

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 837

(Senator Gladden, *et al.*)

Finance

Environmental Matters

Baltimore Corridor Transit Study - Red Line - Required Considerations

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

The bill takes effect June 1, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Two million dollars would be needed to meet the bill's requirements related to studying heavy rail, divided equally between FY 2007 and 2008. The study is not specifically funded in the FY 2007 budget.

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: The bill requires MTA to evaluate implementation of the alternatives, to the extent that currently budgeted resources allow. MTA advises that it has not conducted any detailed engineering or environmental studies related to a heavy rail subway system. MTA advises that the cost of performing the studies would be approximately \$2 million, divided equally between fiscal 2007 and 2008, if it were

required to do so prior to proceeding. The Department Legislative Services (DLS) concurs with this assessment.

However, MTA has not budgeted funds to perform such studies, especially studies related to heavy rail. As the bill requires MTA to perform all such studies to the extent that budget resources allow, MTA either could shift existing resources from other projects or studies to study heavy rail in more detail than it currently has done or could interpret the bill as allowing it to forego studying heavy rail in enough detail to be able to proceed to construction. If MTA undertakes the study of heavy rail, costs would increase in subsequent years to ensure that projects or studies delayed in favor of heavy rail are undertaken.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1306 (Delegate Marriott, *et al.*) – Environmental Matters.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 2006
ncs/ljm Revised - Senate Third Reader - April 5, 2006

Analysis by: Nora C. McArdle

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