
March 30, 2021

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 97 – Purple Line Marketing Act

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 97 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 97 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA), alongside Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP), Amtrak, the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA), local governments, development agencies, and other stakeholders, to develop and implement a marketing plan that will generate interest in the Purple Line before the start of operations and promote the use of the Purple Line after the start of operations with the goal of maximizing ridership. The bill prescribes several steps in the marketing plan, including the use of marketing media, identification of interconnectivity to other modes of transportation in the area, as well as bicycle and pedestrian access, and provision of information to the public on the Purple Line and the various systems to which it is connected. Furthermore, the bill allocates \$500,000 in funding in the year preceding the opening of the Purple Line for the development and implementation of the marketing plan. Finally, the bill requires MDOT MTA to report on the progress of the marketing plan in October of 2021.

The Purple Line is a 16-mile light rail line that will extend from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County. It will provide a direct connection to the Metrorail Red, Green, and Orange Lines at Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton. The Purple Line will also connect to MARC, Amtrak, and local bus services.

With the recent Purple Line settlement agreement, PLTP has issued a solicitation for a new design-build contractor to complete the Purple Line project. This solicitation process is expected to take approximately nine months. A new, revised in-service date for the Purple Line cannot be established until the new design-build contractor is selected and a construction schedule is confirmed. Thus, it is too soon to know whether the \$500,000 allocated in the bill would be efficient for an adequate marketing plan of the Purple Line. Additionally, requiring MDOT MTA to report on the marketing plan in October of 2021 is premature given that the actual marketing plan will not be developed until the year before the opening of the Purple Line.

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As with any major project such as the Purple Line, MDOT MTA will develop a marketing and communications plan that works in concert with local partners, businesses, and other stakeholders and that builds on synergies between MDOT MTA and MDOT's other Transportation Business Units.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information while deliberating Senate Bill 97.

Respectfully submitted,

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