

Executive Summary



FIGURE ES-1
BALTIMORE REGION





TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK

2035

Creating a Blueprint for the Baltimore Region's Future

Executive Summary

What is Transportation Outlook 2035?

Transportation Outlook 2035: Creating a Blueprint for the Baltimore Region's Future, called Outlook 2035, is the financially constrained long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region. The plan, reviewed every four years, is an update to the region's 2004 transportation plan, Transportation 2030, and creates a framework that guides transportation investments for the Baltimore region from 2013 through the year 2035. The vision of Outlook 2035 was established over the last 20 years as local governments of the Baltimore region, assisted by state agencies, collectively assembled as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO), began to plan and implement actions for how the future transportation network of the Baltimore region would de-

velop. Past long-range transportation plans included such major capital investments as the extension of the Baltimore Metro to Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Baltimore Central Light Rail, MD 100, MD 43 and numerous transportation investments that promote cost effective and efficient alternatives to single occupant automobile travel.

Outlook 2035 envisions a robust multi-modal transportation system that provides an array of transportation choices that efficiently and safely moves people and goods while accommodating the region's future growth and prosperity. Outlook 2035, like its predecessor Transportation 2030, addresses the relationship of transportation to land development, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship and Maryland's fiscal reality.

A distinct feature of Outlook 2035 is the principle of financial constraint. As required by federal legislation, financial constraint means that transportation investments outlined in a regional transportation plan must demonstrate that anticipated revenues will be available to support the cost of proposed infrastructure investments. The fiscal estimates utilized in the development of Outlook 2035 are based on the recent history of Maryland transportation spending, specifically in the Baltimore region. In other words, Outlook 2035 is not a “wish list” but reflects a listing of major capital trans-

portation investments that at this time have been balanced against federal, state and funds forecasted to be available to underwrite the cost of implementing these strategic decisions.

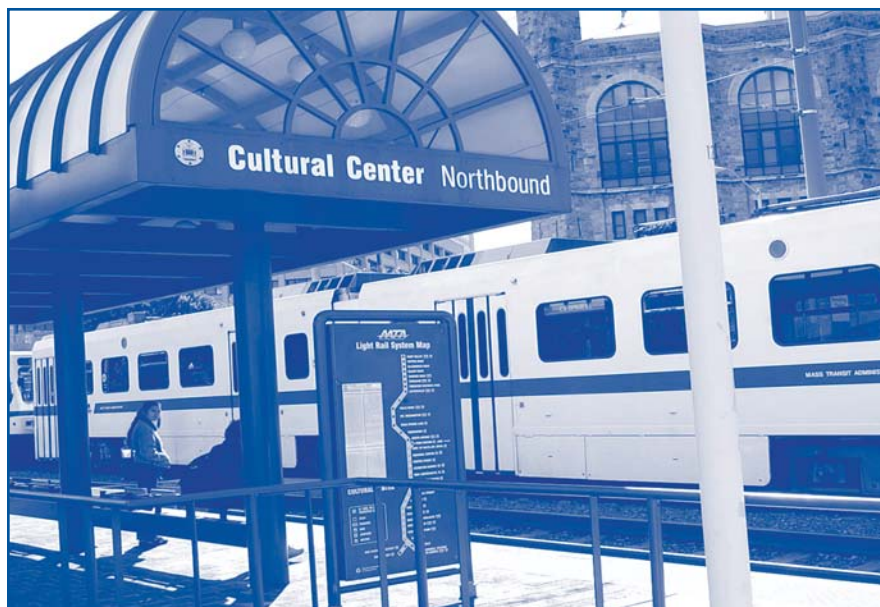
Outlook 2035 is prepared by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), the federally designated MPO for the Baltimore region. The BRTB is a 10 member policy board consisting of the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard and the Maryland Departments of Transportation, Environment and Planning. The mission of the

BRTB is to provide regional transportation planning and policy-making for the Baltimore region and to develop a multi-modal transportation investment plan that satisfies the federal mandates of Safe, Accountable, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act.

Introduction, Section 1
**PLANNING
 PROCESS FOR
 TRANSPORTATION
 OUTLOOK 2035**

SETTING A COURSE

In keeping with recent federal requirements governing transportation policy, MPOs must develop a new long-range transportation plan every four years. Not only must this plan be financially constrained and meet air quality standards, but no transportation project can be eligible for federal aid unless the project is included in a federally endorsed long-range transportation plan. In creating a path for the completion of this effort, the BRTB identified a



set of goals and strategies to guide the direction of Outlook 2035. Current and future trends that affect our region's transportation needs were analyzed. Demographic changes in the age and location of our regional population and households coupled with economic growth and workforce demands (i.e., Base Realignment and Closure process), requires decision-makers to understand regional travel behavior to implement efficient and effective transportation solutions. A first rate transportation system does not only strive to address past mobility and access concerns, but must remain relevant and viable to address future challenges, such as the following:

- Creating Transportation Choices
- Socio-economic Growth
- New Military Employment Opportunities
- Aging Infrastructure
- Goods Movement Explosion
- Financing the Demand for New Capacity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Sustainable Communities and Urban Core

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

Outlook 2035 addresses a number of challenges:

- Creating Transportation Choices
- Socioeconomic Growth
- New Military Employment Opportunities
- Aging Infrastructure
- Goods Movement Explosion
- Financing the Demand for New Capacity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Sustainable Communities and Urban Core

PRIORITIZING INVESTMENTS

Pivoting from Transportation 2030, the BRTB collaboratively developed criteria and a subsequent list of transportation improvements that were deemed “Regionally Significant” or of critical importance to all users of our transportation system. Six regionally significant projects were elevated to this status given regional travel needs and the project’s anticipated completion by 2020. The second step in the project submittal process centered on local government BRTB members working cooperatively with the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop a

list of potential transportation projects that were consistent with local jurisdiction priorities. In all, over 130 highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and management and operations projects were submitted for inclusion in the new long-range plan.

A critical part of the planning process, called “prioritization,” provided the BRTB with a tool to evaluate a wide range of individual transportation projects that collectively could be assembled to achieve the most efficient and cost effective solution to current and future transportation demands. The methodology used to prioritize projects al-



The BRTB analysis estimated that in 2007 dollars, \$33.4 billion will be available through the TTF to operate, maintain and expand the region's transportation system through the year 2035.

lowed for an in-depth look at both the policy and technical attributes of each project compared against similar mode types. Policy criteria centered on such project components as consistency with local comprehensive plans and State Smart Growth policy, economic development and inter-jurisdictional cooperation. For state funded projects located outside of Priority Funding Areas, the state must address the projects' eligibility under the 1997 Act. Technical criteria focused on system mobility, congestion and safety. Transit oriented investments concentrated on ridership and congestion relief. Using this process to select projects ensured that these projects would advance regional goals and promote viable transportation solutions. While staff evaluated the mix of candidate transportation re-

quests, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration assembled project specific cost estimates.

FINANCING THE PLAN

The next big step in updating the previous plan was a forecast of revenues and expenditures expected in the next 25 years. The Maryland Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) is the source of all state transportation dollars and therefore became a controlling factor in developing Outlook 2035 investment strategies. The BRTB analysis estimated that in 2007 dollars, \$33.4 billion will be available through the TTF to operate, maintain and expand the region's transportation system through

the year 2035. Over the last 10 year period 45 percent of Maryland's total transportation operations budget has been spent on transit, covering such items as fixed-route service expansion and the replacement of buses and other transit facilities. Conversely, only 19 percent of the State's operations budget over this same period has been allocated to support the highway network.

While preserving and operating a multi-modal transportation system are prerequisites to a successful system, the focus of Outlook 2035 is the new capital expansion elements that are expected to be operational during the plan's horizon. After careful consideration of the basic costs to maintain and operate our first class transportation

system, the BRTB allocated 26 percent or \$8.7 billion of the projected \$33.4 billion budget to finance new capital transportation investments between 2013 and 2035.

CREATING AN ACTION AGENDA

Over the 2-year course of developing Outlook 2035, the BRTB has continued to proactively engage various stakeholders, bringing many points of interest into the planning process to frame the direction of this regional long-range plan. A restructured Citizens Advisory Committee has become a more effective conduit for public involvement and is now more representative of the diverse interests in different parts of the region. Based on project prioritization, available revenues, sys-

tem performance and citizen input, the BRTB developed a multi-modal agenda of future transportation investments. This “Preferred Alternative” was released for extensive public review, incorporating best practices regarding public outreach and participation. At least one public outreach event was held in each of the BRTB member jurisdictions and the BRTB devoted greater attention to available technologies such as the Internet and electronic visualization to promote public awareness and engagement. Public comments received throughout the 3-month public participation process convinced decision-makers to reconfigure the initial allocation of available funds. The revised plan committed significant shares of fiscal resources to projects that address more than one mode and expand the menu of transportation choices.

The transportation investments and policies delineated in Outlook 2035 support the development of a balanced transportation system that promotes our region’s diverse

and vibrant economy and quality of life. The expenditure of \$8.7 billion supports highway and rail expansion and seeks to reduce auto dependency by investing in alternative transportation services and promoting energy efficient and safe travel options. Coupled with a vast array of existing regional and local transportation initiatives, Outlook 2035 serves as a catalyst to the continued development of a comprehensive regional mobility system.

Introduction, Section 2 WILL TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK 2035 BE SUCCESSFUL?

The true test for Outlook 2035 is whether it will actually improve regional mobility and safety, reduce time spent in congestion and enhance our quality of life. By constantly monitoring the performance of our regional transportation network; decision-makers can compare a select group of criteria that indicate the success in meeting the plan’s goals. Since it is unlikely the BRTB will achieve all of the goals out-



lined in this document, the MPO is committed, if necessary, to explore opportunities to introduce new measures that, it is hoped, will move the region in the right direction.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

MOBILITY – A multi-modal transportation system’s performance can be measured by its effect on roadway congestion. If transportation choices, trip reduction programs and system management projects are effective, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and congestion will be reduced. However, economic and population growth are occurring faster than capacity improvements can be made.

In 2005, drivers in the Baltimore region traveled 56.5 million miles every day. Of all roadways, 11.2 percent were congested for at least one hour of the day. Every day, drivers spent a total of 70,500 hours sitting in traffic.

By 2035, the daily VMT is projected to increase by 34 percent, to 75.5 million miles.

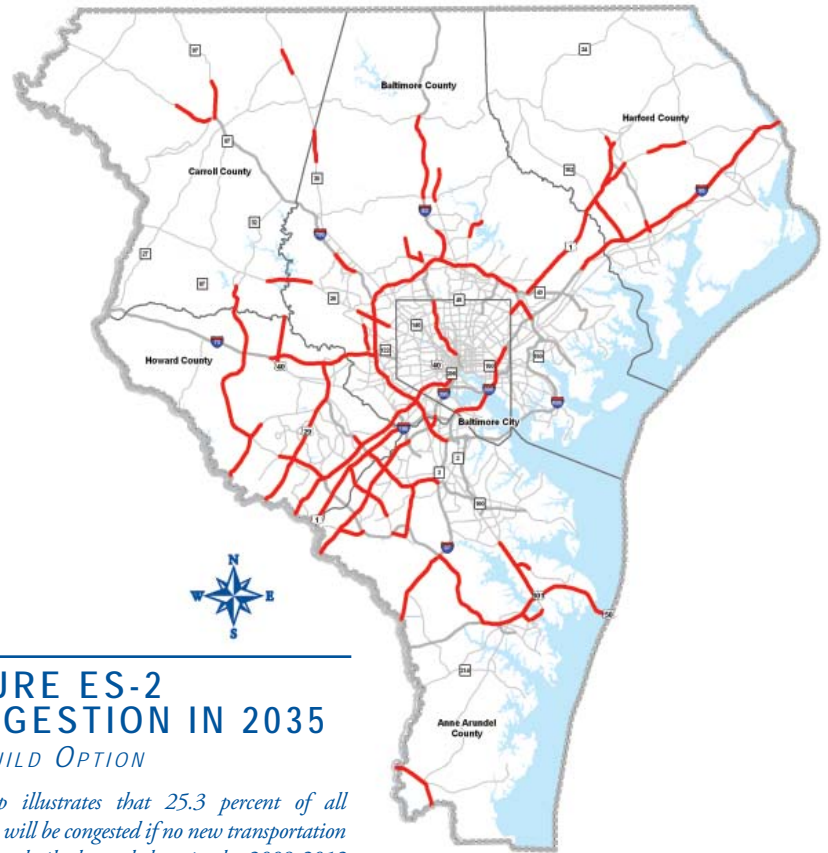


FIGURE ES-2
CONGESTION IN 2035
NO BUILD OPTION

The map illustrates that 25.3 percent of all roadways will be congested if no new transportation projects are built, beyond those in the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Compare this to the map on the next page.

More travel will occur during peak travel times, and congestion will more than double.

Although Outlook 2035 will help mitigate projected congestion, congestion will still be nearly twice what it is today. We simply do not have the resources to build our way out of it. Acknowledging this fact, we have included management and operations (M&O) as a separate category. The M&O projects help address congestion without

construction of new capacity.

AIR QUALITY – At a minimum, the transportation system must not result in emissions that would worsen air quality or delay the region from reaching timely attainment of federal standards. Because the Baltimore region is a nonattainment area for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter, as well as a maintenance area for carbon monoxide, the plan was tested to ensure consistency

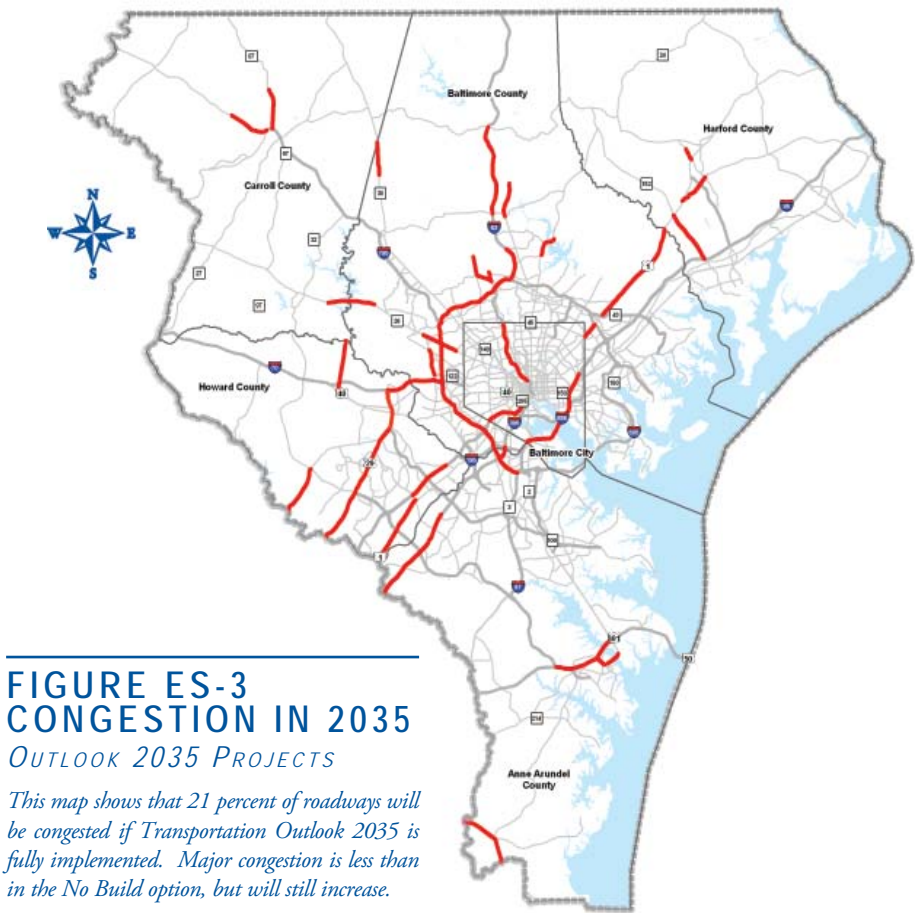
with stated goals. Improvements in air quality may be observed through reductions in mobile source emissions or maintenance of emissions despite increases in vehicle miles of travel.

In light of the importance of air quality, Outlook 2035 includes funding for transportation strategies to improve air quality, while simultaneously improving the efficiency of the system.

Three categories of projects to improve air quality are included: technological, behavioral, and capital improvements. Bicycle and pedestrian projects continue to be an important element in Outlook 2035.

Introduction, Section 3
ADDRESSING THE FUNDING SHORTFALL

As the BRTB embarked and continued upon the task of creating a new long-range transportation plan, it became clearer and clearer that projected revenues would not cover the region's transporta-



tion needs over the next 25-year period. As detailed in the 2003 Maryland Transportation Needs and Funding Report, fiscal resources to support system operations and new capital improvements/expansion have not kept pace with increasing materials and labor costs. Overall costs of transportation improvements have gone up 42 percent since 2004 and are projected to continue to increase due to the worldwide demand for materials such as concrete

and steel products. Even with the General Assembly's enactment of a 2004 transportation revenue increase, dollars garnered from this package only allow the Maryland Department of Transportation to fund projects currently in the 2007 Consolidated Transportation Program.

What appears to be needed is a reliable funding source to minimize the potential for system deterioration and core service reductions.

A revenue enhancement package recently outlined by Governor O'Malley is scheduled to provide an additional \$400 million to \$600 million annually to build \$40 billion worth of transportation infrastructure over the next 20 years.

Rather than an increase in the State gas tax, the enhancement package includes the strategy of “indexing” the current gas tax to a national construction costs index.

This approach would allow the level of revenues flowing into the Transportation Trust Fund to keep pace with rising construction costs.

Without additional financial capacity, the BRTB has been forced to exclude the expansion of the region's rail network.

The region will face the results of placing regional mobility demands solely on an already overburdened roadway network.

Should the General Assembly approve a revenue enhancement strategy, the BRTB will reexamine the project mix of Outlook 2035.

This plan update could potentially rebalance the highway and transit investments currently proposed in Outlook 2035.

Additional revenue could support a new segment of the region's 2002 rail plan, enhance and expand Maryland Rail Commuter Service (MARC) service and broaden the menu of transportation options that shift single occupant vehicle trips to other more efficient transportation modes.

Over the coming months, the BRTB will continue to monitor the actions of the Maryland General Assembly and work together to identify a list of key regional transportation priorities that create a balanced transportation agenda for the Baltimore region.

If the BRTB is to sustain the region's transportation system and meet the transportation challenges of the future, the region must come together and “grab the moment”.

