

***Chapter VIII***



***Agency, Elected Official,  
and Public Coordination  
and Comments***

## VIII. AGENCY, ELECTED OFFICIAL, AND PUBLIC COORDINATION AND COMMENTS

FRA and MDOT have encouraged agency and public input in Project development throughout the Project. The purpose of this coordination is to inform stakeholders, become aware of public and agency concerns and interests, and consider that input in Project development. From scoping to alternatives development to the identification of a Preferred Alternative, information received from agencies and the public has supplemented data collected by the Project Team through desktop research and field visits. Comprehensive input from the public and agencies has aided in the identification of a Preferred Alternative that both meets the Project Purpose and Need and minimizes impacts to the environment, to the extent possible.

The agency and public coordination process was implemented to be consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508); FRA Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545 [1999]); and FRA Update to NEPA Implementing Procedures (78 FR 2713 [2013]). Agency and public coordination began in June 2014 with the scoping period at the initiation of the Project. The general public involvement process evolved as the Project advanced, a process which included the screening of the preliminary alternatives, the development and evaluation of alternatives carried forward, and the identification of the Preferred Alternative.

This chapter describes the agency and public coordination undertaken throughout Project development, presented first by agency and public coordination, and then by public involvement efforts conducted before and after the publication of the DEIS. This chapter also introduces official DEIS comments and responses (which are found in **Appendix I**), and summarizes the comments received since the close of the DEIS comment period on February 26, 2016.

Additional information on agency and public involvement may be found in the *Project Scoping Report*, the *Preliminary Alternatives Screening Report*, and the *Alternatives Report*, available at [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com).

### A. Scoping Period

The Project was first introduced to agencies and the public during the scoping period, which began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on June 9, 2014 and concluded with the end of the scoping comment period on July 30, 2014. The primary goal of the scoping period was to introduce the Project to agencies and the public, and to gather input on the Project Purpose and Need and environmental resources. The scoping period also served to determine and clarify issues that were relevant to the scope of the Project. During the scoping process, communication was established between the lead Project agency and Project grantee (FRA and MDOT, respectively) and government agencies, citizens, elected officials, community associations, and other interested stakeholders.

The scoping process for the Project was implemented consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508); FRA Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545 [1999]); and FRA Update to NEPA Implementing Procedures (78 FR 2713 [2013]). The scoping process included the following major elements:

- Publishing of the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* (June 9, 2014);
- Presentation at an Interagency Review Meeting (June 18, 2014);
- Hosting of a Public Open House (June 19, 2014); and

- Scoping comment period for agencies, the public, and any other interested stakeholders (June 9, 2014 to July 30, 2014).

While the scoping period officially began with the publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* on June 9, 2014, outreach to the public started as early as May 20, 2014, when the Project website ([www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com)) was launched. The scoping period and the launch of the Project website laid the foundation for both agency coordination and public involvement throughout the remainder of the Project.

## B. Agency Coordination

FRA and MDOT have encouraged agency input on Project development throughout Project development. The purpose of this coordination was to inform agency stakeholders, learn about agency concerns and interests, and use agency input in Project development. Information obtained from agency input has been used from Project scoping to engineering development and the environmental evaluation of the alternatives.

Federal and state agencies have been kept abreast of Project updates via the Project website, [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com), and regular Interagency Review Meetings (IRM) hosted by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA). The Project was presented to interested federal, state, and local agencies at six separate IRMs between June 2014 and April 2016, which took place both before and after the release of the DEIS. Agencies were invited to attend the IRM via e-mail.

### 1. Participation

Eighteen agencies were represented over the course of the process (Table VIII-1):

**Table VIII-1: Agency Representation**

Agency Represented at IRM	6/18/14	10/15/14	5/20/15	6/17/15	10/21/15	4/20/16
Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)	x		x	x		
Critical Area Commission (CAC)			x			
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	x	x	x		x	x
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)				x		
Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)	x	x	x	x		x
Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)	x	x	x		x	x
Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)		x	x	x		x
Maryland Historic Trust (MHT)	x	x	x	x		x
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)						x
Maryland Port Administration (MPA)		x				
Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)	x		x	x	x	x
Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)	x					
National Park Service (NPS)			x			

Agency Represented at IRM	6/18/14	10/15/14	5/20/15	6/17/15	10/21/15	4/20/16
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration- National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA- NMFS)		x			x	x
US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	x	x	x	x	x	x
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	x	x	x	x	x	x
US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	x	x	x	x	x	x

**2. Interagency Review Meetings**

All IRMs were held at Maryland SHA in Hanover, Maryland. Each meeting included a presentation with maps, graphics, and other information on the Project background, purpose, and need. Additionally, each meeting provided information about the Project schedule and next steps, as well as contact information. Agencies were encouraged to submit comments throughout the Project process, and several agency comments were received through the online Project comment form.

a. Interagency Review Meeting: June 18, 2014

The purpose of the first IRM was to introduce agencies to the Project and encourage their input in the scoping process. The meeting included information about the tunnel’s existing physical and operational conditions, environmental resources, and previous studies. Discussion topics included the existing physical conditions of the tunnel, construction impacts, double-stack freight train operations, stormwater management, and public and agency involvement.

b. Interagency Review Meeting: October 15, 2014

The purpose of the second IRM was to update agencies on the development of the preliminary alternatives and the release of the *Preliminary Alternatives Screening Report*. The meeting included information about screening methodology and recommendations for alternatives to be carried forward. Discussion topics included accommodation of both passenger rail service and freight rail operations, whether there was a speed goal for the Project, and coordination with the FRA NEC FUTURE team.

c. Interagency Review Meeting: May 20, 2015

The purpose of the third IRM was to serve as an update to agencies prior to the July 2015 Public Open House. The meeting included information about track and operation requirements, the alternatives carried forward from the screening (Alternative 1, Alternative 2, Alternative 3, and Alternative 11), the development of alternative options (Alternative 3A, Alternative 3B, Alternative 11 Option A, and Alternative 11 Option B), ventilation facilities, the future of the existing tunnel, and the alternatives evaluation criteria. Discussion topics included Project cost and potential property displacements.

d. Interagency Review Meeting: June 17, 2015

The purpose of the fourth IRM was to provide information on the development of alternative options. The meeting included information about the development of alternative options, ventilation facilities, the future of the existing tunnel, and the alternatives evaluation criteria. Discussion topics included stormwater management, Indirect and Cumulative Effects (ICE) analysis, vibration analysis, operation requirements, hydrogeology, right-of-way impacts, treatment of cut material, the Project completion date, natural resources, the future of the existing tunnel, and the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

e. Interagency Review Meeting: October 21, 2015

The purpose of the fifth IRM was to provide an overview of Alternative 1: No-Build, and Alternatives 3A, 3B and 3C, as well as the release of the *Alternatives Report*. The meeting included information about the evaluation criteria, the elimination of certain alternatives from the study (Alternative 2, Alternative 11 Option A, and Alternative 11 Option B), ventilation facilities, a follow-up to questions from the previous IRM, environmental documentation, and public involvement activities. Discussion topics included climate change resiliency, the treatment of cut material, and the future of the existing tunnel.

f. Interagency Review Meeting: April 20, 2016

The purpose of the sixth IRM was to provide an overview of the DEIS release and subsequent Public Hearings. The meeting included information about major comment themes from the DEIS comment period, Alternatives development and evaluation since the release of the DEIS, identification of the Preferred Alternative, Preferred Alternative engineering details, and ventilation facilities and intermediate ventilation facility sites.

**C. Elected Official Coordination**

The Project Team has held regular meetings with local, state, and federal elected officials who represent the Study Area. Beginning during preliminary alternatives development in Fall 2014, over 20 meetings were held with Study Area representatives in the US Congress, Maryland Congress, Baltimore City Mayor’s office, and Baltimore City Council. Elected officials were briefed on the status of the Project throughout its various stages, and were kept informed of public involvement efforts and public input. Meetings included a PowerPoint presentation as well as discussion; technical Project Team members attended the briefings when requested. Input, such as engineering and environmental concerns, received from elected officials during these meetings was continually incorporated into alternatives development and evaluation throughout the Project. Dates and types of meetings are recorded in **Table VIII-2** below.

**Table VIII-2: List of Meetings with Officials**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Official or Organization</b>
October 14, 2014	Briefing	Congressman Cummings
October 29, 2014	Briefing	City Council President Jack Young and Councilman Nick Mosby
November 18, 2014	Briefing	Deputy Mayor Khalil Zaied
December 23, 2014	Briefing	Mayor’s Office of Neighborhoods
January 20, 2015	Pre-briefing	Mayor’s Senior Staff
February 4, 2015	Briefing	Councilman Welch
February 5, 2015	Briefing	Mayor and her Senior Staff
February 5, 2015	Briefing	Councilman Costello
February 5, 2015	Update	Council President Jack Young and Councilman Nick Mosby
March 19, 2015	Briefing	MD State Senate Delegation (including Senator Catherine Pugh, Senator Nathaniel McFadden, Senator Bill Ferguson)
March 20, 2015	PowerPoint provided	MD State House Delegation
June 8, 2015	Update	Councilman Costello (regarding June Open Houses)
June 8, 2015	Update	Council President Jack Young (regarding June Open Houses)

Date	Meeting Type	Official or Organization
June 9, 2015	Update	Deputy Mayor Khalil Zaied (regarding June Open Houses)
October 1, 2015	Briefed	Councilman Welch
October 2, 2015	Update	Deputy Mayor Khalil Zaied
October 6, 2015	Briefed	Council President Young
October 6, 2015	Update	Deputy Mayor Khalil Zaied
November 10, 2015	Briefed	Deputy Mayor Connor Scott and Legislative Andy Smullian
November 10, 2015	Briefed	Councilman Mosby
November 17, 2015	Project Team/ Engineering Team meeting	Councilman Mosby
March 18, 2016	Briefing	Annapolis City Delegation
March 21, 2016	Briefing	Councilman Costello on new ventilation facility locations

## D. Public Involvement: Alternatives Development and Evaluation

Members of the public, including citizens, elected officials, and other stakeholders (i.e., community associations, Baltimore City agencies, and local institutions and businesses), are important Project participants and have been regarded as such throughout the Project process. At all meetings, the public was given the opportunity to learn about Project development in-person and directly ask questions and engage in discussion with the Project Team.

This section, **Section D**, presents public involvement efforts undertaken prior to the release of the DEIS on December 18, 2015. From the Project's NOI on June 9, 2014, through the alternatives development and evaluation that preceded the release of the DEIS, three Public Open Houses and ten community meetings were held. **Section E** provides updates on public involvement efforts undertaken since the release of the DEIS.

The Public Open House meetings were advertised via letters to elected officials, community associations, Baltimore City agencies, and other local institutions and businesses; postcards mailed to approximately 18,000 residences and businesses within approximately a half-mile of the existing B&P Tunnel alignment; newspaper advertisements in four publications; fliers posted at high-traffic locations within the Study Area; press releases and announcements on the Project website, [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com); and e-mails to the Project mailing list.

### 1. Public Open House: June 19, 2014

The first Public Open House was held during the scoping period on June 19, 2014, at the Talon Center at Coppin State University from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Thirty-nine members of the public and agency representatives attended the first Public Open House. Ten display boards provided an overview of the Project, including the following Project elements: Project Purpose and Need; tunnel description and existing conditions; the NEPA process; environmental resource considerations; previous tunnel-related studies; the Project schedule; two maps of the existing B&P Tunnel alignment and vicinity, featuring historic and natural resources; and input solicitation and contact information. The display boards were posted to the Project website prior to the meeting.

### 2. Public Open House: October 29, 2014

The second Public Open House, which updated the public on alternatives development and the *Preliminary Alternatives Screening Report*, was held on October 29, 2014, at Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

The Public Open House was attended by 110 members of the public, including citizens and agency representatives. Display boards provided an overview of the Project, specifically the preliminary alternatives development. Downloadable versions of these display boards were made available on the Project website prior to the meeting.

### **3. Public Open House: June 16, 2015**

The third Public Open House for the Project was held on June 16, 2015, at Carver Vocational-Technical High School, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The purpose of this meeting was to present more detailed engineering development and environmental evaluation on the alternatives that had been carried forward from the preliminary screening, including Alternative 1; Alternative 2; Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C; and Alternatives 11A and 11B. This Public Open House also served as the public introduction of the alternative options.

The Public Open House was attended by 66 citizens and agency representatives. Display boards provided detailed information on the alternatives development and evaluation. Additionally, a presentation, which served as a broad introduction to the information on the display boards, was delivered three separate times during the evening. Downloadable versions of these display boards were made available on the Project website prior to the meeting.

### **4. Project Community Meetings**

In addition to the Public Open Houses, the Project Team hosted ten smaller-scale community meetings in April, July, and October 2015. These community meetings were implemented in an effort to be responsive to community needs, clarify community concern, and facilitate Project understanding among Study Area residents. The meetings provided opportunities for the public to both learn about the Project background and milestones, as well as engage with the Project Team. Downloadable versions of the presentation were made available on the Project website after the meeting.

#### **a. April 2015**

A series of four Project community meetings were held in April 2015 in order to provide a status update on the engineering activities and environmental evaluation that had occurred since the *Preliminary Alternatives Screening Report*. Over 25 people attended the four meetings. These meetings were intended to prepare the public for the new information to be released at the Alternatives Public Open House. A 30-minute presentation by members of the Project Team provided Project background, the Purpose and Need, an overview of the preliminary alternatives screening process, the alternatives carried forward, and continuing Project activities. The presentation was followed by a Question-and-Answer session, during which community members voiced questions and concerns to the Project Team. The Project community meetings were held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on the following dates:

- April 13, 2015, at Gilmor Elementary School;
- April 14, 2015, at Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School;
- April 20, 2015, at Westside Elementary School; and
- April 21, 2015, at Lockerman Bundy Elementary.

#### **b. July 2015**

Another series of three Project community meetings were held in July 2015 to provide a recap of information presented at the Alternatives Public Open House and provide opportunities for additional public input and questions. A total of 76 people attended the three meetings. During these meetings, the Project Team made a 30-minute presentation. The presentation highlighted the major topics of the June 2015 Public Open House, including the latest engineering development and environmental evaluation on Alternative 1; Alternative 2; Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C; and Alternative 11 Options A and B. The presentation was followed by a Question-

and-Answer session, during which community members voiced questions and concerns to the Project Team. The Project community meetings were held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on the following dates:

- July 7, 2015, at Perkins Square Baptist Church;
- July 14, 2015, at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church; and
- July 16, 2015, at Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School.

c. October 2015

Three Project community meetings were held in October 2015 to provide community residents Project updates concurrent with the release of the *Alternatives Report*. A total of 97 people attended the three meetings. During these meetings, the Project Team made a 30-minute presentation. The presentation explained the reasons for eliminating Alternative 2, Alternative 11 Option A, and Alternative 11 Option B from further study. It also provided the latest engineering development and environmental evaluation on Alternative 1, Alternative 3A, Alternative 3B, and Alternative 3C, as well as the latest information on ventilation facilities. The presentation was followed by a Question-and-Answer session, during which community members voiced questions and concerns to the Project Team. The Project community meetings were held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on the following dates:

- October 6, 2015, at Carver Vocational-Technical High School;
- October 13, 2015, at John Eager Howard Recreation Center; and
- October 20, 2015, at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church.

## **5. Community Association Meetings**

The Project Team also attended local Community Association meetings to present information on the Project and respond to questions in smaller, neighborhood-focused settings. The Project Team attended the following Community Association meetings:

- Alliance of Rosemont Community Organizations (ARCO) on June 17, 2015, at St. Edwards Roman Catholic Church;
- Western District Community Council Meeting on August 27, 2015 at First Mount Calvary Baptist Church; and
- Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Inc. (RHIC) on September 1, 2015, at John Eager Howard Recreation Center.

## **E. Public Involvement: DEIS Comment Period Process and Mitigation**

The DEIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation was released to the public on December 18, 2015. An electronic version of the DEIS was made available on the Project website, [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com), and hard copies were made available at ten local agency and library locations. Since then, public involvement efforts have shifted to focus on gathering input on the DEIS and the identification of the Preferred Alternative, as well as working with community members to develop potential Project mitigation strategies. This coordination has been carried out through three DEIS Public Hearings during the DEIS comment period, two Public Open Houses, several Community Association meetings, and Mitigation Working Group meetings.

### **1. DEIS Comment Period and Public Hearings**

The release of the DEIS on December 18, 2015, initiated the DEIS comment period, which ended on February 26, 2016. The DEIS Comment process included three Public Hearings, and allowed for agencies and citizens to submit formal comments on the DEIS. Agencies and the public were notified of the DEIS comment period and invited to the Public Hearings via the *Federal Register*; e-mails to the Project mailing list; updates to the Project website; newspaper advertisements, including the *Afro-American*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and the *City Paper*; State



Clearinghouse distribution; Study Area brochure mailings; and letters to agencies, elected officials, community associations, and other stakeholders. The two Public Hearings originally scheduled in the NOI had to be rescheduled due to winter storms. Rescheduled dates and locations for the Public Hearings were announced via e-mail to the Project mailing list, the Project website, newspaper advertisements, and Study Area postcard mailings.

Agencies and the public were encouraged to submit official comments on the DEIS via the following methods:

- Completing an online comment form at the Project website, [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com);
- Sending an e-mail to [info@bptunnel.com](mailto:info@bptunnel.com);
- Sending written comments to B&P Tunnel Project, 81 W. Mosher Street, Baltimore, MD 21217; and
- Giving oral or written testimony at one or more of the three Public Hearings.

The Public Hearings allowed for citizens to review display boards; speak directly with Project Team members; and provide official, oral and written testimony on the DEIS. The Public Hearings were held on the following dates:

- February 1, 2016, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Frederick Douglass High School;
- February 6, 2016, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at Frederick Douglass High School; and
- February 17, 2016, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Carver Vocational-Technical High School.

A total of 132 citizens, elected officials, and organization and agency representatives attended the Public Hearings. Attendees included the following elected officials:

- US Representative Elijah Cummings;
- Maryland State Senator Catherine Pugh;
- Maryland State Delegate Barbara Robinson;
- Representative for Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young; and
- Baltimore City Councilman Nick Mosby.

Attendees also included representatives from the following organizations:

- Baltimore City Central Committee;
- Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP);
- Baltimore City Department of Public Works–Office of Engineering and Construction (DPW–OEC);
- Baltimore City Recreation and Parks;
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen- District of Columbia State Legislative Board (DCSLB);
- Chesapeake Climate Action Network;
- Coppin Heights CDC (CHCDC);
- Druid Heights CDC (DHCDC);
- Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council (GMCC);
- Healthy Neighborhoods;
- Maryland Transit Administration Citizens Advisory Council (MTA CAC);
- Maryland Transit Administration Citizens Advisory Council for Accessible Transportation (CACAT);
- Matthew A. Henson Neighborhood Association (MAHNA)/Matthew A. Henson Community Development Corporation;
- N4O, Inc.;
- Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC);
- Residents Against the Tunnels (RATT);
- St. Francis Neighborhood Center; and

- Whitelock Community Farm.

A total of 54 individuals provided official oral testimony at the Public Hearings. Official comments received on the DEIS, as well as other Project comments received after the close of the DEIS comment period, are discussed in **Section F**.

## **2. Public Open Houses: April 6, 2016 and April 16, 2016**

The fourth and fifth Public Open Houses for the Project were held on April 6, and April 16, 2016, at Frederick Douglass High School, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm and Carver Vocational-Technical High School, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm respectively. The Public Open Houses offered the public an opportunity to see how their feedback given during the DEIS comment period was incorporated into the alternatives development and environmental evaluation. The purposes of the Public Open Houses were to:

- Review the refinements to all alternatives that minimized community impacts;
- Communicate that Alternative 3B was still under consideration;
- Receive input from the public on Alternative 3B;
- Explain the disadvantages of Alternative 3A and Alternative 3C when compared to Alternative 3B;
- Communicate that alternatives to the proposed Whitelock Street and Brookfield Avenue Intermediate Ventilation Facility location were being considered instead of Whitelock Street;
- Review the Intermediate Ventilation Facility locations along West North Avenue;
- Respond to public questions asked during the DEIS comment period regarding freight trains, vibration, air quality, and the need for four tracks; and
- Explain the next steps for the Project.

The Public Open Houses were advertised in a variety of ways. Letters were sent to elected officials, community associations, Baltimore City agencies, and other local institutions and businesses. Postcards were mailed to approximately 18,925 residences and businesses within approximately a quarter-mile of the Preferred Alternative, as well as additional properties within the Penrose community near the south portal that could potentially be impacted by the Project. Newspaper advertisements were placed in four publications, and fliers were posted at high-traffic locations within the Study Area. In addition, an announcement was posted on the Project website ([www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com)) and an e-mail was sent to the Project mailing list.

The Public Open Houses were attended by 81 citizens, elected officials, and organization and agency representatives. Display boards provided information on a variety of topics related to the revised alternatives, including the disadvantages of the refined Alternatives 3A and 3C. Boards also provided information on potential sites and tunneling costs for the Intermediate Ventilation Facility, an introduction to mitigation, and responses to the DEIS comment period Frequently Asked Questions. Downloadable versions of these display boards were made available on the Project website prior to the meeting.

## **3. Community Association Meetings**

At the organization's request, the Project Team met with Residents Against the Tunnels (RATT) on May 24, 2016 at Beth Am Synagogue from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to address specific questions and concerns related to the Project. The Project Team gave an overview of the Project, the Project schedule, and addressed questions related to freight, diesel fumes, ventilation buildings and vibration.

The Project Team also met with the No Boundaries Coalition on June 14, 2016 at St. Peter Claver Church from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The Project Team addressed questions related to the ventilation facility such as noise levels, impacts to West North Avenue development, and impacts to the John Eager Howard Elementary School. Questions also sought to address safety, vibration, and the Project timeline.

#### 4. Mitigation Working Group Meetings

The Project has established a Mitigation Working Group to provide an opportunity for the Project Team to work with community stakeholders and representatives to identify potential mitigation measures for the Project in an ongoing process. The Mitigation Working Group consists of members of the Project Team, community stakeholders, and representatives of community associations, which include the following:

- Bikemore;
- Druid Heights Community Development Corporation;
- Matthew A. Henson Community Association;
- Midtown-Edmondson;
- Mt. Royal Community Development Corporation;
- Mt. Royal Improvement Association;
- No Boundaries Coalition;
- Residents Against the Tunnel (RATT);
- Reservoir Hill Historic District/Reservoir Hill Improvement Council;
- Rosemont Homeowners and Tenants Association;
- Western District Community Relations Council; and
- Whitelock Community Farm.

Two Mitigation Working Group meetings have been held thus far, on May 10 and May 31, 2016, at the Perkins Square Baptist Church from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Mitigation measures are proposed for the following impacts: community, economy, transportation, natural resources, hazmat and emergency management, construction, noise, vibration, and cultural resources, as well as general Project mitigation. Measures proposed by the Working Group are discussed in more detail in **Chapter VII** and commitments and agreements made by the Project will be documented in the Record of Decision (ROD). The Mitigation Working Group is an ongoing process, beyond publishing of this FEIS. In order to keep the public updated, meeting minutes are available on the Project website [www.bptunnel.com](http://www.bptunnel.com).

#### F. Agency and Public Comments

Agency and public comments have been an integral element of Project. Input from federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the public, has been solicited continually throughout the development of the Project. Comments were submitted via written comment cards; online comment forms at the Project website; the Project e-mail address, [info@bptunnel.com](mailto:info@bptunnel.com); and postal mail. In addition to these methods, comments were submitted via recorded oral testimony during the DEIS comment period Public Hearings. The public was also encouraged to ask questions through telephone communication with a Baltimore City Project representative, whose telephone number was made available on the Project website and meeting materials.

Comments received prior to the publication of the DEIS were addressed through an e-mail reply and/or environmental documentation available on the Project website, including the *Scoping Report*, *Preliminary Alternatives Screening Report*, *Alternatives Report*, and the DEIS.

A total of 161 comments were received electronically, by mail, and at Public Hearings during the DEIS comment period, from December 18, 2015 to February 26, 2016. Major themes expressed in these comments include:

- Concerns about potential increases in freight trains and the transportation of hazardous materials and the potential for emergency events;
- Concerns about the potential disruption of neighborhood character and quality of life, and the potential deterrent to economic growth in Reservoir Hill, a revitalizing neighborhood;
- Concerns about the potential for degraded air quality;

- Concerns about potential vibration impacts on fragile and historic housing stock;
- Concerns about potential inequitable environmental impacts placed on low-income and/or Black and African-American Baltimore City residents and communities;
- The potential for new/different passenger and freight rail connections in Baltimore and regionally;
- Concerns about potential noise impacts;
- Questions concerning the need for four tracks as opposed to two tracks;
- General support for the Project;
- General concern over the proposed site for the Intermediate Ventilation Facility at Whitelock Street and Brookfield Avenue, where a community garden (Whitelock Farm) currently exists;
- Guarantee of compensation for potential damage to homes;
- Potential negative property value impacts in communities above the tunnel and near tunnel portals;
- General distrust of Project and Project Team intentions;
- Concerns about MARC's transition to an all-diesel fleet; and
- General concern that localized environmental costs are not worth the regional benefit of decreased travel time.

A specific response has been prepared for each comment received during the DEIS comment period (December 18, 2015 through February 26, 2016) including comments received during each of the three Public Hearings. DEIS comments and responses are presented in **Appendix I** of this FEIS.

There were 28 comments received after the close of the DEIS comment period on February 26, 2016. Sixteen comments were emailed, and 12 were collected from the April 2016 public open houses. These comments were not included in **Appendix I**. The themes addressed in these comments were largely similar to themes in comments received during the DEIS comment period. The themes in these comments included:

- General support for or opposition to the Project;
- Concerns for impacts to neighborhoods, historic districts, and businesses; foundations of older buildings and homes; air quality; and water resources;
- Recommendations for alternative routes previously considered by the Study;
- Interest in mitigation for impacts due to vibration and impacts to Whitelock Community Farm;
- Preference for the tunnel being cleared for high and wide loads;
- Appreciation for the public outreach process; and
- Concerns expressed about ventilation facility aesthetics.

Information addressing these comments can be found in **Chapter V** (Affected Environment), **Chapter VI** (Environmental Consequences), and **Chapter VII** (Mitigation). In addition to the themes identified above, six emailed comments specified the author's request to be added to a mailing list or interest in or availability for upcoming meetings.