

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 873
Finance

(Senator Jones, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

**Baltimore Corridor Transit Study - Red Line - Requirements and Citizens'
Advisory Council**

This bill establishes a Citizens' Advisory Council for the Baltimore Corridor Transit Study for the Red Line. One purpose of the council is to advise the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) about studying all options available for the Red Line project, including underground rail.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Staffing for the council and additional council expenses could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The council consists of 15 members. Five members are to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and five members are to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates. These 10 members must be business owners, residents, service providers, or workers in the Red Line corridor and are to be appointed in consultation with the members of the Baltimore City Delegation of the General Assembly that

represent Legislative Districts 41, 44, and 46, and the members of the Baltimore County Delegation that represent Legislative District 10.

Of the remaining five members, two are to be appointed by the Governor, or at the Governor's discretion, the Maryland Transit Administrator; two are to be appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City to represent specified city agencies; and one is to be appointed by the County Executive of Baltimore County. Members do not receive compensation. MTA is to staff the council.

The council is to advise the administrator on major policy matters concerning the Baltimore Corridor Transit Study including but not limited to ensuring that the project:

- includes, during its planning phase, the distribution of factual information that allows the community to compare the costs, benefits, and impacts of all construction alternatives;
- benefits the communities through which it travels; and
- favors alignments that produce the least negative community impacts possible.

In addition, MTA is to:

- consider the redevelopment of commercial areas surrounding the study area in consultation with specified groups;
- solicit the advice of the council before making any major decisions;
- consider methods for providing preference in hiring for construction jobs the residents of legislative districts in which the Red Line will be built or which are adjacent to those districts;
- consider establishing a dedicated fund for property damage reimbursement; and
- at the end of the planning phase and the beginning of passenger service, prepare a report, in consultation with the council, evaluating the use of the council in incorporating community participation in the planning process.

The council is to report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its activities by September 1 of each year.

Current Law: MTA has jurisdiction over planning, developing, acquiring, financing, and operating certain transit facilities, including the Baltimore mass transit system. MTA may not establish or abandon any route without a public hearing. In addition, MTA must prepare plans to meet the transit needs of the Metropolitan Transit District, which must include the transit facilities to be established, the areas to be served, and the type of

equipment to be used. MTA must maintain a copy of the proposed plan for public viewing and hold one public hearing. MTA must consider evidence and commentary presented at the hearing.

Background: The proposed Red Line is a 10.5 mile east-west corridor connecting sections of Baltimore County, Edmondson Village in Baltimore City, West Baltimore, downtown Baltimore, and the Inner Harbor East. The Red Line would connect to Baltimore's existing transit system – Metro Subway, light rail, and MARC lines – and would serve major employers such as the Social Security Administration, the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, and the downtown central business district.

Options being considered for the project are enhanced bus service, bus rapid transit, and light rail transit (including underground rail). In addition, the impact of not building is being considered. MTA is working on a draft environmental impact statement and preliminary engineering. MTA has spent \$9.5 million on planning through fiscal 2005. MTA's capital budget for the Red Line contains \$6.1 million for planning in fiscal 2006 and \$7.0 million for planning in fiscal 2007.

MTA established five community working groups for the Red Line project. All have held scheduled meetings, the last of which was in May 2005. In addition, MTA held five community workshops in November 2005.

State Expenditures: MTA is already considering underground rail as well as redevelopment and has been consulting with the specified groups except for the Department of Business and Economic Development and the Department of General Services; therefore, MTA advises that consultation with the specified groups regarding redevelopment and reporting to the General Assembly could be handled with existing resources. MTA advises that staffing for the council would necessitate hiring one grade 20 employee. DLS advises that staffing the council and any incidental expenses related to the council could be handled with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1309 is designated as a cross file, but it is not identical.

Information Source(s): Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Department of General Services, Department of Business and Economic Development, University of Maryland

Medical System, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Nora C. McArdle

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510