

Community Advisory Team

Meeting Summary

Date: January 29, 2025

Location: War Memorial Plaza – Downtown Baltimore



Notable attendees

MTA Leadership**Martha Gross**, Executive Director of MTA Transit Development and Delivery**Ken Melton**, Red Line Communications and Community Engagement Director**Matthew Hendrickson**, Deputy Director of Community Engagement**Engineering and Design Team and Engagement Team:**

Andrew Bing

Anthony Brown

Betty Seifu

Caitlin Tobin

Doris Duren

(Ambassador)

Drew McTygue

Jarren Williams (Ambassador)

Jerome Home

Marco Avila (Ambassador)

Minahil Mehdi

Rochelle Carpenter (Ambassador)

CAT Attendees

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Anita Cathcart | 8. Minister Glenn Smith | 17. Sue Carlin |
| 2. Ayana Bass-Myers | 9. Ginger Hanson | 18. Scott Kashnow |
| 3. Bernard Sims | 10. Greg Dewey | 19. Sonia Eaddy |
| 4. Bree Jones | 11. Howard V Hughes | |
| 5. Carolyn Myers | 12. James Footman | |
| 6. Cynthia Shaw | 13. Katie McRury | |
| 7. Derek Moore | 14. Melanie Scheirer | |
| | 15. Manny Grogan | |
| | 16. Ryan Dowdell | |

Key Takeaways

The agenda included a recap of 2024 activities, discussion and a resource fair of related projects. Key takeaways from the meeting include:

- There was clear and helpful feedback on the engagement activities in 2024 during our debrief. We appreciated the feedback that the pop-ups, open houses, and community association meetings have been effective.
- We also appreciate the concrete ideas for opportunities in 2025, including messaging on MTA buses, ways to make our social media more accessible, and having more topic-focused meetings with residents.
- We are excited to kick off the Community Compact update and to have the CAT and many other organizations involved. The early ideas brainstormed during the meeting on the critical safety, land use, TOD, and housing issues should address and will inform the kick-off of the Community Compact effort.
- We had representatives from Amtrak, Baltimore City DOT and MTA to share information on the myriads of other projects that are related or adjacent to the Red Line. We hope you enjoyed the resource fair segment, and we were pleased to see so many engaged conversations.



Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Andrew Bing, CAT facilitator, started the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Including referencing guest representatives from the Amtrak Frederick Douglass Tunnel, Maryland Transit Administration, and Baltimore City who were in attendance to share information regarding other infrastructure projects within the Red Line project area.

- Andrew acknowledged that Wonjung Bae, Lecturer of Advanced Digital Documentary Production course at Johns Hopkins University, was also in attendance alongside two of her students. Andrew shared the group is filming transit related documentaries and may connect with CAT members for interviews. CAT members were informed it was their choice whether they wanted to participate or not.
 - CAT members introduced themselves.
- 2. Andrew Introduced Martha Gross, Executive Director of MTA Transit Development and Delivery. She is currently serving as the interim Red Line Senior Project Director.**
- Martha shared her experience in leading multi-billion-dollar transportation projects from concept to reality.
 - She shared there has been a leadership change, thanking the former senior project director, Allison Scott. She explained while they look for a new senior project director, the core leadership team at MTA has not missed a beat in terms of keeping the project moving forward.
 - She introduced additional key MTA staff and delivered the MTA Administrator, Holly Arnold's, commitment to smoothly advancing the project forward.
 - She highlighted that the revised budget, released by Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Secretary the prior week, had some positive outcomes for transportation and, specifically, transit. It included critical funding for replacing our light rail fleet, which is important to the Red Line because the state of good repair of existing services is considered by FTA when evaluating providing funding for new projects.
 - She acknowledged the new administration in Washington and stated that we are awaiting clarity on how the news coming out of Washington will affect MTA, specifically. She underscored that even with the uncertainties, this Project remains a top priority. Most major projects around the country experience similar volatility at this stage of a project.
 - She highlighted the project's commitment to youth engagement, high school internship program and strengthening connections with Morgan State and John Hopkins University.
 - She thanked the CAT members for their service and time.
 - In closing, she introduced the first video for the People of the Red Line series which featured Red Line's former high school intern and now a Baltimore City Police Officer, Anton Christian.
- 3. Andrew Bing provided a 2024 CAT overview, highlighting accomplishments:**
- 3 meetings
 - 2 CAT Office Hours
 - Valuable comments from CAT members and the design and engineering team's efforts to incorporate these suggestions into the plans.
 - Regarding 2025, Andrew pointed toward the commitment to quarterly CAT meetings, continued office hours and a stronger relationship between the CAT and Red Line.
- 4. Andrew introduced Matt Hendrickson for a 2024 outreach summary.**
- Matt gave an overview of the outreach activities in 2024, including specific metrics on the number of people engaged and the number of activities held to-date on the project. Matt highlighted the project team has engaged over 11,000 people so far.
 - Minister Glenn Smith asked whether 11,000+ engaged people is a respectable number, considering the total potential ridership numbers. Matt indicated that the team is committed to continuing to grow that number and wants the CATs support and advice on how to do so.
 - Matt recognized the Ambassadors and reviewed their role in the past year and moving forward.
 - Matt gave an overview of the open house attendance and online engagement, including surveys, social media and online views of open house materials.
 - The feedback from survey respondents on the open houses indicated the overall vibe from the public was positive. People appreciated the engagement efforts, were supportive of mode announcement and felt they were able to have rich conversations with staff.

5. **Andrew invited CAT members to conduct a debrief of the 2024 outreach. He asked CAT members to brainstorm feedback on what engagement activities went well and where engagement could be improved. He also asked for suggestions on new ideas for engagement. Comments/suggestions included:**
 - Looking into using new social media platforms like BlueSky.
 - All video/reel communications must include closed captioning.
 - Need to generate excitement for the project and build confidence that this project is going to happen. One way could be to use video on the buses since you have a captive audience; this will reach existing transit riders to increase their excitement for the future project.
 - Need a better “ground campaign,” with people on the streets interacting with the public. People from the communities. Minister Smith suggested people from his organization.
 - Need a big community event, such as a resource fair with a wide range of information for community members, at a place like the West Baltimore MARC Station.
 - More engagement at transit stations – notably Metro stations – along the corridor
 - Acknowledged that the Red Line and MTA staff were at the City4All forum organized by Delegate Robbyn Lewis this past weekend. There is an opportunity to capture the momentum of activist groups from that event.
 - Question/Comment on what is the method for gathering comments from people who live along the alignment and will be directly impacted? Examples included homeowners along Edmondson Avenue and Poppleton residents who could be impacted by a future tunnel. CAT members shared there is a desire for people to understand the impacts before decisions are made. Andrew stated that the Red Line team could host a meeting or event to share anticipated construction, noise and vibration impacts.
 - Question on what are the plans to move this project forward in the face of the new administration in Washington and potential federal funding challenges? Can MTA speak to the federal funding freeze? Martha responded that the team is looking at and preparing for a range of scenarios and options as more clarity comes out of Washington.
 - CAT members highlighted there are still concerns and a need to have more conversations with the neighbors. There is a need to engage people who live directly along the Highway to Nowhere.
 - CAT members highlighted they had success inviting the Red Line team to come speak to the Mount Clare Community Council. The turnout was good, and the discussion was rich.

6. **Andrew welcomed Matthew Hendrickson back to the podium to close-out the Outreach overview with a 2025 Red Line Outreach Look-Ahead.**
 - Matt shared an overall timeline which encompassed outreach to elected officials, youth, small businesses, faith organizations, neighborhoods/community, community pop ups, special events, and the ongoing engagement of the CAT.

7. **Andrew announced the Resource Fair which lasted a half-hour and included robust dialogue with crucial transportation projects in the region.**
 - Amtrak/Frederick Douglass Tunnel
 - Maryland Transit Administration
 - West Baltimore TOD
 - East Baltimore County Access Study
 - East-West Raise
 - Baltimore City Department of Transportation
 - West Baltimore United
 - Baltimore Greenway Trail Project
 - Downtown RISE

8. **Andrew welcomed Minahil Mehdi for a discussion regarding the community compact. Her presentation focused on:**
 - The purpose and goals of the compact. She announced that the Family League of Baltimore will lead an effort to update the community compact. The update approach will involve:
 - Engaging agency and community partners.

- Reviewing 2008 goals.
- Developing a revised set of goals and community benefits with partners. This would involve a series of work sessions.
- A public signing of the updated compact.

9. Andrew invited the CAT to comment on the process and goals for the NEW Community Compact. Comments included:

- It is important to make sure the Red Line is safe and clean.
- Compact should include a commitment that no one loses their homes.
- Provide an opportunity for individuals to sign the compact, especially those directly impacted by the project (e.g., those who live on the alignment).
- How do we speak to protecting residents from the gentrification that can come through/from a successful project? There are a lot of legacy homeowners who could be impacted.
- The document should speak about land use, maybe the creation of a land use committee around station areas. Need a group that can meet with the community to focus on land use in these business areas and guide investments.
- We need to work with the city to make sure new taxes associated with vacancies are enforced.
- We need to define what opportunities the Red Line will bring to the community, so people understand the potential for the community. We need to preserve neighborhoods and have tangible opportunities for those impacted by this investment. We want people who live here to be able to stay here or come back to their neighborhoods.
- How do we ensure investments happen in the neighborhoods? The compact needs to speak to this possibility. Will there be economic growth that invites people to come back to these neighborhoods. We know the system will get people to where they want to go, but what will be the benefit for people in the neighborhood?
- Can stations be incorporated into buildings or other land uses? This may not be a compact element but needs an understanding of how stations can be integrated with development.
- Remembering the Highway to Nowhere, could there be a down payment assistance program for persons who were displaced, or their relatives?
- How do we know that what is shared at community meetings is heard? And, if possible, incorporated into the engineering and design plans? And, if not, can the association understand why? CAT members explained while it's good that the Red Line team attended meetings, but there is a need to come back out again, explain what we heard and show how it is or is not being integrated into decisions, and why. There is a perception that feedback is "falling on deaf ears." Andrew emphasized that the Project seeks all types of feedback including constructive criticism. Minahil suggested that Red Line team members could summarize public feedback for the meeting organizer and CAT member.
- Let all CAT members know when the Red Line is presenting at other Community Association meetings. CAT members can attend their community association meetings but can also attend other communities so that they can hear the issues and discussions of other communities.
- Andrew emphasized the update of the Community Compact will involve many community members and organizations, not just the CAT, and that the CAT will have opportunities to comment on that process and agreements therein.

10. Andrew reviewed upcoming activities and closed out the meeting.

- Andrew thanked everyone for their time and dialogue.
- Next office hours – March 5th, Noon-1pm
- Next CAT meeting is tentatively on April 2nd.

Action Items

- Ambassadors will reach out to proactively explore opportunities for future Community Association meetings.
- Integrate key feedback from the CAT for 2025 engagement activities, some examples include:
 - Making all materials accessible (Closed Captioning, Spanish translation etc.)

- Strategy for personalized meetings with residents directly impacted by the project.
- Find ways to expand outreach to more transit riders (videos on buses, pop-ups at transit stations)
- Incorporate other feedback and topics into future CAT meetings:
 - Provide quarterly summary of what we heard from outreach.
 - Share more information on noise and vibrations impacts.
 - Integrate TOD, land use and housing as a topic in a future CAT meeting.

Upcoming Outreach