

VIA MAIL AND E-MAIL

831 Woodside Parkway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
March 11, 2008

Mr. Michael Madden  
Purple Line Project Manager  
Maryland Transit Administration  
6 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Results of February 28, 2008 Vote of Seven Oaks-Evanswood  
Citizens Association's Vote on Purple Line and Routing on Wayne  
Avenue, Silver Spring

Dear Mr. Madden:

On February 28, 2008, Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association (SOECA), which represents over 700 households near downtown Silver Spring, including on Wayne Avenue, held a huge town hall meeting to debate resolutions and cast votes by ballot, pro and con on the Purple Line. The number of members attending this meeting exceeded all previous records for an SOECA meeting by over 300%. The adopted resolution was overwhelmingly approved, by a vote of 71% to 29%, to support a Purple Line that follows a wisely-designed route through Silver Spring, a route that is not built at street-level on Wayne Avenue. It is our understanding that on the same date our neighbors in Park Hills Citizens Association (PHCA) also rejected a street-level route on Wayne Avenue by an overwhelming majority.

The major part of SOECA's adopted resolution reads as follows:

Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association (SOECA) supports a Purple Line that follows a wisely-designed route through Silver Spring. However, SOECA strongly opposes the building of a street-level Purple Line on Wayne Avenue through Silver Spring due to the significantly adverse impact a street-level route will have on traffic, the neighborhoods, and downtown Silver Spring.

SOECA urges all State and County public officials to support the construction of a Purple Line underground through residential Silver Spring. A tunnel will benefit Silver Spring by providing a true rapid, mass-transit solution to our traffic problems rather than a slow-moving trolley through Silver Spring. A tunnel avoids the traffic gridlock and other irreversible harm that will result from a street-level route on the only residential street in the Purple Line's 16-mile route.

The resolution also stated our community's concern that "a cheap and short-sighted solution for a rail alignment through Silver Spring will create severely adverse impacts that no amount of 'mitigation' can significantly alleviate, and that slow street-level rail on Wayne will not produce a first-class transit system." Moreover, the resolution made clear that this community "believes that an effective Purple Line route can be built through residential Silver Spring that is not constructed at street level and that can provide rapid transit through the community."

As you know, SOECA did not arrive at its position lightly. During the now three and a half years of the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) study, SOECA has hosted presentations by you and/or members of your project team five times. SOECA created a Purple Line Task Force last year, and its members met with you and your team as well as County officials in an attempt to ascertain all relevant facts relating to the Purple Line in general and to the proposed route on Wayne Avenue. The last six meetings of our Association, including that on February 28, were devoted primarily to a discussion of the Purple Line, and members were updated at meetings, through our newsletter, and on the association's listserv regarding Purple Line developments. Residents were also encouraged to attend MTA's focus group meetings in October 2007 and open houses in December 2007. Moreover, residents continued to debate the issues on the listserv.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that during these months of quiet and careful deliberations in our community, MTA and other officials have moved ahead and all but decided, albeit unofficially, to build the Purple Line at street-level on Wayne Avenue. SOECA voted on September 26, 2007 to request that MTA study tunneled options under Wayne Avenue. Just two weeks later, MTA in effect announced at an MTA focus group that it would not study these options. At that focus group, members of the community recommended a shorter tunnel option under Wayne Avenue to Mansfield Road that would avoid the problems that MTA cited as reasons for not studying the longer tunneled options. In the ensuing months, MTA appeared to ignore the community's request for the shorter tunneled option, and in addition would not answer questions related to the rejection of the longer tunneled options. Finally, on January 17, 2008, MTA notified SOECA that it would review the shorter tunneled option on Wayne after all.

We believe that it would be very unfortunate if MTA's review of the shorter tunneled option is an exercise designed to lead to early dismissal. Our community is desirous that a tunneled option on Wayne remain in the study and that it be fully studied as are all other options which remain in the study that will be released as the Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) presently scheduled for August. Without a full study of all factors that are required to be fully evaluated in the AA/DEIS, neither the community, nor all decision makers, will have complete information required for an informed decision relative to the Governor's ultimate selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative at the end of this year.

The last words of SOECA's resolution are worth noting:

Our community prides itself on patience, open dialogue, and a trust that public officials will treat our concerns with respect. And we remain prepared to discuss with planners and officials a route that works for all of Silver Spring, improves the entire Purple Line, and truly assists and does not detract from our community's vision.

It would be to the benefit of all if MTA, and other government officials engage in a serious direct dialogue with SOECA officers and designated representatives (as well as with PHCA) on a tunneled option through residential Silver Spring that makes sense and to assist in finding a way to make it happen. We seek the best end result for our residents and for all of Silver Spring. We remain committed to continue our support for sensible mass transit solutions.

Sincerely,  
Officers of SOECA  
Mark Gabriele, President  
Kathleen Samiy, Vice President  
Ann Johnson, Vice President and  
Secretary  
Bill Kaupert, Treasurer

cc: Martin O'Malley, Governor  
John Porcari, Secretary, Department of Transportation  
Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
Montgomery County Council - President Mike Knapp and Council Members  
Andrews, Berliner, Elrich, Ervin, Floreen, Leventhal, Trachtenberg  
Montgomery County Planning Board – Chairman Royce Hanson and Members John  
Robinson, Allison Bryant, and Jean Cryor  
Jamie Raskin, District 20 State Senator  
Sheila Hixon, Tom Hucker, and Heather Mizeur, District 20 State Delegates  
Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County  
Arthur Holmes, Director, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and  
Transportation  
Gary Erenrich, Special Assistant to the Director for WMATA Affairs, Montgomery  
County Department of Public Works and Transportation  
Tom Autrey, Transportation Coordinator, Transportation Planning, Montgomery  
County Planning Department  
Gary Stith, Silver Spring Regional Office Director  
Debbie Spielberg, Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board  
Alex Eckman, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration, Office of  
Planning and Environment  
Gail McFadden-Roberts, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration,  
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