

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 300 (Delegate Korman, *et al.*)
Environment and Transportation

Finance

**Department of Transportation - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
Authority Services - Utilization Study**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in cooperation with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), to conduct a study every five years of the utilization of bus, rail, and subway transportation services under the jurisdiction of WMATA. By December 1, 2015, and every five years thereafter, MDOT must submit a report detailing the results of the study to the Governor and specified legislative committees.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The first study and report required by the bill, which is due by December 1, 2015, can be completed using existing budgeted resources. MDOT can likely complete future studies and reports using existing resources as well, assuming WMATA continues to conduct periodic surveys for use in other analyses.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In conducting the studies, MDOT must:

- compile and analyze statistics regarding the starting points and destinations, by jurisdiction, of individuals using WMATA-provided transportation services;
- determine the modes of transportation individuals use to connect to WMATA-provided transportation services and the modes of transportation used between WMATA-provided transportation services and final destinations, including walking, personal vehicle, bus, and Maryland Area Regional Commuter train;
- compile and analyze data on the number of individuals who use Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess and the frequency of use; and
- study and compare the various reasons individuals use WMATA-provided transportation services, including traveling for work, education, entertainment, recreational, or other purposes.

MDOT may use any information that is currently available for the first study. For future studies, the information must be from data collected within the previous five years. Information used in the studies relating to Maryland jurisdictions must be organized by individual jurisdiction, rather than by region, with separate information for Baltimore County and Baltimore City, or by zip code. Information pertaining to specified counties may be compiled and organized under the category of “other Maryland.”

Current Law/Background: WMATA was established in 1967 through an interstate compact among Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The original purpose was construction and operation of a rapid rail transit system for the Washington metropolitan area. In 1973, WMATA purchased the assets of four major private bus companies operating in the area.

Maryland’s overall participation in the Washington metropolitan transit system consists of the provision of annual funding to WMATA for the capital and operating costs of Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems. Funds for operating the Metrorail system are based on the number of stations, number of passengers, and population in each jurisdiction. Funds for Metrobus operation are based on the number of bus miles and bus hours of operation for each jurisdiction, as well as population and ridership. MetroAccess funding is determined by the share of trips taken by residents of each jurisdiction. The cost of each mode of service is partially offset by fare and other revenues generated by the service. In fiscal 2013, Maryland’s share of WMATA operating costs was \$263.7 million, and capital expenditures were \$132.4 million.

Funding for Maryland's portion of WMATA costs is the sole responsibility of the State. These funds support the operating deficit, including payment of a maximum fare subsidy established by the authority. The State also pays 100% of the capital equipment costs and 100% of the debt service allocated to Maryland for "Metro Matters" revenue bonds issued to finance capital improvements to the Metrorail system.

In addition, the State pays the operating service deficit for eligible bus service in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. Eligible local bus service is service that replaces comparable authority bus service, or is otherwise eligible per a 1989 agreement. In fiscal 2013, the State provided Prince George's and Montgomery counties with \$34.5 million to subsidize local bus service.

MDOT advises that WMATA conducts periodic surveys for use in subsidy formulas and to gather demographic data for specified analyses. The most recent major rail survey was conducted in 2012, and the last complete bus survey was conducted in 2008, although a bus survey is currently underway. WMATA does not plan to begin another rail survey until at least 2016. MDOT advises that WMATA's surveys are conducted periodically, rather than annually or biennially, because the cost of conducting a survey is considerable. In addition, the collected data, jurisdiction of residence, demographic characteristics of riders, and types of travel tend not to change significantly from one year to the next, though they have the potential to change significantly over a longer period of time.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Department of Legislative Services

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