

Transcript for Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev Environmental Study  
Project Process & Information Video  
October 2017

Slide 1

Welcome and thank you for your interest in the proposed Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev Project.

Though we're early in the process, the team encourages YOU to get involved with the environmental study. Your feedback has a REAL potential to make this project better.

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The project team has heard your expressed concerns loud and clear, and we are listening to you. Our staff is available to discuss the project and study process with you. There will be multiple opportunities to communicate with the Project Team, whether it's through public meetings, submitting comment cards, speaking over the phone, emailing, or posting comments to the website. We encourage you to provide your comments, speak with our staff, and visit the project website to view updated project information and responses to frequently asked questions.

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Right now, the federal project is a grant studying the feasibility of a superconducting magnetic levitation (or ES-SEE maglev) train. Engineers and planners are currently finalizing technical specifications and weighing the benefits and impacts of a proposed high-speed train service between Baltimore and Washington, DC. S-C-MAGLEV trains are now the fastest in the world, with cruising speeds more than 300 miles an hour.

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Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail (or BWRR) is a private company that is proposing to construct the SCMAGLEV system between Baltimore and Washington DC. Their proposal would provide an approximate 15-minute service between the new Baltimore and Washington stations, and would run on a new, dedicated guideway – partially through tunnel and partially elevated – with no surface-level intersections with existing roadways or other railroads.

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Congress authorized funding to \*study\* magnetic levitation projects in 2005's 'Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act'.

The Federal Railroad Administration (or FRA) awarded \$27.8 Million to the Maryland Department of Transportation (or MDOT) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (or EIS) for BWRR's proposal.

Please note, though, that no one has yet set aside money for construction.

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At this stage, it is too early to determine if or how the project will affect any landowners because a final alignment has not been determined.

A goal of the proposed project is to maximize the use of existing rights-of-way intended for transportation uses and to minimize impacts to local communities and environmental resources. FRA and MDOT will have additional details on these factors as the project progresses and with completion of the alternatives analysis.

Some alternative alignments will be eliminated from further study, and those alignments that are retained are likely to continue to evolve to minimize impacts on communities and environmental resources. Property owners can get a better idea of potential right-of-way impacts by examining maps of the alternative alignments posted on the project website ([www.bwmaglev.info](http://www.bwmaglev.info)) and at public meetings. It is important to note, however, that FRA will likely adjust and refine alignments based on public and stakeholder input during the study process.

## Slide 7

Safety is of paramount importance. The safety and security for areas adjacent to the train facilities, as well as on-board trains and at train facilities, will be evaluated as part of preliminary design and documented in the EIS through coordination with relevant agencies, stakeholders, and technical experts. The Project Team will research and document safety issues and best practices related to personal safety and security for passengers, as well as address the safety and security of operating superconducting magnetic levitation trains under various conditions and environmental factors, such as snow events and during times of poor conductor visibility. The Project Team will also research and plan for potential threats such as terrorist attacks, fires, explosions, and severe weather events.

## Slide 8

The project includes three proposed stations: in Washington, DC, at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and in Baltimore City. The system would require one maintenance facility, support facilities such as ventilation shafts along the route, and new electric substations.

## Slide 9

The project team is led by FRA. Working for FRA at the state level is MDOT. MDOT serves as the grantee and oversees the work being performed by the Maryland Economic Development Corporation or MEDCO, and the Maryland Transit Administration or MTA, a transportation business unit of MDOT.

MEDCO is coordinating the engineering and design efforts being developed by the Private Project Sponsor BWRR. MDOT-MTA is overseeing the NEPA compliance and EIS process, which is being conducted by the Environmental Consultant AECOM.

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The Alternatives Report will be published in the winter/spring of 2018, followed by the Draft EIS and corresponding public hearing in fall of 2018. Once comments on the Draft EIS have been addressed, the Final EIS and Record of Decision will be published in the Winter of 2019. Comments from the public and agencies are welcomed and encouraged throughout the process.

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The study area for the evaluation of potential environmental effects extends 40 miles from downtown Washington, DC, north to downtown Baltimore, and from the I-95 corridor east to central Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties, a distance of about 10 miles. The Study Area was developed by the Study Team to define the area where SCMAGLEV could be implemented and the surrounding areas that could be affected by the construction and operation of the proposed system.

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In addition to neighborhoods and communities, the study area contains a number of important natural and cultural resources. Most of the land in the study area is privately owned, but large federal, state and institutional properties are located throughout the corridor.

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There are many Parks located throughout the study area, some are large Federal and State lands, while others are smaller community parks. The study team recognizes the importance and sensitivity of these parks and will work to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential impacts as part of the study process.

#### Slide 14

Many key environmental considerations will be studied as part of this project such as environmental justice, noise and vibration effects, electromagnetic fields, safety, and construction.

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FRA and MDOT are coordinating with more than two dozen resource agencies to evaluate potential impacts to natural resources and ensure ecosystems within the study area continue to thrive.

For each alternative alignment retained for detailed study, the team identifies these resources and evaluates the nature and extent of the potential impacts.

Where possible, alignments are shifted to avoid or minimize impacts.

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The proposed project is being studied with federal funds. Therefore, its potential environmental effects must be evaluated and compared to a No-Build option, and comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (or NEPA) review process.

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On large projects like SCMAGLEV, NEPA studies are a multi-year process involving many steps, many agencies at all levels of government, and many opportunities for public input. The goal of NEPA is to identify the potential negative effects of the project, study alternatives that do the least possible harm, consider a 'no-build' option when the adverse impacts could possibly outweigh project benefits, and throughout the process, provide the public with the opportunity to provide input.

The results of this NEPA study will be published in an Environmental Impact Statement (or EIS) and available for public review and comment. Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies will review the EIS and associated public comments as part of the decision-making process.

Correspondence and feedback from citizens, residents, and other project stakeholders is encouraged throughout the NEPA process and can be done a variety of ways. Perhaps the simplest way is through our project website and email address. Please visit [www.BWMaglev.info](http://www.BWMaglev.info) or email us at [info@BWMaglev.info](mailto:info@BWMaglev.info).

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NEPA is also an umbrella law that encourages integrated compliance with other environmental laws. Because this project is funded by the Federal Government, it must comply with the NEPA process and all corresponding environmental laws and approvals.

#### Slide 19

The NEPA process consists of five steps, requiring significant coordination between the project team, public stakeholders, elected officials, and governmental regulatory agencies.

#### Slide 20

Step 1 consists of initiating the NEPA process by publishing a Notice of Intent, submitting a draft Purpose and Need, holding agency and public scoping meetings, developing initial preliminary project alternatives, and accepting comments from the public during a 30-day comment period. For this project, the Notice of Intent was published on November 25, 2016.

#### Slide 21

Step 2 consists of collecting data on existing conditions and screening potential alternatives. The alternatives that do not meet the project purpose, sufficiently address needs, or contain fatal flaws or disproportionately high impacts or costs are screened out and dropped.

#### Slide 22

In Step 3, the project team analyzes the remaining alternatives, and publishes an Alternatives Report.

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In Step 4, the team determines a preliminary preferred alternative based on the analysis, publishes a Draft EIS, holds public hearings, and accepts comments from the public for 45 days.

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In Step 5, the team publishes the Final EIS, accepts comments from the public for 30 days, reviews the comments, and publishes a Record of Decision.

The project team welcomes and encourages public and regulatory input throughout the entire NEPA process and will review all comments received from citizens, residents, and other project stakeholders, and incorporate the suggestions that will contribute to a successful outcome.

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Thank you for participating in the SC Maglev project. For the most up to date information or to provide comments and questions, please visit our website at [www.bwmaglev.info](http://www.bwmaglev.info). You can also email the project team at [info@bwmaglev.info](mailto:info@bwmaglev.info).