

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 575

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

**Prince George's County - Maryland Department of Transportation - Study of Rail
Transit System for Southern Prince George's County**
PG 401-10

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to study the technical feasibility and economic viability of constructing a Metro rail, light rail, or monorail transit system in specified areas of southern Prince George's County. MDOT must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by February 1, 2011. MDOT must use existing resources to complete the study.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2010, and terminates June 30, 2011.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$500,000 in FY 2011, \$707,000 in FY 2012, and \$306,000 in FY 2013. Since MDOT is required to use existing resources to implement the bill, State funding would need to be redirected from other projects to hire consultants to conduct the required study. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	500,000	707,000	306,000	0	0
Net Effect	(\$500,000)	(\$707,000)	(\$306,000)	\$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: The study must focus on the MD 201/I-295 corridor from Indian Head, Maryland, to either the Southern Avenue or the Anacostia Metro station near the border of Washington, DC. Furthermore, the study must:

- identify property that would be needed to construct an appropriate rail transit system in the designated corridor and determine the ownership of the property involved;
- evaluate the extent to which potential sites for a rail station can accommodate parking;
- estimate the costs to the State and applicable local governments of purchasing rights-of-way needed for the project to proceed; and
- determine the feasibility of using a portion of any existing public rights-of-way for the project.

MDOT must solicit input for the study from specified persons throughout the State.

Current Law: MDOT supports transit services in Maryland through the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). MDOT provides annual operating grants to the Washington Suburban Transit Commission, which then provides funding to WMATA for 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. The 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 recent 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 with recommendations in June 2008. Furthermore, MTA is currently completing a study to identify right-of-way needs for transit way alignment, stations, and park-and-ride lots along the 18-mile corridor between the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station and White Plains.

State Expenditures: The bill requires MDOT to use existing resources to conduct the study. Accordingly, this estimate assumes redirection of \$1.5 million (\$500,000 in fiscal 2011, \$707,000 in fiscal 2012, and \$306,030 in fiscal 2013) in TTF expenditures from other projects to complete the study. Funding for the other projects would need to be backfilled.

MDOT advises it would require significant contractual assistance with alternatives analysis, survey, land record, engineering, and economic modeling to complete the study. The estimated cost is based on MDOT's experience conducting studies of this magnitude and complexity. For example, the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Study project, a comparable study, cost approximately \$1.2 million. Legislative Services notes that costs could vary depending on the issues that arise during the study.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Prince George's County, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 12, 2010
mam/lgc

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