

December 11, 2020

Governor Larry Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Treasurer Nancy Kopp
Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Comptroller Peter Franchot
Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Fund the MTA's Capital Needs and Build the Purple Line

Dear Governor Hogan, Treasurer Kopp, and Comptroller Franchot:

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) operates local buses, commuter buses, light rail, MARC, and paratransit, and provides funding to locally operated transit systems in every Maryland county, Baltimore City, Annapolis, and Ocean City. and MARC.. More than 1 in 3 transit riders in the state work in essential job services. Hospital and health care workers (the largest share of riders), grocery store workers, childcare professionals, and nursing care staff and other employees use transit to get to work everyday.

MTA is severely underfunded and needs \$2 billion over the next 10 years. That backlog has built up over many years and continues to get larger with each capital program. Since Maryland increased the gas tax and transit fares in 2013, the Maryland Department of Transportation has invested the lion's share of the new revenues in the State Highways Administration- 77%, and MTA has received only 2%.

As a result, vehicle miles traveled per capita in Maryland, after falling for six consecutive years until 2014, rose again quickly and exceeded its historic high by 2018. Meanwhile MTA trains and buses break down more than in peer systems around the U.S. and. Cutting investment in the MTA below \$500 million annually grows the backlog of neglected maintenance and sticks the next administration with higher costs and deteriorated service. The time to act to reverse these trends is now.

"The Transit Safety and Investment Act of 2020" (HB 368, SB 424) will be re-introduced in the 2021 session. It will set minimum funding levels for 6 years (FY2023-2028) from the Transportation Trust Fund.

Meanwhile, the Purple Line settlement of \$250 million (\$100 million of which will be paid by December 31, 2020) will also come from the Transportation Trust Fund. We must be cognizant that we must go forward to fund both critical transportation systems.

Funding transit is a matter of equity. Transit users are disproportionately people of color, persons with disabilities, persons of low income, and seniors. In a large, continuing study of upward mobility based at Harvard, commuting time has emerged as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty. The state must provide the bottom line defense for its residents.

Reducing vehicle miles travel per capita and increasing transit ridership are critical objectives for reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion.

We, the undersigned organizations, are relieved that the state and the private partnership have reached a negotiated settlement which provides a way to get the 16.2 mile Purple Line light rail project back on track.

This means that once the settlement is approved by BPW, construction can continue on this vital east-west corridor connecting major suburban activity centers in Prince Georges and Montgomery counties.

Carrying an anticipated 64,000 passengers daily (in 2030), this project will not only benefit existing transit riders, but also take cars off the road, reducing congestion and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Today, many low-wage earners may take two or three buses from Langley Park to their jobs in Bethesda, but the Purple Line will provide them with a one-seat ride. More students can ride the Purple Line to get to the University of Maryland, where instead of budgeting for more parking garages, our flagship university can build more classrooms! And finally, the trip between Silver Spring and Bethesda will be under ten minutes!

We urge you to approve the settlement for the Purple Line, to endorse the Transit Safety & Investment Act, and to do everything in your power to ensure that the MTA receives no less than \$500 million in capital funding annually.

Sincerely,

Brian O'Malley
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance