



HUB West Baltimore
Community Development Corporation
HUBWestBaltimore.org

Baltimore-Washington Transportation Research Group's

 **West Baltimore Project**
WestBaltimoreProject.org

SB0514 - MARC Regional Rail Transformation Act - Favorable With Amendment

(February 16, 2022)

Dear Senator Kelley and esteemed members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

Please accept the following testimony in favor of (2022) Senate Bill SB0514 - **with one critical amendment**, the proposed language of which is listed below.

HUB West Baltimore is a soon-to-be launched community development corporation focusing on the 6-10 block radius around the West Baltimore MARC Station, arguably the most disinvested area of the entire State of Maryland. It grew out of the 2-year research, lobbying and planning effort by the Baltimore-Washington Transportation Research Group's West Baltimore Project, through which express MARC service was identified as the single most critical development tool available for rapid, equitable, transformational revitalization of the three neighborhood clusters around the MARC station.

Further, these areas - again, arguably the most disinvested in the state - are between 90-97% African-American and the virtual poster neighborhoods for Redlining and other institutional racism. So, when the MTA, MARC, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland talk about directing transportation dollars in the most "equitable" direction, there is no greater locus of "equity" need - and "equity" revitalization potential - than here in West Baltimore.

Yet, little in this MARC "omnibus" bill will directly benefit this key focus area of the State in any way approaching the transformational effect MARC Express could have. Why? Because currently the trip on MARC from Baltimore to Washington's Union Station is often more than an hour with frequent delays. MARC Express would potentially bring that trip-time below a half-hour, making this area of West Baltimore as accessible to Union Station and DC's downtown as Bethesda and Arlington are on the Washington, DC metro system. In short, MARC Express would do nothing less than seamlessly weaving this critical-need area of Maryland directly into one of the hottest economies in the country

The benefit for current West Baltimore residents would be immediate and massive, with tremendous half-hour accessibility to Washington's half-million jobs, nearly all of them paying significantly more than the equivalent job in Baltimore. And on the economic development side, housing price disparities would bring an influx of lower and middle-class families to diversify the income profile of the MARC Station area. So, there'd be highly visible wealth effects brought to the area, both by the changing prospects of existing residents, as well as the addition of new households and homeowners.

Senators, West Baltimore has waited long enough for economic development. We now have the key at our fingertips. Let's use it, by inserting the below language into SB0514. Thank you.

Jonathan Sacks,
Steering Committee Lead, HUB West Baltimore *and* Lead, West Baltimore Project

For FAQ's on MARC Express service: <https://www.hubwestbaltimore.org/marc-express-to-washington>
For more on MARC Express and AA County: <https://www.hubwestbaltimore.org/bwi-rail-station>

Proposed Amendment to Maryland (2022) SB0514/HB0778 to Establish a Pilot MARC Express Service.

The language would compel the MTA/MARC to:

- Run two southbound morning rush hour express trains (between 6am and 9:30am)
- Run two northbound morning rush hour express trains (between 4pm and 6:30pm)
- Run them every work day
- Stop these express trains only at Baltimore Penn Station, the West Baltimore Station, Thurgood Marshall BWI Rail Station and Union Station.

(Proposed new language is below in yellow highlights.)

SENATE BILL 514

**Transportation - Investment Program - MARC Rail Service
(Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act)**

(By: Senators Beidle, Augustine, Corderman, Elfreth, Feldman,
Gallion, Kelly, McCray, Rosapepe, and Sydnor)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

(B) (1) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL ESTABLISH INDIVIDUAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMS TO ADVANCE THE MARC CORNERSTONE PLAN AND 16 OTHER MARC IMPROVEMENTS BY PROVIDING INCREMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS 17 FOR:

(VII) ESTABLISHING A PILOT MARC EXPRESS SERVICE TO INCREASE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREAS AROUND THE THURGOOD MARSHALL BWI RAIL STATION, THE WEST BALTIMORE STATION, AND THE BALTIMORE PENN STATION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(C) IN FISCAL YEAR 2023, THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL ADVANCE THE FOLLOWING RAIL PRIORITY PROJECTS AS PART OF THE INVESTMENT PROGRAMS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION:

(8) IMPLEMENT:

- (I) TWO (2) SOUTHBOUND TRAINS ON THE PENN LINE BETWEEN 6AM AND 9:30AM EVERY WORK DAY, ORIGINATING AT BALTIMORE PENN STATION AND STOPPING ONLY AT THE WEST BALTIMORE STATION, THE THURGOOD MARSHALL BWI STATION AND WASHINGTON UNION STATION;
- (II) TWO (2) NORTHBOUND TRAINS ON THE PENN LINE BETWEEN 4PM AND 6:30PM EVERY WORKDAY, ORIGINATING AT WASHINGTON UNION STATION AND STOPPING ONLY AT THE THURGOOD MARSHALL BWI STATION, THE WEST BALTIMORE STATION, AND THE BALTIMORE PENN STATION.