

East-West Light Rail Line Gets Backing

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The push to create a light rail line that connects the east to west here in Baltimore is gaining more support.

Gigi Barnett has more on who is now pushing for the line.

Our media partners at the Baltimore Sun have learned that Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon and County Executive Jim Smith will announce their support for expanded light rail service.

It's one of the biggest complaints facing the city's light rail service, the two line currently in operation don't connect, leaving many looking to move from east to west, now short on positions.

Now, the push to add an additional Red Line, that would connect Woodlawn to Bayview is gaining support.

The leaders of Baltimore's two metropolitan governments will join forces and push for the new Red Line.

Mayor Sheila Dixon and County Executive Jim Smith are planning to urge the MTA to choose "Alternative 4C."

What we want to do is bring back Edmondson Avenue into a neighborhood that's greener," said Dixon, who lives in Hunting Ridge. "My house is three doors off Edmondson. I believe it's going to enhance my community."

The \$1.6 billion proposal would create a mix of above ground and below ground tunnels that would run underneath downtown Baltimore, Fells Point and West Baltimore's Cooks Lane.

For months business owners and developers in the area have pushed for the line.

The MTA predicts the new Red Line would serve 42,000 passengers a day, with access to 7,500 businesses and nearly 200,000 workers.

The MTA says having the support of Dixon and Smith is very important because they represent the two communities that will be most affected by the line. The announcement is expected to come sometime Thursday.

The MTA will then take the recommendations from the community to the federal government when it applies for federal funds.