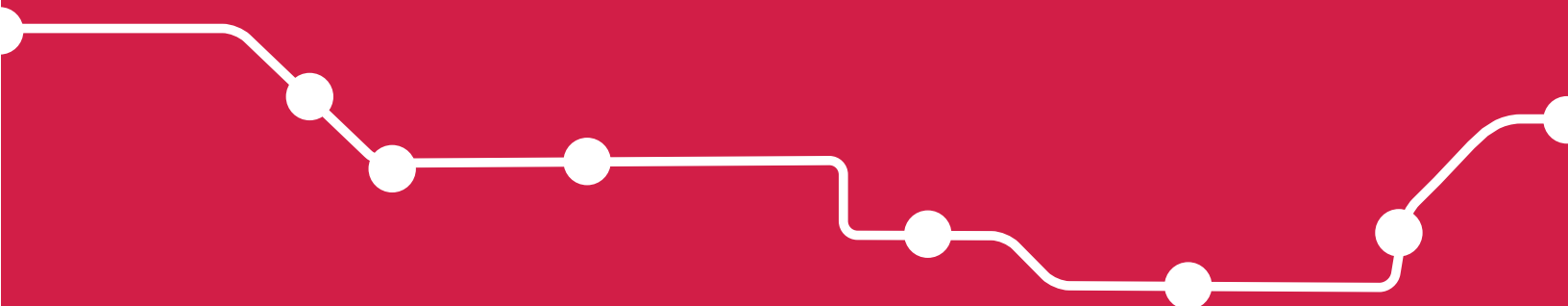




2024

# RED LINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





# REPORT ON 2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE RED LINE PROJECT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2023, Governor Moore relaunched the Baltimore Red Line (Red Line), which was canceled in 2015 after more than a decade of planning and design. The Red Line will address a major gap in east-west transit service between Bayview and Woodlawn and through downtown Baltimore City.

Since the project's relaunch, MTA has been working to reintroduce the Red Line to the public and keep them informed and engaged as the project advances. The Red Line team has accomplished this by sharing information in different ways: via the project website and social media channels, at community events, and at meetings and open houses. Throughout these engagement activities, materials were provided in both English and Spanish.

In 2024, Governor Moore announced the recommendation to advance the Red Line as a Light Rail project. The mode selection was based on technical analysis, key metrics (Measures of Effectiveness), and public input. Since the announcement, the team has continued to inform the public about the remaining alternatives under consideration and the key trade-offs associated with alignment options; these efforts culminated with a series of five open houses along the corridor in October to provide both project background and updates from 2024. Activities have focused on sharing information and gathering input to inform project decisions.

MTA formed three groups to guide the project's outreach and engagement efforts.

A pilot group of **Red Line summer interns** provided their perspectives as MTA studied the project throughout the summer and gained work experience in public engagement.

MTA created the **Community Advisory Team (CAT)**, with 25 members selected from hundreds of applicants. This diverse group helps inform the Red Line's outreach and engagement efforts, acting as a crucial link to communities along the corridor.

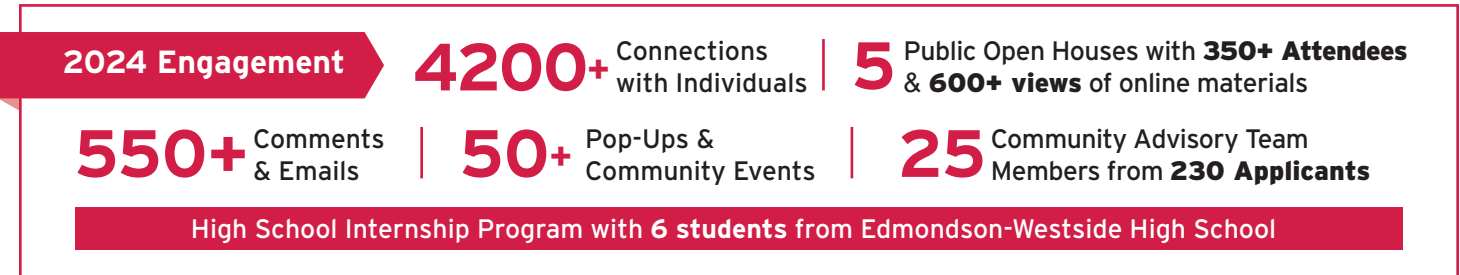
In the summer, four **Red Line Ambassadors** joined the team to serve as liaisons to communities along the corridor, gathering insights and input.



## WHAT WE DID

Throughout 2024, the Red Line team conducted a range of outreach activities. Staff shared information and gathered public feedback at five open houses, 20 community association meetings and more than 150 pop-ups, fairs, and festivals. The team provided all information on the project website, including narrated versions of the materials, in both English and Spanish.

### Total Engagement Since 2023



## WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout 2024, the Red Line team repeatedly heard a strong desire to advance the project efficiently while ensuring a regional approach to economic growth that prioritizes job access and creation. Many of the community conversations, comments, and questions heard throughout 2024 reflected the same overarching priorities conveyed in 2023, reflected in the table below.

	<b>Strong Support &amp; Urgency</b>	Conversations repeatedly indicated a desire to complete the Red Line quickly.
	<b>Direct Access</b>	Comments highlighted the need for easy station access via walking and biking and direct access to jobs and other destinations.
	<b>Seamless System Integration</b>	Community members want a complete and connected transit system.
	<b>Job Creation &amp; Economic Growth</b>	Residents and stakeholders anticipate economic development and local job opportunities resulting from the Red Line.
	<b>Construction &amp; Impact Mitigation</b>	Community members want minimal noise, vibration, restriction to access, traffic disruptions and parking impacts during construction and beyond.

# 1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

## PROJECT OVERVIEW



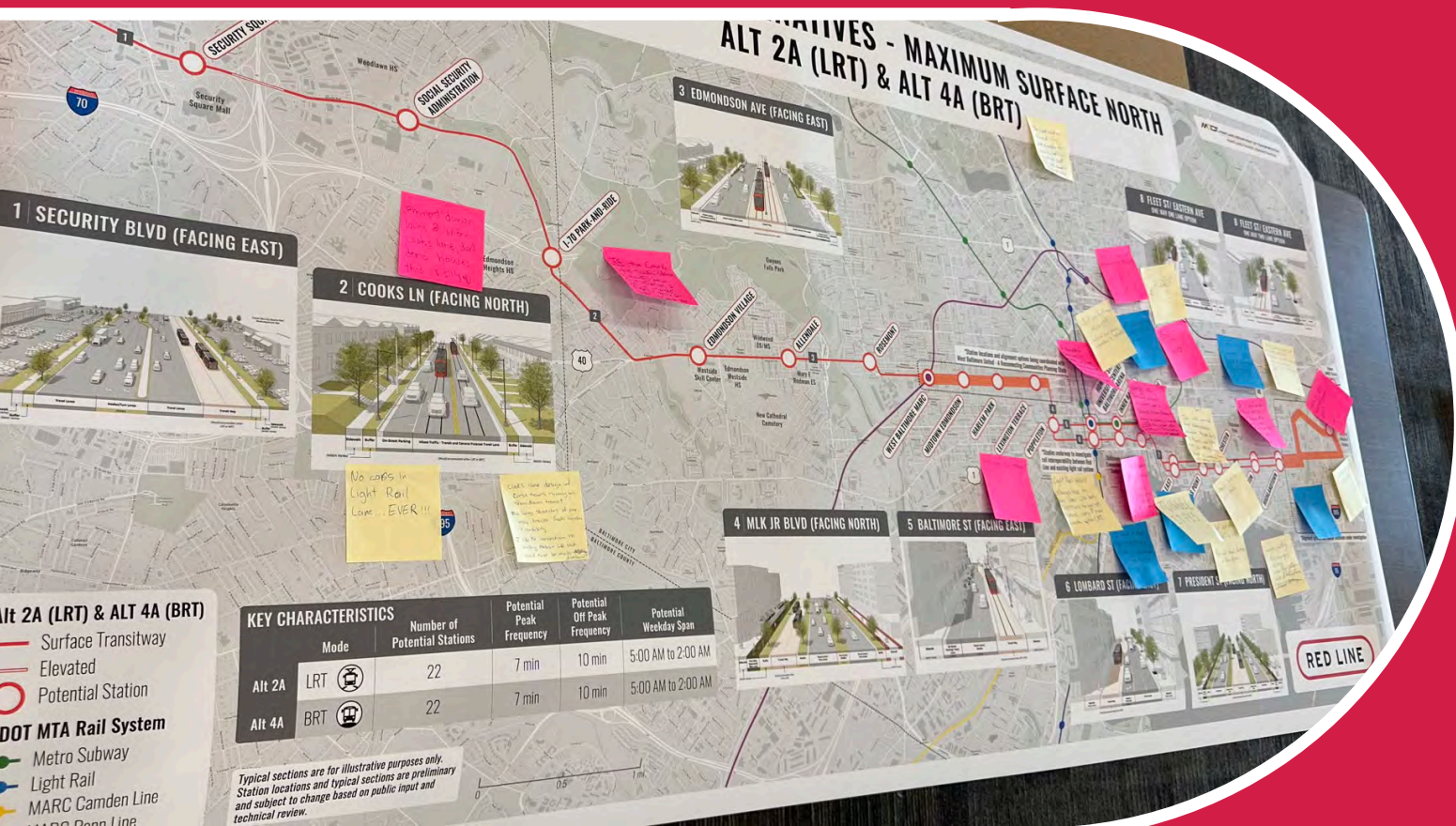
### RED LINE BACKGROUND

The Red Line will be a high-frequency, high-capacity Light Rail transit line that will run through downtown Baltimore and fill a critical gap in east-west transit service between Woodlawn and Bayview.

A more connected region means a more economically vibrant region. When we provide increased access to jobs, essential services, healthcare, and entertainment districts, more people contribute to the economy. According to a 2024 analysis by the Greater Baltimore Committee, constructing and operating the Red Line is estimated to produce between \$10 to \$19 billion in new economic activity.<sup>1</sup>

For more information on the history of the project, visit the *Background* section of the website:

[Background - Red Line \(redlinemaryland.com\)](https://redlinemaryland.com)



### Red Line Benefits

The Baltimore Red Line will create better, faster, east-west connections across the region through downtown Baltimore. This will create many benefits for the region, including:

- Providing premium transit access to older adults
- Connecting students to education opportunities
- Shifting trips in the region to transit
- Providing residents more mobility options
- Connecting residents to hundreds of jobs
- Creating a more complete system that connects to existing rail stations and high-frequency bus routes



<sup>1</sup> <https://greaterwashingtonpartnership.com/publications/economic-development-potential-of-the-baltimore-red-line/>

2

# ROLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## ROLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community involvement is a cornerstone of MTA's project decision-making and fundamental to the success of the Red Line. MTA relies on public input to address specific needs of the communities the Red Line will serve. Outreach and engagement efforts go far beyond sharing information. Instead, the Red Line team actively participates and collaborates with people who have important local knowledge to share from living, working, and navigating the corridor.

### DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

MTA's decision-making for the Red Line is informed by multiple inputs, including ongoing feedback from the public. The effort has been organized and designed according to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) features of meaningful public engagement.<sup>1</sup> This comprehensive strategy ensures that the project aligns with the needs and aspirations of our communities while meeting the necessary regulatory and environmental considerations. MTA recognizes that integrated education and collaboration leads to good decision-making.

MTA's decision-making process is illustrated in the graphic to the right. Each of the six inputs displayed led to the decision to design the Red Line as a Light Rail project instead of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Along with the other inputs, a broad range of public perspectives informed this decision.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising%20Practices%20for%20Meaningful%20Public%20Involvement%20in%20Transportation%20Decision-making.pdf>

## FEATURES OF MEANINGFUL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Meaningful public involvement is based on understanding the communities impacted by the Red Line, the demographics and contexts of these communities, and the priorities they hold - both around transportation and community needs more generally. From this baseline understanding, the Red Line team has built relationships that provide insight into community desires and needs. Tailoring the tools, techniques, and types of engagement activities to these communities builds trust and collaboration between the project and the people it will serve. The Red Line team maintains consistent communication with communities to keep feedback loops open and share how input has shaped the project.



SOURCE: [United States Department of Transportation \(USDOT\) Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making \(November 2023\)](#)



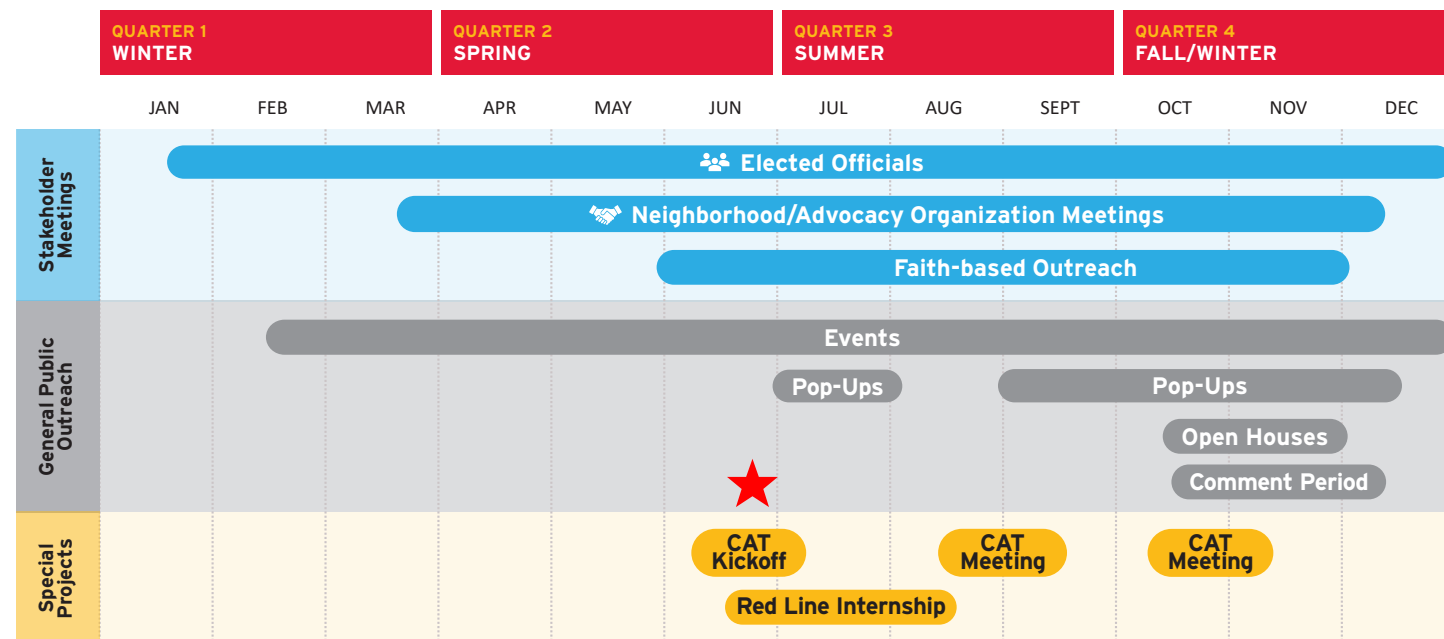
# 3 2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



# 2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Engagement activities for the Red Line in 2024 focused on expanding connections to the breadth of communities and constituencies throughout the corridor and the greater region. The Red Line team applied a combination of outreach and engagement strategies to meet project goals throughout the year, including stakeholder meetings, public outreach activities, and online engagement opportunities. A major focus for the year was to expand the accessibility of Red Line-related project information, including Spanish-language and staffing support materials, and the on-demand information available on the project website.

## 2024 Red Line Engagement Timeline



### Red Line Ambassadors

In 2024, four Red Line Ambassadors were hired to focus on the unique characteristics, communities, and priorities of different segments of the corridor. The Ambassadors are tasked with building long-term, resilient relationships with the communities in their segment. The Ambassadors work collaboratively to ensure consistent information is disseminated throughout the project area and community feedback is shared with the larger Red Line team.

## SPRING

Spring engagement focused on increasing the Red Line's social media presence, improving and expanding the resources available on the project website, and ramping up Red Line team members' presence in communities through formal and informal engagement activities.

### Community Advisory Team (CAT)

In the late spring, the Red Line Community Advisory Team (CAT) was created to support the development of the Red Line by providing input into the project development process, suggesting and supporting engagement opportunities, and advocating for the project. The CAT launched in 2024 with the selection of 26 individuals from 230 applicants.

*For more information about the CAT, please visit the Community Advisory Team section of the website:*

[Community Advisory Team - Red Line \(redlinemaryland.com\)](https://www.redlinemaryland.com)



### Red Line High School Internship Program

In June, the Red Line selected six students from Edmondson-Westside High School (in their sophomore and junior years of study) to participate in a six-week-long paid summer internship. Throughout the program, the interns learned about transportation investments, including government and private sector roles, project development, transit operations, and community engagement. This included visits to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., the proposed Baltimore Red Line corridor, MTA headquarters, and several MDOT facilities. They offered insights into engaging Baltimore's youth regarding careers in transportation as well as the Red Line project. The Red Line team is looking forward to continuing the program in 2025.





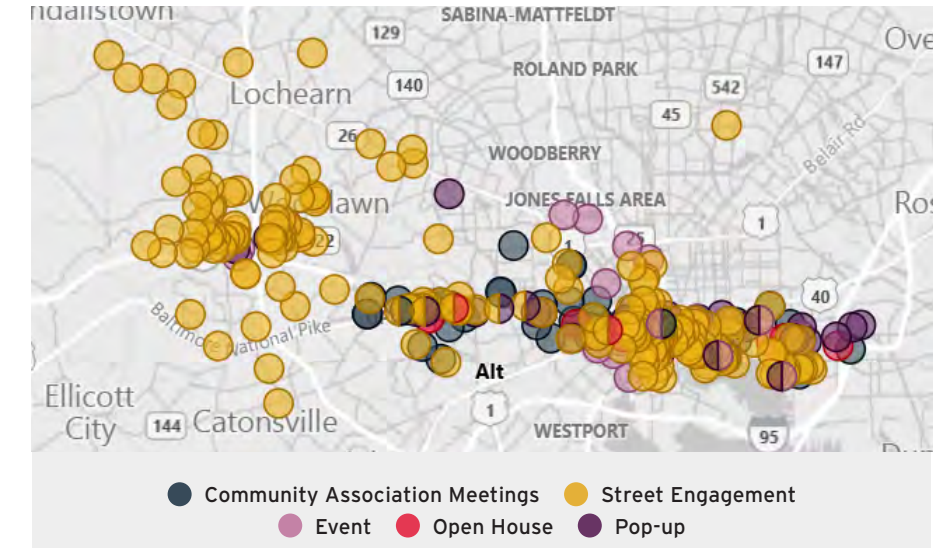
**SUMMER**

The Governor's announcement of Light Rail as the state-recommended mode ignited further interest in the project in the summer.

During this period, the Red Line team participated in fairs, festivals, and events throughout the project area, as well as community organization and neighborhood association meetings. These interactions provided opportunities for community members to ask questions, raise concerns, voice their priorities, and share their hopes for the project.

**WHERE WE WERE**

Events took place throughout the study area, including Baltimore County, West Baltimore, Downtown, and East Baltimore. Locations of these 300+ events in 2024 are mapped below. While a majority of the events were located within the project corridor, the Red Line team held some events further from the proposed alignments, understanding that transit investments are considered in the context of a network connecting regional origins and destinations. The Red Line team continually assessed geographic coverage to equitably reach communities throughout the corridor. While the team attended events and community meetings as requested, supplemental outreach was targeted to areas where community participation or engagement was identified as being lower than average. A project fact sheet was provided in both English and Spanish at public outreach events, and Spanish-speaking staff members were present at events where attendees were likely to speak Spanish.



**FALL**

During the fall, activities focused on driving participation in the series of five open houses held in October.

These meetings provided project information, updates on the technical and environmental analysis under way, and an exploration of the trade-offs of the different alternatives currently under consideration. Participants were able to provide comments on the project overall as well as on specific segments. All materials were also available in Spanish and online, including bilingual narration.



**Community Engagement Activities Summary**

Pop-Up Meetings & Street Engagement	253
Community Meetings	33
Open Houses	5
Organization Events, Fairs, & Festivals	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>311</b>

**WINTER**

The Red Line team continued to attend community events and present to neighborhood groups. The team also focused on reviewing information and input gathered during 2024, sharing key themes and priorities heard to continually inform the project as the alternatives under consideration were analyzed and refined.



**WHAT WE DID**

Engagement activities throughout 2024 focused on expanding awareness of the project among corridor communities, building collaboration structures with jurisdictional and agency stakeholders, and sharing project progress as the Red Line continued to advance through the alternatives analysis. Red Line team members, including the Red Line Ambassadors, proactively identified community events, fairs, and festivals while also remaining responsive to requests from community associations and organizations to provide project updates and presentations. A series of open houses in the fall provided an update on project progress, with all materials available online as well.

Throughout the year, attendees at any event or individuals visiting the website were encouraged to share their thoughts, questions, priorities, and concerns with the team via comment cards.

The following tables summarize the Red Line team's participation at various activities and events throughout 2024.

**Professional and Advocacy Organization Presentations**

07/18/2024	Transit Choices Coalition
07/18/2024	Transportation Research Board
10/21/2024	Mpact Transit + Community Conference
11/13/2024	Greater Baltimore Committee Billion Dollar Opportunities Event
11/14/2024	Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure and Transportation Summit
11/18/2024	Greater Baltimore Committee Billion Dollar Solutions Event
11/21/2024	Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (CACAT)
12/04/2024	Livable Streets Coalition
12/11/2024	Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition

**Red Line Open Houses**

10/22/2024	Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy (West Baltimore)
10/23/2024	Baltimore War Memorial Building (Downtown)
10/23/2024	Woodlawn High School (Baltimore County)
10/24/2024	The Creative Alliance (Southeast Baltimore)
10/25/2024	Greater Baltimore Committee (Downtown)
10/26/2024	Edmondson-Westside High School (West Baltimore)

**Fairs, Festivals, Community Events and Pop-ups**

06/07/2024	Highlandtown First Friday Art Walk
06/08/2024	Charles Street Promenade
06/16/2024	Baltimore Pride in the Park
06/22/2024	Afram
07/07/2024	St. Bernadine Church
07/13/2024	Caribbean Festival
07/13-14/2024	LatinFest
07/27/2024	Fell's Point Farmers Market
08/01/2024	WTMD's First Thursday
08/02/2024	Highlandtown First Friday Art Walk
08/03/2024	ArtScape
08/05/2024	West Hills National Night Out
08/17/2024	Fell's Point Farmers Market
09/05/2024	WTMD's First Thursday
09/06-07/2024	OweFest
09/11/2024	West Baltimore MARC Station
09/14/2024	Associated Black Charities Cookout
09/14/2024	The Three Sisters Festival
09/14/2024	Love Groove Festival
09/14/2024	Ten Hills Block Party
09/25/2024	Giant Foods
09/25/2024	Edmondson Village Bus Stop
09/28/2024	Pigtown Festival
09/28/2024	Jonestown Community Day
09/29/2024	Ravens Tailgate
10/01/2024	The Markets at Highlandtown
10/03/2024	West Baltimore MARC Station
10/05/2024	Fell's Point Fun Festival
10/15/2024	Lexington Market
10/19/2024	Baltimore Running Festival
10/27/2024	Tails on the Rails
11/02/2024	Día de Los Muertos / Day of the Dead Parade
11/23/2024	Christmas Village
12/03/2024	Charles Street Metro Station
12/08/2024	Winter Lights at the Observatory
12/08/2024	Union Square Cookie Tour of Historic Homes
12/11/2024	Woodlawn Tree Lighting
12/14/2024	La Posada

**Community and Neighborhood Association Presentations**

03/12/2024	Rosemont Community Association
04/04/2024	Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations (ARCO)
04/04/2024	Franklin Square Community Association
04/08/2024	Harlem Park Neighborhood Council (HPNC)
04/09/2024	Coppin Heights CDC (CHCDC)
04/17/2024	Hunting Ridge Community Association
06/06/2024	Harlem Park Neighborhood Council (HPNC)
06/07/2024	Allendale Community Association
07/01/2024	Hunting Ridge Community Association
07/09/2024	Franklin Square Community Association
07/13/2024	Edmondson Village Community Day
07/18/2024	Poppleton NOW Community Association
07/22/2024	West Hills Community Association
07/23/2024	Fayette Street Outreach
08/27/2024	Sandtown Collective
09/05/2024	Coppin Heights CDC
09/17/2024	Little Italy Neighborhood Association
09/18/2024	Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations (ARCO)
09/19/2024	Poppleton NOW Community Association
09/26/2024	Edmondson Village Community Conversation
10/02/2024	Butchers Hill Community Association
10/10/2024	Uplands Community Association
10/11/2024	Lyndhurst Community Association
10/15/2024	Hunting Ridge Community Association
11/06/2024	Ridgely's Delight Neighborhood Association
11/12/2024	Historic Jonestown Neighborhood Association
11/13/2024	Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood Association
11/14/2024	Southwest Better Neighborhood Associations
11/18/2024	Patterson Park Neighborhood Association
11/18/2024	West Hills Community Association
11/19/2024	Canton Community Association
12/03/2024	Bon Secours Community Outreach Center
12/10/2024	City Center Residents Association

**Concurrent Project Events**

07/22/2024	Amtrak Frederick Douglass Tunnel West Baltimore Open House
07/24/2024	Amtrak Frederick Douglass Tunnel West Baltimore Open House
08/19/2024	West Baltimore United Stakeholder Meeting
10/08/2024	BMore Bus Open House

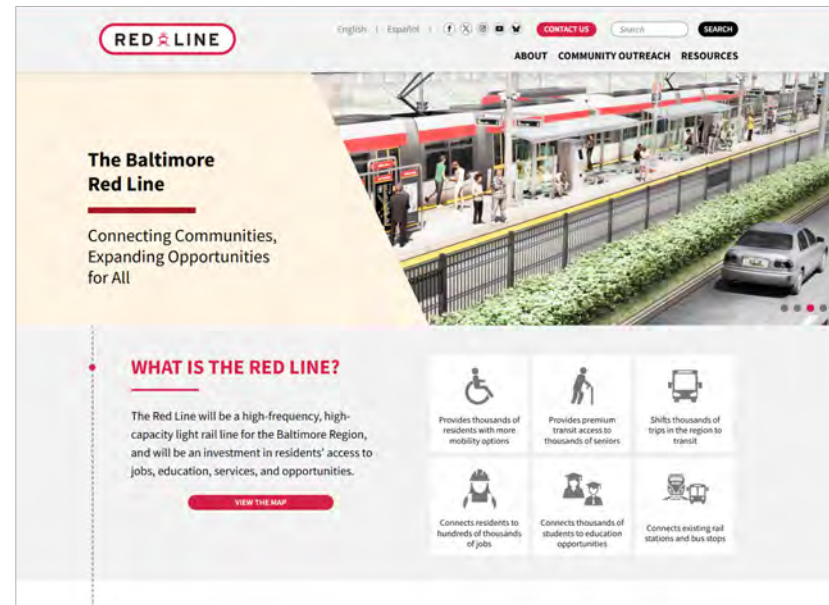
**Online Engagement**

In 2024, online engagement efforts included a revamp of the Red Line website to provide more navigable access to project information. Information disseminated on the website will be publicly accessible throughout the life of the Red Line project, empowering people to review previous materials and catch up on project progress. The website hosts key background information, project documents, and updates on how to stay engaged in the project. The website is available in both English and Spanish.

**Examples of Website Information**

- Open House Materials
- Interactive Maps
- Past Project Materials
- Project Videos and Narration
- Comment Cards/Email
- FAQs & Glossary
- Event Calendar
- Current Project Documents

The team posted project information, advertised events, and encouraged public participation on Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube. The Red Line team also launched a project newsletter in 2024, with profiles of project team members, updates on project progress, and information about upcoming events. These newsletters were distributed via the electronic mailing list and hard copies were provided at events and presentations.



**Expansion of Spanish Language Capacity**

The Red Line corridor is home to a growing population of primarily Spanish-speaking residents, workers, and business owners. Equitably reaching this population demands appropriate staff and resources. In 2024, the Red Line team expanded its staffing for events to include more Spanish-speaking staff, with intentional allocation of these team members to support events with a large presence of Spanish-speaking attendees.

MTA also now provides all Red Line materials in both Spanish and English. Staff provided a fully translated set of open house boards, with copies made available as hand-outs at open house and community events. These open house materials were also presented as online narrated presentations, for those who wished to listen to the information instead of, or in addition to, reading it. The Red Line website is also translated into Spanish.



**Youth Engagement Pilot Efforts**

The Red Line team piloted activities to engage children and ensure families felt supported and welcome. Staff provided Red Line postcards for children to color while their caregivers learned about the project at pop-ups, festivals, and similar events. A map provided at the “Kid Zone” at the fall open houses also invited younger attendees to share the places they like to go and their vision for their community. These relaxed areas for creativity and joy left participants of all ages feeling welcome and inspired.

The Red Line team will expand youth engagement in 2025 in collaboration with MTA’s Youth Transit Council and schools.

**Older Adult Engagement Pilot Efforts**

Approximately 15 percent of the Baltimore metropolitan region consists of people who are 65 years of age or older. As adults age, there is an increased need for alternative forms of transportation beyond a personal vehicle. Consequently, there is a growing commitment to design “Eight and Eighty” spaces - meaning those that are equally accessible for an eight-year-old, an eighty-year-old, and everyone in between.

Over the past year, the Red Line team engaged older adults. In December 2024, an event was held at the Bon Secours Senior Center with 23 older adults in attendance. Key topics that emerged included safety, access to reliable transportation, and connectivity to existing services and transit lines.

Older adults are the backbone of many religious institutions. Throughout the year, the Red Line team conducted faith-based outreach in dozens of places of worship spanning religions and

ethnicities across Baltimore City and County. In 2024, staff held 35 meetings and other community events with faith-based institutions, making connections with more than 150 older adults. Conversation topics included safety, accessibility, coordination with other projects, and funding concerns.

In 2025, the Red Line team is planning events to host in collaboration with the Hatton Senior Center in Canton, the centrally located Waxter Senior Center in Mount Vernon, and a growing network of faith-based institutions.




4


WHAT WE HEARD


WHAT WE HEARD


In 2024, conversations with members of the public centered around affirming the project’s continued progress, which highlighted a desire for the project to advance quickly toward full implementation, and an interest in achieving the next milestone.


Across the corridor, outreach and engagement efforts consistently revealed the following priorities, areas of interest, questions and concerns:

- 
**Strong Support & Urgency**

Conversations repeatedly indicated a desire to complete the Red Line quickly.
- 
**Direct Access**

Comments highlighted the need for easy station access via walking and biking and direct access to jobs and other destinations.
- 
**Seamless System Integration**

Community members want a complete and connected transit system.
- 
**Job Creation & Economic Growth**

Residents and organizations anticipate economic development and local job opportunities resulting from the Red Line.
- 
**Construction & Impacts**

Community members want minimal noise, vibration, restriction to access, traffic disruptions and parking impacts during construction and beyond.

When considering the Red Line corridor at the geographic segment level, certain topics arose in communities specific to their area:

Baltimore County	West Baltimore	Downtown	Southeast Baltimore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect to and coordinate with Security Square Mall redevelopment</li> <li>• Considerations for student access and safety</li> <li>• Access to job opportunities at major employers</li> <li>• Coordinated investment and economic development initiatives</li> <li>• Interest in Cooks Lane surface versus tunnel trade-offs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support investment without displacement</li> <li>• Coordination with other projects in the area (e.g., West Baltimore MARC Station, Frederick Douglass Tunnel, West Baltimore United)</li> <li>• Access to job opportunities</li> <li>• Alignment preference to travel in US-40 right-of-way</li> <li>• Mitigate construction impacts</li> <li>• Support for small businesses during construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to catalyze major investment and economic revitalization</li> <li>• Interest in understanding environmental and traffic impacts of tunnel and surface options</li> <li>• Desire to coordinate with broader public and private development and investment</li> <li>• Application of Complete Streets practices (e.g., walkable, bikeable environment)</li> <li>• Clear, easy connections to existing transit network</li> <li>• Support for small businesses during construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of alignment options to connect Canton and Bayview</li> <li>• Concerns about traffic and parking impacts (e.g., one-way flows)</li> <li>• Application and impacts of Complete Streets practices (e.g., walkable, bikeable environment)</li> <li>• Connections to major retail locations</li> <li>• Interest in surface versus tunnel trade-offs</li> <li>• Desire for transit connectivity to employment centers in eastern Baltimore County, such as Tradepoint Atlantic</li> </ul>



## 5

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Throughout 2024, Red Line engagement activities yielded invaluable insights into communities' preferences and priorities and confirmed the value of this major transportation investment. The public's highest priority, as reinforced by comment cards and emails, is to better understand the project timeline and selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative. Many community members also highlighted the importance of intermodal connections and transit access, highlighting the significance of a dependable transportation system that seamlessly connects communities to opportunity. The Red Line team also frequently heard a desire to affirm the commitment to advance the project to full implementation.

Following the State's recommendation to advance the project as Light Rail, the Red Line team has focused engagement on understanding community priorities as well as mitigating concerns as the project advances. While some alignment and operating preferences are clear, others remain in need of further exploration and consideration as the Locally Preferred Alternative is refined.

In 2025, the Red Line will continue to design and implement a variety of outreach and engagement tools and tactics to ensure a diversity of perspectives inform the project.

### Specific planned campaigns and activities include:

- ✓ Launching the People of the Red Line video series
- ✓ Increasing the frequency of the project newsletter
- ✓ Starting a Red Line blog on the project website
- ✓ Collaborating with the MTA Youth Transit Council, Red Line interns, and schools to design and implement targeted youth engagement strategies
- ✓ Engaging older adults to more meaningfully learn from their lived experiences
- ✓ Fostering open lines of communication with communities and organizations along the corridor
- ✓ Expanding engagement with small businesses in the Red Line project area
- ✓ Collaborating with Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and the Family League of Baltimore to update the Red Line Community Compact with the public's involvement

