

# PURPLE LINE

## Sustainable and Equitable Development



The Purple Line represents Maryland's largest transit investment in the 21st century. Historically, transit investments of this scale have been transformative for the people and places that surround them, but these transformations have often been at the expense of residents and businesses with less economic and political power.

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC), administered by the National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG)—an urban planning and policy research center at University of Maryland (UMD) College Park—has developed a data-driven strategy for the sustainable and equitable development of the Purple Line corridor. The resulting report emerged after a two-year planning process in collaboration with Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, their planning and transportation departments, and other PLCC partners, and was made possible by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration to the Maryland Transit Administration.

### THESE ARE THE CORE PRIORITIES:

#### PEOPLE-FIRST TRANSIT ACCESS

Achieving the Purple Line's full potential to address existing inequities and to spur economic development through improved transit access will require strategic and coordinated improvements to pedestrian, bike, and bus accessibility throughout the corridor.

#### FROM TRANSIT-ORIENTED DISPLACEMENT TO EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Planning and transit-oriented development (TOD) strategies that center the needs of vulnerable residents and small businesses can help to more equitably distribute the economic benefits associated with the Purple Line.

#### INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

To ensure that historically-disadvantaged populations benefit from the new transit line, efforts to grow key transit-oriented industries should be paired with interventions to support small businesses, a diverse group of entrepreneurs, and residents looking to build skills and obtain quality jobs.



These efforts will require participation, collaboration, and commitment from many partners in the public and private sectors. It will be essential to center the voices of impacted people and collaborate with the community to refine the recommendations and align new programs and investments with community needs and goals.

# PURPLE LINE

## Strategies to Advance Sustainability & Equity



The Purple Line corridor lacks adequate infrastructure to ensure safe access to Purple Line Stations by walking and biking. To ensure effective mobility options to and around PL stations, the report recommends:

- **Improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure** such as more sidewalks and buffers from traffic, more signalized crossings, and greater access to neighborhoods
- **Improving automobile traffic management**, including lowering posted speeds and changes in signal timing that favor pedestrians
- **Prioritizing bus connections** and careful setting of final service parameters such as fares, transfers, and headways
- **Improving bicycle paths** and protected lanes near Purple Line Stations and extending paths and lanes to more distant locations



The threat of gentrification and displacement is substantial. To prevent the loss of affordable housing and protect more affordable housing units in the long term, the report recommends:

- **The pursuit of more resources for affordable housing** from local, state, and federal government
- **More construction of affordable housing** in high opportunity areas near Purple Line stations
- **The adoption of inclusionary zoning** in Prince George's County in the Purple Line Corridor and modification of Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) policy within specific station areas
- **Greater use of right-of-first-refusal and renter support programs** in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties
- **Increases in zoned densities** to facilitate the construction of middle-income housing



The Purple Line Corridor will link four of the state's leading economic engines and will likely stimulate additional economic growth. To facilitate and promote inclusive economic growth, the report recommends:

- **Targeting specific transit-oriented industries** such as information technology, quantum computing, health care, government offices, restaurant and retail, and other labor-intensive industries
- **Supporting small and micro-businesses** with technical assistance, place-based management, commercial rent stabilization, and small business property acquisition
- **Developing workforce development and digital skill-building programs** that enhance employability in local residents



Equity is central to the TOD plan. To assure a sustainable and equitable corridor, the report recommends:

- **The engagement of local residents and communities of color**
- **Preserving the existing cultural assets of existing communities**
- **More place-making investments in historically disinvested neighborhoods**