



# Maryland State Rail Plan Outreach Summary



Outreach has been a vital aspect for creating the Maryland State Rail Plan (Rail Plan). It allows for collaboration between many different stakeholders and ensures that every voice is heard. Outreach for the Rail Plan was conducted from November 2020 through July 2021. To date outreach has included:

- Public website for the Rail Plan with information on how citizens can voice their opinions
- Email account created for public comment
- Public survey conducted November 2020 through January 2021
- Regional adjoining state interviews
- 15 stakeholder interviews
- Creation of stakeholder advisory committee and stakeholder

The website was created to inform the public about the Rail Plan. The website highlights the relevant elements, the process and timeline, the federal requirements, and how to comment on the Rail Plan, including an email address.

An online survey was open to the public from November 2020 through January 2021 and received 216 responses. Of the participants, 83% were private citizens, 14% were government representatives, and 3% were economic development agencies. The survey results showed rail priorities focusing on improved connections, services, and safety as the top priorities. Options valued most for 2040:

MARC Service	Intercity Amtrak	Freight Rail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% New service off Northeast Corridor</li> <li>• 22% Faster service in Northeast Corridor</li> <li>• 21% Reliable service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% More frequent and/or faster service</li> <li>• 30% Run through service</li> <li>• 14% Reliable service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28% Short line railroad improvements</li> <li>• 27% Rail served industrial &amp; commercial sites</li> <li>• 24% Enhanced rail access to the Port of Baltimore</li> </ul>

MDOT conducted one-on-one interviews with various stakeholders, to learn more about the role of rail in Maryland as well as gather their input on what should be included in the Rail Plan. Stakeholders expressed interest in assistance with grant applications, and funding support for rail from the State and federal governments.

A common theme across all outreach initiatives was greater access to rail in every corner of the State. There is a desire for more frequent, more reliable, and faster passenger rail service. Additionally, there is a need for upgraded facilities, multimodal transportation facilities at stations, and an expansion of service to reach more broadly across Maryland. Other comments included: enhanced safety, additional trains, and more frequent service. From the public survey there was an overwhelming number of comments concerning passenger rail compared to freight rail.

The following three themes were the most common response across every outreach initiative and should be considered in the Rail Plan:

- More frequent and faster passenger rail service
- Expanded rail access to reach each all corners of the State
- A dedicated program for grant application support and funding assistance

**Freight Rail**

- Reduce hazmat exposure to communities

**Commuter Rail (MARC)**

- Improve MARC service, new stations, parking expansion
- Faster and more frequent MARC service
- Enhanced/more commuter rail service
- More frequent and faster service, more service beyond the Penn Line
- Expanded service area, including service to Northern Virginia, Delaware, Annapolis, and Southern Maryland
- Enhanced College Park station
- Better connections to Penn Station in Baltimore
- Add connections to Frederick along I-270

**Intercity Rail (Amtrak)**

- Improve Amtrak intercity service, new stations, parking expansion
- Decrease fares and expand service
- Bring back more frequent long-distance service and dining
- Expand services to the Eastern Shore Region including Salisbury, Maryland
- Expand services from Waldorf to Washington DC

**Overall Rail Comments (Passenger and Freight Rail)**

- Improve safety at highway-rail grade crossings
- Better connections to other modes of transportation
- Upgrade multimodal connectivity
- Improve infrastructure
- Add an integrated fare system
- Improve accessibility at stations
- No disruptions to passenger trains, place priority on passenger trains
- Increase track speed, increase frequency of trains, and decrease travel times
- Use new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use only renewable energy (i.e., solar, wind)
- Build new tracks to bypass freight lines, upgrade existing tracks
- Replace the Amtrak B&P tunnel and CSX Howard Street Tunnel
- Fix/replace bridge over the Susquehanna River
- Upgrade road bridges to handle dual tracks
- Need a pedestrian bridge at C&O canal path and Potomac River crossing
- Increase intermodal access at existing facilities for transit, pedestrians, etc.
- Need for new stations across the state for better accessibility for Maryland residents
- Add additional service during the day



Faster service

More frequent service

Common themes heard across each outreach initiative

Greater access to rail in Maryland

Dedicated program for grant applications & funding