

## **Red Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is the Red Line?**

The Red Line LPA is a 14-mile light rail line that will extend from the Woodlawn area in Baltimore County to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Campus in east Baltimore City. It will provide convenient connections to the Metro Subway, Central Light Rail, MARC commuter trains and local bus routes to create a comprehensive regional transit network.

The Red Line will run mostly as a dedicated surface transitway in the median of existing roads with one mile of tunnel under Cooks Lane and approximately three miles of tunnel downtown. The Red Line would run underground in areas of high congestion and limited right-of-way, while running on the surface where available right of way, traffic conditions and adjacent land uses are appropriate.

#### **Who would the Red Line serve?**

The Red Line not only serves existing dense residential neighborhoods, employment centers and attractions, it also serves a number of areas that would benefit from economic development and investment and provides opportunities for transit oriented development. The Red Line LPA will support emerging new development at locations such as Harbor East, Canton Crossing and Uplands. It could also spur revitalization efforts at Security Square Mall, Edmondson Village, Highlandtown, Greektown, and around the West Baltimore MARC station. The connection with MARC will allow access to Washington, DC and growing BRAC job opportunities at Fort Meade and Aberdeen.

#### **How will the Red Line improve public transit in Baltimore?**

The Red Line was included in the Baltimore Region Rail System Plan developed in 2001-2002. It was an integral part of the plan, with stations near major employment centers in downtown Baltimore, Inner Harbor East, the Social Security Administration complex, the University of Maryland, Baltimore professional schools and the adjacent hospital complex; improved public transit for many Baltimore City and Baltimore County residential neighborhoods; connections to existing Metro, Light Rail and MARC stations, and proximity to leisure activity points of interest, such as Oriole Park at Camden Yards, M&T Bank Stadium and the Hippodrome Theater.

#### **Are there opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at Red Line stations?**

The Red Line has been identified as a priority transit project because it will connect growth areas, attractions and densely developed communities in such a way that residents can reach jobs or visitors can reach attractions. Baltimore City and Baltimore County governments, in cooperation with local communities, have made some initial suggestions for possible TOD opportunities. They include the area around the West Baltimore MARC station (a community-based planning effort commenced in October 2006) and areas in Baltimore County near Security Square Mall. In several other sections of the city, MTA is coordinating planned development to optimize alignments and station locations for the Red Line.

**What is the planning process for a project like the Red Line?**

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) recently completed the first phase of the project, the Planning – Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) phase. The announcement of the LPA will be followed by the Preliminary Engineering/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PE/FEIS) phase. During this phase more detailed environmental studies, and financial and construction plans will be completed. Upon completion of the PE/FEIS process a "Record of Decision" (ROD) will be sought from the Federal Transit Administration. The ROD formally transitions a project from the planning and environmental process into design and construction.

**Were communities involved in the planning process?**

Yes, the Red Line project team launched numerous initiatives to reach out to the community during the study process. The project team held six rounds of open houses and community workshops throughout the study area to inform the public about the progress and direction of the project and to field questions. Public hearings on the Red Line AA/DEIS were also held in November 2008.

In addition to the workshops the MTA offers the Speaker's Bureau program where MTA representatives and project engineers attend local community meetings to present information on the Red Line and field questions specific to that community. In all these community sessions, the questions and comments are recorded and become an integral part of the study.

Created by legislation, the Red Line Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) meets monthly and provides a forum to present information on the project to the community and address their particular issues. The CAC is responsible for advising the MTA on impacts, opportunities and community concerns about the Red Line.

**When will construction begin?**

Under the current schedule, construction on the Red Line would begin in 2013 following the completion of the planning and engineering phases of the project. Operation of the Red Line could begin in 2016. However, this date is contingent on the availability of federal and state funding.

**How much would it cost to build the Red Line?**

In 2009 dollars the cost to build the Red Line would be \$1.63 billion.

**Why was Light Rail Transit (LRT) selected?**

For the Red Line, all of the LRT alternatives have consistently higher projected ridership than the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives. Ridership for similarly defined BRT Alternatives (similar amounts of tunnel and at-grade) are between 9% and 13% less. LRT attracts more new transit riders than BRT. In comparison to the No-Build Alternative, the LRT alternatives attract from 25 to 79% more transit riders than the corresponding BRT alternatives.

LRT is more effective than BRT from a travel time perspective. In the AA/DEIS, the LRT projected end-to-end travel times range from 7 to 13 minutes faster than the corresponding BRT alternatives. The travel time savings contribute to a lower FTA cost effectiveness for the LRT alternatives, which except for the exclusive surface-running Alternative 4A, are also better than

the BRT alternatives. Cost effectiveness is a key criterion of obtaining federal funds for a Red Line transit project.

**Would Light Rail Transit vehicles on the Red Line be different than cars currently running on the Light Rail?**

Yes, the Red Line light rail vehicles would be different than the current MTA light rail vehicles. The most significant difference is that the proposed Red Line LRT vehicles would have low floors, typically 14 inches above the top of rail, meaning passengers could walk directly onto the train from the platform without climbing stairs. The current Baltimore LRT vehicles have a floor height of 40 inches above the top of rail. Also, the proposed Red Line LRT vehicles would have a width somewhat narrower than the existing MTA train width of nine-and-a-half feet. This would reduce the potential impact on existing streets and adjacent properties and allow the vehicles to fit more naturally into local neighborhoods.