

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**  
**COUNCIL BILL 17-0023R**  
**(Resolution)**

---

Introduced by: Councilmembers Pinkett, Dorsey, Costello, Bullock, Henry, Middleton, Cohen,  
Burnett, Sneed, Schleifer, Reisinger, Scott, Stokes, President Young

Introduced and read first time: May 8, 2017

Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

---

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Transportation

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Proposed Replacement of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration,  
4 Amtrak, and the Maryland and City Departments of Transportation appear before the City  
5 Council to discuss the proposed B&P tunnel replacement project and what its costs and  
6 benefits will be for both Baltimore as a whole and the neighborhoods that are being asked to  
7 host the project.

8 **Recitals**

9 The 144-year-old Baltimore and Potomac (B&P) Tunnel in West Baltimore, located between  
10 the West Baltimore MARC Station and Penn Station along Amtrak’s busy Northeast Corridor is  
11 used by Amtrak and MARC passenger trains, as well as some Norfolk Southern Railway freight  
12 trains. According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), this nearly century and half old  
13 tunnel requires substantial maintenance and repairs, does not meet current design standards, and  
14 is approaching the end of its useful life with regard to its physical condition. The FRA has also  
15 determined that the tunnel is functionally obsolete, unable to meet current and future rail  
16 demands due to its vertical and horizontal track alignment while serving as a bottleneck at a  
17 critical point in the Northeast Corridor, impairing operations of the most heavily-traveled rail line  
18 in the United States

19 After years of studies on the issue, the FRA recently announced its preferred option for  
20 replacing the tunnel with 3.67 miles of new track including a new 2 mile tunnel through West  
21 Baltimore. The FRA proposal, projected to cost \$4.5 billion, would double both the number of  
22 trains that could pass along the track in a day and the speeds they could sustain.

23 However, the project would require Amtrak to acquire 12 acres of land, displacing at least 17  
24 residents and 6 businesses. Concerns have also been raised about the siting of a ventilation  
25 facility on North Avenue and the impact of construction and travel vibrations on the affected  
26 neighborhoods.

27 Also, although billed as a passenger rail project, the current tunnel does handle some freight  
28 traffic. It is not presently clear whether the increased capacity on the proposed rail line would  
29 result in an increase in freight traffic as well, or if the nature of that traffic might change in a way  
30 that could raise health and safety concerns for Baltimore residents.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

## Council Bill 17-0023R

1 Further discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of the project for Baltimore is needed  
2 before funding is allocated or construction begins. Most importantly, the questions about vent  
3 locations, required displacements, and freight train usage of the new tracks deserve more  
4 attention.

5 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
6 Council requests that representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, and the  
7 Maryland and City Departments of Transportation appear before it to discuss the proposed B&P  
8 tunnel replacement project and what its costs and benefits will be for both Baltimore as a whole  
9 and the neighborhoods that are being asked to host the project.

10 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
11 Executive Director of the Federal Railroad Administration, the President and CEO of Amtrak,  
12 the Maryland Secretary of Transportation, the Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's  
13 Legislative Liaison.