



The Maryland General Assembly
Baltimore City Delegation



*THE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE*



Baltimore City Delegation

July 1, 2015

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

We, the local, state and federal elected leaders of Baltimore City, write today to urge that you reconsider your decision to cancel the construction of the Red Line transit system in Baltimore. Additionally, we also request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss your decision and its devastating impact on the City of Baltimore.

The Red Line as currently planned would be a light rail transit system that would extend for 14.1 miles – including 11 miles located within Baltimore City – between the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in Woodlawn (Baltimore County) through the heart of downtown Baltimore and then to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. As currently planned, the Red Line would serve 19 station stops.¹

The Red Line has the potential to be a transformative project for Baltimore. In the immediate term, the construction of the Red Line would create significant new employment opportunities in the City. According to a study commissioned by the Baltimore City Department of Transportation and authored by the Jacob France Institute (JFI), the construction of the Red Line would generate more than \$2 billion in economic activity in Baltimore just over the construction period, while creating or supporting more than 9,000 direct construction and related jobs paying more than \$500 million in salaries and wages. JFI estimated that 83% of the jobs that would be created or supported by the construction of the Red Line would employ individuals who had received only post-secondary vocational training or on-the-job training.²

¹ Baltimore Red Line Final Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, Volume 1 (Dec. 2012).

² Richard Clinch, *The Economic and Job Impacts of the Construction of the Red Line Mass Transit System on Baltimore City*, The Jacob France Institute (Nov. 2009) (available online at <http://www.jacob-france-institute.org/documents/Red-Line-12-09.pdf>).

Over the longer term, once built, the Red Line would provide a much-needed economic investment in a City that faces deep and systemic economic challenges. The Red Line would spur development along its entire corridor and particularly around its 19 planned stations.

Baltimore's downtown remains the vibrant heart of the City. Baltimore has the 9th largest downtown population and the 12th highest number of jobs (nearly 124,000) located in its downtown area of any U.S. metropolitan area.³ The Red Line would enable residents from both the east and west sides of Baltimore and surrounding jurisdictions to travel easily to jobs in the downtown area.

However, while Baltimore's downtown is strong and thriving, as a recent study by the Brookings Institution noted, "[w]ithin the city of Baltimore, deep divisions exist by race and place," and communities "just to the west and east of downtown Baltimore . . . exhibit very high rates of poverty."⁴ These divisions, which "are shaped by a legacy of discriminatory 20th Century practices, such as redlining, blockbusting, minimum lot sizes, racial zoning, racial steering, and restrictive covenants," have been particularly devastating to the African American residents of Baltimore.⁵ According to a report produced by the Democratic staff of the Congressional Joint Economic Committee (JEC) and examined during an event convened in Baltimore by the JEC and the Congressional Black Caucus on June 23, the unemployment rate for African Americans in Baltimore is 14.8%, which is more than two-and-a-half times the unemployment rate among white residents of Baltimore.⁶ More than a quarter of all African Americans living in Baltimore live in poverty.⁷ And poverty has increased in the City in recent years. One report estimates that

³ Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, "State of Downtown Report, 2014," (March 2015) (available online at <http://baltimoredevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2014-SODT.pdf>).

⁴ Alan Berube and Brad McDearman, *Good fortune, dire poverty, and inequality in Baltimore: An American story*, Brookings Institution (May 11, 2015) (available online at <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2015/05/11-poverty-inequality-baltimore-berube-mcdearman>).

⁵ Baltimore Metropolitan Council, "Opportunity Collaborative: Baltimore Regional Plan for Sustainable Development," (June 2015) (available online at http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/RPSD_Final_June_2015.pdf?ae56d8).

⁶ Democratic Staff of the Joint Economic Committee, "The American Dream on Hold: Economic Challenges in the African American Community - Baltimore Fact Sheet," (June 23, 2015) (available online at http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/0df881e3-4994-4983-b881-75d6ca0aff06/baltimore-fact-sheet-final-.pdf).

⁷ *Id.*

“between 2007 and 2012, the number of Baltimore Region residents living below the federal poverty level increased by over 46,000 adults.”⁸

Critically, the Red Line would link some of Baltimore’s most economically depressed communities with economic opportunities throughout the City and in the surrounding region and it would put transit stations in some areas of the City most in need of a development catalyst. According to the JFI report, 20% of the households in Baltimore City “are located in the Red Line construction area.” According to the 2009 JFI report, per capita income in the Red Line construction area was \$20,722 while the median household income in the Red Line construction area was \$31,286.⁹ Current estimates indicate that the median income level of African American households in the City of Baltimore as a whole is \$34,600 (a figure that is, in turn, nearly \$30,000 *below* the median household income of white households in Baltimore City).¹⁰

The Red Line would also provide a new, efficient transit option to many Baltimore residents for whom lack of access to efficient public transportation has been a significant barrier preventing access to jobs. A report issued just last month by Transportation For America found that in the Baltimore region “today fewer than 1 in 3 jobs is accessible by transit within 90 minutes.”¹¹ In 2014, the Opportunity Collaborative confirmed that “[m]ost Baltimore Region residents living in low-income neighborhoods can not effectively travel by public transportation to growing job centers in areas north and south of Baltimore City.”¹² And in 2015, the Opportunity Collaborative noted that “[a]lthough the region’s public transit system is extensive, it does not adequately serve suburban job areas, particularly during second and third shifts. This makes

⁸ Baltimore Metropolitan Council, “Opportunity Collaborative: Barriers to Employment Opportunities in the Baltimore Region,” (June 2014) (available online at http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/Barriers_Study_Final_052714.pdf?ae56d8).

⁹ Richard Clinch, *The Economic and Job Impacts of the Construction of the Red Line Mass Transit System on Baltimore City*, The Jacob France Institute (Nov. 2009) (available online at <http://www.jacob-france-institute.org/documents/Red-Line-12-09.pdf>).

¹⁰ Democratic Staff of the Joint Economic Committee, “The American Dream on Hold: Economic Challenges in the African American Community - Baltimore Fact Sheet,” (June 23, 2015) (available online at http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/0df881e3-4994-4983-b881-75d6ca0aff06/baltimore-fact-sheet-final-.pdf).

¹¹ Sarah Kline, *Weighing Maryland’s Economic Future: Assessing the Benefits from the Purple and Red Lines*, Transportation For America (May 2015) (available online at <http://t4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Maryland-Transit-Report.pdf>).

¹² Baltimore Metropolitan Council, “Opportunity Collaborative: Barriers to Employment Opportunities in the Baltimore Region,” (June 2014) (available online at http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/Barriers_Study_Final_052714.pdf?ae56d8).

having access to a car an almost essential job qualification.”¹³ In low-income areas of the City, however, many households lack access to a private vehicle. For example, in Upton/Druid Heights, a neighborhood close to – but outside of – the downtown area, more than 68% of households had no vehicle available to them in 2013.¹⁴

According to JFI, the planned Red Line alignment would take a fixed-rail transit system through an area of the City of Baltimore where 39% of the households lack access to an automobile and are dependent on mass transit.¹⁵ And opportunities that would be opened to City residents by the construction of the Red Line will only grow. By one estimate, by 2030, 73% of Baltimore City’s employment base will be within half a mile of the Red Line route.¹⁶

The Red Line has been advanced by the administrations of Governors Glendening, Ehrlich, and O’Malley and years of extensive study have demonstrated how beneficial the project would be to Baltimore. However, you concluded after just five months in office that “The Red Line as currently proposed is not the best way to bring jobs and opportunity to the city.”¹⁷ We would like to understand how you reached this conclusion. What changes do you believe should be made to the Red Line to enable the project to bring jobs and opportunity to the City? What specific project(s) will your administration support to strengthen links between the east and west sides of Baltimore and between Baltimore and the surrounding region and how will these projects bring more jobs and opportunities than the Red Line is projected to bring?

In addition, your decision to abandon the Red Line project as planned raises significant unanswered questions. As the *Baltimore Sun* reported, your decision means that \$288 million and more than a decade of effort will yield no benefit to the State.¹⁸ Your decision will also

¹³ Baltimore Metropolitan Council, “Opportunity Collaborative: Baltimore Regional Plan for Sustainable Development,” (June 2015) (available online at http://www.opportunitycollaborative.org/assets/RPSD_Final_June_2015.pdf?ae56d8).

¹⁴ Jacob France Institute, Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, (available online at <http://bniajfi.org/>).

¹⁵ Richard Clinch, *The Economic and Job Impacts of the Construction of the Red Line Mass Transit System on Baltimore City*, The Jacob France Institute (Nov. 2009) (available online at <http://www.jacob-france-institute.org/documents/Red-Line-12-09.pdf>).

¹⁶ *Don’t Kill the ‘Jobs Line,’* Baltimore Sun (Jan 4, 2015) (available online at <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-red-line-20150104-story.html>).

¹⁷ *Hogan Says No to Red Line, Yes to Purple,* Baltimore Sun (June 25, 2015) (available online at: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-hogan-transportation-20150624-story.html#page=1>).

¹⁸ Michael Dresser, *With Red Line Canceled, \$288 Million May Be Gone,* Baltimore Sun (June 27, 2015) (available online at <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-sun-investigates-transit-20150627-story.html>).

mean that the State of Maryland will walk away from as much as \$900 million that the Baltimore-area Congressional delegation has worked to make available in federal funding to support the construction of the Red Line. Your decision may also force the State of Maryland to pay back to the federal government millions of dollars already used to develop plans for the Red Line. For example, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board approved an amendment to the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for the Baltimore region that shifted \$55.2 million in federal funding provided under Section 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula Grants) (together with \$13.8 million of matching funds) to the project planning phase from Fiscal Year 2014 to 2015 for the Red Line.¹⁹ Will the State be required to repay this money to the Federal Transit Administration? If so, what will be the source of the State's repayment – and will the repayment affect expenditures on transit in Baltimore? Will the State be required to repay any additional federal funds already expended on the Red Line?

Collectively, we have worked for nearly a decade to support the construction of the Red Line and the better future it would create for Baltimore. We believe that the decision you have made to cancel this project is deeply short-sighted and will haunt Baltimore for decades. Again, we urge you to reconsider this decision and respectfully request the opportunity for a delegation of City leadership and Donald C. Fry on behalf of the business community to meet with you and Secretary Rahn at your earliest convenience to discuss this decision.

Should you have any question or to coordinate the meeting, please contact Ms. Lucinda Lessley, of the Office of Congressman Cummings at 202-225-4290 or via email at Lucinda. Lessley@mail.house.gov and Andrew Smullian, of the Mayor's Office, at (410) 396-7208 or via email at Andrew.Smullian@Baltimorecity.gov. Thank you for your time and hopefully urgent consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor
The Honorable Bernard C. "Jack" Young, President, City Council
The Honorable James B. Kraft, 1st Council District
The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, 2nd Council District
The Honorable Robert W. Curran, 3rd Council District
The Honorable Bill Henry, 4th Council District
The Honorable Rochelle "Rikki" Spector, 5th Council District
The Honorable Sharon Green Middleton, 6th Council District
The Honorable Nick J. Mosby, 7th Council District
The Honorable William "Pete" Welch, 9th Council District
The Honorable Edward L. Reisinger, 10th Council District

¹⁹ Baltimore Regional Transportation Board Resolution #15-8, Amendment to the 2014-2017 Baltimore Region Transportation Improvement Program (Sept. 23, 2014) (available online at <http://www.baltometro.org/phocadownload/Committees/BRTB/BRTBRes15-8.pdf>).

The Honorable Eric T. Costello, 11th Council District
The Honorable Carl F. Stokes, 12th Council District
The Honorable Warren M. Branch, 13th Council District
The Honorable Mary Pat Clarke, 14th Council District

The Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Catherine E. Pugh, Chair, Baltimore City Senate Delegation
The Honorable Curtis S. Anderson, Chair, Baltimore City House Delegation
The Honorable Margaret L. McIntosh, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Frank M. Conaway, Delegate 40th Legislative District
The Honorable Antonio L. Hayes, Delegate, 40th Legislative District
The Honorable Barbara A. Robinson, Delegate, 40th District
The Honorable Lisa A. Gladden, Senator, 41st Legislative District
The Honorable Jill P. Carter, Delegate, 41st Legislative District
The Honorable Nathaniel T. Oaks, Delegate, 41st Legislative District
The Honorable Samuel I. “Sandy” Rosenberg, Delegate, 41st Legislative District
The Honorable Joan Carter-Conway, Senator, 43rd Legislative District
The Honorable Mary L. Washington, Delegate, 43rd Legislative District
The Honorable Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Senator, 44th Legislative District
The Honorable Keith E. Haynes, Delegate, 44A Legislative District
The Honorable Nathaniel J. McFadden, Senator, 45th Legislative District
The Honorable Talmadge Branch, Delegate, 45th Legislative District
The Honorable Cheryl D. Glenn, Delegate, 45th Legislative District
The Honorable Cory V. McCray, Delegate, 45th Legislative District
The Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, Senator, 46th Legislative District
The Honorable Brooke E. Lierman, Delegate, 46th Legislative District
The Honorable Luke H. Clippinger, Delegate, 46th Legislative District

The Baltimore City Congressional Delegation

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski, U.S. Senator, Maryland
The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S. Senator, Maryland
The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, U.S. Representative, 7th Congressional District
The Honorable C.A. “Dutch” Ruppberger, U.S. Representative, 2nd Congressional District
The Honorable John P. Sarbanes, U.S. Representative, 3rd Congressional District

Cc: Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor, State of Maryland
Pete K. Rahn, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Governor
Keiffer J. Mitchell, Jr., Special Advisor, Office of the Governor
Donald C. Fry, CEO, Greater Baltimore Committee
Kaliopé Parthemos, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Colin Tarbert, Deputy Mayor of Economic and Neighborhood Development
Khlail Zaied, Deputy Mayor of Operations, Office of the Mayor
Dan Sparaco, Assistant Deputy Mayor of Operations, Office of the Mayor
William Johnson, Director, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Veronica McBeth, Transit Bureau Chief, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Fleming El-Amin, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Barbara Zektick, General Counsel, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
John Olzewski, Jr., Legislative Liaison, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Sam Sidh, Baltimore City Department of Transportation

