

BASIC FACTS ABOUT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

WHAT IS THE BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD?

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) is directly responsible for the transportation planning process for the Baltimore metropolitan region in accordance with the metropolitan planning requirements of Section 134 (Title 23 U.S.C.) of the Federal Highway Act of 1962 and Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act. The BRTB is a 10-member policy board consisting of the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties and the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Department of Planning. Voting rights are extended to all members with the exception of the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Department of Planning that serve the BRTB in an advisory capacity.

Staff of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council provide technical support to the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, and is also engaged in economic and demographic research, computer mapping applications, air and water quality programs, cooperative purchasing and rideshare coordination.

WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION 2030?

As our region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the BRTB is responsible for determining how federal transportation funds will be spent. Every three years, the BRTB reviews how the region is changing and growing in order to determine future transportation needs. This process identifies the major capital projects which should meet the region's transportation needs for the coming decades. This is the Long Range Plan.

The current Long Range Plan was completed in 2001. The next one is scheduled to be finished by November 2004 and will be known as the 2004 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan. Our standard way of referring to it, however, is to call it *Transportation 2030*. It will guide spending for capital expansion programs and projects to the year 2030. The funding covered by *Transportation 2030* also includes maintenance and operational improvements.

WHAT IS THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM?

The Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, is a short range transportation program. While the Long Range Plan covers 20 years or more, the TIP only covers five years and is a program, not a plan. The TIP documents the anticipated timing, cost and rationale for federally-funded transportation improvements to be made in the Baltimore

region. Projects in the TIP flow from the Long Range Plan. The TIP's main purpose is to identify projects which will require federal funding in the near future.

WHERE DO PROJECTS IN THE LONG RANGE PLAN AND TIP COME FROM?

Projects that are included in the Long Range Plan (and that flow to the TIP) are developed by the seven local governments on the BRTB and the Maryland Department of Transportation. The idea for the project may originally come from a city or county council member, business or industry representative, or a community organization. If federal funding is needed, the project must become part of the regional Long Range Plan process.

The Maryland Department of Transportation also has an annual process to develop projects. Every year, MDOT develops the Consolidated Transportation Program. MDOT visits each of the local governments in the state to collect a list of proposed projects from each jurisdiction. A draft Consolidated Transportation Program is developed and MDOT visits each jurisdiction again. Some of the jurisdictions allow these meetings to be open to the public for comment. After these visits – called the Annual Tour – the updated Consolidated Transportation Program is sent to the Maryland General Assembly for approval. The General Assembly can approve or reject projects.

A local project that needs federal funding must also go through the local government's capital improvement program process where it may or may not be approved. Typically, the local government develops a capital improvement program every year. Citizens always have an opportunity to participate in the annual Capital Improvement Program process.

The projects that are proposed for the Long Range Plan come from the projects that have been developed (although not yet carried out) by the local governments or MDOT. Most of the projects that are in the Long Range Plan are anticipated to have some federal funding. All jurisdictions, in consultation with MDOT, submit projects to be considered for the Long Range Plan.

WHERE DOES THE FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS COME FROM?

Transportation projects can be funded by federal, state or local funds or some combination. The BRTB deals with projects that have federal, state and local funding. Federal funding comes from the U.S. Department of Transportation and is allocated to the Maryland Department of Transportation. The BRTB in cooperation with MDOT develops a financial forecast to determine how much of this funding is available to cover projects in the regional Long Range Plan.

DOES THE BRTB IMPLEMENT TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS?

No, the BRTB as a regional body, is **only** involved in the planning process for transportation infrastructure improvements. The following state and local agencies actually carry out the implementation of transportation projects (note that the first six agencies are part of the Maryland Department of Transportation):

- State Highway Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Maryland Transportation Authority
- Maryland Aviation Administration
- Maryland Port Administration
- Motor Vehicle Administration
- The Departments of Public Works for:
 1. City of Baltimore (Department of Transportation),
 2. City of Annapolis,
 3. Anne Arundel County,
 4. Baltimore County,
 5. Carroll County,
 6. Harford County, and
 7. Howard County.

HOW CAN SOMEONE CHANGE A ROAD WIDENING OR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT?

Once the bulldozer is on the road, there is a good chance that the project has been in the works for some time. It is very difficult, although not impossible, to terminate a project once the construction phase has begun. At this point in the process, citizens can have more of an impact on HOW the project takes place rather than WHETHER it takes place. You might be able to have sidewalks added to the project, for example. If you want to help determine whether projects take place you must get involved in the long range transportation planning that the BRTB directs or even earlier at the local level of planning.

HOW CAN A NEED FOR MORE FREQUENT BUS SERVICE BE MET?

The Maryland Transit Administration administers bus service. They hold hearings on issues such as bus service frequency. If you want to help determine how funds are spent on transit projects that are major capital projects, you must get involved in the long range transportation planning that the BRTB does. Examples of transit projects that would appear in the Long Range Plan and the TIP include bus shelters and light rail system improvements.