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Community Leaders Visit West Coast Light Rail Projects

Group Departs Sunday Seeking Lessons for Baltimore's Red Line

BALTIMORE, MD (September 26, 2008) - Sixty neighborhood activists, elected leaders, developers and City officials are traveling to Portland, Phoenix, Seattle and Los Angeles this weekend to learn more about light rail projects similar to Baltimore's proposed Red Line.

The four groups will depart Sunday from BWI Airport to tour mass-transit projects under construction or near completion. As Baltimore's Red Line Project moves closer to construction in 2012, decision makers are seeking to understand more about transit-oriented development, economic opportunities and construction mitigation techniques. The tours are jointly sponsored by the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, Baltimore City, the Citizens Planning and Housing Association and the Maryland Transit Administration.

"I appreciate the time that Baltimore's community leaders are giving to learn more about the opportunities that await us with the Red Line," said Mayor Sheila Dixon. Representatives of the Mayor's Office, Department of Transportation, Baltimore Development Corporation, Housing Authority, and Minority/Women's Business Development Office are participating in the tour.

"The Red Line can add value for residents and businesses. We're excited about the chance to learn from examples beyond our borders," said Otis Rolley III, President/CEO of Central Maryland Transportation Alliance.

"I'm very supportive of the Red Line Transit Project but I also have a lot of questions about how we can make it work for Fells Point. This trip is a great opportunity to see how another city has tackled their transit challenges," said Victor Corbin, President of the Fells Prospect Community Organization.

For area residents who would like to follow the tours and receive real-time updates, the group will be regularly posting information on Twitter, the new micro-blogging service that allows its users to provide 140-character updates via the Internet. To receive the updates, you must have a free Twitter account and follow the Baltimore Red Line account, "@GoRedLine."

Sponsors are encouraging everyone to be a part of the West Coast transit tours by following along at <http://twitter.com/GoRedline>.

Four years ago, CPHA and the Greater Baltimore Committee sponsored similar trips to transit projects around the country. Out of that came the Red Line Community Compact signed on September 12th by Mayor Dixon, Maryland DOT Secretary John Porcari and more than 65 community, business, environmental and civic organizations.