

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1427 (Delegate Walker)  
 Ways and Means

**Task Force to Study Expanding Metrorail Service in Southern Prince George’s County**

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study Expanding Metrorail Service in Southern Prince George’s County. By December 1, 2014, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation must provide staff for the task force.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014, and terminates May 31, 2015.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$600,000 in FY 2015 only for contractual services to conduct the required study and develop the required report. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	600,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$600,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** It is assumed that Prince George’s County can provide staff for the task force and provide expense reimbursements to members with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force must (1) study the rail transit needs of specified areas of Southern Prince George's County; (2) identify and evaluate potential rights-of-way for stations and other infrastructure that would be needed to expand Metrorail service in Southern Prince George's County; (3) estimate the cost of expanding Metrorail service in that area; (4) estimate the economic impact on Prince George's County, the State, and the Washington metropolitan region of expanding Metrorail service in that area; and (5) study and make recommendations regarding the amount of funding needed to support expansion of Metrorail service in that area and as potential funding sources and mechanisms.

The task force is authorized to (1) conduct site visits to other rail transportation systems in Maryland and other jurisdictions and (2) hold public hearings to solicit input from interested persons.

Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

**Current Law:** MDOT supports transit services in Maryland through the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC), established in 1965, is responsible for administering the Washington Suburban Transit District and is authorized to develop a transportation system, including mass transit facilities, for Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It coordinates mass transit programs with the two county governments, WMATA, and MDOT. MDOT provides annual operating grants to WSTC, which then provides funding to WMATA for the operation of the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems. MTA has authority to plan, develop, construct, acquire, finance, and operate transit facilities. In addition, MTA has jurisdiction over services performed by transit facilities owned or controlled by MTA, including bus service.

Long-term transportation planning in the State is a collaborative process designed to consider input from the public, local jurisdictions, metropolitan planning organizations, and elected officials. State law requires the Secretary of Transportation to present the draft *Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)* to elected officials and discuss it with them. CTP, which is issued annually to the General Assembly, local elected officials, and interested citizens, provides a description of projects proposed by MDOT for development and evaluation or construction over the next six-year period.

**Background:** MDOT has sought to address transportation needs in Prince George's County and Southern Maryland through several efforts. For example, in October 2004, MTA completed the MD 5/U.S. 301 Transit Service Staging Plan that outlined four alternatives for staged implementation of higher capacity transit in the corridor: enhanced commuter bus, moderate-level bus rapid transit (BRT), high-level BRT, and light rail transit. Also, the Commission to Study Southern Maryland Transportation Needs was established by Chapter 14 of 2006 and charged with (1) reviewing studies and plans prepared by State transportation agencies; (2) studying the current and future impact of traffic congestion in Southern Maryland; (3) assessing barriers to transportation improvements (roadway and mass transit); and (4) making recommendations for the amount of funding needed to reduce congestion and possible funding mechanisms. The commission submitted a report in August 2009 that concluded that commuter rail service between Southern Maryland and Washington, DC is potentially feasible but would be costly and difficult to implement.

**State Expenditures:** TTF expenditures increase by \$600,000 in fiscal 2015 only for contractual services to staff the task force, conduct the study and analysis, conduct public hearings, and develop the required report. Despite the bill's June 1, 2014 effective date, it is assumed that no costs are incurred until fiscal 2015.

MDOT advises that, given the short timeframe to conduct the study and produce the required report, the analysis required by the bill must rely heavily on existing sources of information, industry norms, and analysis and comments offered by the public; the duration of the task force does not allow time for detailed engineering analysis or design. MDOT notes that to fully determine the constructability, feasibility, potential ridership and projected environmental, community, and economic impacts of the extension would require several years of study and considerable additional costs.

Reimbursement of expenses for task force members can be handled with existing resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 2014  
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