



## Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project Alternative Screening - March 2002

*Welcome to the Maglev Alternative Screening Public Open House. The Maryland Transit Administration is holding these public meetings to introduce the three alignments being proposed for the Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project. These open houses are designed to be informal, to provide an opportunity for you to speak one-on-one with project representatives, and ask questions about the alternatives under consideration, Maglev technology, and the project in general. We need your comments and ideas on the three alternatives to determine those for more detailed study. Thank you for your interest.*

### Alternative Screening Process Summary

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) continues to move forward with environmental, engineering and public involvement efforts as part of the Baltimore-Washington Maglev project. Magnetic levitation, maglev, is a technology whereby vehicles are operated by a non-contact electromagnetic support system that lifts, guides and propels the vehicle forward at speeds in excess of 240 miles per hour. Maglev technology could be used to connect Baltimore and Washington, D.C., with a stop at Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the MTA, in cooperation with Baltimore City, Baltimore County and the District of Columbia, are preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 or NEPA. NEPA establishes a national policy of preserving and enhancing the human environment for future generations while meeting the needs, including the transportation needs, of the present generation.

In September 2001, scoping meetings for this project were held to introduce potential alignments to the public and local communities. Formal

comments were requested at these meetings and also taken through the Maglev website. All comments were reviewed by the project team, responded to if requested, and used to refine the alignments.

The second, and current, phase of the DEIS is to determine which alternatives will be selected for more detailed study. Several alternative routes are being studied to link Baltimore and Washington, DC. The alternatives currently being studied are the No-Build alternative, an alignment paralleling Interstate-95, an alignment paralleling the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, and an alignment paralleling the Amtrak rail corridor.

This selection will be based on key social, environmental, engineering, and constructibility issues, as well as public and agency input. This second round of public meetings is being held in order to show how the alignments have been refined since scoping and to seek public input into which of these alternatives will be selected for more detailed study. We need your comments to make this decision.

As part of the alternative screening process, categories of project features are being studied which

*(continued on next page)*

## Alternative Screening Process Summary

*(continued from page 1)*

include natural and human features, historical and archeological features, and engineering and operational features.

Once the alternative screening process is complete and comments have been submitted from the public and resource agencies, the project team will decide which alignments will be retained and carried forward into the next phase of the project for more detailed study.



### Screening Factors

#### Public and Agency Input

##### Natural, Human and Historic Features

- Maryland DNR wetlands
- Wetlands of special state concern
- Protected species habitat
- Minority and low income communities
- Sensitive receptors
- National Register listed or eligible sites
- Historic and archeological sites
- Stream crossing

#### Engineering and Operational Features

- Speed
- Utilities
- Construction complexity
- Special structures
- Intermodal connectivity
- Impacts to existing infrastructure
- Ridership
- Operation and maintenance costs

### Alternative Screening–Next Steps

**Present Alternatives at Public Meetings (now underway)**  
**Receive and Review Public Comments (now through April 5, 2002)**  
**Conduct Alternatives Retained Screening (now through mid-April)**  
**Agency Review and Concurrence of Alternatives Retained (May 2002)**  
**Begin Engineering/Environmental Analysis of the Alternatives Retained (May 2002)**

## Purpose and Need Summary Statement

*As part of the DEIS, the MTA must establish what is called the “Purpose and Need” of the Baltimore-Washington Maglev project. This section of the DEIS is in many ways the most important chapter of study. It establishes why the agency is proposing to finance and build the project while at the same time causing environmental impacts. A clear, well-justified purpose and need section explains to the public and decision makers that the project is necessary and worthwhile. The Purpose and Need section will justify why environmental impacts are acceptable based on meeting the project’s purpose and need.*

### Purpose of the Project

In 1998, the U.S. Congress established the Maglev Deployment Program to achieve two separate goals: demonstrating the feasibility of an entirely new transportation technology while at the same time addressing the transportation needs of a particular area of the country.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is conducting a nationwide competition to select a location to achieve these goals. One critical technical criterion is that the proposed Maglev Project be a segment of a high-speed ground transportation corridor. In May, 2001, the Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project was selected by FRA as one of only two projects, nationwide, that has the potential to best meet the two MDP goals, and be a segment of a high-speed ground transportation corridor.

A Maglev system in the Baltimore-Washington corridor would provide high-speed, state-of-the-art transportation from center-city to center-city between Union Station in Washington D.C. and the Camden Yards area in Baltimore, with a station at BWI Airport and a potential station near the Capital Beltway. Maglev would dramatically reduce travel time between Baltimore, Washington and BWI Airport. The system is being designed to provide intermodal connections with urban, commuter and intercity bus and rail systems in Baltimore and Washington and BWI Airport.

Business, recreational, tourist, and commuter travel demands in the Baltimore Washington corridor

are projected to increase over the next 40 years. The Maglev system could help meet these demands for travel between both cities as well as to and from BWI Airport. With a Maglev connection between Union Station and the Camden Yards area, travelers to the region would be able to easily visit both cities as part of vacations. It can be expected that the addition of the Maglev system may induce even more tourists to travel to the region, because the Maglev system would become an attraction, itself, in the initial years.

Maglev could be the signature investment in support of revitalizing downtown Baltimore. In addition, having a Maglev station at BWI Airport would be a significant support to the airport and surrounding areas. Similarly, a Maglev station at Washington Union Station would promote investment within the District of Columbia and its transit-accessible suburbs.

The Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project is intended to demonstrate Maglev technology under the FRA’s MDP. This would be accomplished through operation of the dual track, three (or four) station system, use of high and low-speed switches and daily revenue service operations.

### Need for the Project

The Baltimore Washington Maglev Project could help to meet critical transportation economic and

*(continued on page 4)*

## Purpose and Need Summary Statement

*(continued from page 3)*

environmental needs in the Baltimore-Washington Corridor. Transportation needs that could be addressed by the project include:

- Meeting transportation demands from growing population, employment, tourism and air travel.
- Reducing congestion on area roadways, and related damage, injuries and fatalities.
- Helping to reduce the need for additional airport and highway construction.
- Supporting BWI Airport as a key economic engine of the State.

Economic and environmental needs that could be addressed by the project include:

- Supporting Smart Growth principles by focusing transportation access to the revitalization area in Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., and reinforcement of investments at BWI Airport.
- Promoting tourism and convention activity, by effectively shrinking the region with a twenty-minute connection between the two cities.
- Supporting regional economic partnership.
- Support of joint development and generation of employment.
- Reducing air pollution by taking cars off the road.
- Reducing dependency on gasoline through reduced travel on roads.

## Contact Information

Comments on the alternative alignments under consideration must be sent to the MTA at the address below or at the Maglev web site at [www.bwmaglev.com](http://www.bwmaglev.com). All comments should be received by April 5, 2002 to be considered in this phase of the DEIS for project. The MTA is committed to keeping you informed about the Baltimore-Washington Maglev Project. If you would like additional information, have questions or would like a Maglev project presentation at your community meeting, please visit our web site or write to:

Suhair Alkhatib, Project Manager  
[Salkhatib@mdot.state.md.us](mailto:Salkhatib@mdot.state.md.us)

Diane Ratcliff, Environmental Manager  
[Dratcliff@mdot.state.md.us](mailto:Dratcliff@mdot.state.md.us)

Office of Planning  
Maryland Transit Administration  
6 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

