

Question: Will you open the Purple Line in pieces or altogether?

Response: The entire system will open at once, which is optimal for testing the full system under rail conditions.

Question: Why did the cost of the project increase?

Response: In our post-pandemic marketplace, major factors that influenced the cost include supply chain issues, rising material costs, labor shortages, inflation and insurance increases – all of which carry their own costs while also affecting industry risk assessment and allocation. Government agencies, local jurisdictions and private firms across the nation are experiencing significant increases on major projects due to these and other related factors.

Question: Who is paying for the project cost increase?

Response: Our concessionaire, Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP), will finance the additional project costs through a combination of debt and equity. PLTP, in turn, will then be repaid through increased availability payments made by the State during the 30-year operations and maintenance period.