

Friday, September 12, 2008

Contact:
Danyell Diggs
Red Line Planning Coordinator
443-984-4097

Mayor Dixon Joins State Transportation Secretary John Porcari to Sign Red Line Community Compact

Over 60 organizations endorse transit project

BALTIMORE, MD (September 12, 2008) - Mayor Sheila Dixon joined Maryland Transportation (MDOT) Secretary John D. Porcari, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Administrator Paul J. Wiedefeld and more than 60 community leaders to endorse a series of guiding principles and strategies for the design and construction of the proposed 14-mile Red Line transit project. The agreement is called the "Red Line Community Compact."

The guiding principles found in the Red Line Community Compact place a strong emphasis on economic empowerment for both residents and businesses along the new transit corridor. The document includes environmental protections and enhancements for the communities along the Red Line's route. It also urges funding for community-centered and transit-oriented development opportunities, as well as aggressively managing the impact of construction.

These principles and strategies were developed following Mayor Dixon's Red Line Summit. The summit was attended by over 300 people in early May. The Mayor also participated in a series of walking tours held this summer with community, business, civic and religious groups.

"The Red Line is essential to Baltimore's future," said Mayor Dixon. "We know that there are tremendous economic and environmental opportunities and community benefits that can be realized with the Red Line project. Our partners in the state and city have acknowledged and pledged to work together to meet the challenges that comes with this major public works project."

"The State is moving the Red Line forward because it expands and connects our existing rail network and gives our citizens a way to get to life's activities while beating the high price of gas," said Secretary Porcari. "Opportunities like the Red Line do not come around very often, and we have to get it right. The compact we are signing today creates a partnership with Baltimore City and communities that will help us get it right."

A steering committee composed of cabinet members, community leaders, and MTA/MDOT staff will monitor the Compact's implementation and provide an annual progress report to the Mayor. Appointments to the committee will be announced in early October.

When completed, the proposed Red Line will provide a rapid and enhanced transit connection between the Woodlawn area of Baltimore County, West Baltimore communities, downtown Baltimore, Inner Harbor East, Fells Point, Canton, and the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. Construction is expected to begin in 2012, pending environmental approvals and funding agreements with the federal government.

The Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park Museum in Fells Point hosted the signing ceremony.