Baltimore Red Line
Baltimore, Maryland
Preliminary Engineering
(Rating Assigned May 2011)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Light Rail Transit
	14.5 Miles, 20 Stations
Total Capital Cost ($YOE):	$2,219.25 Million
Section 5309 New Starts Share ($YOE):	$1,109.00 Million (50.0%)
Annual Forecast Year Operating Cost:	$41.00 Million
Ridership Forecast (2030):	57,000 Average Weekday Trips
	12,500 Daily New Trips
Opening Year Ridership Forecast (2021):	48,100 Average Weekday Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium-High
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium

Project Description: The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) proposes to build the Baltimore Red Line, a light rail transit (LRT) line between Woodlawn in suburban Baltimore County through downtown Baltimore, and terminating in Bayview in east Baltimore City. The Red Line is proposed to operate parallel to, or located on or under Interstate Highway 70 and U.S. Route 40 on the west, several arterial streets in downtown Baltimore, and the Norfolk Southern railroad right-of-way on the east end of the route. Most of the alignment is proposed to be a dedicated transitway in the median of existing streets, with approximately three miles of tunnel through downtown and one mile of tunnel under Cooks Lane toward the western end of the route. The project includes 15 at-grade stations and five underground stations in downtown; six park-and-ride facilities with 2,400 total spaces; 38 light rail vehicles; and a rail car storage and heavy maintenance facility. Service would be provided twenty hours per day with seven- to eight-minute headways during peak periods and 10-minute headways during off-peak periods.

Project Purpose: Currently there is no direct, expeditious east-west transit route in the corridor. Arterial streets are congested in this cross-town corridor during rush hours, causing slow bus operations. Traffic speeds on downtown segments of the corridor range from six to 12 miles per hour, and these are expected to worsen by up to 10 percent by 2030. The Red Line will offer speedy, convenient, and dependable transit service through downtown on exclusive and dedicated running way with easy transfer connections to other elements of the Baltimore transit network. In addition, the project will serve major employment locations including the U.S. Social Security Administration and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Woodlawn; the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Campus; the Baltimore central business district; the Baltimore Inner Harbor mixed use commercial and entertainment destination, including major league baseball and football stadiums; the Fells Point and Canton residential neighborhoods currently experiencing major infill redevelopment; and the mature residential neighborhoods of West Baltimore, Edmondson Village, Rosemont, Harlem Park, Highlandtown, and others.

The Red Line will connect with existing north-south transit services across downtown Baltimore including the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail system, the Baltimore heavy rail Metro system, the existing Central Light Rail Line, and the MTA bus system.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: Following publication of the draft alternatives analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in September 2008, the State of Maryland selected as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) a LRT line from Woodlawn to the Bayview Medical Center in August 2009. The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) approved the Red Line in the BRTB's 2004 financially constrained long-range transportation plan (CLRP) in December 2004. BRTB subsequently amended the CLRP to include the Red Line LPA as approved by the state and to include an updated capital cost estimate for the project in July 2010. FTA approved the Baltimore Red Line into preliminary engineering in June 2011. MTA anticipates approval of the Final EIS in late 2012, receipt of a Record of Decision in early 2013, entry into final design in mid-2013, receipt of a Full Funding Grant Agreement in mid-2015, and start of revenue service in early 2021. The Red Line has been included in a Federal program of High-Priority Infrastructure Projects for expedited environmental review to be completed in February 2013.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
Source of Funds	**Total Funds ($million)**	**Percent of Total**
Federal: Section 5309 New Starts	$1,109.00	50.0%
State: Maryland Transportation Trust Fund (TTF)	$1,110.25	50.0%
Total:	**$2,219.25**	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium-High

The land use rating reflects the population and employment densities within ½-mile of proposed station areas:

- Population density in the proposed station areas averages 9,100 persons per square mile. Total employment served by the project currently is 184,121 jobs.
- Land use in Red Line station areas will range from the high-density, mixed-use concentration of development in downtown Baltimore, to redeveloping urban neighborhoods and suburban commercial centers and medical complexes at outlying stations.   The character of land use is transit-supportive in over half the station areas, including downtown Baltimore and urban neighborhoods, where the pattern and scale of development support a diverse mix of uses, high concentrations of employment and special attractions, and walkable street networks with substantial levels of pedestrian activity.
- Parking supplies are constrained in downtown and to a lesser extent, in the stations located in urban neighborhoods, where most parking is on-street. Parking is plentiful, however, at the outlying suburban stations. The average daily parking rate in downtown off-street facilities is $14.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-High

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-High
(50 percent of Economic Development Rating)

- The State of Maryland and Baltimore County have policies that actively promote the concentration of development in existing cities and towns. Maryland's 1997 *Smart Growth Management Act* created an incentive-based program designating Priority Funding Areas (PFA) for growth-related state infrastructure funding. Virtually the entire Red Line is within a PFA. Baltimore County has a demarcation line defining urban areas that can receive public utility infrastructure to accommodate development.
- The State, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City have designated areas within walking distance of transit as priority areas for development. The City has a checklist for evaluating transit-oriented development (TOD) that governs the reviews of proposed projects near transit stations, requiring mixed uses, active street level uses, street connectivity, transit access, and reduced parking requirements. Parking policies in the City encourage reduced reliance on the use of private vehicles.
- Existing zoning ordinances in Baltimore City generally allow densities in the medium-high to high range. The City is redefining zoning codes to encourage mixed-use infill development, including TOD, and reductions in parking supply. Baltimore County plans to revise zoning to be consistent with station area plans for TOD.
- The State of Maryland and City of Baltimore provide significant incentives for compact development patterns with transit supportive characteristics. State law allows TOD projects to compete for funding on an equal basis with other transportation investments. Baltimore City's Capital Improvement Plan provides preferential capital funding for TOD projects and local governments in Maryland have the authority to use tax increment financing and special taxing districts to pay for TOD infrastructure, including operating and maintenance cost.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-High
(50 percent of summary economic development rating)

- The project sponsor has a strong joint development track record. The land use submission identifies 30 potential projects that are either planned, proposed, or under construction in Red Line station areas. Over 2,000 acres of property in station areas have strong potential for future redevelopment in transit-supportive uses.
- High levels of population and employment growth are forecast for project station areas, reflecting the vitality of economic sectors based in the region. The Red Line is an integral element of State, County, and City land use policies supporting the continued revitalization of the Baltimore economy.

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Factor	Rating	Comments
Local Financial Commitment Rating	**Medium**	
Non-Section 5309 New Starts Share (20% of summary financial rating)	**Medium**	The New Starts share of the project is 50.0 percent.
Project Capital Financial Plan (50% of summary financial rating)	**Medium**	
Capital Condition (25% of capital plan rating)	Medium-High	The average age of Maryland Transit Administration (MTA's) bus fleet is 7.2 years, which is in line with the industry average. The most recent bond ratings, issued in June 2010, are as follows: Moody's Investors Service, Aa1; Fitch's, AA+; and Standard & Poor's Corporation, AAA.
Commitment of Funds (25% of capital plan rating)	Medium	Less than 25 percent of the non-Section 5309 New Starts funds are budgeted, with the remainder planned. The source of funds is the State Transportation Trust Fund.
Capital Cost Estimates, Assumptions and Financial Capacity (50% of capital plan rating)	Medium	Revenue assumptions are comparable with historical data. The capital cost estimate is optimistic. The financial plan shows that MTA, along with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), has the financial capacity to cover cost increases or funding shortfalls equal to at least 25 percent of estimated project costs.
Project Operating Financial Plan (30% of summary financial rating)	**Medium-High**	
Operating Condition (25% of operating plan rating)	Medium-High	MDOT's current ratio of assets to liabilities as reported in its most recent audited financial statement is 1.6 (FY 2009). There have been no service cutbacks or cash flow shortfalls in recent years.
Commitment of Funds (25% of operating plan rating)	High	More than 75 percent of operating funding is committed, while the remainder is budgeted. The main revenue sources include Section 5307 Federal Formula funds, MDOT operating subsidy, farebox and other operating revenues.
O&M Cost Estimates, Assumptions, and Financial Capacity (50% of operating plan rating)	Medium	Assumed growth in operating expenses and farebox collections is consistent with historical experience. Projected cash balances and reserve accounts exceed 12 percent (1.5 months) of annual system-wide operating expenses.

Red Line Locally Preferred Alternative