

4/25/2024

- **Introduction from Kent Sovine (CHEER) and Sheila Somashekhar (PLCC)**
 - **Kent Sovine (Executive Director CHEER):** Welcomes everyone coming out tonight. We are here to discuss what the Purple Line means to our community and how we are going to live with the Purple Line once construction is over. Living with the Purple Line is what we are here to talk about tonight. We are partnering with PLCC (Purple Line Corridor Coalition) on this initiative. Sheila, Reemberto, Eduardo, and Rich are also helping with this initiative. Thank you to the community for coming out! This is helpful for us to fine tune our May 18th walk. This will help us clearly communicate to those what they need to hear.
 - **Sheila Somashekhar (PLCC):** She works with PLCC. PLCC works on things like affordable housing, small business preservation, and helping to make sure that communities are walkable and bikeable. We work through partnerships through orgs like CHEER. Why are we here? The Purple Line is coming! It is under construction right now. It will finish at the end of 2027. There are decisions that have been made, but there are decisions now that still need to be made such as how to walk through neighborhoods and how to cross through streets. We are working with CHEER to organize a community walk to lift up what the community wants to see happen. For example, how it will be safe. On May 18th from 10 am-12 pm, we will be doing a walk. Community members will share their experiences with decision makers. We have a lot of people that we invited to this walk. A lot of people from the County, City, State, and Takoma Park will be coming. Transportation engineers who are drawing the plans for our streets will be here too. It is important for them to hear what is important in the community. They can map what is needed. The community is the one that knows these streets, lives in this neighborhood, and can help make decisions about it. The idea is to walk from the Arliss Station to Piney Branch/University. There are 2 Purple Line stations. So, tonight is about preparing for that walk. We also have a transportation engineer here. He's read through thousands of pages of documents. He can let us know the plans for the Purple Line. For example, if there is a road with a number on it like Piney Branch(# 320) it is managed by the State Highway Administration. If a street does not have a number on it, it is either managed by the County or the City. In the areas where the Purple Line stations here will be, they are managed by the State Highway Administration. So, we have invited folks from all of these agencies to come and talk to each other because sometimes they don't talk to each other. The Planning Dept has also been invited because they plan for the long term how the streets will look like. Rich (PLCC Engineering Consultant) has done the work on these issues, He is contracted with PLCC. He is not with the State or the County. He works for PLCC. Like you, we are advocates and trying to get the best info from the County and the community.

6:41- Short Video shown

- Quick video of what the Purple Line may look like
- The video is an example of Amsterdam, Netherlands. It shows how the people in the streets interact with the train.
- Kent mentions that Seble, Vanesa, and Lisa have been working with the community to get community support for the community-led walk on May 18th. These are all CHEER staff and they are also community members.
- The Purple Line will be above ground.
- It allows people to go in and out easily

Rich Presentation(Engineer from PLCC): Purple Line Pedestrian and Bicycle Accessibility Needs

- Will be talking about what has been going on under the Federal Transit Administration grant that PLCC got in regards to this
- Getting there with the construction of the Purple Line has been slow and painful. It has taken a while to build.
- Benefits of the Purple Line:
 - A new modern transit mode that will connect you with more opportunities
 - Upgraded and safe and more attractive walking and biking environment
 - More vitality will be brought to this community- to enhance what there is now!
- Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC):
 - Our job under this grant is to help make sure the project goes as intended. That you can connect with the system as easily as possible. That the community becomes a better and safer place to live, work, and play.
- Challenges of the Purple Line:
 - This is a world that was designed for vehicles and not people
 - Narrow Sidewalks next to fast moving traffic. High posted speeds, infrequent signage, and questionable enforcement
 - Some members in the audience just found out that this train is above ground.
 - Lots of parking lots and business entrances. Lots of sidewalk obstructions. Especially at Flower and Piney Branch.
 - Wide multi-lane streets. Sometimes 7 lanes. Big intersections. Long Crosswalks. Turning vehicles.
 - Signal timing favors vehicles over pedestrians. Crossing buttons that don't help much either.
 - Unprotected Crossings-Long distances between signalized crossings. It is very dangerous right now already.
 - Auto friendly curbs-makes it easier for cars to zoom in and out, but it puts pedestrians at greater exposure
 - Neighborhood sidewalks are narrow, one side
 - Neighborhoods have narrow streets, no sidewalks car parking
 - Sidewalks are also not continuous-winding through apartment complex/parking
- Long Branch/Piney Branch Existing Conditions:

- So, we have looked very carefully at this area to identify existing conditions and problems that there may be. So signalized crossing with a light is very important. Nothing really on Flower or University We have limited intersections. Crosswalks are very iffy. A lot of the crosswalks are currently faded out. There are a lot of curb cuts. This is right in the transit area. There are a lot of blocked access areas. These are areas blocked up by things like fences. People have to walk into busy streets to get around. There are a lot of deficient sidewalks.
- What is it going to look like? We currently have very limited access to drawings on what the Purple Line will look like and the stations will look like. We have few illustrations. We have an illustration for Long Branch Arliss Station and the Piney Branch/University Station.
- Proposed Improvements From the State:
 - New sidewalks along Flower, Piney Branch from Flower to Carroll, and University from Piney Branch. There are still some areas that are missing as pointed out by Rich.
 - Proposed Improvements from the State- New signals at Seek Ln & University, Garland, and Piney Branch, and potential HAWK signal at Flower and Plymouth
 - Proposed Improvements from the State- On-road bike lane, University Blvd
- Details on State Improvements from Engineering Drawings:
 - Sidewalk reconstruction:
 - 5 ft wide, no buffer, curb cuts remain, and improvements only along adjacent right way
- **Audience ?**: On Piney Branch, will it just be one lane of traffic going each way? No, he doesn't think so. Will look at the drawings again.
- Montgomery County Proposed Improvements:
 - Sidewalk projects
 - Shared use paths on Piney Branch and East Wayne
 - Separated bike lands on Flower from Piney branch to Arliss
 - New crosswalks at University and Seek Ln, across Gilbert St
- MCDOT Sidewalk Improvement Details:
 - Most projects focus on ADA compliance on neighborhood streets
 - Curb ramps
 - Driveway aprons
 - Obstructions
 - Sidewalk reconstruction
 - Width/stops
 - Not much new construction!
- Outstanding Questions and concerns:
 - Sidewalks width & buffering
 - Speed & enforcement
 - Neighborhood sidewalk networks
 - Curb cuts

- High speed corners
- Signalized crossing
- University./Piney Branch Intersection

Presentation Conclusion Before Break-Out Groups (7:15)

- Vanesa Pinto (CHEER's Empowerment and Leadership Development Program Director) leads a presentation. She is from CHEER. We work to protect & respect the community. We also work to build trust. Vanesa mentions that we already saw a lot of these images and we anticipate a lot of difficult situations. You are probably asking yourself what we are doing here? What is this going to serve? Is this really going to change anything? What am I doing here? It matters! Being here matters! The time we put into advocating for things like our schools and pedestrian safety, they (officials) can see us. They can help us connect to the things that we would like to accomplish. This is visibility! Vanesa also mentions that we are here because we already have collected a lot of info from the community. We want to plan now to bring forth what we need for the walk. Vanesa also mentions that this is the fourth walk that CHEER has done. We have done others with different themes. Who are the people that are important during this walk? US! The community! We are carrying the conversation. It is not CHEER. It is us! It is not PLCC. It is all of us together! So, we are breaking out into 3 groups. Each group will focus on a different area of concern.
 - Table 1 is pedestrian and community safety
 - Table 2 is purple line operations (cost, integrations with transportation system)
 - Table 3 is on business and housing concerns (how are they going to stay, operate, and function?)

Vanesa Conclusion:

- We all basically hear things like "united we win!" Some of us know we can get things done this way. Of course, it is not easy, but we need to continue. So, please come on May 18th. Some of us are speakers like Salma and Maria. We will be working with them on the materials we created today to be able to speak on the walk. Thank you for coming!!!