The MAGLEV project

Winter 1999
Newsletter #2

A newsletter published by the Maryland Mass Transit Administration

Baltimore-Washington Corridor Selected for Maglev Project

The Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) of the Maryland Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the City of Baltimore, Baltimore County, and the District of Columbia, is examining the feasibility of connecting Baltimore, BWI Airport and Washington, D.C., using Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Technology. Planning activities for this project are funded under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Maglev Deployment Program which is in section 1218 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

Maglev is advanced transportation technology that can provide service at speeds in excess of 240 miles per hour.

MTA Selected for Maglev Project

In May 1999, FRA selected the MTA to conduct an in-depth study in the heavily traveled Baltimore-Washington corridor. The MTA is one of seven agencies nationwide conducting such a study.

As described by Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening, "Maglev is an exciting and innovative concept. With federal support, we can now begin research that will tell us whether or not a Maglev train is practical for travel along the Baltimore-Washington corridor. As we strive to meet our goal of doubling transit ridership by the year 2020, we must be willing to embrace the latest technology as we plan our transportation network of the future."

What is Maglev?

Maglev is advanced transportation technology that can provide service at speeds

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MTA's Tony Brown (right) talks to Marylander about the Maglev Project at an informational meeting.

Public Involvement Encouraged

As the MTA conducts this study on the feasibility of Maglev in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, citizens are encouraged to become involved throughout the process. In mid-October, three information meetings were held in Washington, D.C., downtown Baltimore and the Fort Meade area to discuss the Maglev study corridor and Maglev technology. In an ongoing effort to receive public input, a similar round of informational meetings will be held in the spring of 2000.

"Public input is the key to the success of the Maglev project," said Project Manager Suhair Alkhatib. "We are meeting with people individually, in small groups or large groups in an effort to share as much information with as many people as possible."

Comments from the public will be documented and summarized in the environmental review process to ensure citizen input is considered in decisions about the project.

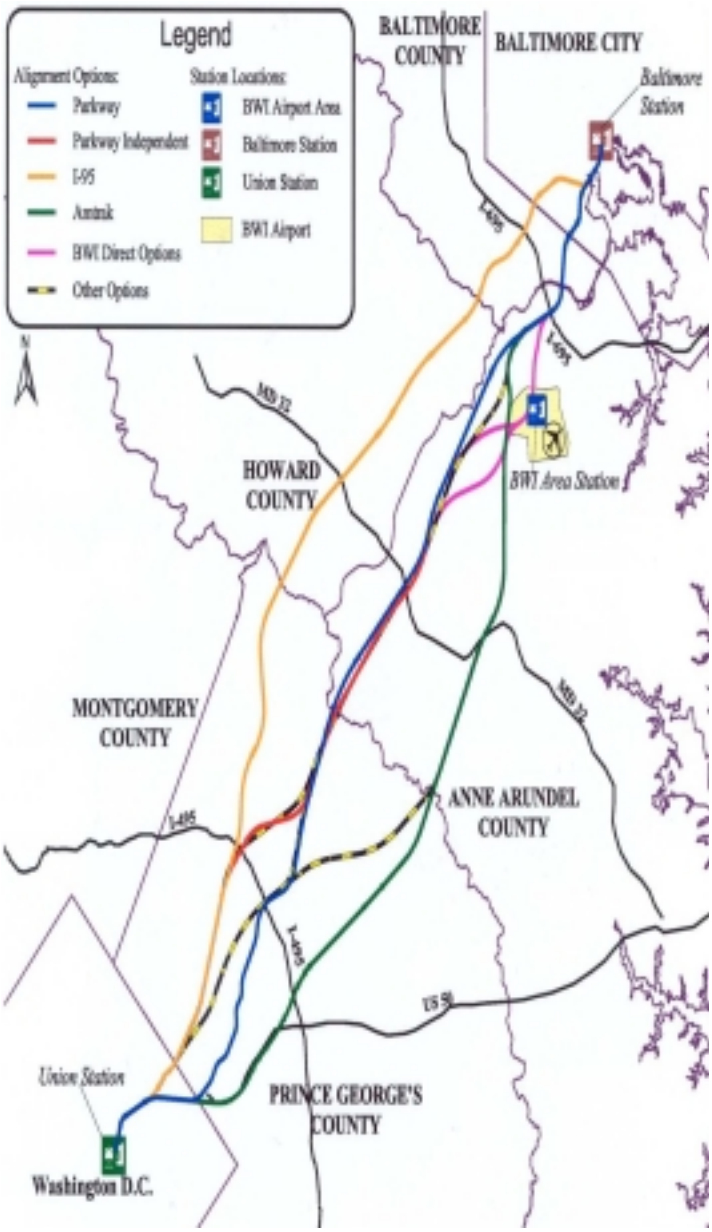
Anyone interested in receiving more information about the Maglev project, can visit the MTA's website at www.mtamaryland.com. The website will feature project updates and information about Maglev technology. Anyone wishing to be added to MTA's mailing list should call Mr. Alkhatib at (410) 767-3751.

Maglev Study Corridor

Project planners and engineers are evaluating the potential benefits and effects of Maglev service between downtown Baltimore and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The alignments illustrated and described below were selected for further study after an extensive evaluation.

Selection criteria that will be used throughout the current Maglev Deployment Program will include the ability to attain speeds of 240 miles per hour, intermodal connections, environmental impacts, projected ridership and revenue, cost and potential for future integration into an interstate Maglev network. The public involvement process will also be considered as part of the the selection criteria.

Station locations that are being considered include several possibilities for downtown Baltimore, Union Station in Washington, D.C. and BWI Airport area.



Alignments Concepts

♦ The I-95 Alignment: This alignment would generally run along the I-95 right-of-way from Laurel northward to downtown Baltimore. South of the Laurel area, the alignment would continue until joining the CSX Camden line near the National Agricultural Research Center (Beltsville). Under this possibility, Maglev would generally share the CSX right-of-way through the College Park area and into the District to Union Station.

♦ The Baltimore/Washington Parkway Alignment: This alignment would run within or immediately alongside the Baltimore/Washington Parkway right-of-way. Under this scenario, the Maglev and the parkway would essentially coexist in the corridor for its entire 36-mile length from U.S. 50 near the District of Columbia/Prince George's County line all the way to I-95, just south of downtown Baltimore. While generally occupying an existing transportation right-of-way, this Maglev alignment would pass through or very near to Fort Meade, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and National Agricultural Research Center.

♦ The Baltimore/Washington Parkway Independent Alignment: This alignment would parallel the Baltimore/Washington Parkway, but run outside and east of the National Park Service parkway boundaries. This alignment, independent of the existing Baltimore/Washington Parkway, would extend through Fort Meade and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, cross the Baltimore/Washington Parkway, and pass through the National Agricultural Research Center.

♦ The Amtrak Alignment: This alignment would be located partially within the existing Amtrak right-of-way in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. Maglev and Amtrak would serve in this corridor under this scenario. This possible Maglev alignment passes near the communities of Severn, Odenton, and Bowie and would pass through the D.C Beltway and District itself roughly on the U.S. 50 /Amtrak corridor.

♦ The Other Alignments: Other alignments are also being considered for analysis that are a hybrid of two or more components of the four alignments described above with a possible direct connection at the BWI Airport.

Message from MTA Administrator Ron Freeland

As we conduct the feasibility study of Maglev in the Washington-Baltimore region, I would like to encourage you to become involved in the effort.

As the agency responsible for bus, Metro subway, Light Rail and MARC commuter rail in the state of Maryland, we conduct numerous studies to determine the feasibility of various projects. Maglev could have a significant social and economic impact on our region. Citizens throughout the region are continuing to search for ways to reduce their travel time, improve air quality, reduce congestion, and enhance the quality of their lives. New technological solutions, such as Maglev, will play a key role. The decisions we make now will affect our region over the next ten, twenty to fifty years. Your involvement is essential in ensuring that we make the right decisions.

Please visit our website, attend our informational meetings, or call us for a briefing with your group or organization. The MTA seeks your input and encourages your participation.

Ronald L. Freeland

Project Evaluation Factors

Nationwide, projects in FRA's Maglev Deployment Program will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Public/Private Partnership Potential
- Revenue Producing Venture
- Ability to generate at least one-third State/Local/ Private Matching fund
- If foreign technology is selected, must involve 70% U.S. content
- Capital and Operating Costs
- Ridership Projections
- Environmental Effects
- Cost/Benefit Projections
- Sound Project Execution Plans for Management, Schedule and Financing National Significance
- Ability to reach 240 miles per hour
- Benefit to U.S. Economy through Technology Transfer

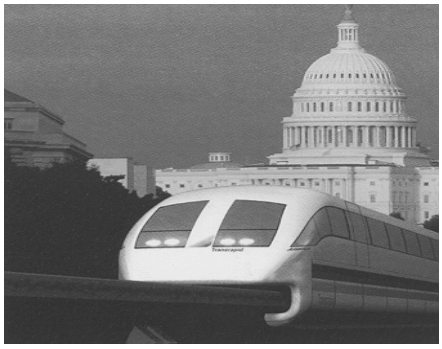
The Benefits of Maglev

Should the Baltimore-Washington Corridor be selected for the design and construction, potential social and economic benefits to the region could be significant.

First and foremost, travel times could be reduced. At a time where more and more vehicle miles are traveled everyday in our region, commuters are looking for ways to reduce the time they spend on the road. Travel times between Baltimore and Washington could be reduced to 16 minutes. At the present time it takes about 55 minutes by automobile and about 50 minutes by MARC commuter rail. Other benefits include:

- Even distribution of airline passengers among the three airports in our region;
- Reduction in the future delays projected at these airports;
- Increased employment opportunities, especially in a new super conducting technology;
- Enhanced economic vitality and tourism in the two interconnected urban areas of Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Should Maglev come to the Washington-Baltimore corridor and extend further north to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston and south to Richmond, Raleigh, and Charlotte, Maglev could significantly bolster the economy along the East Coast. Congestion could be reduced at airports along the East Coast by diverting commuter air passengers to the Maglev system. This new way to travel could also reduce highway congestion and its associated pollutants.



Photographic simulation of Maglev vehicle.

Baltimore-Washington Corridor Selected

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in excess of 240 miles an hour. Maglev trains are lifted, propelled and guided magnetically over specially designed guideways, free of many of the constraints of more traditional rail technologies.

Project Overview

The Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project will build upon the Baltimore-Washington Corridor Magnetic Levitation Feasibility Study that was conducted in 1994. Several possible routes will be evaluated for relative cost, ridership, benefits, performance and potential environmental issues, including landuse, parklands, wetlands, historic sites, electromagnetic forces, air quality, noise, effects on neighborhoods and any other concerns as identified by the public and project staff.

Please call or write to the address below if you have questions, need additional information, or want to be on the project mailing list.

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Maglev Project Chronology

- June 1994 – Baltimore-Washington Corridor Maglev Feasibility Study Completed
- May 1999 – U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater announces selection of seven corridors for further study.
- July 1999 – Mass Transit Administration (MTA) begins feasibility study of Washington-Baltimore region.
- October 1999 – Informational meetings held throughout region.
- Winter 1999 - Ongoing study evaluating analysis, alignments and environmental impacts.
- Spring 2000 – Informational meetings will be held throughout region.
- June 2000 – MTA completes studies in Baltimore-Washington corridor.
- Fall 2000 – Federal government selects one or more finalist corridors.

If Washington-Baltimore region is a finalist corridor:

- 2001-2002 – Environmental Impact Statements prepared for selected alignment.
- 2003 – Single corridor selected by FRA for funding, design, and construction.
- 2004-2005 – Design completed; rights-of-way acquired.
- 2006-2009 – Construction period.