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Public Comment

We want to know what you think!

\$225 million for Transit : Transportation Outlook 2035 Amendment - Draft Preferred Alternative

Subject: Transportation Outlook 2035 Amendment - Draft Preferred Alternative

Comments: The BRTB's Draft Preferred Alternative for amending Transportation Outlook 2035 is commendable not only for its content, but also for the care that went into its preparation. The proposal spreads funds across a variety of projects, ensuring that the region's funding-deprived transit system can grow in a balanced manner. Given the shortage of funds--a mere \$225 million in additional expansion moneys being presently forecast--it is particularly important that smaller, achievable projects receive funding, and the \$30 million for intermodal facilities, the \$35 million for MARC stations, the \$15 million for dedicated bus lanes, the \$19.4 million for park-and-ride lots, and the \$0.6 million for the Carroll County bus system are precisely of this description. They make modest but needed improvements to access and capacity. Far more importantly, they improve connectivity, which is sorely lacking in the region's present transit network. The \$125 million for Green Line engineering provides an opportunity for the region to determine the appropriate service area and alignment for that project, while also ensuring that it is clearly on the list of regional priorities. This combination of projects hardly begins to scratch the surface of the region's needs, but--given the money available and the BRTB's unwillingness to redesignate existing funds in Transportation Outlook 2035--is perhaps the best possible.

The process by which this Draft Preferred Alternative amendment was developed is itself impressive. By carefully following the Citizens Advisory Committee's advice to designate all new available funds to transit expansion, by consulting the public before proposing projects, by soliciting public submissions, by considering alternative scenarios, and by holding public meetings and BRTB voting sessions on the amendment, public confidence in the BRTB's planning process has been dramatically bolstered and its output has gained respect, if not enthusiastic support.

I urge the BRTB to pass this Draft Preferred Alternative in its current form.

Pre-formatted comments:

Name: Saul Wilson
Agency/Organization:
Submitting for: Individual
Location: Baltimore, MD.
Date: January 11, 2009
Email:
Phone:

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e-mail:

From: shameek robinson
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 10:07 PM
To: comments@baltometro.org
Cc: mlogan@baltometro.org; hbloom@baltometro.org; raris@baltometro.org
Subject: Response to Transportation Outlook 2035: Creating a Blueprint for the Baltimore Region's Future.

Greetings,

As a Maryland taxpayer and transplant from northern New Jersey, I've observed the mass transportation setup here in the Baltimore area since I've started to work in Baltimore City in 2005. I initially envisioned that I would have multiple options for a fast, convenient commute from Harford County where I live to Mt. Washington where I work. Sadly this is not the case.

From where I live, my job is approximately 29 miles away which according to GoogleMaps and Mapquest, should take me 38 minutes to get to work via 95, 695, and 83. Well we all know that is the stuff of myth and legend. I actually take 40, 43, 1, and Northern Parkway and can get to work in 45-50 minutes - at least twice as fast as the highway actually takes in the morning. This is if I choose to drive.

If I choose mass transit, my commute time doubles. 90 minutes by bus/train/light rail (the more transfers one has to make - the less likely one is to utilize mass transit), and most inconvenient of all - extremely limited and fixed schedules. If I'm off any planned route (bus, train, light rail), I must wait upwards of 30 minutes or worse yet, I have to sleep where I am until the next rush hour period the next day (according to the timetables).

Mass transit may be cheaper on the wallet. It may be cleaner since less cars and combustion are on the road. But if it's too time consuming, inconvenient, and inflexible, I and people like myself will continue the insanity of driving (insanity being defined as doing the same things and expecting different results).

Every MAJOR transit system in the northeast is EXPANDING; from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. Baltimore metro is the ONLY system that is actually REDUCING SERVICE during a time of INCREASED PATRONAGE. This illogical, unpractical, and downright embarrassing situation needs to be rectified. While there may not be enough funding to build new metro or light rail tracks/stations, funding needs to be channeled into the regional rail system IMMEDIATELY! From Perryville to DC, the Northeast Corridor needs to be beefed up substantially. Trains need to run daily and on weekends. Feeder buses need to be logically set up with the stations. This is 2009 for crying out loud! MTA/MARC needs to stop thinking of itself as 'commuter' rail and start thinking of itself as 'regional' transportation - especially into and out of Baltimore (both ways NORTH and SOUTH). Stop thinking of Baltimore as a suburb or way stop of DC and think of Baltimore as the destination that it should be.

Right now, MTA/MARC/Regional bus is carrying on like NJ Transit did when I was a kid. It's time to grow up and link Baltimore to its people, and its people to Baltimore. Otherwise we will remain just a waystop or a 'suburb' on I-95 and the Northeast Corridor.

Sincerely,
Shameek Robinson
Edgewood, MD

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Public Comment

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\$225 million for Transit : Transportation Outlook 2035 Amendment - Draft Preferred Alternative

Subject: General support for the Amendment

Comments: I want to compliment the BRTB and BMC for responding to the broad public desire for a shift in funding from roadways to transit and other sustainable transportation modes. Unlike most other planning efforts undertaken by the BRTB the public was given relatively broad ability to craft a plan from scratch rather than commenting on plans that were already fully developed.

While the projects in the Amendment are not exactly those that the Sierra Club or I as the Transportation Chair would recommend (see attached), they are a commitment to a wide variety of transit improvements that would strengthen and expand the system.

I would urge the Board to be careful in selecting locations for dedicated bus lanes, focusing on areas where existing roadway capacity can be dedicated to buses rather than adding roadway capacity and also incorporating appropriate bicycle & pedestrian facilities as the restriping and stop placement occur.

I'm most disappointed that the \$225 million does not include any funds for AVL, something that could dramatically improve on-time performance and rider information, both of which are points of frustration for existing riders and which discourage potential transit riders.

Finally, I hope that the Board will look for ways to adjust the schedule for projects within TO2035 so that these projects can be moved up so that they may take advantage of an anticipated increase in Federal funding available for transit projects.

Thank you for your efforts on this amendment, for effectively engaging the public, and for the staff support.

Pre-formatted comments: [TO2035 Amendment ScenariosPJM.pdf](#), 12K document.

Name: Patrick McMahon

Agency/Organization: Greater Baltimore Group of the Sierra Club

Submitting for: Organization

Location: Baltimore, MD.

Date: January 14, 2009

Email:

Phone:

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	Scenario #4a ⁴		Scenario #7 - Sierra Club Expansion, Connectivity and Station Enhancements, System Information and Security	
	Expansion, Connectivity and Station Enhancements			
(shown in thousands)	\$225 Million (000)	\$340 Million (000)	\$225 Million (000)	\$340 Million (000)
1 Green Line - scope to be determined	\$125,000		\$124,600	\$169,400
2 Park-&-Ride spaces: \$10,000/space for 2000 spaces (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard counties)	\$19,400		\$10,000	\$15,000
3 Carroll County ¹ – vehicles and amenities	\$600		\$400	\$600
4 Intermodal Facilities ² - \$10 million/facility average, 3 of 4 (CMTOP, Columbia, Snowden Square, Parole)	\$10,000		\$20,000	\$30,000
5 Intermodal Facilities ³ - \$20 million/facility average (such as Lexington Market or other Baltimore City location)	\$20,000		\$20,000	\$20,000
6 MARC stations (not currently included in TO2035, i.e. Odenton or West Baltimore)	\$35,000		\$30,000	\$60,000
7 AVL (only)				
8 Dedicated bus lanes (in congested corridors such as I- 695, MD 152, US 29, MD 2)	\$15,000			\$5,000
9 AVL, 511, next vehicle information, kiosks			\$15,000	\$20,000
10 Security Equipment such as Cameras, Phones, Lighting at Transit Stations			\$5,000	\$20,000
Totals	\$225,000	\$0	\$225,000	\$340,000

[1] Local jurisdiction committed to operational funding

[2] Represents a Transit Transfer Center

[3] Represents a Intermodal Transfer Center (potential
public private partnership)

(4) Scenario #4a was offered by Howard County at the
Public Meeting on 11/25/08

(5) Scenario #6 was offered by Art Cohen at the Public
Meeting on 11/25/08

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Public Comment

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\$225 million for Transit : Transportation Outlook 2035 Amendment - Draft Preferred Alternative

Subject: Dedicated bus lanes

Comments: I feel dedicated bus lanes will further congestion. If you were to consider "HOV" lanes to include buses and hybrid vehicles and car pools at peak rush hours, that would be acceptable. But to take away one lane of an already congested highway would be a terrible idea. All it would do is generate more congestion and more pollution.

Thank You

Pre-formatted comments:

Name: Paul Cox
Agency/Organization:
Submitting for: Individual
Location: Reisterstown, MD.
Date: January 14, 2009
Email:
Phone:

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From: Jessie Watrous
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 1:00 PM
To: comments@baltometro.org
Subject: Transportation Outlook 2035

My comment-- Is there any way to make it so that commuters can bring non-folding bikes on MARC trains? This would increase connectivity of greater Baltimore to greater DC. Jessie

From: knicks1120
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 10:20 PM
To: comments@baltometro.org
Subject: public transportation amendment

I am a student at Towson University and am from New York originally. When trying to improve the public transportation system you should try to compare it to some of the bigger cities such as New York. Trains run from each town to the city(with stops at each town on different train lines). If you drove from each town to new york city, it would take the same amount of time on the train to get there, which makes it a reliable system. It also runs smoothly in bad weather. The Long Island Rail Road has an effective system that many people agree is far superior. They pride themselves with being on time and have a high success rate with it, and get people to their destinations quick. I feel that if Baltimore got something like that it maybe costly in the short run, but it pays off in the long run. It helps people get to where they need to go much more effectively. People seem to feel that driving is more of an effective way of getting to where they need to go with the current baltimore public train system. I feel that with an improved train system, baltimore can take that step to try and help their citizens get to where they need to be on time. This is what Baltimore lacks right now, as the current system is unreliable and many people from Maryland agree with my opinion. I hope you take this into account and make your citizens happier

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Public Comment

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\$225 million for Transit : Transportation Outlook 2035 Amendment - Draft Preferred Alternative

Subject: support for balanced plan, funding

Comments: The draft plan appears to have been carefully balanced to enhance the regional transit system with limited funds. The opportunity for public input (like mine here) is very welcome. It is also crucial that the general public's views not unduly sway the process in favor of short term or populist initiatives. The best regional transit spending will occur in concert with careful growth planning and management. I assume that the best of Baltimore City and County's 'smart growth' plans are mirrored in the BRTB planning.

The modest funds available for transit remind me that in 2005, the MD legislature passed a bill that puts the Intercounty Connector in line ahead of other transportation projects for Transportation Trust Funds.

For supporters of regional transit that helps to save land, water and air, it should be remembered that more funding will result in more transit improvements sooner.

Pre-formatted comments:

Name: Eric Schott
Agency/Organization:
Submitting for: Individual
Location: Baltimore, MD. 21210
Date: January 21, 2009
Email:
Phone:

» [See recent comments](#)



POSITION STATEMENT

**COMMENTS OF DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK 2035
2008 AMENDMENT DRAFT
January 23, 2009**

The Greater Baltimore Committee, the leading business organization serving Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties is pleased to offer its views on the *Outlook 2035 2008 Amendment Draft*, which is intended to focus on ways to make the region's transit systems more user friendly and attractive to a broader segment of the area's population.

The GBC is glad to see the inclusion of the Green Line in the document. This is a vital transit artery from the Johns Hopkins University Medical Campus to Northeast Baltimore City in the vicinity of Morgan State University and Good Samaritan Hospital and subsequently into Baltimore County. As noted in our earlier comments offered on the draft document in September of last year, inclusion of the Green Line in the long range plan makes sense. It has been included in the state's annual Consolidated Transportation Plan as well as the Baltimore Regional Rail Plan which was adopted by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) in 2002 and contemplates a 30 to 40 year build out of an integrated rail system for the region. It therefore deserves inclusion in this document in order to ensure at least the beginning phase of funding within the time frame contemplated by *Outlook 2035*.

Federal legislation requires a metropolitan planning organization's long range plan to be "fiscally constrained." That is, the transportation investments outlined in the document must reflect anticipated revenues that will be available to support the cost of proposed infrastructure investments. The recent announcement by Maryland's Transportation Secretary John Porcari that the State's transportation spending will decrease by an additional \$1.4 billion, over the previous projected decrease of \$1 billion, does not bode well for the increased spending projected in the *Outlook 2035 Amendment*. Nevertheless, realizing that no transportation project can be eligible for federal aid unless it appears in a federally recognized long range transportation plan such as *Outlook 2035*, the GBC endorses the development of this amendment despite the dour financial projections of MDOT. It is hoped that with a federal stimulus package about to be enacted by Congress, and the prospect for increased project funding via the anticipated federal authorization, that money will be available in the future to implement the transportation projects contemplated in the BRTB's amended document.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Suite 1700 . 111 South Calvert Street . Baltimore, Maryland 21202-6180
410 . 727-2820 . Fax 410 . 539-5705

GBC Comments on Outlook 2035 Amendment Draft
January 23, 2009
Page Two

The GBC is also pleased to see the inclusion of MARC station improvements and would like to see the document amplify where exactly the plan anticipates improvements. Yet, the GBC still advocates for MARC related extensions northward into Delaware connecting to Wilmington, and southward into Northern Virginia in order to accommodate the expected influx of BRAC related employment to Aberdeen Proving Ground and Fort Meade which will assuredly arrive in the state over the next few years. Ultimately, there is also need for MARC Penn/Camden/Brunswick line improvements, a station enhancement in Edgewood, a multimodal transportation center in Aberdeen, and expediting operational use of the Elkton Train Station in accommodating the Northeast Corridor workforce, all of which the GBC has advocated for previously. The GBC believes that these projects deserve mention in the amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the *Outlook 2035 Amendment Draft*. We at the GBC realize that fiscal concerns are paramount at this time, yet we believe that they are also temporary. Transportation infrastructure and financing formulas for infrastructure are becoming a major subject of policy debate at the national and state levels. The political winds may be indeed changing to see enhanced funding for critical transportation projects, in particular, transit initiatives. The GBC therefore urges consideration of the additional projects mentioned above for inclusion in the amended document. The GBC remains prepared to help move the transportation agenda forward in order ultimately to garner much needed improvements to our transportation infrastructure.

From: judy rose
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2009 5:29 PM
To: comments@baltometro.org
Subject: Comments re Draft Preferred Amendment to TO 2035
Attachments: Cmts re Preferred Amendment to TO 2035.doc

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft amendment. My comments are attached.

COMMENTS REGARDING PREFERRED AMENDMENT TO TO 2035

The Harford portion of the BRTB's Preferred Amendment to TO 2035 proposing 'new' transit projects for the anticipated \$225M funding slated for transit for the year 2020, requires highway widening or expansion in almost all cases. Essentially the same, but reworked projects, are being proposed contrary to the stated concerns of the citizens. This, in spite of the BRTB stating this draft amendment constitutes acknowledgement of and addresses the public's concerns derived from the hundreds of comments generated from public reviews of the long range Transportation Outlook 2035.

Some, but hardly all, of those public concerns being the crumbling economy, the increasingly polluted environment, the declining land resources, and the traveling time and fuel consumption involved, etc. In line with local issues, we found and supported the National trend toward transit, not more highway expansion.

The Board, however, elected to approve "their" plan and forged ahead, proudly stating, "The message from the public was very clear – the world is changing and the Baltimore region must take local action in response to significant changes in the global environment that we share. Pollution and air quality concerns, changes in population density and employment options, congestion and environmental impact of highway traffic are all issues that need to be addressed through greater emphasis on alternative transportation options."

Mere words, apparently, implying they understood the concerns of the public and were going to address them. Now the Board anticipates \$225 in "new" money which they said may go to new proposed transit programs to accommodate public comments. A pittance in reality and more likely a figment of our imagination.

These funds presumably to be split between the seven areas comprising the Baltimore metropolitan region. And no, the approved TO 2035 plan stands relatively unchanged, clearly with no intention to modify it to reflect the public's wishes as to the direction that transportation needs to go – to transit. My comments regarding some of the following Preferred Draft Amendment projects proposed for Harford County follow:

MD 152: One of Harford's "new" projects proposes a dedicated bus lane on MD 152 which would entail widening a road which is predominantly outside the development envelope as well as the priority funding area. Necessary infrastructure is not planned and does not exist. There are no connecting business or population centers. So, who will be served by widening this highway?

MD 24 is the major and most congested route in Harford where a bus lane should be a serious consideration. A less costly and more sensible alternative, MD 24 contains major County shopping centers, citizen services such as the hospital, MVA, doctors' offices, restaurants, as well as high density housing developments. MD 24 leads directly into a major employment center to be located at the U.S. Army base in the Edgewood area.

MD 22: There are no high density population centers sufficient to warrant widening of MD 22 from I-95 up to MD 543. MD 22 would be better served by incorporating a couple of transit stops in the school campus parking lots (with perhaps bike racks) to aid in reducing the congestion in that area. The logical priority should be placed on that portion of MD 22 from I-95 into the Aberdeen area of the U.S. Army base where the BRAC employment is expected.

Harford Park and Ride Lots: One cannot imagine, other than relocating the MARC station to MD 715, what other park and ride spaces would be required and at such a cost. There are more than adequate and underutilized MTA lots already along most major routes. The problem is they are not advertised as being public park and ride lots. What is needed is to arrange bus transit stops and some commuter parking areas at existing lots at malls, schools and high density areas around the County. Then stick up signs so the public will know they exist. This should be relatively inexpensive.

If the emphasis is really centered around the influx of BRAC people as often inferred, then the concentration should be placed on making

the MARC station and transit lot improvements from Aberdeen to the main Aberdeen Proving Ground entrance on MD 715.

General Comments:

Yes, we are encouraging bus transit on ALL major thoroughfares within the County, but utilizing existing park and ride lots, shopping mall lots, school, library, bank, campus lots, etc. All are methods that do not generate a need to widen or construct roads and are less costly to the taxpayers. To use what already exists makes perfect sense and will save dollars for transit. The examples given for widening, particularly on MD 152 and portions of MD 22, will cause a backlash as almost everything proposed thus far promotes more development outside PFAs and the development envelope rather than the more efficient transit.

Everything about some of these proposals are contrary to principles of smart growth and we need to concentrate on putting the very scarce funding where it is really needed in other areas of the County. As it stands, we'll probably be lucky to see the first nickel anyway.

Instead, the focus still appears to be directed to widening, extending, and constructing roadways - but to what end?

Suggest more public participation during the transportation planning process and strict public oversight prior to funding regional projects.

Judy Rose
Joppa, MD

From: Amber K. Blake
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 7:00 AM
To: 'Monica Haines'
Subject: FW: \$ for mass transit

From: Nelson, Jay
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2009 11:58 AM
To: ablake@baltometro.org
Subject: \$ for mass transit

Hi Amber:

I just wanted to suggest that to come with the \$ for these initiatives, the Board should be lobbying O'Malley and the legislature to divert ICC money to mass transit/bike lanes. If ever there was a time to strike the political iron while its hot, it's now. Cheers.

--

Dr. Jay A. Nelson, Professor
Dept. of Biol. Sci.
Towson University
Towson Maryland 21252-0001