



2022

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

THE GAMEPLAN FOR A MODERN TRANSIT SYSTEM



GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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STRATEGY TO ADVANCE BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

The Baltimore region needs a world-class public transit system to create shared economic prosperity and inclusive growth.

Despite its strengths, the existing system does not meet the needs of a 21st century economy, workforce, or population and therefore demands a course correction.¹ Baltimore lags peer regions in transit performance in most categories of significance – the number of destinations accessible by transit, the reliability of transit, and the degree to which existing transit assets are leveraged to maximize their impact and potential for inclusive growth.

It has been nearly a quarter century since the Baltimore metro area has opened a new rapid transit service. While expansion studies are underway, we are years away from final plans or starting construction.

This could be a major missed opportunity at a time when the federal government is making its largest investment in transit expansion in history over the next five years through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Without leadership from public, private, and civic leaders, Baltimore will miss this historic opportunity to invest in expanding more equitable, accessible, safe, and competitive transit options.

The current state of Baltimore's transit system results from shortcomings over many decades to adequately fund and maintain the system. Transforming the system will require collective buy-in and commitment across the civic, private, and public sectors over many years, as well as bringing new voices to the conversation, to sustain momentum toward achieving transit excellence.

Delivering success against the six priorities of the *Baltimore's Transit Future* strategy can help fix the transit system of today and build the transit system of tomorrow. The business community is ready to work alongside our regional leaders – public, private, and civic – to accelerate shared solutions and collaborate on their implementation.

¹ For an overview of the challenges facing the region's transit system, see "[Transportation Report Card](#)," Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, 2020.



STRATEGY TO ADVANCE BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

Address MTA Repair Backlog & Operator Shortage

01

The foundation of Baltimore's transit system has been eroded by insufficient operational and maintenance funding over decades. To position the system for growth, we need to return to a state of good repair and expand operational capacity to reliably serve today's riders and service schedules. This should include efforts to improve workforce training and development for expanded service and new technologies. This must be addressed in the short term to build momentum and restore confidence in the system.

Establish Frequent, Reliable Bus Service to all Regional Job Centers

02

Too many jobs are out of reach for too many residents. The bus offers the most expedient solution to close these gaps within a few years to broaden job opportunities for the region's residents and open labor pools for employers. Where rail exists today, service should be increased to offer no less than 15-minute regular service at all hours of the day.

Support Regional Coordination, Decision Making, and Funding

03

Baltimore is unique among major transit systems throughout the country in that it is governed and operated by a state agency with no local oversight, making it difficult to deliver major projects, adequately maintain and operate the system, and respond to regional needs. Reforms should be made to MTA's governance structure of the transit system to enhance accountability, shared responsibility, and operational and capital investments to create a truly regional, rapid, and reliable transit system.

Implement a 10-Year Rapid Transit Expansion Program

04

The region should advance no less than three projects that meet the twin conditions of being realistically attainable within the next 10 years and provide comprehensive improvement in available transit options and connections to regional job and activity centers. This should include completion of an east-west rapid transit service – a priority connection for the region that dates back more than a half century.

Prioritize Regional Rail Investment

05

Through strategic investments to deliver faster, more frequent MARC service, the Baltimore region will be better connected to DC, Northern Virginia, and points in between, and enhances its ability to sustainably grow its population and employment base.

Catalyze Equitable Development at Transit and Rail Stations

06

The Baltimore region has several underdeveloped and proposed rail stations that could serve as hubs for thriving, transit-oriented communities, yielding thousands of new jobs, millions in new tax revenues, generate greater transit ridership, and reduce congestion. The region must cultivate and encourage more transit oriented development around these transit stations.

Achieving these goals will require cooperation and shared commitment by many parties. Our elected leaders must work with local agencies, frontline labor organizations, community representatives, businesses of all sizes, and civic institutions, among others, to deliver a transit system that empowers the Baltimore region to succeed.

The time for action is now.

The residents and business of Maryland's largest city and surrounding suburbs deserve a world-class transit system.

These six strategic priorities will set the course for a more equitable transportation system, making the Baltimore region a more attractive place to live, work, play, and build a business.

The Greater Baltimore Committee and Greater Washington Partnership stand ready to work with leaders and partners throughout the region to deliver on this promise.

