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## University, health care leaders back Red Line route

Baltimore Business Journal - by Scott Dance Staff

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City higher education and health care officials from the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and Mercy Hospital threw their support behind a popular layout of the planned east-west Red Line transit system Wednesday.

The groups united at a press conference organized by the **Greater Baltimore Committee**, the regional business advocacy group leading lobbying efforts behind a Red Line option known as Alternative 4C, which would span from Woodlawn to Bayview, include two tunnels and cost \$1.6 billion.

The endorsements from significant community institutions helps advance the project as transportation leaders seek feedback from stakeholders in preparation for choosing a locally preferred alternative for the Red Line. Community support is a key criterion in the federal government's decision to help fund the project, and federal funding is a necessity to get it built. Four hearings in neighborhoods affected by the Red Line begin Nov. 6.

Alternative 4C calls for tunneling under the Cooks Lane area on the city's western edge and under downtown, Harbor East and Fells Point.

Representatives from each of the institutions said the Red Line would stimulate the city and help employees, patients and students get around.

"We believe in the center city and we believe strongly in promoting its connectivity to the region," said Sister Helen Amos, executive chairwoman of the board for Mercy Health Services.

James L. Hughes, vice president for research and development at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, said the Red Line would especially be an asset as the university develops its west side BioPark, a new bioscience research center along Baltimore Street just west of its main campus.

Gregory F. Shaffer, Bayview president, said the Red Line is needed to help attract more federal research projects and companies to the city's east side, where Hopkins is also part of a new research park, the Science + Technology Park at Johns Hopkins.

"The only way you can reach our campus is by car, and gasoline," Shaffer said.

Charles W. Simmons, president of Sojourner-Douglas College, and Thomas Hampton, executive assistant to the president at **Baltimore City Community College**, also said the Red Line presents new opportunities to their students and potential students.