



Press Release

Maryland Transit Administration

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR O'MALLEY ANNOUNCES PURPLE LINE RECEIVES FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL

Record of Decision Documents Environmental Mitigation Commitments

BALTIMORE, MD (MARCH 20, 2014) – Governor Martin O'Malley announced today that the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) Purple Line light rail project achieved another milestone with the approval by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation. The FEIS, issued for public comment in September 2013, assesses the potential transportation and environmental impacts and benefits of the Purple Line Preferred Alternative and the No Build Alternative.

“This announcement, coupled with the FTA's recommendation for funding earlier this month, moves the Purple line one step closer to construction,” said Governor O'Malley. “The Purple Line is another great example of our efforts to invest in our critical infrastructure, reducing congestion, improving our environment and driving transit ridership.”

The FTA's Record of Decision (ROD) marks the end of a thorough and extensive process to identify and then avoid, minimize or mitigate possible impacts to communities, historic buildings and natural resources such as parks, wetlands, streams and trees. The ROD summarizes the purpose and needs of the project, the alternatives considered, the comments received during the review period and responses to those comments, the factors that support the selection of the proposed alternative, and the commitments to be carried into further engineering and construction of the project. The ROD, including responses to FEIS comments along with general project information, can be found at <http://bit.ly/1pi2yDj>.

“The Purple Line will bring thousands of jobs to the region, attract new residents and businesses to Prince George's and Montgomery counties and help meet the demand for high-quality, reliable east-west transit service inside the Capital Beltway,” said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown.

This decision follows the March 5th release of President Barack Obama's Fiscal Year 2015 budget, which includes a request to provide \$900 million for the Purple Line through FTA's New Starts Program, with \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2015. The New Starts program provides federal financial support for construction of major capital transit projects across the nation.

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“We thank the many citizens, community organizations, and environmental agencies for their years of hard work leading to the Record of Decision,” said MTA Administrator Robert L. Smith. “Public and agency feedback was critical in helping us identify and evaluate project impacts and methods to mitigate, minimize and manage those impacts. We are committed to continuing to work with local citizens, our stakeholders and Prince George’s and Montgomery counties as the project progresses.”

Now that the FTA has approved the FEIS and has recommended the project be partially financed through a Full Funding Grant Agreement, the MTA can move into the next phase of the project, which includes selecting a private partner to finalize design, build, finance, operate and maintain the project. Currently, MTA is working with four private-sector teams, who will submit proposals through a competitive process this year. In late 2014 or early 2015, MTA will select a preferred partner and recommend the final agreement to the Board of Public Works for its review and approval. Construction is planned to begin in 2015, with the line operational in late 2020. For more information on the Purple Line, please visit www.purplelinemd.com.

The Purple Line is a 16-mile light rail line that runs east-west inside the Capital Beltway between Bethesda in Montgomery County and New Carrollton in Prince George’s County with 21 stations planned that will provide direct connections to Metrorail’s Orange Line, Green Line and two branches of the Red Line, and the MARC Brunswick, Camden and Penn Lines. The total project cost is \$2.371 billion, with the private sector expected to invest between \$500 and \$900 million. A combination of federal, state and local monies also will be used to fund the project. Thanks to the enactment of state law, the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2013, Governor O’Malley added \$711 million in state funds for design and construction of the Purple Line in MTA’s six-year capital budget as part of Maryland’s Consolidated Transportation Program for Fiscal Year 2014 to Fiscal Year 2019. Estimated ridership by 2040 is expected to be more than 74,000 and construction is estimated to create 6,300 regional jobs during the five-year construction period.

For the latest information on MTA service, passengers are urged to check the MTA website at www.mta.maryland.gov. Customers also can call the MTA Transit Information Contact Center Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 410-539-5000. TTY 410-539-3497. To sign up for email about service modifications and delays, go to www.mta.maryland.gov/enotifications. Visit MTA’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mtamaryland> or Twitter feed at <http://twitter.com/mtamaryland> for more sources of updated information.

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