

published in the **Federal Register** on September 21, 1994. Subsequently, the Georgetown Branch became known as the "Western" segment of the Purple Line. The current Bi-County Transitway Project now also includes what was known as the Purple Line "East", which extended from Silver Spring to New Carrollton. The Bi-County Transitway study area is now defined as all of the earlier Purple Line project area between Bethesda and New Carrollton.

The EIS will address the need to improve transit access, reduce travel times and improve connectivity in response to regional growth, traffic congestion, and land use plans for the area. The EIS will examine potential impacts and benefits to the social, cultural, economic, built and natural environment. The EIS will develop and evaluate alternatives that are cost efficient and beneficial. Improvements that enhance connections to existing transit systems, increase access to transit and to economic development areas, and minimize adverse impacts will be identified. The EIS will evaluate the No-Build Alternative, Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative, Build Alternatives for Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT), and any additional alternatives generated by the scoping process. In addition to mode, the Build Alternative will consider alignments, grade options, station locations, and facilities such as maintenance and storage yard, inspection and Operation Control Center (OCC), traction power substations and tiebreaker stations.

**Scoping Meetings:** Public scoping for the Bi-County Transitway EIS will be held on: September 16 at the Holiday Inn-Silver Spring, 8777 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; September 17 at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 4301 East West Highway, Bethesda, Maryland 20615; and September 24 at College Park City Hall, 4500 Knox Road, College Park, Maryland 20740. All scoping meetings will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and will be carried out in an open house format.

Details on meetings dates, project updates, times and locations will be announced on the project Web site [www.Bi-CountyTransitway.com](http://www.Bi-CountyTransitway.com) and in a project newsletter. Comments and input may be provided at the scoping meetings. Information will be available in English and in Spanish and will be published in the following newspapers: *The Washington Post*, *The Gazette*, *The Washington City Paper*, *The Washington Hispanic*, *The Washington Times*, *The Takoma Voice*, and *The Washington Afro-American Newspaper*.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the project scope should be sent by October 31, 2003 to Michael D. Madden, Project Manager, Bi-County Transitway, Maryland Transit Administration, Office of Planning, 9th Floor, 6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. For more information about this project or special assistance needs for the scoping meetings, please contact Michael D. Madden at (410) 767-3694.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Gail McFadden-Roberts, AICP, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration, Region III, Office of Planning and Program Development, 1760 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-4124, (215) 656-7100 (voice).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **I. Scoping**

The FTA and MTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, and Federal, State, regional, and local agencies to provide comments on the scope of the project. The goals of the Bi-County Transitway are to: Provide improved suburb to suburb transit alternatives and enhanced access to key civic, educational and employment activity centers; improve system connectivity and increase transit usage by providing an essential link to the Metrorail radial lines, as well as to other rail or bus services in Montgomery and Prince George's County; optimize public investment by providing, at a reasonable cost, efficient, safe, and reliable transit service, while minimizing environmental impacts; improve regional mobility by increasing the speed, reliability, and access to transit services in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; support economic development and revitalization through improved connections to central business districts and activity centers; and support regional clean air quality goals with a cost effective transit alternative. Comments should focus on the alternatives for analysis and environmental issues, rather than on a preference for a particular alternative.

Public meetings and hearings, newsletters, project Web site and other outreach methods and forums will be used to inform the public of the progress of the project and to solicit input from the community on the proposed project as it develops. Outreach activities will include meetings with local officials, community leaders, local stakeholders, and the general public throughout the area. Public attendance at meetings will be sought through mailings, notices,

advertisements, press releases and other efforts.

Additional agency coordination will be carried out through the Project Team, which will meet throughout the study process to address key issues. Members of the Project Team will include representatives of Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the State Highway Administration.

##### **II. Description of Corridor and Transportation Needs**

The project is located in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, north of Washington, DC. The project area includes established communities characterized by medium-density residential uses, with pockets of high-density development (Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park/Takoma Park, College Park, and New Carrollton), and the University of Maryland. The earliest development in the area corresponded with the construction of electric railways that radiated from the District of Columbia and facilitated movement into outlying areas. The primary roadways centered on downtown Washington, DC, and mainly traversed the corridor north to south. These arterials include Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355), Connecticut Avenue (MD 185), Georgia Avenue (MD 97), New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650), and Baltimore Avenue (US 1). The area has limited infrastructure for east-west travel, with two primary routes consisting of East-West Highway (MD 410) and University Boulevard (MD 193).

This portion of the Metropolitan Washington Region experienced rapid suburban development following World War II, and now contains mature neighborhoods accompanied by the development of supportive commercial activity centers along the primary roadways with the majority of housing stock constructed prior to 1960. Many of the commercial activity centers have access, parking, and pedestrian circulation deficiencies. The service employment sector is very strong throughout the corridor. In addition, professional and office employment are located in clusters near Metro stations in Bethesda, Silver Spring and, to a lesser extent, College Park and New Carrollton.

Numerous communities along the corridor contain populations that rely on transit to reach employment and activity centers. New transit services in the corridor have been limited to bus service, which is subject to roadway