

Finding Your Way: Baltimore Transportation

By Jack Dobson

For many students, going to college means making a big change in their lives. Some have moved once or twice, others around the country many times, and yet still there are some who can claim to have been a lifelong resident of their hometown for their whole lives. Whether you are making a trek up I-95 north into the mid-Atlantic, or you are migrating south to take refuge from Jack Frost, Loyola University, and in turn Baltimore City, are bound to become your new hometown for the next four years. Some of you are used to city life, and yet others may have no idea how to operate a bus fare box. But ultimately, getting acquainted with the transportation system in the City of Neighborhoods can make all the difference.

Let's start with the familiar—Uber and Lyft have become a common part of our vernacular today, and are probably paving the road ahead for the future of private transportation. Both of these ride-hailing services depend on fares and are therefore subject to fare hikes

due to or in- new policies creased demand in a particular area, but for the most part are searchable through typing in your destination on the apps themselves. The only downside is that they don't typically offer a student discount, save for at the beginning of the year. For a cheaper option, the Collegetown Shuttle Network is a free bus service that connects the universities of Baltimore to each other, as well as to the Towson Town Center mall, the Loch Raven Plaza, and Baltimore Penn Station. The Blue Line, which services Loyola, typically runs every two hours on Monday-Thursday, and hourly on Friday afternoons and weekends, with limited service on Sunday (Miller). Another free bus service that connects with the Collegetown Network is the Charm City Circulator's Purple Line at Penn Station. Minus holidays, the Circulator runs all seven days in the week, with extended late night service for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and weekday service ending at 8 PM (Charm City Circulator). The Circulator covers a large part of downtown; the Green line extends all the way out to Johns Hopkins Hospital in the East, the Purple Line services Penn Station down to Inner Harbor, and the Banner Route goes all the way down to the Fort McHenry Star Spangled Banner site. The Charm



City Circulator's coverage of Baltimore is second only to the government-owned Maryland Transit Administration (MTA).

Baltimore's publicly funded transportation system is operated by the MTA and its infrastructure contains a bus, light rail, subway, and commuter rail system that spans from the malls up in Hunt Valley to Washington's Union Station. Loyola is directly serviced by routes 11 and 33 (soon to be LocalLink routes 51 and 28, respectively), which Route 11 serves Towson Town Center to the north, and Inner Harbor to the south. Route 33 serves Cold Spring Lane, from Moravia Avenue to Roger's Ave. Metro Station. As with all city buses, they may be subject to congestion and delays, or they may arrive earlier than stated on MTA websites and schedules.

Fares as of February 2017 cost \$1.70 per ride, and \$4.00 for a day pass (MTA Maryland). Payment can be made with paper money and coins, but an easier and far more efficient way of paying is through a "Charmcard" from the MTA or a "SmarTrip" card from the Washington Metro system. Both can be registered online and money can be transferred onto it with a credit card without delay.



“now you'll know how to get there”

Loyola is also indirectly served by the Baltimore Light Rail system by the “Cold Spring Lane” station, with a connection through the Route 33 bus, or by walking approximately 30 minutes from the main campus to the station. The light rail's termini end in Hunt Valley Towne Centre, a small suburban-type mall, and two termini to the south, one to Cromwell/Glen Burnie, and one to BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. The third line of the light rail system is services two train stations, one at Camden Yards to the south, and Penn Station to the north, for direct connections to MARC and Amtrak trains from the MTA system. The light rail also requires a \$1.70 fare that can be paid for at a ticket vending machine, or a day pass that can be used at any bus, light rail, or metro station for the day can be purchased as well, and the SmarTrip/ Charmcard are also accepted as payment as well. MARC, or the Maryland Area Regional Commuter system, services Penn Station to Washington, D.C.'s Union Station for approximately 50 minutes to 1 hour. The Penn Line travels through stations such as BWI Airport Station and New Carrollton, where a connection through the free Amtrak/MARC shuttle gives easy access to Baltimore's local airport, and the New Carrollton station connects directly with the WMATA's

Orange Line if skipping the hustle and bustle of Union Station is something of a priority. Roundtrip tickets from Penn Station to Union Station cost \$16, and roundtrip tickets Penn Station to BWI are \$10, and are an easy buy at any ticket station or Amtrak Quik-Trak ticket kiosk.

Speaking of Amtrak, when the Thanksgiving holiday comes around and home is only a few states away, the railroad is typically a cheaper option than flying for the most part. Amtrak's Northeast Cor-



ridor services everywhere from Newport News, VA, to Boston South Station, MA, and for a higher cost, the Acela Express gets to fewer destinations faster. In the south, Amtrak services Newport News and Norfolk, VA, as termini for the Northeast Regional network, and costs around \$140 dollars round trip without the student discount. For the north, a trip to New York's Penn Station can cost around

\$160 for a 2-hour trip, and Philadelphia's 30th Street Station can cost around \$100. Trips through Connecticut and up to Massachusetts are about 5-7 hours from Baltimore's Penn Station, and can cost upwards of \$170 to \$200 (Amtrak). A timelier alternative is BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, directly connected to the aforementioned MARC and Light Rail systems, and has a larger area of states to connect to, with nonstop flights reaching as far out as Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Southwest is the largest carrier out of BWI, with nonstop flights directly to Boston-Logan, Hartford, Providence, and JFK, but ultimately ticket prices to places in the Northeast run higher than a trip on Amtrak. For those coming from the Midwest and South, BWI is probably the best option compared to Amtrak.

Baltimore is a city you will get to know up close and personal over the next four years at Loyola, and whether you're trying to find a nice little spot downtown where you and your friends can go to eat, or take a nice walk under the Star Spangled Banner at Fort McHenry, now you'll know how to get there.