

# TOPS

## Transportation Opportunities Plans: Making the Most of Baltimore's Red Line



Location ..... Baltimore City and Baltimore County, Maryland

Type of Application..... Project Planning

Applicant Organization ..... Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
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Type of Eligible Applicant ..... City Government

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## Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore’s Red Line

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This grant application for TOPS is submitted to the United States Department of Transportation by a broad coalition of state and local agencies in the Baltimore region, as well as multiple project sponsors and supporting organizations. The primary point of contact is:

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**In addition to the applicant, multiple other partner organizations are currently involved and have pledged to offer support to TOPS.**

**They include:**

- **Maryland Department of Transportation**
- **Maryland Transit Administration**
- **Baltimore City Department of Planning**
- **Baltimore County**
- **Greater Baltimore Committee**
- **Downtown Partnership of Baltimore**
- **Social Security Administration**
- **Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services**
- **Johns Hopkins Hospital**
- **University of Maryland at Baltimore**
- **University of Maryland Bio Park**
- **DLLR Workforce Development**
- **Baltimore Red Line Community Compact**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Baltimore is challenged to meet its mobility, housing, employment, and economic opportunity needs by loss of population, uneven land use patterns and density, a lack of quality affordable housing, and inefficient transportation connections. Baltimore communities—especially distressed communities—are often disconnected from jobs and the basic necessities of life.

The Maryland Transit Administration in partnership with Baltimore City and Baltimore County is implementing the Red Line, a new light rail line providing east-west connections to major employment centers and Baltimore destinations. The Red Line will improve Baltimore citizens' access to opportunities. However, additional work is required by the City and County to maximize the transit investment by providing better access to jobs, growing transit ridership, stimulating development of affordable housing, improving educational opportunities, and increasing the resident population around station areas. That work is the focus of this TIGER 2014 application.

Station areas are the locations where the Red Line will interface with the surrounding community. Station area planning is typically carried out through four steps:

1. Community visioning
2. Station design
3. Revision to land use regulations
4. Implementation planning for improved local transportation connections and community integration in the broader station areas

The Red Line Project team has done an excellent job of leading the station planning process through the first three steps. The final step of implementation planning for local transportation connections and community integration remains to be completed by Baltimore City and Baltimore County. This effort is TOPS: the Red Line Transportation Opportunities Plans. TOPS, a Functional Master Plan, will establish a framework for the City, County and private investment in transportation, education, recreation, and economic development. TOPS will produce Station Area Inventories, Station Area Investment Plans, and a Consolidated Station Area Investment Program.

TOPS will plan for investments that:

- Derive the full community benefit of the federal, state and local Red Line investment
- Optimize productivity of the transportation system
- Realize improved community connections to jobs, healthcare and education
- Maximize private investment in transforming Baltimore

TOPS will lead to strategically planned investment in the Baltimore region to benefit its citizens. It will establish interagency partnerships, policies, plans and strategies leading to ladders of opportunity. The TOPS Functional Master Plan will include strengthening access and connection to employment, healthcare, workforce development, affordable housing, education, recreation, public safety and economic development. TOPS will address infrastructure state of good repair, regional economic competitiveness, community quality of life, environmental justice, and sustainability.

TOPS strongly meets all of the TIGER selection criteria for project planning and leverages the federal, state and local investment in the Red Line.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **What is the Red Line?**

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is currently nearing completion of the Red Line design. The 14-mile light rail line runs east-west from the proposed Bayview MARC station in East Baltimore to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in suburban Baltimore County. This \$2.6 billion New Starts funded project represents an extraordinary partnership among MTA, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, USDOT, other government agencies, elected officials, the private sector, and the public. Planning for the Red Line began in 2000 and the Red Line is scheduled to be in revenue service in 2022 pending federal funding.

The Red Line will provide enhanced east-west mobility, reducing travel times between neighborhoods and concentrations of jobs and educational opportunities while providing enhanced connectivity to Baltimore’s existing transit network that includes the Metro subway, the Central Light Rail, the MARC commuter train service, Core Bus service, and Mobility paratransit service. Nineteen stations are planned to serve communities, downtown Baltimore, major attractions and employment centers.

Baltimore neighborhoods have been the focus of the Red Line since its inception. The MTA and the local governments (Baltimore City and Baltimore County) established a Community Compact to ensure that during the planning, design, construction, and operation of the Red Line, community needs were met. The Community Compact states that “As the MTA and local governments decide on a Red Line alignment, Baltimore City will develop a Red Line neighborhood investment strategy to enhance the quality of life in Red Line station communities...” Ultimately, station areas are where the Red Line will interface with the surrounding community. Station area planning is typically carried out through four steps:

1. Community visioning
2. Station design
3. Revision to land use regulations
4. Implementation planning for improved local transportation connections and community integration in the broader station areas

**The Red Line will provide access to regional destinations; TOPS will provide a framework for enhancing neighborhood access to the Red Line.**

The Red Line team has done an excellent job of leading the station planning process through the first three steps, working in collaboration with Station Area Advisory Committees (SAACs). The SAAC process is part of the MTA’s public involvement program for the Red Line and fulfills a commitment from the Red Line Community Compact. Through regular meetings, more than 250 community stakeholders provided input on how Red Line stations could best serve local communities. SAAC members brought expertise, experiences, familiarity, and connections to the Red Line station planning process. This “on the ground” knowledge helped the Red Line design team ensure that stations were sited and designed to maximize connectivity to neighborhoods and reflect community priorities.

The final step of station area planning process, implementation planning for improved local transportation connections and community integration, remains to be completed by a partnership

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led by the City of Baltimore. This effort is **TOPS: the Red Line Transportation Opportunities Plans**.

### **What is TOPS?**

TOPS is a **Functional Master Plan** that will establish a regional framework for City, County and private planning and investment in the vicinity of the Red Line stations. Specifically, TOPS will:

- Determine how to implement “last mile” transportation connections between the Red Line stations and their surrounding neighborhoods.
- Identify how the City, County and development partners will focus investments in transportation, education, recreation and economic development to leverage the Red Line.
- Create Station Area Investment Plans that stabilizes the residential and commercial real estate markets and reduce the risk for future private sector investment.

Through interagency teams and a robust public involvement process TOPS will produce:

- **Station Area Inventories** including local transportation (streets, sidewalks, local transit and trails) and economic conditions / community facilities (housing, healthcare, schools, parks and recreation facilities);
- **Station Area Investment Plans** including conceptual plans and cost estimates for local multi-modal transportation projects, housing, community investments and private investments;
- **Consolidated Station Area Investment Program** providing a multi-year implementation plan and investment strategy.

TOPS will plan for infrastructure and community investments that:

- Derive the full community benefit of the federal, state and local Red Line investment;
- Optimize productivity of the transportation system;
- Realize improved community connections to jobs, healthcare and education;
- Maximize private investment in transforming Baltimore.

### **Who will benefit?**

Baltimore City and County residents and businesses will be the primary beneficiaries of TOPS. Disinvestment is endemic in a number of Baltimore neighborhoods, many of which will be served by the Red Line. TOPS will get residents to the Red Line so they can better access jobs, educational and training opportunities, services, and shopping needed for them to live prosperous lives. TOPS will also foster customer access from Red Line stations to businesses. Those same local access improvements that support the Red Line will also cross barriers to effective access within and among neighborhoods.

TOPS will also create a regional benefit because many destinations and employment centers draw customers and employees from a broad area. With the Red Line investment, suburban employers will be able to draw from a larger labor pool, and as neighborhoods stabilize and experience reinvestment, the entire regional economy will grow. Furthermore, visitors to the

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greater Baltimore region will have opportunities to experience a greater variety of Baltimore's unique neighborhoods, shopping districts, and rich historic and cultural heritage.

The clearest indicator of who will benefit from TOPS comes from the community support demonstrated through the Red Line SAAC process. Broad coalitions of local community leaders and citizenry came together to develop visions for each station area. Together they identified specific local access elements to be addressed. At two different steps in the SAAC process, the greater public was engaged in a dialogue regarding challenges and opportunities at each station, resulting in a broad base of support from stakeholders. The community has said what they want, and TOPS will develop the detailed implementation and financial plans to deliver it to them.

### **What challenges will TOPS address?**

In many station areas Baltimore neighborhoods have experienced long-term decline and disinvestment. Baltimore also has a high number of zero car households that rely heavily on public transportation. The 2000 census ranked Baltimore 6<sup>th</sup> in zero car households with 35.9 percent having no car. Local and state government agencies have realized that significant public investment in transit and the supporting transportation infrastructure are critical to helping these communities regain their footing. The Red Line is a significant transportation investment that will resolve some of the City's transportation inadequacies.

Baltimore's population and employment have also changed over time. There are pockets of disinvestment and decline, especially in the vicinity of the Route 40 (former I-170) corridor between Franklin and Mulberry Streets. As a result, there has been uneven private investment in Baltimore's neighborhoods. TOPS will maximize the Red Line infrastructure and help attract private investment to socially and economically disadvantaged areas.

Baltimore residents deserve and anticipate better. TOPS, by leveraging the large public investment in the Red Line, will provide ladders of opportunity to assist Baltimoreans in improving their economic condition and quality of life. Specifically, TOPS will establish plans and programs that will:

- **Create or improve connections between people and centers of employment, education, and services.** As noted in the Economic Competitiveness section of this application, TOPS will connect Baltimore residents and businesses with the Red Line. The Red Line, in turn, will provide them connections to the region, nation, and beyond.
- **Remove barriers to connected systems of transportation.** TOPS will provide more effective walking, bicycling, and local transit "last mile" connections to regional transit. Moreover, it will break down built barriers such as rail lines and freeways that have historically divided neighborhoods and stifled their prosperity.
- **Promote workforce development in all modes.** As part of the Red Line, the MTA developed a workforce development initiative that will lead to future employment and training opportunities for local area residents as well as expanded opportunities for local small (disadvantaged) businesses. TOPS will expand on that initiative as its implementation plan moves from planning into design and construction.

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- **Focus public investment in education, housing, healthcare and economic development.** Funding for the Red Line is now committed so City, County and State agencies can focus public investments in education, housing and economic development around Red Line stations. TOPS will encourage interagency decision making that will allow the Red Line neighborhoods to prosper from the light rail system's construction.

### How will TOPS meet those challenges?

TOPS will, broadly speaking, develop plans to improve transportation connections between the Red Line and the communities it serves. TOPS will focus investment decisions to leverage the Red Line commitment by:

- **Enhancing economic development, ridership, and other goals established during the Red Line project development and engineering processes.** Better neighborhood connections ensure the highest possible utilization of the Red Line and foster neighborhood stabilization and reinvestment.
- **Facilitating multimodal connectivity and accessibility.** Red Line stations are where regional and local transportation of all forms—walking, bicycling, various types of transit, and driving—come together. Because these areas serve so many modes and the interchanges among them, they should be the focus of transportation investments.
- **Increasing access to transit hubs for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.** Walking and bicycling are proven to have significant benefits beyond transportation measures, such as increasing property values, boosting retail rents, and enhancing public health.
- **Enabling mixed-use development.** Most of Baltimore's neighborhoods grew up around transit, such as streetcars, and therefore embraced walkable, mixed-use design as a standard urban form. Disinvestment and decades of focus on driving (and parking) have compromised that form in some areas. Transit is expected to spur new development in station areas, and good local access is needed to make that happen.
- **Identifying infrastructure needs.** TOPS will inventory basic functionality of the local streets and sidewalks in each station area and seek first to restore a state of good repair. All City and County departments will coordinate to ensure that improvements address all applicable elements of the street.
- **Facilitating private sector participation.** Additional private investment is a desired outcome of TOPS. Inclusion of private sector partners in the planning process will give them a sense of ownership and strengthen their commitment during implementation.

**These are bold goals, and TOPS has a solid work plan and commitment to public engagement to ensure they will be met.**

## **TOPS WORK PLAN**

The nineteen Red Line station areas differ in existing local transportation infrastructure and levels of economic activity. The six stations in the Downtown area through Fells Point and Canton have experienced recent economic growth and investment in streets and sidewalks, while the Bayview MARC Station is undergoing a station area transit oriented development study in advance of the TOPS project. These seven stations are expected to require lower levels of planning. Of the twelve remaining stations, eight are described in this application. All nineteen stations will be considered during the TOPS process with investments programed through the Consolidated Station Area Investment Program.

The TOPS Work Plan is described in five stages with the public engagement stage continuing over the course of the project. This work will produce the Functional Master Plan which will be comprised of three elements including the Station Area Inventories, Station Area Investment Plans and the Consolidated Station Area Investment Program.

### **TOPS example station study areas:**

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Security Square
- Edmondson Village
- West Baltimore MARC
- Harlem Park
- Poppleton
- Highlandtown/Greektown
- Bayview Campus

**Stage 1 - Public engagement:** TOPS, through partnership between BCDOT and the MTA, will re-engage the Station Area Advisory Committees (SAACs) and the public for a third round of community dialogue. These meetings will build on the previously completed station area visioning process, delving into more detail on specific issues associated with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. The public involvement strategy will specifically involve facilitated small-group meetings and broader public workshops for each station area. Private non-profit, governmental and private sector partners (listed on page 27) will be engaged in a collaborative process to guide TOPS and assist BCDOT determine the type and extent of Station area investments. Building on the community credibility established during the SAAC process and Baltimore's history of reaching out to underserved communities, this process will ensure **meaningful input is effectively sought from all stakeholders.**

**Stage 2 – Inventories and problem definition:** Transportation and economic condition inventories will be updated during this stage as needed including collection of travel data by mode; crash analyses; land use and building inventories; street sufficiency measures; and schedules for MTA, City, and privately-operated transit. The Red Line public involvement process already identified local access needs in a general sense; these are described under the eight example station areas on the following pages. TOPS will examine those issues more specifically. To supplement the public outreach process, TOPS will conduct a series of technical analyses specific to the context of each station area. Deficiencies identified through this process will not only form the basis for the definition of **local transportation access projects**, but will also establish **performance measures** for objective evaluation of alternatives developed during the next phase of work.

**Stage 3 – Station Area Investment Alternatives:** Local transportation alternatives including Complete Streets, sidewalks, trails and transit, and economic development alternatives including

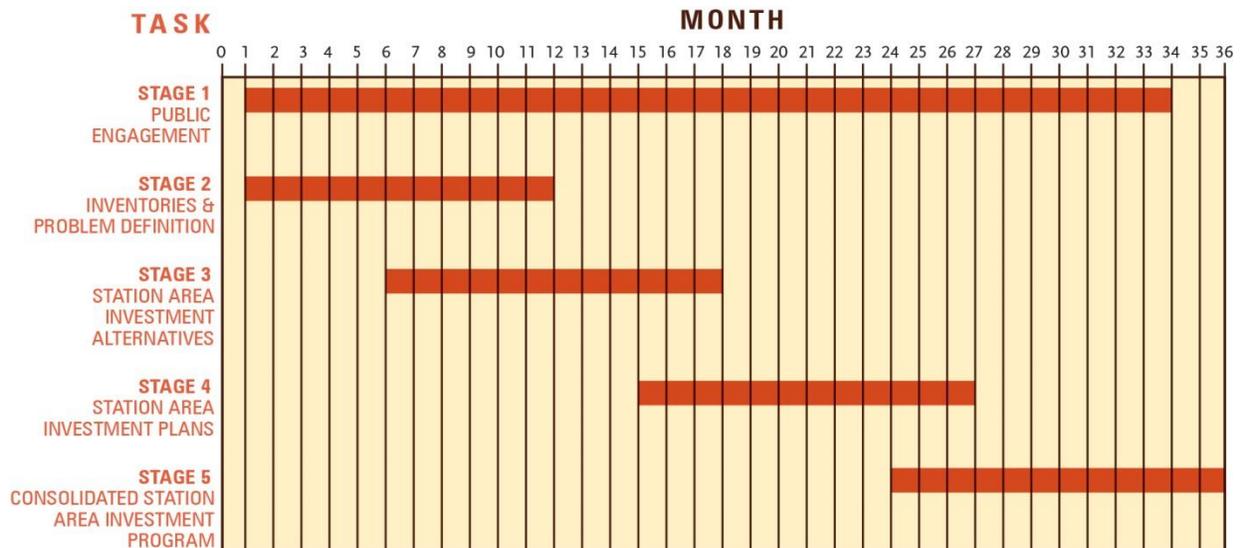
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opportunities for private sector investment, housing, parks and open space will be developed for each of the selected station areas. The proposed process for developing Complete Streets alternatives is found in the Institute for Transportation Engineers’ (ITE) *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context-Sensitive Approach*. This document represents the state of the art in developing and evaluating multiple alternatives that focus on specific performance measures. Through the SAAC and public engagement process, each alternative will be weighed against the others to determine which best addresses both technical needs and stakeholder desires. During the development of alternatives, the private sector will be engaged through developer forums where current market opportunities will be identified, barriers to private investment will be explored, and changes in public policies will be discussed. Maximizing private sector participation in Baltimore’s future is an important element of TOPS.

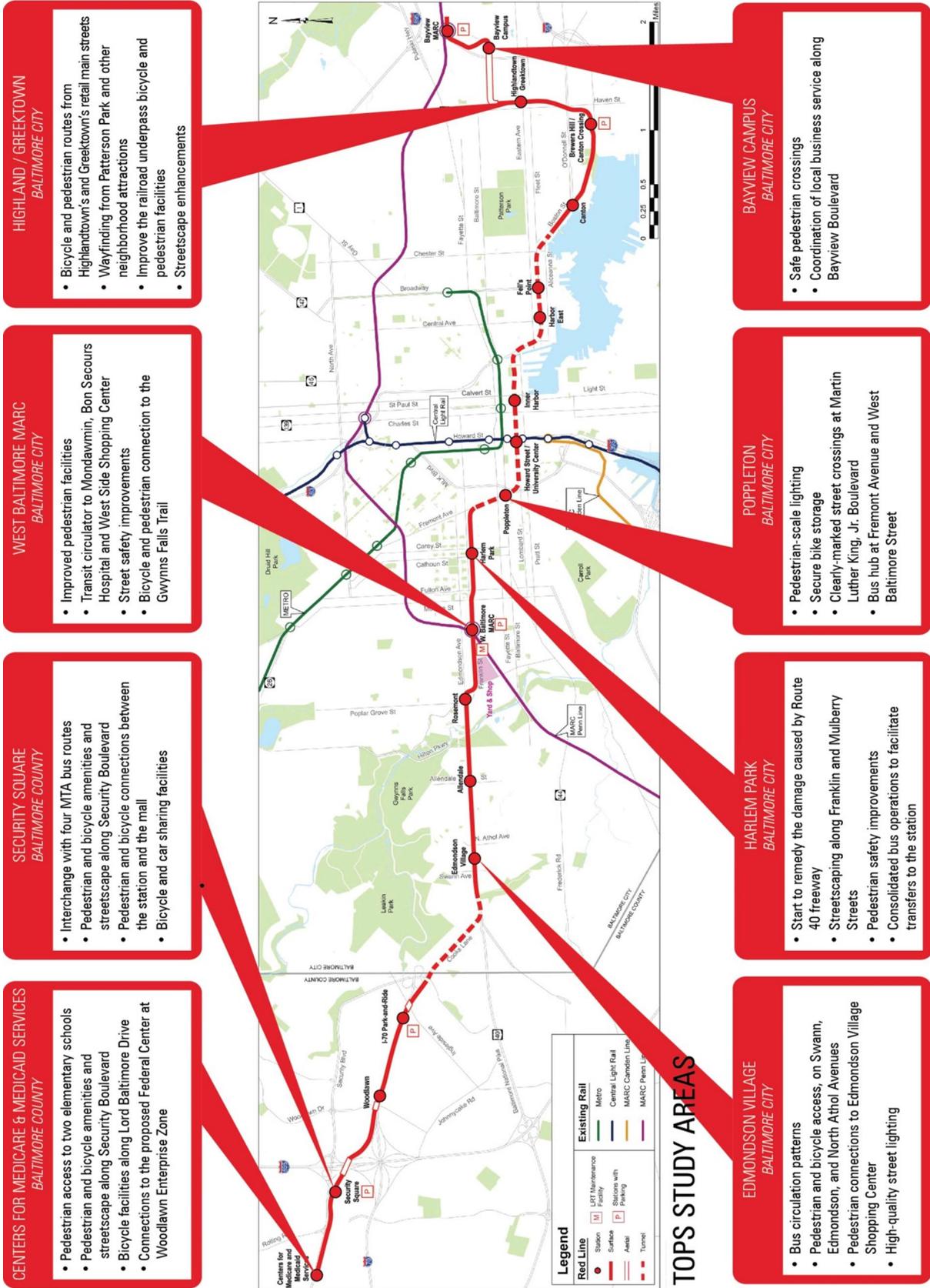
**Stage 4 – Station Area Investment Plans:** Station Area Investment Plans will be developed for each of the selected stations. They will clearly identify the scope of proposed improvements and anticipated planning-level costs. Conceptual designs, responsibilities for project implementation, environmental clearance and implementation schedules will be addressed for each project included in the Station Area Investment Plans.

**Stage 5 - Consolidated Station Area Investment Program:** The ultimate product of TOPS will be a Consolidated Station Area Investment Program. To best ensure that the plan moves as efficiently as possible into built projects, it will include a monitoring and reporting system. This system will allow all project stakeholders to track implementation progress across a series of performance measures identified at the onset of the process. **Any stakeholder will be able to track the implementation of any project at any time.**

**Schedule:** TOPS will be completed in 36 months. TIGER funds will not only be obligated within six months of grant award, well in advance of the September 30, 2016 statutory deadline, but the entire project will be completed years before the 2021 expenditure deadline.



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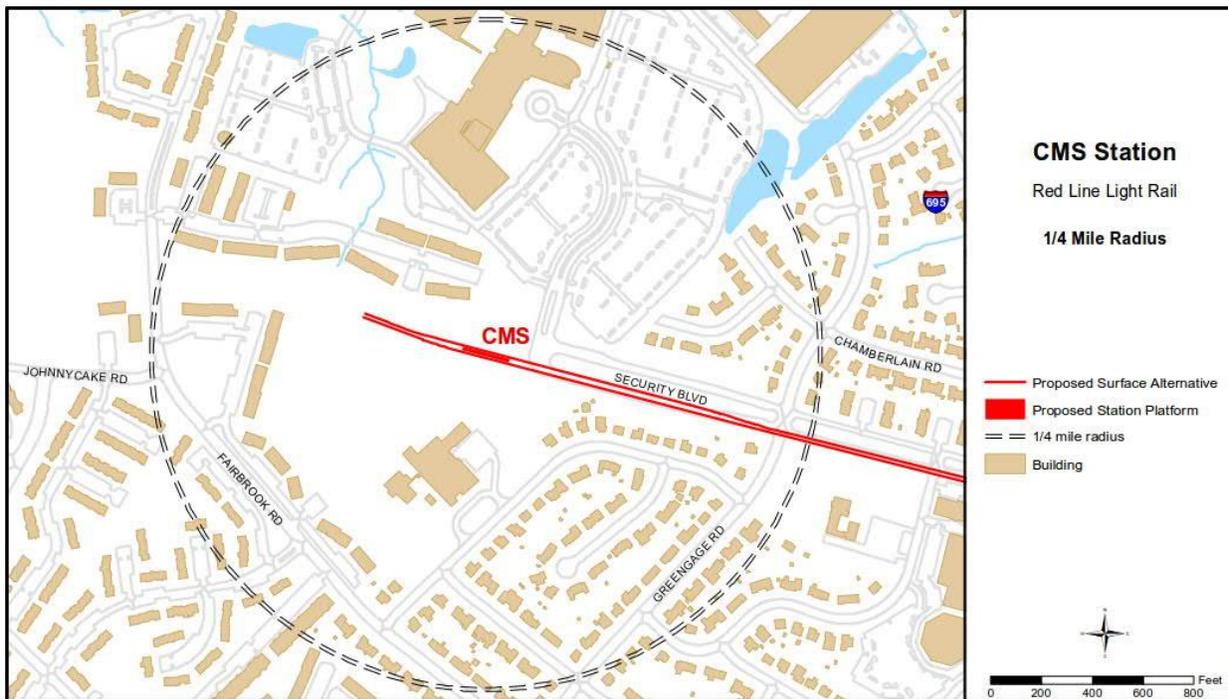




The following pages provide descriptions of the eight sample station areas that form the TOPS program, as well as specific local access elements that will be studied under TOPS.

### Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

The CMS station is the proposed western terminus of the Red Line and is located in Baltimore County. It is named for the adjacent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, a major Federal government office complex. Other land uses in the area are characterized by a mix of suburban land uses (residential, commercial and employment), but are primarily comprised of low-to-medium density residential uses.

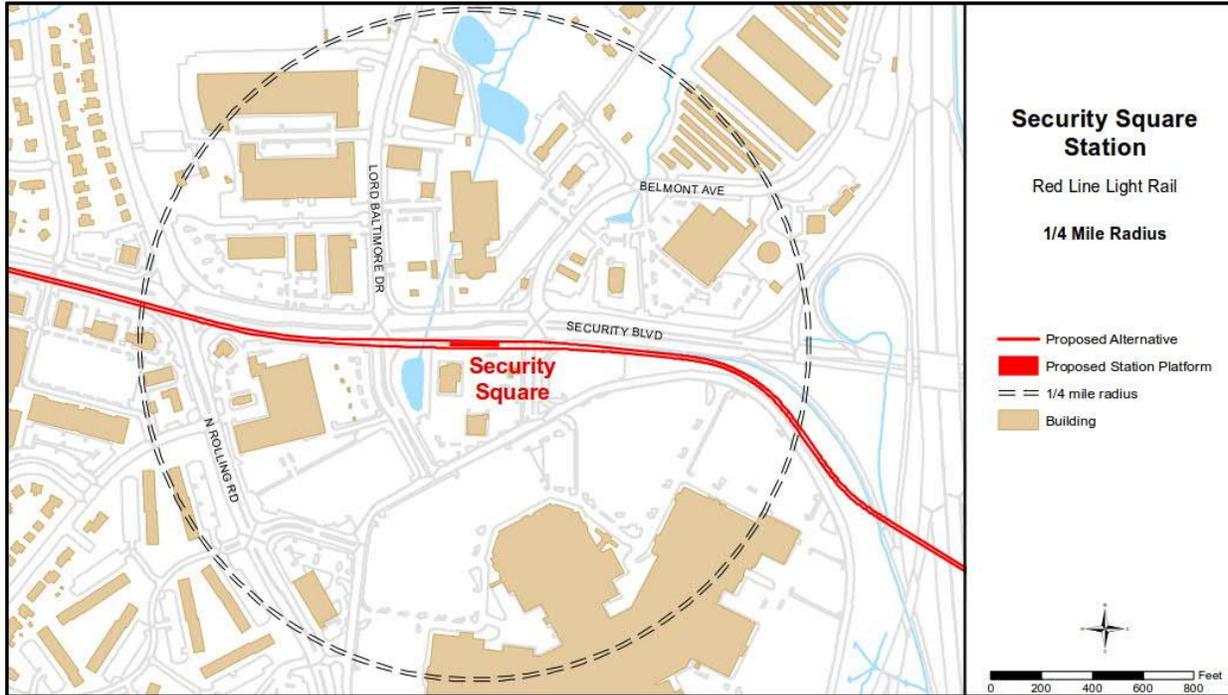


TOPS will address the following connectivity issues identified by the MTA and SAAC:

- Pedestrian access to two elementary schools
- Pedestrian and bicycle amenities and streetscape along Security Boulevard
- Bicycle facilities along Lord Baltimore Drive
- Improved pedestrian and street lighting
- Connections to the proposed Federal Center at Woodlawn Enterprise Zone to the north and east of the station area

### Security Square

Located just east of the CMS station in Baltimore County, the Security Square station will serve Security Square Mall and the surrounding area. The mall and adjacent properties provide excellent opportunities for redevelopment over time, and it was recognized that multimodal access must be provided to allow opportunities for redevelopment resulting in creating economic growth.



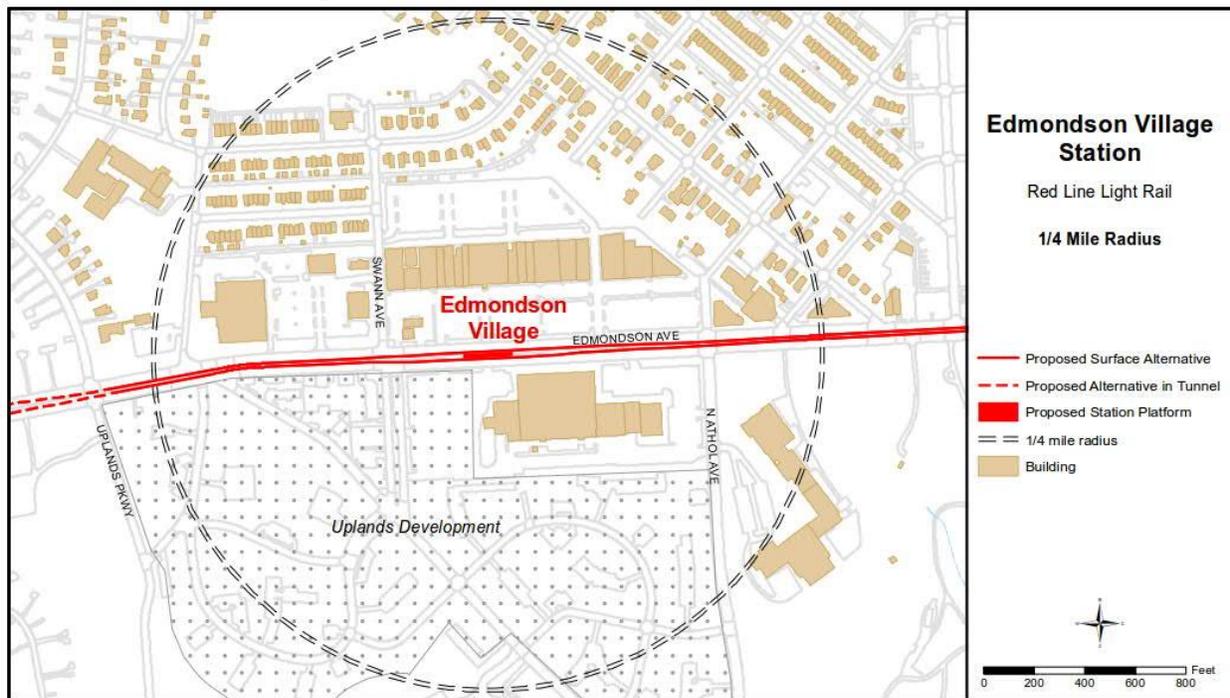
Specific access concerns for TOPS include:

- Consultation with major commercial property owners to foster a dialogue on how local access improvements can spur transit-oriented development
- Interchange with four MTA bus routes
- Pedestrian and bicycle amenities and streetscape along Security Boulevard, including improved crossings
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections between the station and nearby retail and employment centers
- Alternative transportation facilities including bike and car sharing

### Edmondson Village

Edmondson Village is a historic Baltimore City neighborhood. The proposed station is a walk-up station designed to serve the variety of dense land uses in the area, including the historic Edmondson Village Shopping Center, the Edmondson-Westside High School complex, the Uplands community redevelopment project, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and a variety of urban commercial and residential areas.

The Uplands Community located just south of the Edmondson Village Station is a major redevelopment initiative sponsored by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. Uplands Visionaries, LLC is the master developer and with participation of six private limited liability corporations and the Southwest Baltimore Community Development Corporation. The master planned development will consist of more than 1,100 residences in a modern, urban mixed-income housing community. The first phase is underway with a combination of single family homes, townhomes and apartments.



The MTA and SAAC emphasized pedestrian access to the Edmondson Village station due to the urban nature of the area. TOPS will develop an implementation plan for the following access issues:

- Potential revisions to bus circulation patterns, reflecting high bus ridership in the neighborhood; five bus routes are currently planned to pass through the station
- Comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle access, focusing on Swann, Edmondson, and North Athol Avenues
- Strong pedestrian connections to Edmondson Village Shopping Center and potential development sites
- Green streets, including preservation of tree canopy and stormwater management

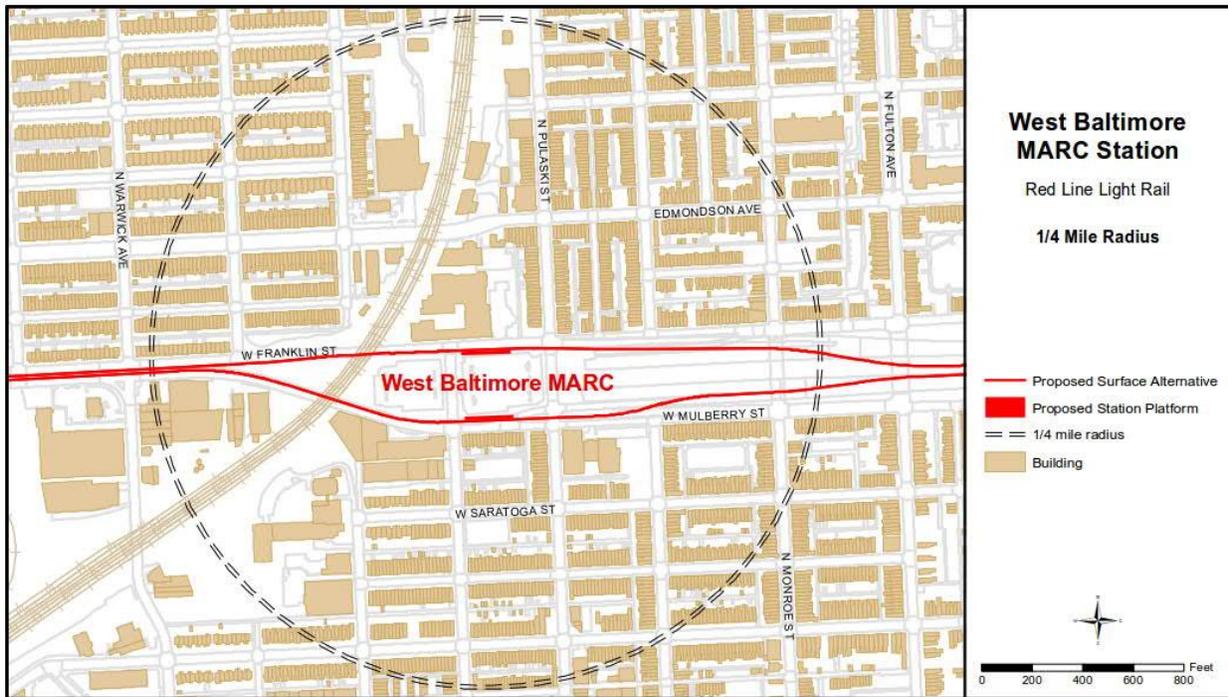
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- Reinforcement of the street as a public realm and community open space asset
- Safety and security for pedestrians, particularly appropriate street lighting

### West Baltimore MARC

The West Baltimore MARC Red Line station will provide an interchange opportunity with the commuter rail station of the same name. Historically, transportation has served to divide the surrounding neighborhoods of Evergreen Terrace, Harlem Park and Pinehurst rather than unite them. The grade-separated Amtrak Northeast Corridor, on which MARC trains run, is a north-south barrier, and the partial construction of Route 40 (former I-170) divides neighborhoods east of the MARC station.

In 2009, the Baltimore City Department of Planning completed a Transit-Centered Community Development Strategy plan for the West Baltimore MARC station area. The study found "...that there is limited market potential for various uses in the local market area as it exists today and both the City and the community need to take immediate action to improve the quality of life for current residents and business owners and to change the current development environment." The report also emphasized the importance of the Red Line to the fortunes of the area.



TOPS provides the opportunity to, in the words of the SAAC, "use the MARC Station and the Red Line to bring about community improvement." The MTA and SAAC identified a significant number of community improvements including:

- Improved pedestrian facilities throughout the station area
- A transit circulator among key destinations such as Mondawmin, Bon Secours Hospital and the West Side Shopping Center

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- Safety improvements along Franklin and Mulberry Streets, Fulton Avenue and Monroe Streets, and Edmondson Avenue
- Overall bicycle connectivity as part of the City’s Bicycle Master Plan to ensure neighborhoods have easy bike access to the station
- Direct bicycle and pedestrian connection between the station and the Gwynns Falls Trail
- Provide safe routes to schools
- Improved pedestrian and street lighting
- Better sidewalk connections on Franklin and Mulberry Streets crossing the Northeast Corridor
- Improvements to bridges over the Route 40 (former I-170) barrier
- “Design streets to tame traffic and make West Baltimore more livable”



### Harlem Park

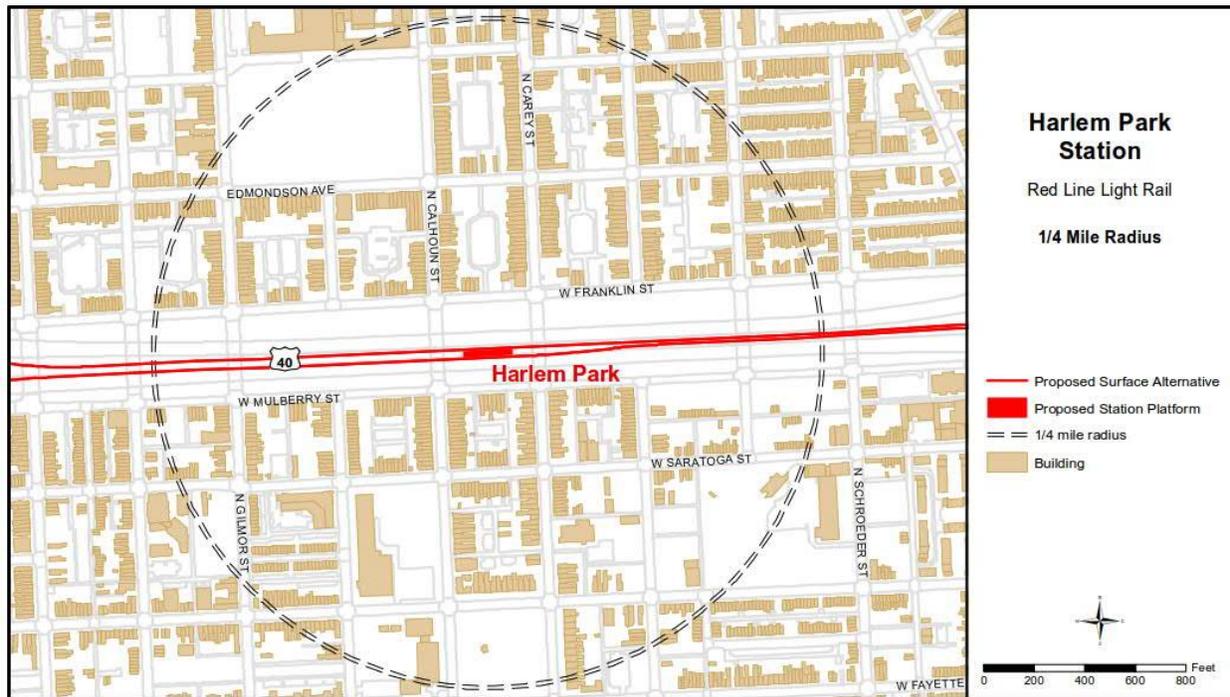
The Harlem Park and Franklin Square neighborhoods face some significant economic challenges. The area is predominantly residential, primarily characterized by two- and three-story row houses typical of much of Baltimore. There is also a significant public housing presence. The principal commercial street in the neighborhood is Baltimore Street, parallel to and four blocks south of the Red Line. There are significant residential and commercial vacancies throughout the area.



Perhaps the most infamous characteristic of the Harlem Park station area is a 1970s era roadway project which has earned it the common nicknames of “The Highway to Nowhere” and “The Ditch.” It is felt by many that this project is one of the primary reasons for the decline of West Baltimore. Nearly 700 homes were taken, displacing many African-American working-class families, and physically splitting the community by the time construction of what was known as I-170 got underway in 1974. Public opposition by civil rights leaders, community activists and others to a network of urban highways that were planned to cut through the city eventually stopped construction of I-170, but not before a 1.4 mile section was completed through West

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Baltimore. Today, the roadway is marked as US 40 with roughly one mile open to the public leading eastward to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.



TOPS will cross the barriers that transportation has created in the community.

TOPS, building on the proposed Red Line station, provides an opportunity to help repair that damage by creating connections across the freeway and into the surrounding community. These improvements would serve as a catalyst for neighborhood stabilization and reinvestment.

The SAAC recommended the following improvements that will be addressed by TOPS:

- Lessen the damage caused by the introduction of the Route 40 freeway barrier into the Harlem Park neighborhood; improvements to the major access routes along the Calhoun Street and Carey Street bridges could include addition of wider sidewalks with special pavers, redesigned guard rails and hand rails, and pedestrian-scale lighting that would make the bridges pedestrian friendly

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- Comprehensive plan for improved bicycle access in the station area
- Streetscaping along Franklin and Mulberry Streets
- Enhancements to the green spaces between Franklin and Mulberry Streets and Route 40
- Pedestrian safety improvements where Calhoun and Carey Streets cross Franklin and Mulberry Streets
- Consolidated bus operations to facilitate transfers to the station
- On-street parking along Franklin and Mulberry Streets to help activate the street and separate pedestrians from moving cars
- Repair sidewalks, street lighting, street trees, and safe pedestrian crossings on several streets surrounding the station
- Connection of the West Baltimore Bike Loop to downtown via Mulberry Street from Calhoun Street to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

### Poppleton

The Red Line will pass under downtown Baltimore in a tunnel, and Poppleton is the first station in the tunnel section. In fact, this configuration was developed by the SAAC in conjunction with the MTA. The station will be immediately adjacent to the developing University of Maryland BioPark and provide access to the surrounding residential area and historic retail corridors.

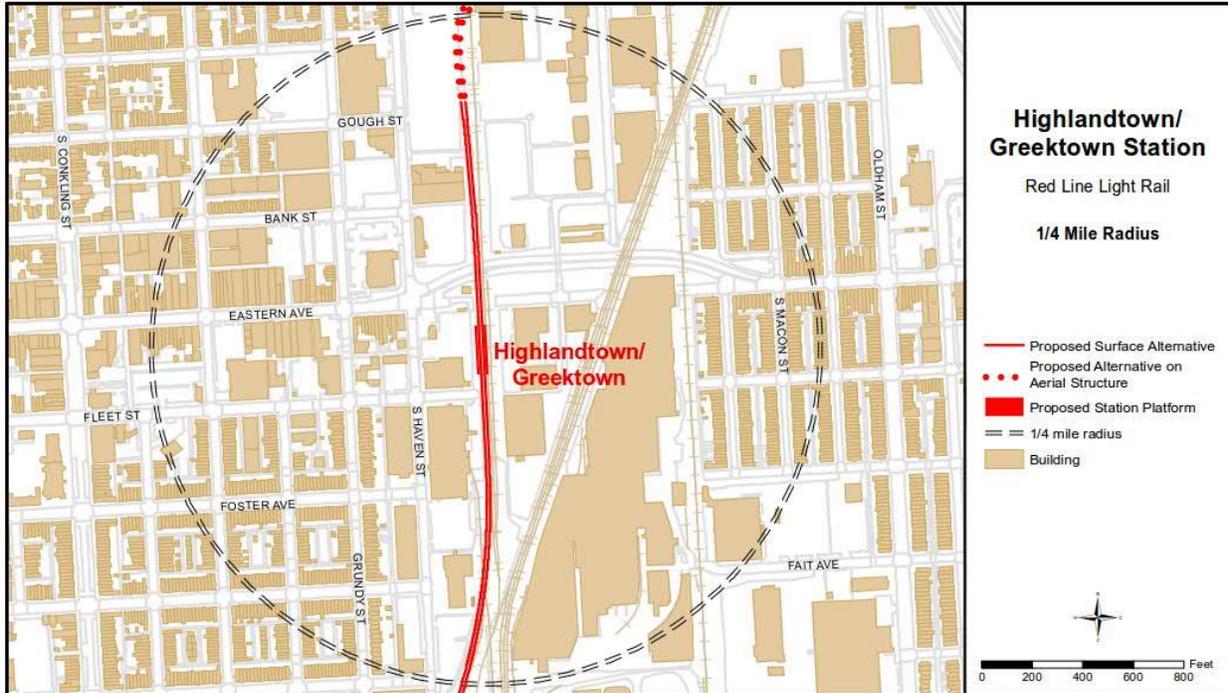


TOPS will study the following recommended transportation improvements for implementation.

- Improved pedestrian and street lighting
- Secure bike storage
- Clearly-marked street crossings, particularly at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
- Bus hub at the intersection of Fremont Avenue and West Baltimore Street
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to support anticipated new development

## Highlandtown/Greektown

Highlandtown and Greektown are active, vibrant communities that represent the best of Baltimore's tradition as a "city of neighborhoods." However, this station area may best embody the need for TOPS.



The Highlandtown/Greektown station location is separated from the cores of the adjacent neighborhoods by significant barriers, including grades and two active freight rail lines to the east. The rail lines are surrounded by a large number of underutilized commercial and industrial properties, including the landmark Crown Cork and Seal complex. Redevelopment of these properties will create remarkable job opportunities for the Baltimore region; TOPS will ensure residents can take advantage of those opportunities.

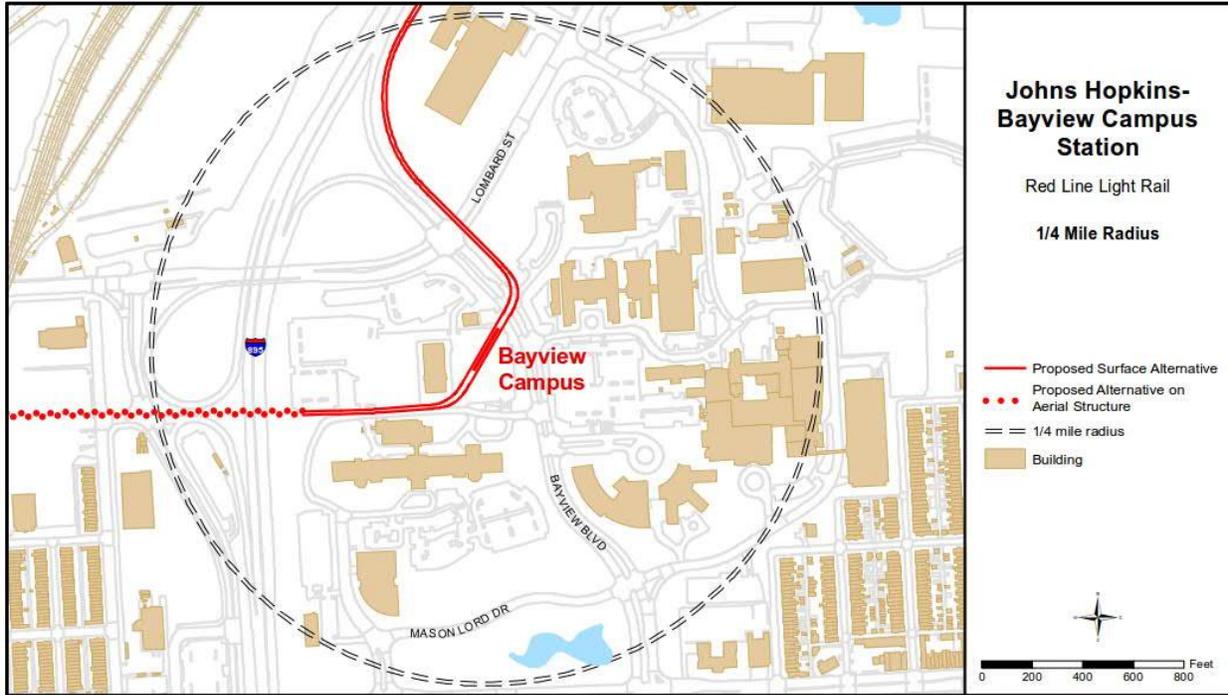
TOPS will specifically address:

- Safe, convenient, and appealing bicycle and pedestrian routes to the station, particularly connecting to Highlandtown's and Greektown's retail main streets
- Wayfinding from Patterson Park and other neighborhood attractions
- Explore reconfiguring Eastern Avenue as it crosses the railroad underpass barrier, including improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the stair connection to Old Eastern Avenue
- Streetscape enhancements



## Johns Hopkins Bayview Campus

The proposed Johns Hopkins Bayview Campus station is located in the midst of Johns Hopkins' massive Bayview complex, near the eastern terminus of the Red Line. Although the station will primarily serve campus uses, it is also near the Joseph Lee and Greektown neighborhoods.



TOPS will develop an implementation plan for the following access elements:

- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Coordination of local business service along Bayview Boulevard



### PROJECT PARTIES

TOPS builds on a strong foundation of partnership among public agencies, the private sector and the public at large. The partnership established for the Red Line will continue seamlessly into the TOPS effort, providing the greatest possible opportunity for the program's success.

The proposed grant recipient is the **Baltimore City Department of Transportation**. BCDOT is responsible for surface transportation within the City. Specific to this project, BCDOT is the implementing agency for all elements of the City's streets, including sidewalks, bicycle facilities, street lighting and conduits. The City's Complete Streets policy, which provides guidance to ensure transportation improvements address travelers of all ages and abilities, is administered by BCDOT. Finally, BCDOT serves transit riders through the Charm City Circulator, a free shuttle providing frequent service along four City routes.

Other City departments will also play an active role in TOPS. A key element of the program is directing City-wide investments in ways that can take advantage of proximity to the Red Line.

- **Baltimore Housing** will play a critical role in supporting transportation improvements that enhance ongoing neighborhood stabilization and redevelopment efforts, ensuring adequate access and connections between housing choices and transit.
- The **Planning Department** has already incorporated Red Line TOD into its TransForm Baltimore effort, and will work with BCDOT to ensure that land use codes support use of transit and other alternative modes of transportation. The Baltimore City Council is currently reviewing legislation to incorporate changes in City zoning regulations that encourage transit oriented development in Red Line station areas.
- The **Department of Recreation and Parks** will ensure streets serve their role as critical elements of the public realm and that adequate and safe access to parks and recreational facilities is provided throughout the community.
- **Baltimore City Schools** will consider how the Red Line can inform school building decisions and safe access to schools.

The **Maryland Transit Administration** and its parent agency, the **Maryland Department of Transportation**, are key project partners. The MTA is the implementing agency for the Red Line and operates most transit services in Baltimore. These include local and commuter buses, the Central Light Rail Line, Metro subway, Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train service, and a comprehensive paratransit system. The State Highway Administration is also partnering with MTA in re-creating the I-70 terminus in Baltimore County into a multi-modal corridor.

Private developers, private non-profit groups and community foundations will also be primary project partners. Examples that will inform the Station Area Investment Plans include the Annie E. Casey Foundation's East Baltimore Initiative and the Opportunity Collaborative Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

## Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore’s Red Line

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The most important partner in TOPS will be **the public** the project will serve. As discussed elsewhere in this application, commitment to citizen participation has been a hallmark of the Red Line planning and design process and will continue as TOPS moves forward.

The Baltimore Community anticipates that USDOT will join us in this partnership to make TOPS a success.

### GRANT FUNDS AND SOURCES

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation requests \$2.1 million in TIGER project planning funding for the Red Line Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS). BCDOT is committing \$900,000 in cash funding, resulting in a 30% cash match.

Agency	Cash	Total funding
Baltimore City DOT	\$0.90M	\$0.90M
TIGER funding requested	\$2.10M	\$2.10M
<b>Total project cost</b>		<b>\$3.0M</b>

TIGER funding is ideal for TOPS because its interdisciplinary nature does not fit neatly into other funding programs. For example, Federal Transit Administration funding is being utilized for the Red Line, but that funding is limited to the transitway and stations themselves, but not the surrounding area. The Transportation Alternatives Program aligns with only portions of the TOPS scope. This project could be funded by CMAQ, SPR, STP, or FTA 5307, but the challenge for actually funding TOPS through any of these programs is that they are already overcommitted. FTA’s new Transit-Oriented Development Planning Pilot Program also has the potential to fund TOPS, but the new program has limited funding at \$10 million for FY 2014 and has not yet been formalized through a Notice of Funding Availability. Finally, although the City is making a significant contribution toward the TOPS planning effort, City funding alone is not sufficient.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

**TOPS meets every selection criterion presented in the Notice of Funding Availability.**

The following pages provide a summary of each of the **Primary** and **Secondary** selection criteria for this TIGER FY 2014 grant and a description of how TOPS will provide benefits in each of those areas.

### State of Good Repair

**Primary**

Despite excellent management practices and careful stewardship of resources, declining revenues have made it difficult for BCDOT to maintain its extensive street system in the condition it would like. Red Line stations will become important destinations in the communities they serve. Transportation investments addressing physical deterioration and functional obsolescence to existing streets and sidewalks are needed to ensure **high-quality multimodal access** to those stations and surrounding development areas.

The nature of all future investments in City streets is codified in the Baltimore City Complete Streets Resolution. The Resolution directs City agencies “to plan for, design, and construct all new City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users. This can be accomplished through the incorporation of construction elements such as special bus lanes, transit stops, improved pedestrian street crossings, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, and bike lanes.” The Complete Streets philosophy is especially important where many residents do not have regular access to cars, and is designed to improve livability, public health, economic competitiveness, and environmental sustainability.

Moreover, state of good repair of pedestrian facilities is an **equity** issue. For persons of all ages and abilities to access the Red Line, surrounding sidewalks must be relatively smooth and barrier-free. Curb ramps must be upgraded to provide good connections across streets. Excellent lighting is needed not only to ease mobility for persons with low vision, but to foster a sense of safety and security for all travelers. Moreover some locations, such as railroad underpasses at the West Baltimore MARC and Highlandtown/Greektown stations, present mobility barriers for persons with disabilities. TOPS will determine how to remove those barriers.

### Economic Competitiveness

Primary

Economic competitiveness is the cornerstone of this application and one of the core principles of the Red Line. The Red Line will provide **reliable and timely access for City residents** to:

- **Employment centers:** nearly 192,000 jobs are currently located within one mile of the Red Line, including all of downtown Baltimore, Federal offices in Baltimore County, Inner Harbor East, Canton, and Bayview.
- **Education opportunities:** 7 elementary schools, 2 high schools, and 4 institutions of higher education, including the University of Baltimore – Baltimore Campus, Baltimore City Community College, the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology and Johns Hopkins University are located near the Red Line.
- **Services:** Primary facilities along the corridor include the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, the University of Maryland Medical Center and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

In addition to providing economic advantage to Baltimore residents, local access to the Red Line implemented through TOPS will have **significant benefits for business**. Businesses in station areas will experience wider access to regional, national, and international markets stemming from improved connections to high-quality transit. Likewise, those businesses will have access to a geographically broader labor pool. Over time, as TOPS workforce development and other educational efforts take hold, that labor pool will also become deeper and better educated, increasing the Baltimore region's competitiveness at a national and international level.

Finally, TOPS will create **affordable and convenient transportation choices**. Nationally, transportation is the second highest household cost behind housing itself. Particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods, car ownership creates a significant burden on household budgets. TOPS will make it easier to Baltimore residents to reduce car ownership, freeing up more income for necessities of life and discretionary spending. Nearly every transit trip starts and ends with walking, so providing safe, secure, and comfortable pedestrian connections to transit is a bedrock principle of this effort.

### Quality of Life

Primary

TOPS and the Red Line are designed to enhance the livability of the neighborhoods they serve, ultimately improving residents' quality of life in several specific ways:

- **Providing more transportation choices.** The Red Line will already do this, but local transportation connections implemented through TOPS will place more households and jobs within reach of high-quality, high-capacity transit. As noted in the Economic Competitiveness section, more transportation choices relate to lower household transportation costs, translating to financially stronger residents.

More transportation choices often mean healthier living as well. One-third of regular transit riders nationwide participate in the recommended amount of daily activity simply

## Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore's Red Line

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by walking to transit. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified the built environment as a core principle for promoting public health. And walkable communities are more likely to support food stores, allowing better access to fresh meats and produce and reducing reliance on prepared foods.

- **Promoting equitable, affordable housing.** Transit-oriented development opportunities identified through the Red Line SAAC process will incorporate a wide range of affordable and market-rate housing to meet the needs of Baltimore residents and those who move to the City. As neighborhoods stabilize due to the influence of high-quality transit, more vacant and dilapidated housing stock will be returned to the market, creating a virtuous cycle of change in housing opportunities.
- **Supporting existing communities and value neighborhoods.** Baltimore is a city of neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods in the Red Line corridor have experienced decades of disinvestment. New transportation connections created through TOPS will support residents and businesses in those neighborhoods and, in conjunction with transit-oriented development and neighborhood stabilization efforts, create a critical mass of residents for neighborhood vitality. In doing so, they will reduce the need for the Baltimore region to develop in patterns of sprawl.
- **Coordinating and leveraging Federal policies and investment.** The Federal Transit Administration, in conjunction with state and local partners, is making an extraordinary investment in the Red Line to address regional transportation challenges. Effective “last mile” connections implemented under TOPS will ensure that those same Federal transportation funds also address the land use and economic challenges described above.

### Environmental Sustainability

Primary

Implementation of the Red Line will support transit ridership, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Local access improvements that result from TOPS will provide the greatest opportunity for Baltimore travelers to access the Red Line and enhance each of those metrics. Furthermore, improving neighborhoods for walking and bicycling has the propensity to shift driving trips to active transportation, extending the reach of those improvements beyond the realm of transit.

TOPS will also promote more responsible land use practices. With better local access, a greater percentage of anticipated metropolitan area growth in population, households, and employment will be accommodated in existing neighborhoods. This Smart Growth strategy will help reduce the environmental degradation caused by urban sprawl.

### Safety

Primary

Safety was a common theme among many of the SAAC discussions during development of the Red Line project. Many of the proposed stations are in areas with high levels of motor vehicle traffic simply because those areas have traditionally been the focus of neighborhood development. Related topics of security and comfort must be addressed as well so that residents, customers, and visitors will feel safe traveling in station areas.

## Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore's Red Line

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TOPS will address safety in the following ways:

- **Enhanced sidewalks** will reduce tripping hazards and provide opportunities for pedestrians to travel without being in close proximity to speeding traffic. Shade provided by street trees improves the walking environment and supports businesses.
- **Improved crossings** will help to protect pedestrians where they are most vulnerable – interacting with motor vehicle traffic. Curb extensions, enhanced crossing materials, and signal timing techniques such as leading pedestrian intervals will be explored at traffic signals. Some locations may also merit consideration of enhanced midblock crossing treatments such as medians, offset crosswalks, and active traffic control devices.
- **Dedicated on-street and off-street bicycle facilities** will extend the reach of station influence well beyond the 1/2-mile typical walkshed. Dedicated facilities such as bike lanes, cycle tracks, and shared use sidepaths are proven to significantly reduce crash exposure. Moreover, an equally important role of those facilities is to increase the user's perception of safety, providing more opportunities for travelers to use active transportation rather than driving.
- **Improved pedestrian lighting** will enhance public safety and security and promote walking. This was a recurring point by many SAACs. Until some neighborhoods stabilize, enhanced lighting may be the principal infrastructure steps to take to encourage active transportation trips.

### Innovation

### Secondary

The key measure of innovation in the TOPS infrastructure program is simply its scale. Although station area plans are relatively commonplace in urban areas, TOPS is an **interdisciplinary, system-wide effort** to tie local access improvements to a major regional rail investment.

There is a potential for the Red Line to open to revenue traffic in 2022 depending on funding commitments. If it receives all of the requested TIGER funds, TOPS could quickly plan a comprehensive set of local transportation access improvements and, pending construction funding, build many of them before **the Red Line opens**. When the success of those projects is observed by stakeholders across the City, there will likely be a push to plan and implement similar improvements at other stations, increasing the likelihood of state, local, and private investment in those efforts.

Beyond the infrastructure itself, the **robust community engagement program** proposed for TOPS is unique. The fact that Station Area Advisory Committees have already been established and identified key issues gives TOPS a head start that few planning studies can match. TOPS will retain the SAACs and engage them in a more focused view of specific local transportation strategies, giving them the technical resources to plan, evaluate, and design improvements and develop an implementation plan.

## **Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore's Red Line**

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TOPS will also build on a highly-developed **workforce development program** in progress as part of the Red Line. This effort, whose mission is to build a talented, diverse, engaged, and productive workforce for infrastructure projects, has the following goals:

- Develop and manage efficient/effective workforce development and hiring programs
- Increase employment potential to underserved groups
- Aggressively engage the community in economic empowerment opportunities
- Connect disadvantaged businesses to opportunities

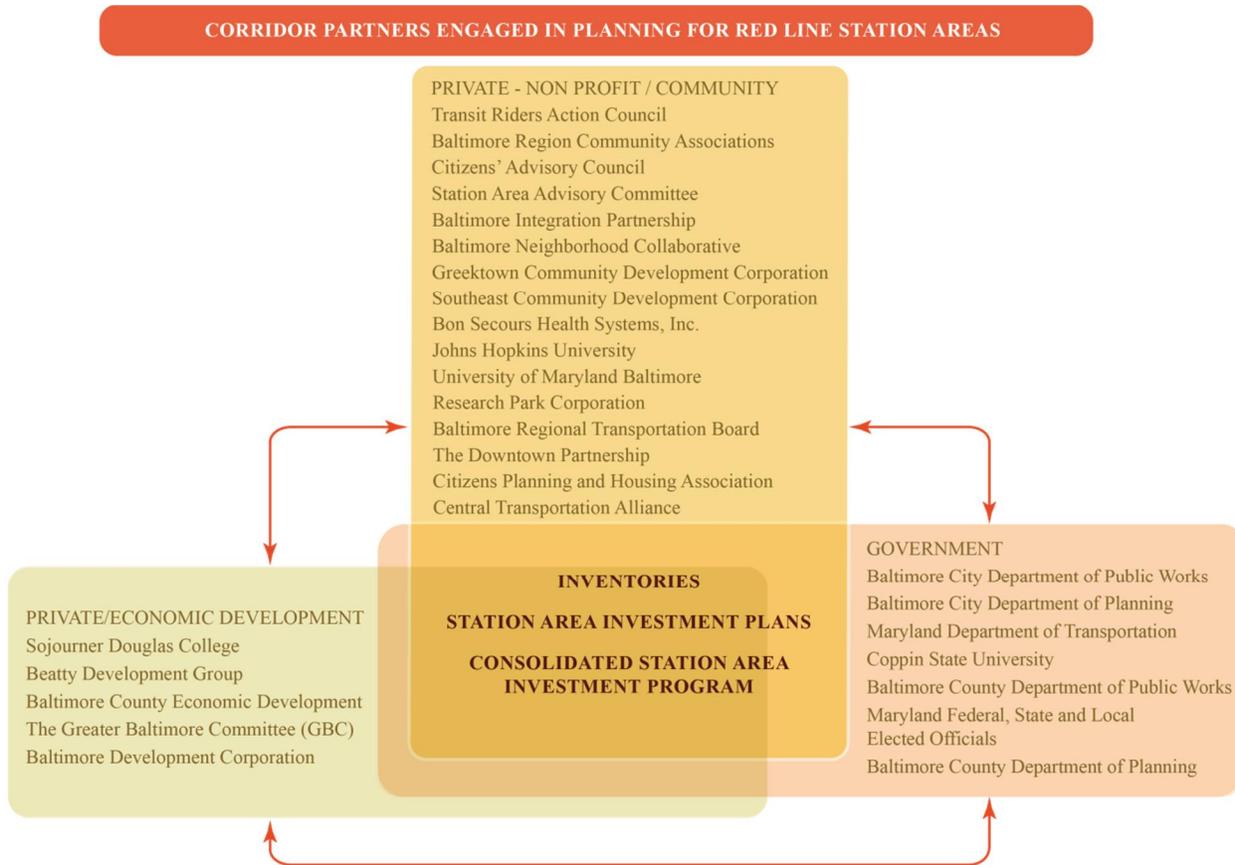
BCDOT will partner with MTA and the Maryland Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) in this workforce development initiative. DWDAL works in partnership with the twelve Workforce Investment Areas (WIAs) located throughout the state of Maryland and is staffed to implement the strategies of the Maryland Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB). GWIB is responsible for developing policies and strategies to form a coordinated workforce system from a variety of education, and employment and training programs. It is also anticipated that community-based workforce development organizations will provide assistance with this program.

## Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore's Red Line

### Partnership

### Secondary

Through an established partnership among all relevant public agencies, private sector representatives, and the public, a remarkable financial and institutional commitment has already been made to the Red Line. Local access, with a focus on economic development and quality of life, has been a fundamental principle of the Red Line since its inception. The following **partners are already engaged** in preliminary planning for Red Line station areas. TOPS will provide the bridge between that preliminary planning and on-the-ground implementation.



TOPS also ties into The Opportunity Collaborative, a “consortium charged with developing a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) for the Baltimore region. The Collaborative’s members include local governments, state agencies, universities and nonprofit organizations. The RPSD will help the Baltimore region coordinate investments in housing, transportation and workforce development to reduce disparities and connect all of our citizens to a prosperous future. The outcomes of the Collaborative’s plan will lower transportation costs for families, create cleaner and safer communities and increase educational and employment opportunities throughout the region.”

**Transportation Opportunities Plans (TOPS): Making the Most of Baltimore’s Red Line**

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**Summary of Selection Criteria by Station**

Station	State of good repair	Economic competitiveness	Quality of life	Environmental sustainability	Safety	Innovation	Partnerships
CMS		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Security Square		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edmondson Village	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Baltimore MARC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harlem Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poppleton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Highlandtown/Greektown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bayview Campus		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

## **PROJECT READINESS**

One of the most compelling reasons to select the TOPS program for TIGER funding is its readiness to proceed. Unlike most significant planning studies, many of the most difficult questions in the Red Line station areas have already been asked and answered. Baltimore City and other project partners such as the MTA have established a strong rapport with the communities TOPS will serve through the Red Line SAAC process and Community Compact. The City has established credibility with these communities and demonstrated that it will follow through on their requests.

With a long history of major project planning, the Baltimore City Department of Transportation has demonstrated its ability to effectively develop and implement transportation plans of varying scales. Valorie LaCour, BCDOT's grant manager, is the City's Chief of Transportation Planning and is therefore in a position to assign City resources to ensure TOPS proceeds quickly and efficiently.

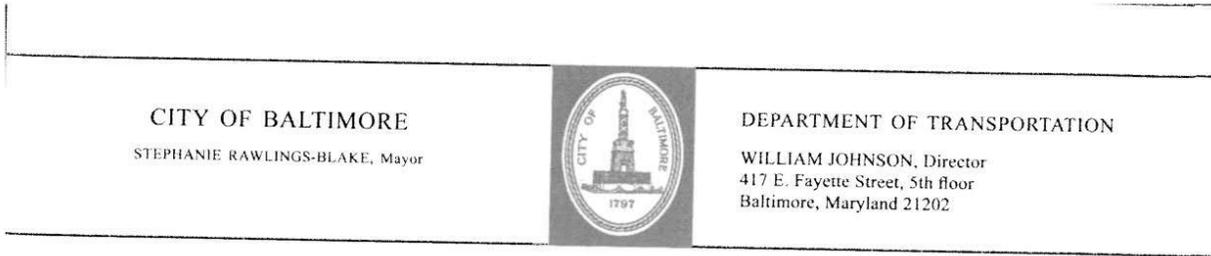
The City and MTA have a record of successful collaboration in similar federally-funded projects including the initial construction of the Central Light Rail, the Baltimore Metro, the Central Light Rail double track and the Central Light Rail signal priority projects. Oriole Park at Camden Yards and Ravens Stadium have also been major projects where the City, State and business partners have constructed major community facilities.

As a planning study, TOPS will proceed within the statutory timeframe, obligating funds well before September 30, 2016. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approvals and other permits are not needed for planning activities.

The groundwork laid by the Red Line station area planning process also ensures that TOPS aligns closely with State and City plans.

In summary, the TOPS project is perfectly positioned to proceed directly into project planning without delay, ensuring that it will be a wise investment of USDOT funds under this grant program.

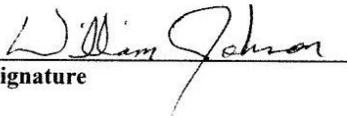
**FEDERAL WAGE RATE CERTIFICATION**



**April 23, 2014**

**RE: Federal Wage Rate Certification  
TIGER VI Discretionary Grant for Transportation Opportunities Plans**

I, William Johnson, hereby certify that the requirements of Subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40 of the United States Code (Federal Wage Rate Requirements) will be met in the utilization of any funds granted to the City of Baltimore Department of Transportation, as required under the FY 2014 Appropriations Act.

  
Signature

**Name: William Johnson  
Position: Director  
Applicant: City of Baltimore, Department of Transportation  
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