



Chapter Six

What Comes Next?

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What Comes Next?



The process of completing a long-range transportation plan such as Outlook 2035 is complex and requires considerable coordination among the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) members and stakeholders. BRTB activities that are underway and continuing through the Unified Planning Work Program represent the day-to-day work at reaching the goals set forth in Outlook 2035. These activities and the investments proposed for implementation will put the region on target to reach access and mobility goals.

Looking forward, BRTB members have identified two critical activities needed to meet these goals. The first is monitoring the outcome of a Special Ses-

sion of the 2007 Maryland General Assembly to consider a budget deficit which will directly impact needed revenue to address un-met transportation needs. The second action is the timely, yet ongoing, monitoring of conditions on the transportation network for daily incident management and future congestion management strategies. Monitoring the regional, state, and federal budgets is a current issue across the country as funding needs grow. The BRTB is very concerned about transportation funding needs and is working with partners in the Baltimore region to get more out of their transportation investments through new transportation management and technology strategies.

Chapter 6, Section 1
TACKLING THE BUDGET DEFICIT TO ADDRESS UN-MET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The state is currently facing a serious fiscal challenge. State officials and outside experts agree that a major “gap” exists between the estimate of revenues from current sources and the baseline expenditures projected for future years. Baseline expenditures include funding mandated by statute, realistic estimates of caseloads in state programs, reasonable assumptions with respect to inflation or other cost adjustments, and continuation of

prior commitments. Assuming the rates for taxes or fees remain unchanged, the general fund “structural deficit” for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 is estimated at about \$1.45 billion. To eliminate the deficit, Governor O’Malley has developed a package of revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions, and called a 30-day Special Session of the General Assembly that began on October 29, 2007 to adopt the package.

Where does transportation fit in the State deficit?

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has indicated the need for \$400 to \$600 million in new

FY 2008 revenue to keep the transportation spending program on track. The current spending program, the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), while sizable, is constrained. The 2007 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly authorized \$1.8 billion in capital spending for FY 2008 and \$1.6 billion in FY 2009.

In addition, the later years of the CTP are even less robust. Funding programmed in the CTP declines to \$1.1 billion by FY 2012. This drop is due to inflationary pressures and the increasing demands of operating programs. Additional transportation debt capacity is unavailable due to the revenue to debt-service coverage ratio required by state law.

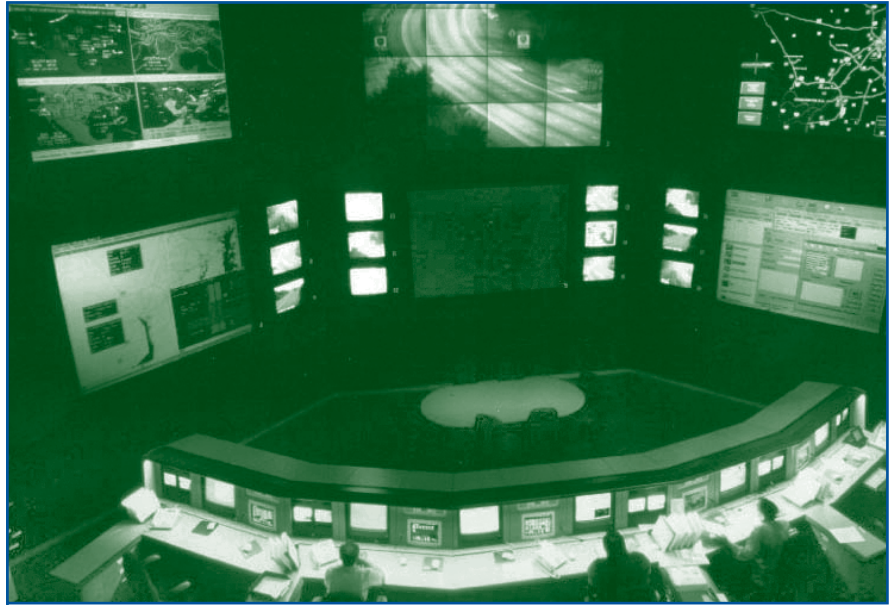
What are the Economic Impacts of Increasing Spending on Transportation Projects?

Transportation spending that annually exceeds \$100 million is a powerful jolt to any state economy. Recently, the Greater Baltimore Committee, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the



Maryland Chamber of Commerce jointly sponsored a Texas Transportation Institute study, *Investing in Maryland's Transportation Infrastructure: The Costs and Benefits to Workforce and Family*, on the costs and benefits accruing to Maryland through its transportation investments.

The impacts of transportation investments are economy-wide. Primarily, they follow three paths. Direct impacts result from expenditures on labor, equipment, and materials. Secondary impacts result from consumer expenditures by transportation workers. At the tail end, there is the impact of expenditures by the consumer work force whose pay flows from construction workers. The report further states that new and improved transportation facilities reduce congestion travel time and total fuel consumed. An improved transportation in-



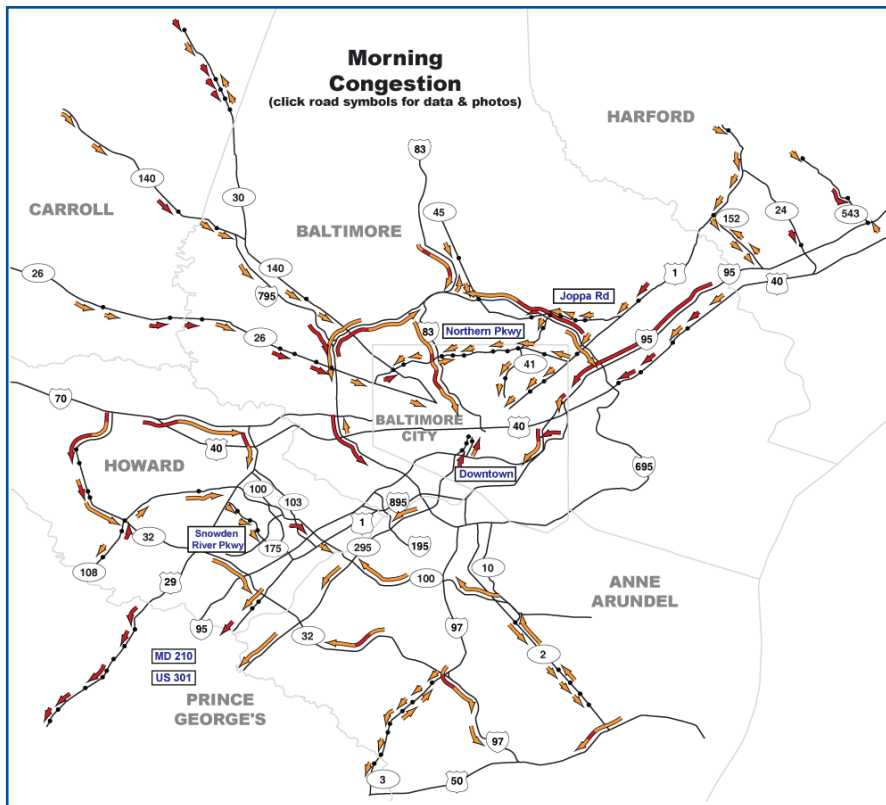
frastructure brings better mobility, and results in more efficient consumer and business operations transportation through reduced operating cost and travel times.

Should additional funding become available to support transportation needs, the BRTB will reconvene to assess the situation. In consultation with MDOT, it will be important to determine the amount of funding that

would be available to system preservation, operations and expansion. If expansion funds become available in the timeframe prior to the next update of the regional long-range transportation plan, the BRTB will consider the Illustrative projects listed in Chapter 5 and engage the public in the process it plans to undertake as well as opportunities for public input.

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Chapter 6, Section 2
MONITORING SYSTEM CONDITIONS

Transportation mobility directly affects our quality of life, impacts our ability to travel around the region, and transport goods and, therefore, impacts the economic productivity of our region. In today’s environment, mobility is also important to safety and security. Increasingly, mobility is jeopardized by congestion and unexpected delays. It has been estimated that,

nationwide, approximately 40 percent of delay happens virtually in the same location and at the same time every day—it is “recurring.” Traffic demand exceeds the available capacity of the transportation infrastructure. Delay also results from unexpected events, such as crashes, weather events (e.g., fog or snow), and work zones.

The technologies themselves are not the answer, but the improved ability to operate the system, enabled by the technologies, is key to ad-

ressing congestion and delays. Applications such as freeway management, arterial management, incident and special event management, work zone mobility and safety management, and road weather management marry technology innovations with a desire to better serve customers through improved mobility. The Baltimore region has several well established and on-going operational programs such as the Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART) for highway

incident management, traffic signal timing, and traveler information programs such as the Multi-modal Traveler Information System, that support mobility in the region.

The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is an important component under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The FHWA defines a CMP as a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for

alleviating congestion and enhancing mobility. Under the CMP, a program for data collection and system monitoring must be established. Data collection is an important task to assess system performance and serves as a repository of historical, simulated, and observed data for the transportation system in the Baltimore region.

As part of this effort, the Baltimore region CMP consolidates data collection efforts related to system performance in an archive of historic and current performance datasets that can be used for future

evaluation and analysis. The overall goal of the program is to communicate measures related to mobility and accessibility in the Baltimore region, and to provide the public with a better idea of how transportation systems perform.

Besides relying on traditional forms of data collection such as traffic counts, aerial surveys of congestion and travel time runs, the Baltimore region will look for new technologies, such as probe data, to provide more data and in real-time to assess the performance of the transportation system.



