Introduced by: Councilmember Seamens

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION 2013-64

Commenting on the Purple Line Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2013, Governor Martin O'Malley announced $680 million in state funding for the Purple Line, with the remainder to be paid for with a combination of federal grants, state and local financial contributions, and private investment; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maryland has completed studying the alignment and mode alternatives for the Purple Line and has written the Final Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Line Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was transmitted to the City of Takoma Park for official review, and is available for public comment through October 21, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the "Takoma Park Neighborhood" described on Pages 4-25 and 4-27 of the FEIS, is based on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Traffic Analysis Zones, which include sections of East Silver Spring that are not within the City boundaries, and does not include sections of Wards 1, 2, 3, and 6 in Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, the environmental, transportation, and economic development benefits documented in the FEIS are recognized and supported by the City of Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Boards of Montgomery County and Prince George's County have recently adopted Sector Plans that recommend changes and rezoned the area around the Takoma/Langley Transit Center stop, in each respective County, in preparation for transit oriented development; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan, adopted by Montgomery County in June 2012, recommends 15-foot sidewalks along University Boulevard, achieved through a dedicated Public Improvement Easement on private property; and

WHEREAS, the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan and Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan recommend a multi-way boulevard for New Hampshire Avenue in Takoma Park, transforming it into a pleasant and attractive regional destination and community asset, by reducing traffic speeds, enhancing pedestrian safety, and increasing bicycle usage; and

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WHEREAS, the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan outlines several economic development recommendations for the commercial area impacted by the Purple Line, to support the dynamic range of existing businesses and encourage mixed-use redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Transit Administration and State Highway Administration have proposed reducing University Boulevard to two automobile lanes in each direction, in response to community concerns over pedestrian safety and circulation, as well as right-of-way impacts to private property, and subsequent business displacements; and

WHEREAS, properties identified for land acquisition in "Takoma Park Neighborhood" discussed on Pages 4-25, 4-27, and 4-161 of the FEIS, are not within the City boundaries; and

WHEREAS, demographic information discussed in the FEIS for Takoma Park also refer to the "Takoma Park Neighborhood" area, and does not reflect the City's corporate limits; and

WHEREAS, a "Green Track" consisting of plant material for aesthetic and stormwater management purposes is one of four track options being considered for the Purple Line, outlined on page 2-29 of the FEIS; and

WHEREAS, the areas in Takoma Park and Langley Park adjacent to the Takoma/Langley Transit Center Purple Line station have been identified as Environmental Justice Areas in FEIS, defined by their higher proportions of low-income and minority populations; and

WHEREAS, Federal guidance under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires a specialized outreach strategy and meetings to document and address the needs of the community in these Environmental Justice Areas; and

WHEREAS, the residential and business community identified housing affordability and the displacement of existing small businesses around Purple Line stations as specific concerns during Purple Line meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Transit Administration will implement a Business Impact Minimization Plan after evaluation of best practices and lessons learned from other light rail construction projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park expresses appreciation to the State of Maryland and the Maryland Transit Administration for the high-quality work in planning the Purple Line transit way and engaging the community; to the Executives and Councils of Montgomery County and Prince George's County for their support

of the Purple Line transit way; and commends the decision by Maryland Transit Administration and Maryland State Highway Administration to reduce University Boulevard to two lanes in each direction with the Purple Line construction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park urges the use of a "Green Track" in commercial areas such as Takoma/Langley Crossroads and Long Branch; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park urges the Maryland Transit Administration to implement its Business Impact Minimization Plan in coordination with other State and County agencies, and business organizations in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads area, and encourages Montgomery and Prince George's Counties to implement housing affordability strategies around the Takoma/Langley Transit Center, Piney Branch Road, and Long Branch Purple Line stations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park urges the Secretary of Transportation to continue working with the State Highway Administration to develop transit areas that enhance comfort, beauty, accessibility, and safety standards for all transit users, especially pedestrians and bicyclists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Takoma Park strongly supports a request for federal funding that will result in the construction of the entire Purple Line rather than breaking construction into lengthy phases.

Adopted this 7th day of October, 2013.

Attest:

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Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk