

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1117 (Delegate Solomon, *et al.*)
 Environment and Transportation

Maryland Transit Administration - Extension of MARC Service - Plans and Report

This bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to (1) develop a plan to expand the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train service, as specified; (2) develop recommendations for policy actions to implement the plan, as specified; and (3) revise the most recent MARC Growth and Investment Plan to reflect the plan and recommendations developed pursuant to the bill. MTA must report its recommendations and plans to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2019. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by up to \$1.0 million in FY 2020 only. Revenues are not directly affected, but could be affected by the plans developed and implemented as a result of the bill.

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	1,000,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$1,000,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: MTA must develop a plan to (1) extend the hours of operation of MARC trains to include “day-long service” on weekdays and (2) provide MARC train service to the Crystal City station in Arlington, Virginia. MTA must develop recommendations for 1-year, 2-year, 5-year, and 10-year policy actions necessary to implement the plan developed pursuant to the bill.

“Day-long service” means the continuous operation of MARC trains (1) at each stop in both directions on the Brunswick Line, Camden Line, or Penn Line and (2) beginning not later than 4:30 a.m. and ending not earlier than 9:30 p.m. the same day.

Current Law/Background:

Maryland Area Regional Commuter Service in the State

MTA operates a comprehensive transit system throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, including more than 50 local bus lines in Baltimore and other services such as the light rail, Baltimore Metro subway, commuter buses, MARC trains, and mobility/paratransit vehicles. MTA is also responsible for hundreds of transit stations.

[MARC commuter train service](#) operates three different lines that serve several Maryland counties; Washington, DC; and Martinsburg, West Virginia: (1) the Brunswick Line; (2) the Camden Line; and (3) the Penn Line. In December 2013, MARC began to offer weekend service on the Penn Line; the other lines offer service only on weekdays and select holidays. MARC train service on the Brunswick Line operates between Brunswick, Maryland and Union Station in Washington, DC. This line also includes an extension to Frederick, Maryland and Martinsburg, West Virginia. Stops along the Brunswick Line include areas surrounding Washington DC, such as Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Silver Spring, Maryland. MARC service is provided by running State-owned MARC trains on existing Amtrak railways owned by CSX Transportation (CSX).

The MARC Growth and Investment Plan outlines a 30-year planning period that identifies capital improvements needed to maintain a state of good repair for the MARC system. The plan also outlines capital needs required to improve and expand service. The plan is organized into three major time periods (short term (present through 2025), medium term (2025 through 2035), and long term (2035 through 2045)) and six investment areas within each of those time periods (vehicles, stations, guideways, facilities, systems, and service). The plan is scheduled to be updated in the spring of 2019 and is being renamed to the MARC Cornerstones Plan.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Founded in 1957, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association, with a membership of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and the U.S. Congress. COG is supported by financial contributions from its member governments, federal and state grants and contracts, and donations from foundations and the private sector. COG's board of directors is responsible for its overall policies. In addition, a wide network of policy, technical, and advisory committees, partnerships, and programs advance COG's regional work. COG is staffed by about 130 subject matter experts and other professionals that support COG and its members. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) advises that COG is currently exploring the feasibility of a MARC run-through service to Virginia.

State Expenditures: Under the bill, MDOT must work with CSX to conduct three rail traffic control studies in order to determine whether the lines could handle the increased capacity necessary to extend the hours of operation for MARC service and expand the service to Crystal City, Virginia. If there is capacity, MDOT and CSX must evaluate whether any additional equipment (including additional rail cars), maintenance facilities, or storage areas are needed, in addition to estimating any additional operating costs for the added service. If there is no capacity, MDOT and CSX must determine the level of expansion necessary to accommodate the increased service; MDOT advises that any cost for such an expansion would be the State's responsibility.

Therefore, TTF expenditures increase by as much as \$1.0 million in fiscal 2020 in order to complete the plans and corresponding studies. This estimate includes \$250,000 for each of the three studies MDOT must complete under the bill (to examine the Camden Line and the Brunswick Line and to determine the feasibility of added service to Crystal City, Virginia). Even though MDOT is already exploring the expansion of MARC service to Virginia in collaboration with COG, numerous stakeholders (including CSX) must be consulted and collaborated with to expedite the feasibility study and to determine how the extension could be achieved. In addition to those three studies, MDOT may need to conduct an evaluation of additional capital needs; that evaluation is expected to cost \$250,000 in fiscal 2020.

It is assumed that no costs are incurred in fiscal 2019, despite the bill's June 1, 2019 effective date.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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sb/lgc

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