

Officials Will Decide Red Line's Fate In January

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BALTIMORE (WJZ) - There's only a few more weeks in the debate over new light rail service in Baltimore. After that, transit officials will decide the fate of the Red Line.

Adam May reports on a new effort to get the project moving.

One of the biggest complaints about the current light rail system is that the two lines we already have don't connect. Adding a Red Line to the map would change that.

An unlikely group rallied Tuesday for a proposed expansion of light rail service in Baltimore. They unrolled a scroll signed by more than 700 members of the business community favoring a Red Line that would run from Security Square to downtown through Harbor East and Canton and ending at Bayview.

"It's the entertainment line if you want to go to a restaurant. It's the tourist line if you want to be at the hotels downtown," said developer Bill Struever.

Developers want the construction jobs.

"If a bank or mortgage company or any other business said they wanted to move to Baltimore and bring five or ten or 15 or 17,000 jobs with them, we'd all be jumping and clamoring for those jobs," said developer Ken Banks.

Despite all this apparent support, there is some opposition. Some people don't want to see it running aboveground, especially in places like Canton, where the Red Line would run right along the median.

"At the public hearing, there was a lot of support for a Red Line everywhere where it was in a tunnel," said Edward Cohen with Riders Action Council.

The MTA estimates the Red Line would serve 42,000 passengers a day with access to 7,500 businesses with almost 200,000 workers.

Laying miles of new track and adding new stops around the city could take years and the earliest new construction could begin would be 2012.

The MTA is accepting comments on the Red Line proposal through Jan. 5.