

HB 80

My name is Vicki Warren and I live at 503 Pershing Drive, in Silver Spring, Maryland. I have lived here for 35 years and love my community. It is a very walkable neighborhood and we have a post office, grocery store, pharmacy and hardware store within walking or biking distance from my house.

I prefer to walk rather than drive for environmental reasons, but the construction of the Purple Line in my neighborhood has changed our community so much that it is more difficult to do now.

During the construction, contractors for the Maryland Department of Transportation removed virtually every mature tree along Wayne Avenue in Silver Spring. These were beautiful, tall trees that provided shade in the summer and beauty all year long.

As a community member, I attended hearings and briefings on the Purple Line through the years and was shown pictures of what the area would look like when the project was finished. During those years, we were not told that the trees could not be replanted along the route due to interference with the wires. It became apparent once construction started and then we were told that tree mitigation would take place off site. The pictures we were shown were not honest descriptions.

How does that help the community? During this time of a focus on the environment and climate change, people are planting trees, not cutting them down.

Unless Del. Lorig Charkoudian's bill becomes law, our community will be forced to deal with heat island effects and other detriments to our health such as poor air quality.

I simply cannot understand why our state would want to decimate the environment rather than protect it. Why wouldn't the Department of the Environment want to work with the Department of Transportation and local government and stakeholders to do everything possible to replant the trees that were removed.

I have pictures if you want to see how bleak the environment on Wayne Avenue has become. Living in a walkable neighborhood loses its value when you cut down all the trees. It is so hard for me to believe this happened in a time when we know that having trees provide so many health benefits.

Please pass HB80.
Sincerely,

Vicki Warren
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