

# **Maryland National Capital Purple Line**

## **Bethesda, MD**

(December 2020)

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is constructing The National Capital Purple Line (“Purple Line”), a 16.2 mile east-west Light Rail Transit (LRT) line extending inside the Washington, DC Beltway from Bethesda in Montgomery County, MD to New Carrollton in Prince George’s County, MD. The Purple Line will operate largely at street level in a combination of dedicated and semi-exclusive right-of-way, and also includes segments on elevated structures and in tunnels. The alignment for the Purple Line will provide direct connections to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) at Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton, MD. The project will also connect to all three Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) commuter rail lines, Amtrak, and local bus routes. The project includes twenty-one stations, two storage and maintenance facilities, and 25 light rail vehicles (LRVs). MTA is executing the project using a Public-Private Partnership (P3) method of project delivery. The project is expected to serve 56,100 average weekday trips in 2035.

In the opening year service is planned to be provided from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on weekdays and from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on weekends, with trains every 7.5 minutes during peak periods, and every 10 to 15 minutes during off-peak periods and on weekends.

The project would provide fast and reliable transit service in this cross-county corridor, improving access to several business districts and activity centers along the route. It would connect passengers via transfers to existing radial transit routes including branches of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s Red, Green, and Orange heavy rail lines. The project would also connect with three Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail lines at Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton, and with Amtrak on the Northeast Corridor in New Carrollton. While the project corridor has extensive radial transit service crossing the proposed route, the only existing transit available for travel along the length of the corridor is bus service, which is slow and unreliable – much of it operating at less than 10 miles per hour on indirect routes. The project is expected to provide significant travel time savings. For example, a peak period bus trip on parallel roads between Bethesda and Silver Spring would take 40 minutes in 2030, while the same trip on the project is estimated to take only 10 minutes.

The estimated project cost is \$2.407 billion. The Section 5309 New Starts funding share is \$900.00 million.

## **Status**

Following publication of the alternatives analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in October 2008, the State of Maryland selected an LRT line between Bethesda and New Carrollton as the locally preferred alternative in August 2009. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board approved the Purple Line into the financially constrained long-range regional transportation plan, including updated capital cost estimates for the project, in October 2009 and May 2011. Under SAFETEA-LU, FTA approved the project into New Starts Preliminary Engineering in October 2011. The Final EIS was published in August 2013, and a Record of

Decision (ROD) was issued in March 2014. Under MAP-21, FTA approved the project into the New Starts Engineering phase in August 2014. In August 2016, a United States District Judge vacated the ROD and requested additional environmental review be performed.

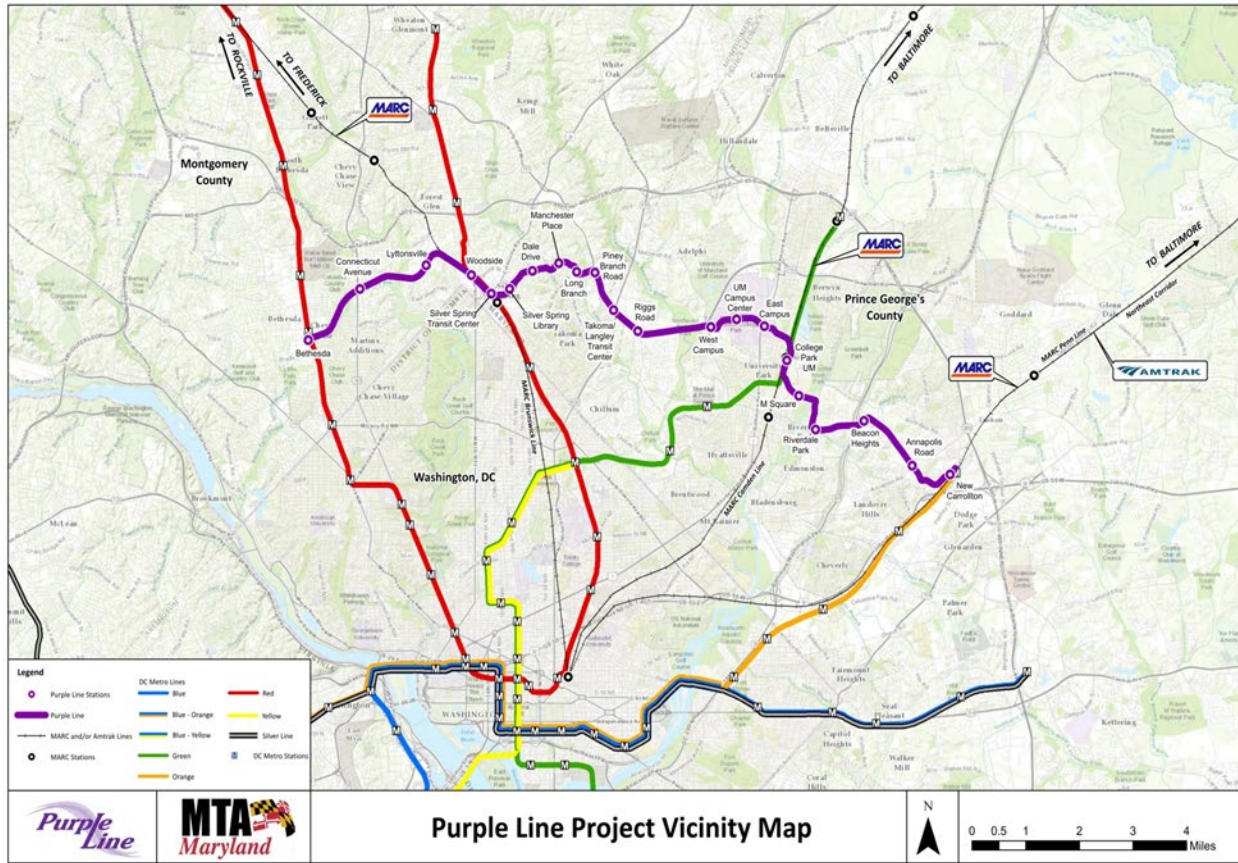
MTA and FTA entered into an FFGA in August 2017, with revenue operations scheduled for December 2022. The project is currently in the construction phase with about 44% of the construction completed and nearly all contracts awarded. The project is however currently facing some challenges that could lead to delays and cost increases. MTA is actively working with the contractors to minimize the impact of the challenges.

Section 3005 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (“FAST”) Act (Pub. L. 114-94; Dec. 4, 2015) authorized FTA to award Federal major capital investment funds for final design and construction of the Maryland Capital Purple Line project. Through FY 2020, Congress has appropriated a total of \$688.00 million for the project.

| <b>Reported in Year of Expenditure Dollars</b>                      |                                  |   |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Source of Funds</b>  | <b>Total Funding (\$million)</b> | <b>Appropriations to Date</b>                                       |
| <b>Federal:</b>   |                                  |   |
| Section 5309 New Starts   | \$900.00                         | \$688.00 million in total New Starts appropriations through FY 2020 |
| Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds                           | \$36.00                          |   |
| <b>State/Local:</b>   |                                  |   |
| Maryland Transportation Trust Funds                                 | \$450.31                         |   |
| P3 Concessionaire Funds, Private Equity, Borrowed Funds, TIFIA Loan | \$ 1,020.72                      |   |
| <b>Total:</b>   | <b>\$2,407.03</b>                |   |

**NOTES:** The Source of Funds and Total Funding numbers are as established at the signing of the FFGA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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Purple Line Project Vicinity Map

