

# MARYLAND COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE TRANSIT

## 2022 Annual Report

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY

- MCRT is a registered 501(C)3 in the state of Maryland.
- Year-end 2022 reported a balance in the MCRT Truist account of \$2,442.18.
- 2022 income consisted of seven donations received from individuals and organizations in the amount of \$758.
- The MCRT received a \$500 grant for Equity in Environmental Programs from the Sierra Club. This was generously matched by a \$500 grant from the National Parks and Conservation Association for similar work. The MCRT directed our attention to reaching out to the Hispanic populations in Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore Counties. The grant funds were spent having an updated comprehensive, one-page flyer on the SCMaglev project professionally translated into Spanish.
- We encouraged all to keep informed of our SCMaglev educational and outreach progress via our website. <http://www.mcrt-action.org/> <http://www.mcrt-action.org/>

### STATUS OF SCMAGLEV DEIS REVIEW PROCESS

- The Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) **SCMaglev Draft Environment Impact Statement review process has been paused since August 25, 2021**. Prior to this, the process was paused from September 2019 to May 2020. Further, the Army Corps of Engineers announced a pause in their review of the SCMaglev proposal to accommodate the FRA timetable. MCRT's Strategy Group continued to meet periodically with Larry Liebesman, our attorney from the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, as well as other subject matter experts, to pursue our ongoing concerns about the SCMaglev project.

### MEETINGS

- **Board Meetings:** January 24, February 22, April 4, May 16, June 27, August 15, and October 17. Victoria Reynolds, a founding member and acting MCRT president resigned from the Board in June 2022. Remaining members reorganized in July to provide for leadership transition and future activities.
- The MCRT Strategy Committee and its Communications and Outreach Committee met monthly in 2022 to make plans and assess actions. In September 2022, the decision was made to hold **joint monthly meetings every third Wednesday of each month**. All interested parties are invited to attend.

### GOVERNANCE ENGAGEMENT

- MCRT Board members tracked and provided written/oral testimony on a range of **legislation related to the proposed SCMaglev train project**. Unfortunately, none of the bills moved out of the Maryland House or Senate committees. We provided guidance on the My General Assembly legislative website on how to access and provide testimony on several occasions.

- Chief among MCRT's efforts in 2022 was continuing our appeal to be able to "see" much more of the **ridership data** (a key rationale for the project) rather than what was provided in a severely redacted version that basically obscures the data. The redacted version had been released as part of an **MCRT Freedom of Information Act request**. Thanks to Mr. Liebesman's well-written appeal and persistent inquiries, the Department of Transportation finally agreed to review the redactions. As a result, a considerable amount of previously redacted data from the Louis Berger Group Inc. contractor submission was released on August 17, 2022. Our experts are analyzing the impact of data now available and what is still protected.
  - On December 21, the MCRT sent a **letter to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)** regarding the issue of segmenting the DC to Baltimore portion of Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail's (BWRR's) plan for the SCMaglev to go to Boston. We had received an ambiguous response to our question on the subject from BWRR's Ian Rainey at a November 14 engineering colloquium held at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt. Therefore, we asked the FRA and MDOT: "Please clarify the FRA's expectations for a comprehensive NEPA evaluation of the full scope (DC to Boston) and, specifically, the segmentation of the project (DC to Baltimore) for the SCMaglev train project. Has FRA advanced this project to a Tier II analysis, as Mr. Rainey claimed?" We are awaiting a response.
  - Through Mr. Liebesman, on November 21, the MCRT **provided input on the proposed modifications of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines** that had been weakened by the prior administration. (April 20, 2022, CEQ announced it will restore NEPA guidelines)
  - On December 15, the MCRT sent a **letter about SCMaglev Beaverdam Creek Tier II water testing action** administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), questioning how it could be financially supported by the BWRR and still be objective. MDE Manager, Angel Valdez responded on December 20: "As we are in the final approval stage, I can now confirm that MDE has developed a contract with an independent environmental economic consultant who will review the economic analysis provided in the SCMaglev Tier II Report, conduct an independent economic analysis ... Once the independent analysis is complete, the contract deliverable, a final report, will be available during the public review and comment period."
- Clarification of Beaverdam Creek issues:*
- Beaverdam Creek is on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and is the stream about which the MCRT team requested the Tier II information.
  - Lower Beaverdam Creek is the tributary at the border of Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County, which is the subject of an investigation for toxics. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will be undertaking the task of securing some removal of large items that do not belong there.
- During pre-election 2022, the **MCRT drafted a letter to elected officials asking that they not support BWRR or Northeast Maglev efforts to secure funding** from avenues in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We decided to defer sending the letter until after the elections took place. In 2023, we will review the draft and consider late 2022 developments, which includes another funding opportunity that may have been created by the recently announced FRA Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program.

## MEETINGS OF NOTE

- **Japan’s Friends of Peace contacted the MCRT to request a briefing** on our activities at a conference they were convening on January 26, 2022. We learned about the impacts the residents have experienced with SCMaglev route destruction in Japan and their opposition activities. We shared information about how our nonprofit was formed and works to oppose similar efforts by Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail in the United States.
- In June 2022, the MCRT asked for **a meeting with Delegate Kumar Barve, continuing chair of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee**, to brief him about our opposition to the SCMaglev. We copied several of his colleagues on the letter. He met with us on August 11 and promised he personally would read our Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comments and get back with us if he had any questions. We have not yet heard back from him.
- An MCRT board member spoke about the SCMaglev with **Lt.-Governor Elect Aruna Miller** in a September 22 town hall Zoom meeting. We followed up with Ms. Miller on October 20, based on her request to send her more information. We were in contact with her staff since then and asked for an in-depth briefing. Board members also brought up the SCMaglev in meetings with Governor-Elect Wes Moore.
- Board and Strategy Group members **attended post-election Moore-Miller Transition Team public outreach meetings**, particularly on the issues of transportation and the environment and climate. We uploaded to their database our several MCRT position papers on the relevant topics and supporting documents by Dr. Owen Kelley about greenhouse gas emissions and ridership data.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

- On July 12, board member **Dan Woomer had an opinion piece published**—Is it Time to Give up on the SCMaglev? [<https://www.capitalgazette.com/opinion/letters/ac-ce-letters-july12-20220710-mvbfmoi5znaxddernsku6b5lqa-story.html>]

## RESEARCH AND THE COMMUNITY

- On August 21, the MCRT posted on our website results of a **Survey of Elected Officials and questions** to assist people when they attended meetings and had the opportunity to speak with candidates about where they stand on building and operating the SCMaglev. We had posted **survey questions earlier to gubernatorial, attorney general, and comptroller candidates**, but received very few responses.

### Baltimore Westport

- On September 20, the MCRT issued a **press release in support of the Westport Neighborhood Association and Westport Community Economic Development Corporation** setting the record straight regarding the South Baltimore 7 (SB7) Coalition’s announced support for the SCMaglev project. In its September 8 press release, the SB7 falsely claimed wholehearted endorsement by its members. On October 25, SB7 rescinded its support because “the nonprofit did not have approval from a majority of the board members, which is required by the bylaws.”

- The MCRT continued to **work with the Baltimore members** of the Strategy Group to provide and maintain support for their efforts to counter BWRR's ongoing legal efforts to exercise eminent domain and derail planned development at the Westport property.

### **Konterra**

- Community discussions about town center development in Konterra were taking place in 2022. At a May meeting, it became clear that the community and the developer were unaware that Konterra was in the sights of the proposed SCMaglev project as a dump site for tunneling sludge. Researchers working with the **MCRT compiled a research report detailing the references to Konterra made in the DEIS** and submitted it to Prince George's County Councilmember Tom Dernoga on September 15 for his and others' information and consideration relative to their discussions.

### **Save BARC**

- The MCRT continued to **follow the proposal to locate the Bureau of Engraving and Printing Currency Production Facility on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)**. The Beaverdam Creek issue along with the similar proposal for a 200+ acre SCMaglev train station on BARC, as well as the impacts of incursion on the Patuxent Research Refuge, are being strongly opposed by the SAVE BARC advocacy group and the MCRT.

### **Citizens Against Beltway Expansion**

- The MCRT continued to **support the opposition efforts of the Citizens Against Beltway Expansion** regarding the toll lanes proposal for the 495 Beltway. Resources were networked and testimonies and letters were written to highlight the environmental and environmental justice impacts of this project.

### **Developing a Framework of Key Targeted Issues**

- In December, the MCRT and Strategy Group began to review the developing 2023 political landscape to assess support for opposition to the SCMaglev and how to proceed in reaching out to allies and win friends in the face of heavy BWRR and Northeast Maglev lobbying.
- The MCRT, the extended Strategy Group, and DEIS-response experts began to **collaborate on a framework of key targeted issues** we can anticipate will be "winning" supportable issues to use when the Supplemental DEIS or EIS or whatever document we anticipate will be issued imminently for public review. We anticipate the need to gear up quickly again to ask for an extension of the review period.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

- The MCRT uses **MailChimp to generate newsletters and alerts** that have a widespread distribution network. We anticipate distributing multiple issues each year. Outgoing member Victoria Reynolds had managed the service. Current board members reorganized and found a volunteer to pick up where she left off. Our first newsletter was published in October 2022 [<https://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=061de41d1bb717bc664341c30&id=b99fe89ecf>].

Working with Bill Boone, we included a new column called “SCMaglev Blatant Subterfuge” to highlight false claims made by the promoter. On November 23, we issued an urgent request alert to support the opposition against the Supplementary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study and to comment on the Prince George’s County Climate Action Plan.

- Board members continually updated, organized, and strengthened the resources contained in **our webpage**: <http://www.mcrt-action.org/>. Our latest project status flyer is located for easy access at: [https://aa247ef8-bd4a-4dd2-890c-8b5ebdf396e2.filesusr.com/ugd/6d0640\\_90372cdd5ad845998270a807cf1139e0.pdf](https://aa247ef8-bd4a-4dd2-890c-8b5ebdf396e2.filesusr.com/ugd/6d0640_90372cdd5ad845998270a807cf1139e0.pdf).

## 2022 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

### Meetings and Other Presentations

*Note:* Members attended a variety of community meetings throughout the year on a regular basis. Those meetings are too numerous to list.

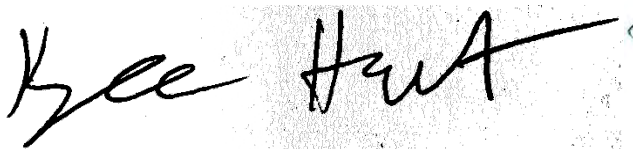
January 26 – presentation for a Zoom conference sponsored by the Nashinoki Peace Academy and Friends of the Earth Japan  
February 8 – presentation for Linthicum Women’s Club  
February 9 – presentation for Linthicum Shipley Improvement Association  
February 10 –Public presentation of the MCRT Annual Meeting to report on 2021 activities.  
August 11 – Briefing for Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

### Information Tables

*Note:* Our MCRT petition [[tinyurl.com/4rks5rk7](https://tinyurl.com/4rks5rk7)] continued to be promoted at events.

May 8 and 9 – Annual Greenbelt Greenman Festival  
September 3 – Annual Greenbelt Labor Day Festival  
October 21 – Town of Bladensburg 280th Anniversary Celebration  
October 29 – Seventh Annual Festival del Rio

Respectfully submitted:



Kyle Hart, Acting President



Patricia Jackman, Treasurer

*Kathleen Bartolomeo*

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Kathleen Bartolomeo, Secretary

*Suzzie Schuyler*

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Suzzie Schuyler, Parliamentarian

*Susan R. McCutchen*

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Susan McCutchen

*Daniel Woomer*

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Daniel Woomer