

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1306 (Delegate Marriott, *et al.*)
 Environmental Matters

Baltimore Corridor Transit Study - Red Line - Required Considerations

This bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to evaluate all alternatives for the Red Line project, regardless of the associated costs.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures would increase by \$1 million in FY 2007 and 2008 for studies connected to heavy rail subway construction. The need to study heavy rail would result in delays; accordingly, TTF and federal fund expenditures could decrease in FY 2010. TTF and federal fund expenditures would subsequently increase in FY 2011 due to costs associated with construction delays.

(in dollars)	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	(-)	-
FF Expenditure	0	0	0	(-)	-
Net Effect	(\$1,000,000)	(\$1,000,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Alternatives that are specifically to be studied include:

- heavy rail and tunneling;
- the recommendations in the MTA Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) report dated December 16, 2003, concerning the construction of metro subway lines and modified alignments;
- alignments that remain underground from the I-70 Park and Ride parking lot to a point southeast of the Amtrak right-of-way and proceed north of specified locations; and
- alternatives, alignments, and transit modes that are requested by specified petitioners.

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. 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 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.

CAC recommended that the Red Line project be built as a heavy rail subway system and adopted modified alignments for the Red Line.

State Expenditures: MTA advises that it has not conducted any engineering or environmental studies related to a heavy rail subway system. Accordingly, MTA advises that the cost of performing the studies would be approximately \$2 million, divided equally between fiscal 2007 and 2008. The Department Legislative Services (DLS) concurs with this assessment. TTF expenditures could therefore increase by \$1 million in both fiscal 2007 and 2008 to study heavy rail, the CAC alignments, and the underground alignments required by the bill. MTA advises that it cannot anticipate the types of studies and alternatives requested by the specified petitioners and, therefore, cannot estimate the costs of those studies. DLS concurs with this assessment.

In addition, MTA advises that scheduled construction on the Red Line is to begin in fiscal 2010. Studying a heavy rail subway system would delay that construction by approximately one year and result in higher construction costs due to the delay. MTA advises that construction costs would increase by approximately 3.5% from fiscal 2010 to 2011.

If MTA ultimately selects enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, or light rail, that delay could cost between \$5 million and \$60.4 million over the construction of the Red Line. If MTA were instead to select a heavy rail option, that cost would be even higher. Construction is expected to take five years; accordingly, the cost in fiscal 2011 could be between \$1.1 and \$12.1 million, or even higher if heavy rail is selected. Construction costs are expected to be split with the federal government.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 837 (Senator Gladden, *et al.*) – Finance.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2006
ncs/ljm

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