



## CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

### SB 359 Support

Senate Finance Committee February 3, 2021

SB 359: Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment - Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan

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The City of Takoma Park strongly supports a plan to replace trees removed during the construction of the Purple Line light rail project. It is critical that the State prioritizes and addresses environmental justice factors, including heat island effects in impacted communities when making these decisions.

- Takoma Park is a Purple Line advocate. The project will help to foster a more livable city by providing access to an environmentally friendly form of transit for our residents. However, we have been challenged by the impacts of prolonged construction and lack of responsiveness to concerns expressed by our residents and businesses. One lasting impact of Purple Line construction is the loss of the area's tree canopy.
- The section of the city most directly affected by the Purple Line's construction—Ward 6—has over 70% people of color, who have historically borne the costs of environmental injustices. A 2018 [assessment](#) from the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory found that Ward 6 is most underserved by the City's existing tree canopy. The area immediately affected by the construction is also heavily commercialized, and especially vulnerable to heat sinks in the tree canopy's absence. This is an area that should be a comfortable, shaded place to walk to transit and our community's businesses.
- The same assessment found that tree canopy in Ward 6 is largely privately managed, and it is important that the State coordinate with businesses and residents to restore the canopy lost in the process of building the Purple Line, as is called for in the legislation.

As the Purple Line's construction moves forward, the State should make sure not to forget about those who have suffered so far. To ensure that Takoma Park residents and other communities impacted by Purple Line construction are made whole for the loss of their tree canopy and have the opportunity to weigh in on its restoration, **the City of Takoma Park strongly urges favorable consideration of SB 359.**