Intercity Bus Service

Overview of the Network and Facilities

BRTB Technical Committee August 5, 2025

Why Intercity Bus?

- ## Federal Regulations - Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming Purpose

  – "Set forth the national policy that the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out… the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and a TIP, that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight, including accessible pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities, <u>and _intermodal facilities that support intercity transportation, including intercity buses and intercity bus facilities_</u>…"

Definition

- **Intercity Bus Service**

    - Follows a regular schedule and operates over a fixed route

    - Connects two or more urbanized areas

    - Has capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers

    - May make connections to bus service to more distant points

Intercity Service Providers

- **Legacy Carriers – Flix Bus/Greyhound, Peter Pan**

  - Makes intermediate stops at both non-urbanized and urbanized locations on many routes

  - Use of terminals as pickup and drop off points.

  - Availability of interline ticketing and coordinated schedules to enable connecting bus services with a single ticket/fare that can be used on other carriers.
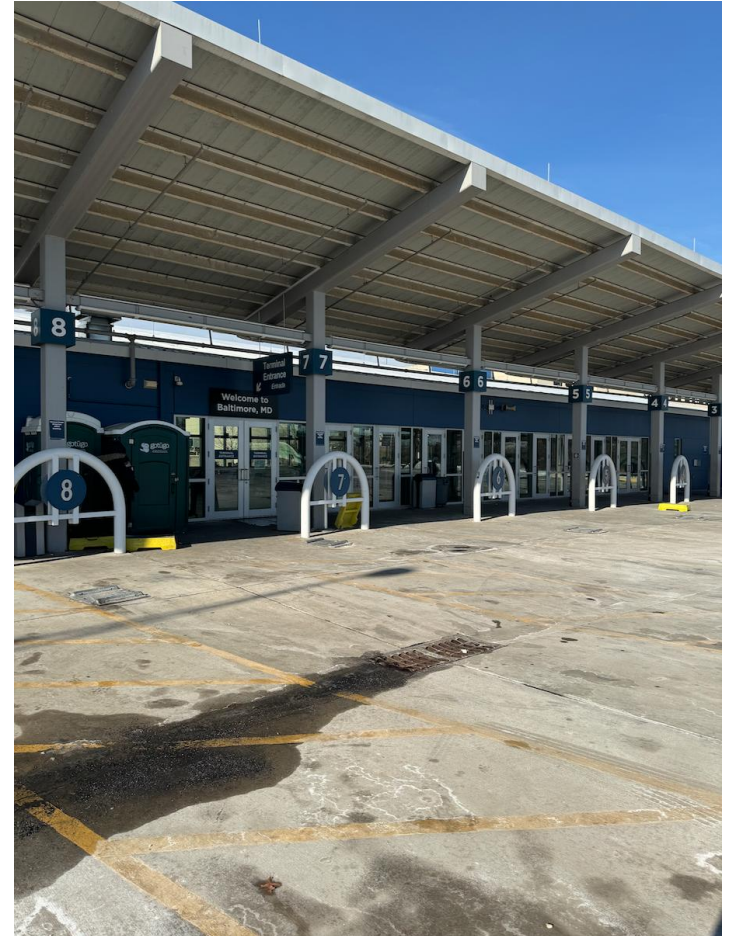
Intercity Service Providers

- **Curbside Buses - Flix Bus, Wanda Coach, and more**

  - Generally serve only larger population centers or major universities (none of the stops are in rural areas)

  - Operate express schedules with no more than one or two stops en route to pick up or drop off additional passengers

 - Schedules are not designed to facilitate connections to other intercity carriers

Intercity Service Providers

- **Shuttle/Feeder Services – Bayrunner**

    – Local routes to connect rural areas to the intercity travel network (bus, rail, air)
    - Western Maryland - Baltimore City to Grantsville
    - Eastern Shore - Baltimore City to Ocean City

    – Typically interlined with legacy carriers for streamlined ticketing

Intercity Bus Map

Bus lines
- Shuttle
- Curbside
- Legacy
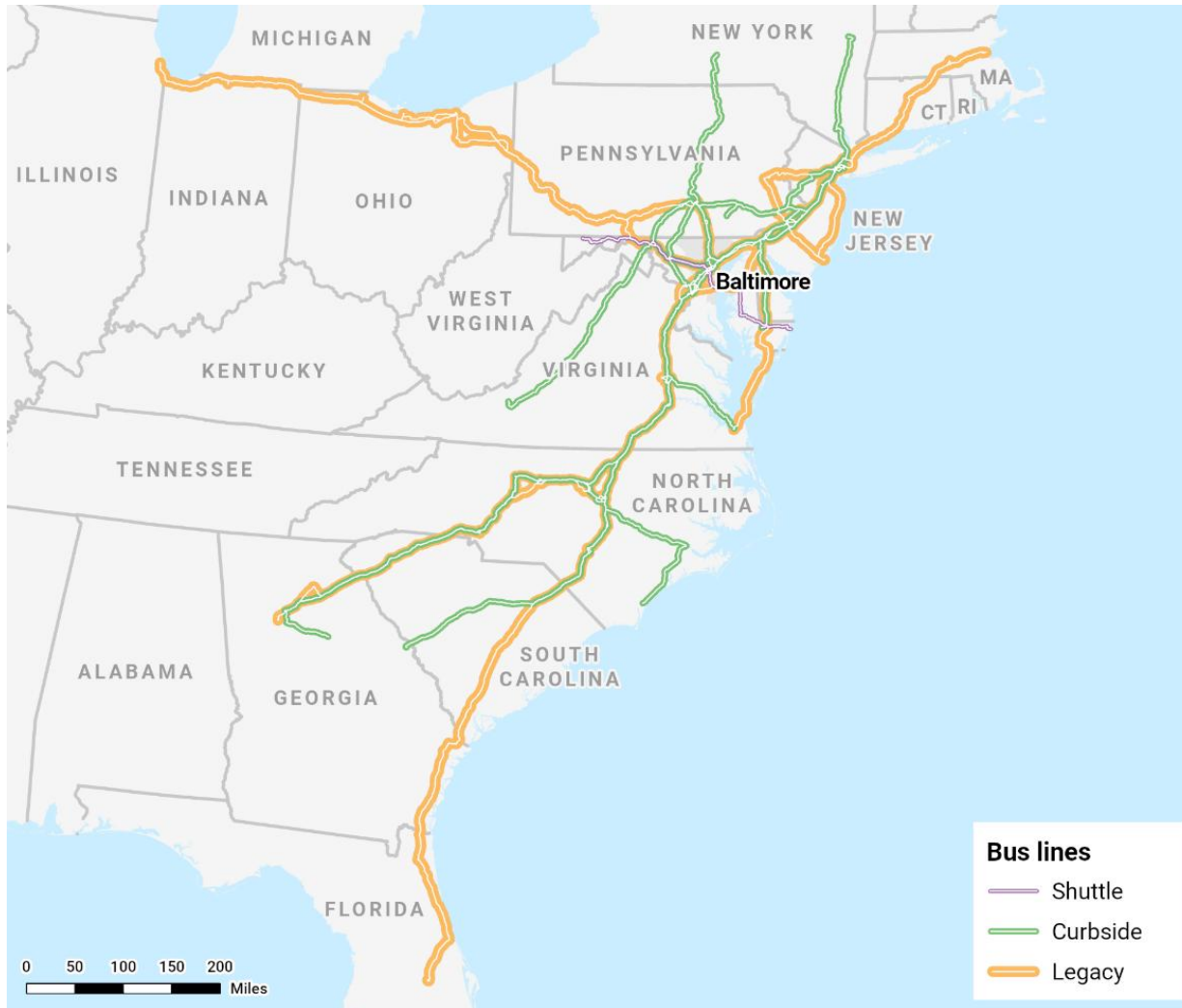
Intercity Bus Trends[1]

- Intercity bus ridership in the U.S. projected to grow 4% in 2025 outpacing the U.S. Travel Association's forecast for growth in travel by airline or automobile
  - Intercity buses carried about 50 million passengers in 2023
- Flix expanded service by about 20% in the Northeast since early 2024
- Service along rural and secondary routes has been slower to recover from pandemic lows, possibly due to the loss of traditional bus stations

[1]Chaddick Institute's Annual Intercity Bus Review

FTA's Intercity Bus Program

- Section 5311(f) sets aside funding for intercity bus service in order to:

  – Support the connection between rural areas and the larger regional or national system of intercity bus service

  – Meet the intercity travel needs of residents in rural areas

  – Support the infrastructure of the intercity bus network through planning, marketing assistance, and capital investment in facilities and equipment
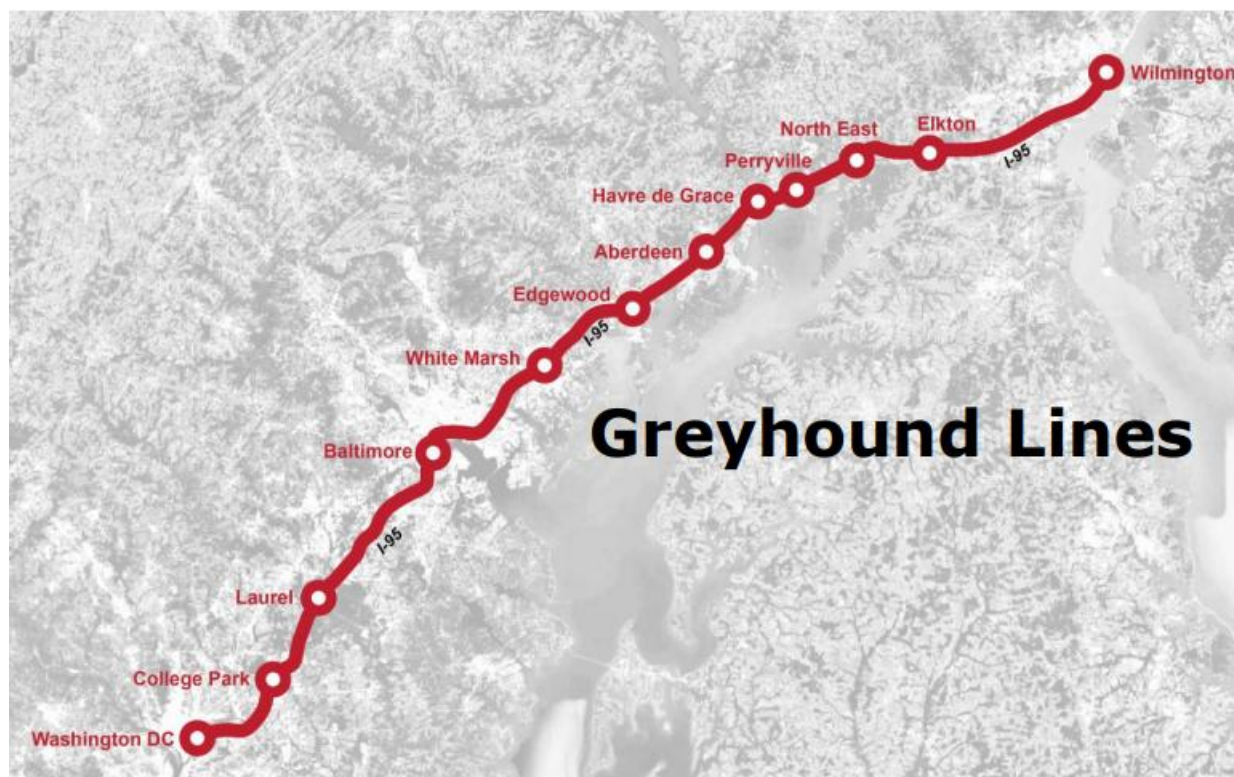
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State Supported Routes

- Western Maryland: two daily roundtrips from Baltimore to Grantsville, MD with intermediate stops
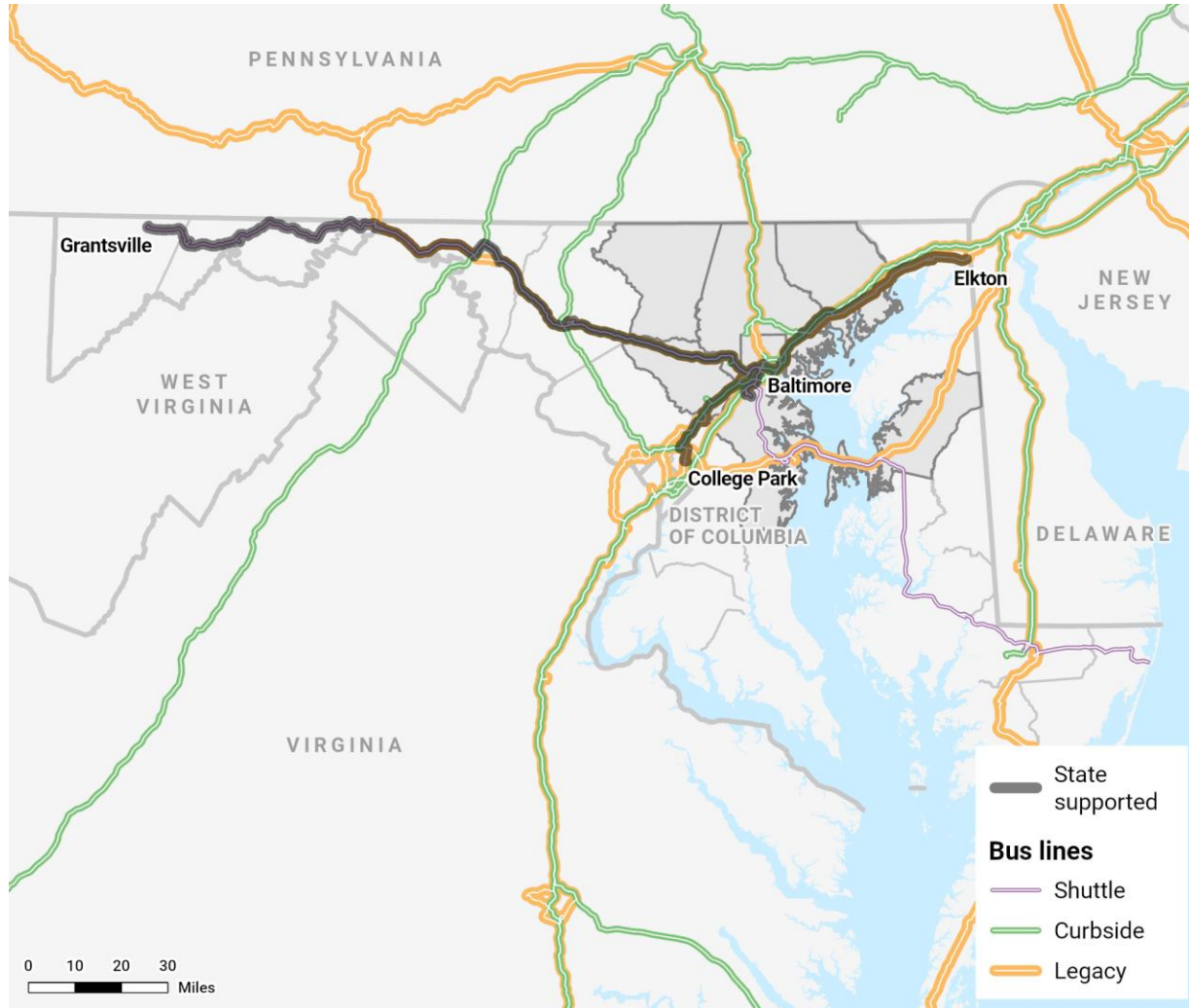

Bayrunner Shuttle

State Supported Routes

- Central Maryland: one daily round trip connecting DC and Wilmington via US 40 corridor

# State Supported Routes Map

Maryland Intercity Bus Study

- In 2022, MDOT MTA assessed its current program and developed recommendations

  – Review other state bus programs to identify potential service alternatives

  – Document Maryland's existing intercity bus network and levels of service from providers

  – Conduct a needs assessment based on demographic data, identification of key destinations, and stakeholder input

  – Identify near-term priorities and vision plan for Maryland's intercity bus network and suggestions for state 5311 program

Maryland Intercity Bus Study

- **Priorities for intercity bus service:**

  – Maintain existing network, especially service from Baltimore to Eastern Shore

  – Interline MTA commuter bus routes in Southern Maryland with Greyhound to allow passengers to make connections at Union Station

  – Expand the network by creating new connections:
    ○ Western MD – Frederick – Washington, D.C.
    ○ Eastern Shore – Annapolis – Washington, D.C.
    ○ Baltimore – Parkton – York, PA

Intercity Bus Facilities – Baltimore Region
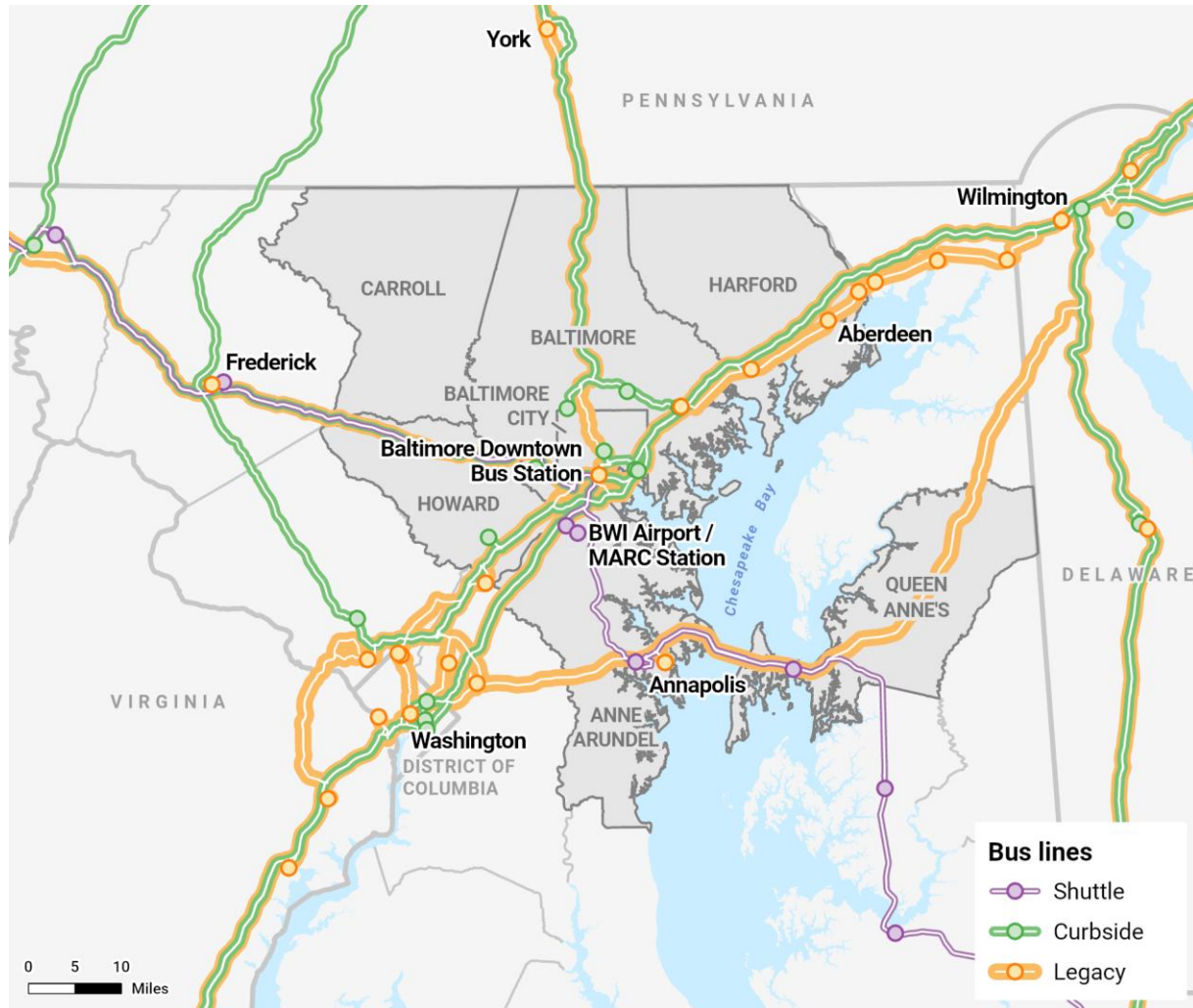
Intercity Bus Planning Considerations

- ## Interstate/HOV Lanes
  - Intercity bus service is concentrated in the I-95 corridor and would benefit from additional HOV or toll lanes

- ## Facilities
  - Four intercity stops in the region are at designated Park-&-Rides and two are at MARC stations. Improvements to lighting, shelter, and seating at these locations would benefit intercity bus travelers

- ## Service Coordination
  - 11 of 17 intercity stops have a transit connection within a 2 minute walk and 16 of 17 stops have a connection within a 5 minute walk

- ## New Services
  - Local public transit operators are eligible to apply for 5311 funding for feeder service (at least 35 miles in length) to intercity bus routes

For More Information

Tim Briggs | Transit Planner

410-732-0500 x1037 | tbriggs@baltometro.org | www.baltometro.org

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