

Monica Haines

From: Transportation
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2007 11:40 AM
To: Monica Haines
Subject: Baltimore Region Transportation

Dear Monica,

The long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region has been released in draft form. "Transportation Outlook 2035" serves as a blueprint for the Baltimore area by identifying the ways the region plans to invest in the transportation system over the next few decades. Annapolis and Anne Arundel County are part of the Baltimore region.

A public comment period on the draft "Transportation Outlook 2035" will be held through August 29, 2007.

The draft "Transportation Outlook 2035":

1) can be downloaded:

<http://www.baltometro.org/content/view/566/401>

2) will be presented at a public meeting:

July 25, 2007 (Wednesday)
Doors open 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Presentations at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
Heritage Office Complex, 2nd Floor
2664 Riva Rd.



Regional transportation plan heavy on highway projects

Baltimore Business Journal - July 13, 2007 by [Scott Dance](#) Staff

A recently released long-term regional transportation plan that prioritizes projects the state hopes to build by 2035 highlights the problems current and future funding gaps create, limiting possible road and transit improvements, officials said.

Five of the top six projects deemed "regionally significant" in the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's Transportation Outlook 2035 Draft Plan are to widen major highways, which local transportation leaders say reflects the nature of growth expected in the coming decades.

Harvey Bloom, the council's director of transportation planning, said the plan was formed by comparing forecasted state transportation budgets and population growth, but the council also plans to address public comments and concerns. Officials expect \$8.7 billion to be spent on transportation system expansion through 2035, according to the plan, which recommends putting \$6 billion toward roads, \$2.2 billion toward transit and \$62 million toward bicycle and pedestrian projects.

"What makes sense is addressing issues we see now and project into the future," Bloom said. "It may be some of the projects change. It may be they do not."

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council, which oversees the transportation board, is holding a series of meetings across the region over the next several weeks seeking public comment on the plan.

Top regional priorities in the plan include widening U.S. Route 50 and interstates 695 and 95 by 2020. The only transit project on that list is the Red Line, a rapid transit system planned to connect Woodlawn and Patterson Park by 2015.

Greater Baltimore Committee Chairman Donald C. Fry said the high priority of road projects reflects the growth trends that are expected, but said he would also like to see more transit projects appear on the list. Many that have been proposed aren't considered feasible because of a lack of funding, but Fry said he hopes the outlook can change if a boost in the budget for transportation capital projects can be achieved in next year's General Assembly.

"The reality of it now is the Red Line is the premier transit line that has moved to the must-go level, and that's a very positive sign in and of itself," he said.



Wider Route 50 among region's top road priorities

By ANDREW CHILDERS Staff Writer

Widening Route 50 to the Bay Bridge in the next 15 years tops the list of the region's most pressing transportation needs in a new 30-year vision by regional planners.

Along with expanding the Baltimore Beltway and Interstate 95 and extending Baltimore's rapid-transit system, adding more lanes to Route 50 is the most regionally significant transportation projects in the Transportation Outlook 2035.

The plan by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, a planning arm of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, brings together representatives from Baltimore and the five surrounding counties to begin planning for transportation needs beyond one jurisdiction's scope, such as the looming impact of the Base Realignment and Closure Process.

"They are the highest priority projects that cross jurisdictional lines," said Harvey Bloom, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's director of transportation planning.

The metropolitan region is expected to grow 19 percent in the next 28 years to just less than 3 million by 2035. Anne Arundel's population is projected to top 578,000 by then, an 18 percent increase from 2000 Census Bureau figures.

The plan is an update to a 2004 document that meets state and federal regulations for regional planning and the 2007 draft is the first version to address BRAC, which could bring more than 20,000 jobs to Fort George G. Meade by 2014. Both Annapolis and Anne Arundel participated in the plan's creation.

"It's consistent with my vision, the transportation vision, for the future of the county," County Executive John R. Leopold said.

Anne Arundel's roads will need an estimated \$5 billion in upgrades as the BRAC jobs come to west county. Regional transportation needs are estimated at \$42.1 billion over the next three decades. Overall, the Transportation Outlook 2035 identifies 11 critical road improvements in Anne Arundel, particularly around Fort Meade. Routes 175 and 198 are identified for widening projects by 2015 while Routes 100 and 170 are targeted for upgrades by 2020.

Maryland Department of Transportation spokesman Erin Henson called the list "a good first step to moving those projects forward." "It shows all of the key players in the Baltimore region have developed a strong consensus tool," she said.



Our Say:

Why widen Route 50 if you won't plan a new bay crossing?

By THE CAPITAL EDITORIAL BOARD

Perhaps we should just be grateful that plans for Anne Arundel County are a major part of the draft long-range plan released by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board. But one would expect a little more foresight in a plan dubbed “Transportation Outlook 2035.”

We don't get it: The No. 1 item on the brief document's list of “regionally significant projects” is adding two lanes on Route 50 from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Interstate 97.

Yet the document, at least in the draft now accessible online, says nothing about adding lanes across the bay at the existing bridge or anywhere else in the Baltimore region. So what is widening Route 50 in this area going to accomplish, beyond moving traffic jams closer to the bay — that is, assuming that the widening includes the Severn River Bridge, which is not specifically mentioned?

Admittedly, the extra lanes might be good news for Annapolis-area residents heartily sick of the tie-ups on Route 50. But that hardly seems enough to justify a major road-widening program.

Perhaps the planners involved, working on behalf of the Baltimore Regional Council, hope a new bay bridge will be built somewhere else in Maryland.

Perhaps they think that the cost puts such a project out of the question.

More likely, they just don't want to let this controversial issue intrude into a planning process in which they're trying to reach a polite consensus.

Polite consensus is all very well, but it won't help the traffic on and around the current bridge, which is getting worse year by year.

Planners aren't the only ones ignoring the obvious — the attitude seems nearly

universal among the state's politicians, from the governor on down. They don't want to face the likely expense, the expected fiery opposition from people near any proposed additional span, or the reality that — given how long it takes to plan and build such a bay crossing — it's already too late to avoid a major traffic crisis.

So they all avoid talking about it and hope the issue will go away, at least for the next couple of elections. This may be expedient, but it's neither brave nor practical. What has happened to the state's politicians since the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, when they were farsighted enough to not only build the original Chesapeake Bay Bridge but to add a second span?

In coming weeks, there will be a series of public presentations of the Transportation Outlook 2035 plan, including one at the Heritage Office Complex in Annapolis on July 25. There will be a good deal for local residents to comment on, as the plan identifies 11 critical road improvements in Anne Arundel, some of them made more urgent by the base realignment expansion at Fort Meade.

On the whole, the plan seems reasonable and responsible — except for that one giant omission. Perhaps a few members of the public can point out what the planners — and politicians — are working hard to ignore.

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http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2007/07_19-57

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/carroll/bal-ca.shortcuts22jul22,0,646454.story

baltimoresun.com

Carroll Digest

July 22, 2007

Board to discuss transportation plan

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board will hold a public meeting on the draft plan for Transportation Outlook 2035, a long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region.

The meeting will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Aug. 1, with presentations at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., in Room 003 of the County Office Building, 225 N. Center St., Westminster.

The board is taking comments on the plan through Aug. 29. The plan is available at www.baltometro.org, and at libraries and planning offices.

Information: mhaines@baltometro.org.



News Digest

July 22, 2007

Transportation plan available for review

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board will hold a public meeting on the draft version of a long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region.

The meeting will be from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. July 31, with presentations at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., on the second floor of the Harford County Administration Building, 220 S. Main St., Bel Air.

The board is taking comments on the plan, titled Transportation Outlook 2035, through Aug. 29. The plan is available at www.baltometro.org, and at local libraries and planning offices.

Information: mhaines@baltometro.org.



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NEWS

Carroll Set For Rapid Growth

Monday, July 23, 2007
WBAL Radio and The Associated Press

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council says Carroll County will be Maryland's fastest-growing jurisdiction over the next 35 years.

The intercounty planning agency projects that Carroll's population will increase by 55 percent by 2035.

The council's transportation outlook projects that the entire Baltimore region can expect an 18-percent increase, raising the population to nearly three million.

The council has recommended some major road upgrades to help Carroll handle the growth. One road targeted for improvement is Maryland 140, which the council says is the county's most congested artery.

<http://wbal.com/news/story.asp?articleid=61038>

Editorial: Citizens should go to transportation meetings

The Baltimore Examiner Newspaper, The Examiner
Jul 23, 2007 3:00 AM (16 days ago)

BALTIMORE -

If we, our children and grandchildren are stuck in traffic or packed on a decrepit train or bus some day, we won't have anybody to blame but ourselves.

We can shape our destiny, and we'll get eight chances to do so through Aug. 28 when the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board meets on its 2035 outlook and recommendations for projects.

Five area county executives and the mayors of Baltimore and Annapolis are on the board because the whole thing about transportation is that it doesn't stop at government boundaries.

Experts agree we rarely solve transportation problems, we usually just shift them in space and time. And we actually can spend a lot of public money to compound problems if municipalities, counties and states don't coordinate projects.

Coordinated regional priorities and solutions are the best way to make sure we make things better instead of worse.

A unified regional approach also gives our area more weight when it comes to state and federal funding for needed projects.

Outlook 2035 lists 49 highway and five mass transit projects. Local governments plan to spend almost three times more on highways than buses and trains. According to Maryland Department of Transportation Planning Director Sam Minnittee, that's mainly because "you can enhance transit without building new transit."

Rail is the best way to move large numbers of people — and people like rail the best — but new rail projects tend to have the longest lead times and highest costs.

The only one in the top six board priorities is the east-west Red Line from Patterson Park through downtown Baltimore to Woodlawn. With thousands of direct BRAC jobs coming to the region and generating thousands more, we face a congestion crisis.

Having a regional transportation board is the second most important mechanism for dealing with it. The most important is informed citizen involvement. Let's get informed and go to the meetings.

Public hearings:

The meetings will feature the information available for viewing and a presentation by officials at 7 p.m.:

» 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City

- » 4 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Heritage Office Complex, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis
- » 3 to 8 p.m. July 31, Harford County Administration Building, 220 S. Main St., Bel Air
- » 4 to 8 p.m. Aug. 1, Carroll County Office Building, 225 N. Center St., Westminster
- » 3 to 8 p.m. Aug. 6, Baltimore County Public Library, 330 York Road, Towson
- » 5 to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 15, Charles L. Benton Building, 417 E. Fayette St., Baltimore City
- » 3 to 7 p.m. Aug. 21, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Baltimore

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board will meet at 5 p.m. Aug. 28 at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council office. On the Web: Visit the draft Transportation Outlook at baltometro.org

Examiner

Ozone levels may be affected by growth

Jason Flanagan, The Examiner

Jul 19, 2007 3:00 AM (20 days ago)

BALTIMORE -

Increased population and job growth could ruin the region's recent downward trend in the number of high-ozone days.

"Even with technology to help us, Americans love their cars, and we do see the [the number of] ozone days going back up," said Regina Aris, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's policy manager.

Since 1980, the Baltimore metropolitan region has seen the number of days when ozone levels are dangerously high drop from 70 days a year to 20 because of cleaner vehicle emissions and improved transit options. However, the federal Environmental Protection Agency designates the region as not meeting federal standards on ozone levels.

With every county in the Baltimore region expecting population and job growth in the next 25 years, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board addressed ozone levels in its recent outlook plan into the year 2035.

Not only will more cars be on the road, but commutes will be longer.

"Future projections for growth in vehicle travel make it more important than ever to control emissions," the report said.

The report lists nearly 50 road improvements in the region, as well as transit improvements to MARC rail lines and bus systems.

Whether ozone-reducing technology can keep up, however, remains to be seen, experts say.

"It's a cycle. Building more roads is not always such a good idea," said William Elrick of Baltimore City-based Torrington Group, a transportation and environmental consulting firm. "As far as more cars, reducing emissions is going to be one of the biggest issues facing the state and transportation planner."

Ground-level ozone is created by chemical reactions of nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compounds in sunlight. The sources of these compounds comes mainly from cars and industrial output, according to the EPA.

AT A GLANCE

Regionally significant projects:

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board identified six major projects to help ease congestion. Most projects are slated for completion in the next 10 to 20 years:

- » Route 50/301: Add two lanes from Interstate 97 to William Preston Lane Bay Bridge by 2020
- » I-695: Widen to eight lanes from I-83 North to I-95 North by 2015

- » I-695: Widen to eight lanes from I-95 South to Route 122 by 2015
- » I-95 South: Add two lanes from I-695 to the Baltimore-Howard County line by 2020
- » I-95 South: Widen to 10 lanes from the Baltimore-Howard County line to Howard-Prince George's County line by 2020
- » Red Line: Construct east-west rapid transit system from Patterson Park through downtown Baltimore to Woodlawn by 2015

Ozone levels:

Number of days when the ground ozone level reached dangerous levels:

1980: 70

1985: 48

1990: 32

1995: 30

2000: 27

2005: 18

Public hearings:

The meetings will feature the information available for viewing and a presentation by officials at 7 p.m.:

- » 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City
- » 4-8 p.m. Wednesday, Heritage Office Complex, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis
- » 3-8 p.m. July 31, Harford County Administration Building, 220 S. Main St., Bel Air
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- » 5-8:30 p.m. Aug. 15, Charles L. Benton Building, 417 E. Fayette St., Baltimore City
- » 3-7 p.m. Aug. 21, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Baltimore

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board will meet at 5 p.m. Aug. 28 at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council office.

jflanagan@baltimoreexaminer.com

Examiner

Need for roads given priority over transit in outlook report

Jason Flanagan, The Examiner
Jul 19, 2007 3:00 AM (20 days ago)

BALTIMORE -

The demand for more roads and rail transit has local officials pondering how to promote mass transit in an ever-growing urban area while staying under a tight budget.

“The needs are enormous, and the resources are finite,” said Anne Arundel County Executive John Leopold, a member of Baltimore Regional Transportation Board that last week released its 2035 outlook of the region’s transportation needs.

The report lists 49 road projects, but notes only five transit projects. One transit proposal landed in the top six “regionally significant” projects — the Red Line transit system to provide an east-west connection through downtown Baltimore.

According to the report, local governments plan to spend 71 percent of transportation expansion funds on highway projects, while only 26 percent of funds will go toward transit projects by 2035.

“You can enhance transit without building new transit,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Planning Director Sam Minnitte, referring to how most transit improvements come from operating funds.

Many of the hot-ticket projects — the Red Line, widening of Interstate 695 — eat up a disproportionate part of the budget, Minnitte said.

And with the public’s preferred transit option of trains or light rail the least economically practical, developing a balanced and cost-effective transit plan has been a struggle for the board, officials said.

“If folks wanted to take buses, we get a lot of them out and running in no time, but that’s not what people want,” said Regina Aris, policy manager for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Howard County Executive Ken Ulman, the board’s chairman, and Baltimore County Executive James Smith were unavailable for comment. The board includes the five area county executives and mayors of Baltimore and Annapolis.

The report does allow for area governments to consolidate and do regional planning, which may help secure federal funding.

“Regional clout should be our focus at this time because each jurisdiction alone is not going to have the same influence in D.C. as a regional partnership,” Leopold said.

More info

» On the Web: You can see the draft Transportation Outlook at baltometro.org.

jflanagan@baltimoreexaminer.com

Carroll County Times

Network of biking, hiking trails across county planned

By Kathryn Leiter, Times Staff Writer July 22, 2007

While Carroll County highways are receiving higher priority, six proposed trails in the county are being considered low priority in the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Transportation Outlook 2035.

Transportation Outlook 2035 is a report that makes suggestions as to what roads and trails should be updated in the region over the next 30 years.

If adopted, the county would be crossed and linked by a network of trails for bikers and hikers.

Biking and hiking are healthier alternatives for getting around, but a lack of trails in Carroll has sidelined some potential exercisers.

Normally, Race Pace Bikes, located on Md. 140, tells customers to go out of the county to find trails, said store manager David Binns. With the addition of trails, this could change, he said.

All plans call for 8-foot-wide macadam trails, which are good for both biking and walking, said Brenda Dinne, chief for bureau comprehensive planning for Carroll Pathways. Carroll Pathways produces a countywide comprehensive plan that should match up with what is included in the Transportation Outlook 2035, she said.

Macadam is a type of pavement consisting of broken stone held together with asphalt or tar.

Two of the suggested trails would link towns. One would connect New Windsor to Union Bridge, and the other will link New Windsor to Westminster.

Many times, residents must drive to an area to bike, but Dinne hopes that a bike trail network linking towns and parks will provide more options for using bicycles in the county.

Advancements in the roadways could help bikers as well. Right now, Carroll doesn't have many roads with wide shoulders where bikers can ride safely through town, said Binns, who often rides his bike to work.

The extra lanes and trails would make Carroll a much nicer place to bike, he said.

Reach staff writer Kathryn Leiter at 410-751-5909 or kathryn.leiter@carrollcountytimes.com.



DYLAN SLAGLE/STAFF PHOTO
Members of the Baltimore Bicycling Club ride along Old Liberty Road in Winfield July 15.

http://www.carrollcountytimes.com/articles/2007/07/22/news/local_news/newsstory2.prt

Carroll County Times

Projections raise questions about infrastructure

By Kathryn Leiter, Times Staff Writer July 22, 2007

With Carroll County's in-creasing population, the county and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council are looking for ways to keep up.

According to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Carroll County is expected to have the highest growth rate in the state by 2035, at 55 percent.

The BMC's Transportation Outlook 2035, a proposal for advancements in the state's transportation network, projects the entire region can expect an 18 percent increase, raising the population to nearly 3 million.

Between 2000 and 2007, Carroll's population has increased by 22,311, with the county issuing 8,231 use and occupancy permits, according to a June population estimate.

Carroll's population has reached 173,208, according to the report. However, growth is down this year, with only 208 permits released through June as opposed to the normal 500, said Scott Graf, comprehensive planner for Carroll County.

"You can only build as fast as your facilities will allow," he said.

The main problem with Carroll's fast-paced growth over the years is the toll it can take on core facilities. Water, sewer and fire companies might have trouble keeping up and could be strained, Graf said.

"It's not as easy to provide water if you don't have it," said Frank Johnson, Mount Airy's mayor and vice chairman for Carroll County for the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board. "At some point, we are going to have some major infrastructure changes."

Besides the cost of general upkeep of the roads, expansion is often necessary with population increase.

To a certain extent, the roads are limiting the development of the area, said County Commissioner Dean Minnich.

"We don't have any interstates except in Mount Airy," he said.

While Carroll has a high volume of traffic, as long as Anne Arundel County and Baltimore have a lot of congestion, Carroll won't get top billing for new roadways, Minnich said.

Maryland controls the main highways, so all changes need to be made by the state, with state funding. Carroll can get word to the state about congestion and other roadway problems by getting involved and working with the BMC, Johnson said.

"Carroll County speaks with a louder voice when we all speak together," Johnson said.

Reach staff writer Kathryn Leiter at 410-751-5909 or kathryn.leiter@carrollcountytimes.com.

http://www.carrollcountytimes.com/articles/2007/07/22/news/local_news/newsstory3.prt



Local

Planning chief: Growth hinges on water woes

Kelsey Volkmann, The Examiner

2007-07-24 07:00:00.0

Current rank: *Not ranked*

Carroll County -

Carroll County's population will grow the most in the Baltimore region from now to 2035, a new report predicts.

But that will happen only if Carroll solves its water shortage, the county's planner says.

"These projections are very optimistic because they are assuming that water capacity is available," said Steve Horn, Carroll's planning director.

The population estimates do not take into account how Westminster, Taneytown and Mount Airy are under consent orders with the Maryland Department of the Environment to find additional sources of water, he said.

Carroll's population is expected to grow 55 percent, to 234,000, by 2035, according to "Transportation Outlook 2035," a report from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, an intercounty planning organization of leaders from Baltimore City and Baltimore, Howard, Anne Arundel, Harford and Howard counties.

But the report relied on 2000 census figures. Carroll's current population is 173,000.

The counties submit their population numbers to the council for its report, which does not examine water as a separate issue, said Barbara Herron, a council spokeswoman.

Towns throughout Carroll are grappling with a state mandate that requires municipalities to have enough water to cover a drought.

These regulations make it difficult for cities to secure water, instead encouraging sprawl because it's easier to gain approval for well water in rural areas, Horn said.

Horn and County Commissioner Julia Gouge plan to meet Wednesday with representatives of the Maryland Department of the Environment to talk about Carroll's plans to build two reservoirs, said Tim Feeser, Gouge's assistant.

The reservoirs would cost millions of dollars and take a decade to develop.

"The days of inexpensive, easily accessible water are gone, particularly here in Carroll," Horn said.

kvolkmann@baltimoreexaminer.com

Examiner

The road to tomorrow

07/26/07

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, a regional planning group made up of state, county and city officials, is presenting a draft plan that will guide regional transportation projects in the coming decades during a series of public meetings.

Selected Howard County projects under consideration:

- * Widen Interstate 95 through Howard County from eight to 10 lanes by 2020

- * By 2015, widen Sanner Road from two to four lanes beginning at Pindell School Road and extend it to state Route 216; widen Marriottsville Road from two to six lanes between Maryland Route 99 and U.S. Route 40; widen Patuxent Range Road from two to four lanes between U.S. Route 1 and Dorsey Run Road

- * By 2015, widen Maryland Route 32 from two to four lanes between Maryland Route 108 and Interstate 70, adding interchanges and ramps; also widen Route 32 from six to eight lanes between Cedar Lane and the Anne Arundel County lane

- * Bicycle and pedestrian improvements along state routes 216, 99, 32 and 103 by 2015

A copy of the plan is available by going to www.baltometro.org and clicking on "Transportation Outlook 2035."

Comments can be submitted in writing to The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD 21224, by fax at 410-732-8248 or by e-mail at mhaines@baltometro.org. Comments are due Aug. 29.



Local

Residents want more transit services

Jason Flanagan, The Examiner
2007-07-27 07:00:00.0
Current rank: # **3,421** of 5,159

Annapolis -

A handful of Anne Arundel County residents told transportation officials Wednesday they want more and better transit service in their county.

"We need transit ... that doesn't turn a one-hour commute into a three-hour odyssey," Odenton resident Doreen Strothman said.

The residents were responding to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's draft of a transportation plan for the metropolitan area addressing road and transit needs through 2035.

The plan has 49 road projects and only five major transit projects. The only proposed transit project in the county is improvements to the Penn Line MARC train service. Most of the funding goes toward road improvements, including the widening of Interstates 97 and 695.

But the roughly two dozen people who attended an afternoon public hearing in Annapolis wanted more mass transit, particularly light and heavy rail.

"It has gotten bad here," Annapolis resident Vicky Owens said. "I feel so congested here ... We need to get more people out of cars and using rail systems."

Transportation officials said buses would be more effective as a transit option, though most people want rails.

"Rails are fixed lines — once they're in the ground, they can't move," county senior transportation planner Harvey Gold said. "You can't follow population or demand changes with rails."

Congestion on Route 50 has hindered tourism and business in downtown Annapolis, residents told the transportation officials.

"People don't want to come to Annapolis because of Route 50," said Annapolis City Alderman Sam Shropshire, Ward-7.

Gold said the plan is a proposal and the council's executive transportation board, which comprises Baltimore-area county executives and mayors, could be influenced to alter the plan.

jflanagan@baltimoreexaminer.com

Examiner



Alderman Sam

SHROPSHIRE - WARD 7

PRESS ROOM

[BACK TO ALDERMAN SAM WEB](#)

Public calls for more mass transit

By ANDREW CHILDERS Staff Writer

The transportation projects left out of a 30-year regional plan drew the greatest reaction from the public at a forum in Annapolis last night.

Several residents protested the lack of mass-transit projects in the Transportation Outlook 2035, a regional planning guide.

The plan by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, an arm of the Baltimore Metropolitan Counsel, identifies key regional road priorities in Baltimore and the five surrounding counties, including Anne Arundel. The plan only outlines projects that are eligible for federal funding.

But the Annapolis forum last night was largely focused on the lack of mass transit in the plan.

"I was disappointed to see there wasn't a goal or vision for any kind of rail transit between Annapolis and Baltimore and Annapolis and New Carrollton," Annapolis Alderman Sam Shropshire, D-Ward 7, said.

The major problem is money, officials said.

With \$8 billion for new construction slated throughout the region by 2035, planners said they tried to stretch the funds out as far as possible and rail projects average \$2 billion to complete.

A previous plan to bring light rail to connect Annapolis to Baltimore was "vehemently" opposed by Glen

Burnie residents, said Harvey Gold, County Executive John R. Leopold's transportation representative to the county Planning Committee.

Bringing rail to Anne Arundel would require much higher population density, according to city and county planners. While the county is among the state leaders in commuter bus riders, those riders only account for about 4 percent of commuters, according to Annapolis leaders.

"If the bus ridership got up there, maybe you could have rail, but the bus ridership isn't there," said Jon Arason, Annapolis' planning director.

Those speaking at the meeting also took issue with the plan's top regional priorities, including widening Route 50 from Interstate 97 to the Bay Bridge - the most pressing problem identified for Anne Arundel.

Though the plan only identifies projects that are currently eligible for federal funding, residents said the road should not be widened until the state has resolved where it would put a new Chesapeake Bay crossing.

"You're shoving this stuff into a choke point and saying, 'Oh well, let road rage dominate,'" said Pete Julian of Annapolis.

This is the first draft of the plan intended to address the looming impact of the Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, process that could bring as many as 22,000 jobs to the Fort George G. Meade region by 2014.

Most of the new projects identified for Anne Arundel focus on the Fort Meade region.

Routes 175 and 198 are scheduled to be widened by 2015, while routes 100 and 170 are planned for

improvements by 2020.

Claire Louder, executive director of the West County Chamber of Commerce, said the projects are critical for the region, but had hoped they could be completed before the jobs started moving into the county.

"It's a good start," she said. "Obviously none of it's coming soon enough for the people coming in. We're getting the projects we need just not when we need them."

*Published June 26, 2007, The Capital, Annapolis, Md.
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BACK TO ALDERMAN SAM WEB



Road projects may be late

Job-linked work in Fort Meade area won't be done till 2015, study says

By Phillip McGowan

Sun reporter

July 27, 2007

Large-scale road projects slated to handle a jobs explosion around Fort Meade aren't expected to be finished before 2015 -- four years after thousands of workers arrive to the Army post, according to a draft outlook for the Baltimore region's transportation needs.

One of the most closely watched projects, the proposed widening of Route 3 through Crofton and Gambrills is expected to wrap up in 2030, more than a half-century after the first calls to overhaul the state highway.

The report by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, which was unveiled Wednesday night at a public forum in Parole, calls for spending \$8.7 billion through 2035 to expand highways and mass transit across the region.

In all, the board has proposed \$33.4 billion in transportation expenditures between 2013 and 2035, with about three-quarters going to road maintenance and operating buses and trains.

The outlook, which is being reviewed on a four-year cycle, is used to place regionally supported transportation projects in Anne Arundel, Howard, Carroll, Baltimore and Harford counties and Baltimore City in the pipeline for federal funding.

Harvey Gold, a planner for Anne Arundel County who serves as a representative for the transportation board, called the outlook a "fiscally constrained plan" based on the best estimate of what transportation funds will be available.

The draft plan lays out 11 highway projects in the county, including widening Interstate 97 to six lanes between Route 32 and U.S. 50; and two widenings along Route 2: between Route 10 and U.S. 50 and between Route 450 and north of the South River Bridge.

Among six "regionally significant" projects offered by the board, one is in Anne Arundel: adding two lanes on U.S. 50 from Interstate 97 to the Bay Bridge.

None of the county's projects is expected to be finished before 2015.

Regina Aris, manager of policy and plan development for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, said yesterday that environmental factors and community input weigh heavily in how quickly large projects can be finished, such as reconstructing a five-mile stretch of Route 175 or a nine-mile section of Route 3.

Aris said the timetable for completing Route 175 and Route 3 is realistic because improvements "will be done in increments" over many years.

But civic and business leaders say that timetable is untenable as western Anne Arundel braces for a crush of jobs that will come over the next four years because of the base realignment and closure process, known as BRAC.

"Anything we can do to expedite road building in this area will be critical," Claire Louder, executive director of the West County Chamber of Commerce, said yesterday. "We are talking about a significant increase in traffic with 22,000 workers coming to the area no later than 2011."

Pushing back those projects "is just not realistic, given the impact we are going to see," she added. "The gridlock will be phenomenal."

At Wednesday's meeting, several residents and civic leaders offered other complaints about the absence of rail proposals, especially to Annapolis. They said the expansion projects were too heavily weighted toward roads.

Gold noted that a previous proposal to bring light rail from Glen Burnie down Route 2 to Annapolis met heavy opposition in North County.

Another board representative, Annapolis Planning Director Jon L. Arason, said that while thousands of people will move to Anne Arundel County over the next two decades, the suburban county is not densely populated enough to command the money for rail projects.

Anne Arundel's population hovers around 510,000, and the transportation board estimates that the county will take in an additional 68,000 residents by 2035. The only way to change the equation, they note, is for municipalities to build apartments and condominiums at densities that exceed the limits that most municipalities allow.

"It has to be solved with density we don't want," said Albert Johnston, a community activist in Severna Park.

Wednesday's meeting was the second of eight across the Baltimore area that will continue through next month, capped by a hearing Aug. 28 in Baltimore where elected leaders, including County Executive John R. Leopold, are expected to hear public testimony on Transportation Outlook 2035. The board will vote on the plan Oct. 23.

Comments on the draft Transportation Outlook 2035 can be e-mailed to mhaines@baltometro.org or faxed to 410-732-8248 or sent in writing to the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore 21224.

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/carroll/bal-ca.civic29jul29,0,572816.story



Civic Agenda

July 29, 2007

WEDNESDAY

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board // will hold a public meeting on the draft plan for Transportation Outlook 2035, a long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Room 003 of the County Office Building. Presentations will be given at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Carroll projects include widening sections of Routes 26 and 32, widening Route 140 with a full interchange at Rt. 97, and construction of several bicycle/pedestrian paths. The plan is available at www.baltometro.org and at local libraries and planning offices. mhaines@baltometro.org.

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/harford/bal-ha.civic29jul29,0,1691525.story



Civic Agenda

July 29, 2007

TUESDAY

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board // will hold a public meeting on the draft plan for Transportation Outlook 2035, a long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the second floor of the Harford County Administration Building, 220 S. Main St., Bel Air. Presentations will be given at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Comments will be taken through Aug. 29. The plan is available at www.baltometro.org, and at local libraries and planning offices. mhaines@baltometro.org.

Note: Please call ahead to verify that meetings are being held.

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In 2035, traffic still will be a headache

08/01/07

By Loni Ingraham

Traffic congestion will increase by 258 percent?

The year 2035 is not a pretty picture traffic-wise, according to "Transportation Outlook 2035," the draft of a long-range transportation plan for the Baltimore region.

Getting there -- or anyplace else -- will not be half the fun.

Commuters who now have to inch their way home through traffic may be chagrined by the plan, which was produced by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, whose representatives will present the plan at the Towson Library on Aug. 6 at 7 p.m.

The 10-member board represents the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties, along with the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Department of Planning.

Traffic congestion during the evening rush hour on all roads in the region is expected to increase by 258 percent by 2035 from what it was in 2000, according to the plan.

Commuters may take faint consolation in a projected increase of only 44 percent on those roads during the morning rush, according to the board, the federally designated metropolitan-planning organization for transportation in the region which cited numbers provided by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

It is the disparity between the growth of jobs and the growth of the region's workforce that will increase commute times, according to the plan.

By the year 2035, the region's population will grow by 18 percent and jobs will grow by 29 percent. That increase of 451,600 jobs will bring the total number of jobs in the region to nearly 2 million.

But the workforce is expected to grow by 198,000 for a total of only 1,489,000 workers to fill those jobs.

Baby boomers will account for the gap; they will start retiring at age 65 in 2010. By 2035 a half million of them will have reached retirement age and many will have chosen to leave the workforce.

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In either case, the percentage of people using transit is expected to remain constant at only around 8 percent, the plan estimated.

E-mail Loni Ingraham at [Loni Ingraham@patuxent.com](mailto:Loni.Ingraham@patuxent.com)



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Where to send comments on regional transportation plan

08/01/07

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The plan features 49 suggested highway projects that have to be prioritized, as well as 103 projects related to transit, bicycles, pedestrians, management and other initiatives. It also projects how more than \$41 billion could be allocated.

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The board considered a wide range of scenarios from doing everything to doing nothing, according to the plan.

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Traffic bad now? Wait until 2035

Congestion expected to grow by 258%

08/01/07

By Loni Ingraham

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Where to send comments on traffic plan

08/01/07

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08/01/07

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You can make your voice heard on traffic outlook

08/02/07

By Loni Ingraham

Citizens who want a voice in planning for future road projects to handle burgeoning traffic may view a draft of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's "Transportation Outlook 2035" plan.

The plan will be on display at the Towson library Aug. 6 from 3 to 8 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

The plan includes a project to rework the intersection of York and Ashland roads in Cockeysville.

Comments on "Transportation Outlook 2035" must be received by Aug. 29 at 4:30 p.m.

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E-mail Loni Ingraham at Loni.Ingraham@patuxent.com

August 03, 2007

Transportation Outlook 2035

Board sees flood of jobs, need for wider roads 07/26/07

By Nate Sandstrom

By 2035, there will be an additional 100,000 new jobs in Howard County, and more than 450,000 in Baltimore and its surrounding counties, according to a new draft plan from a regional transportation group.

More than half those jobs are expected to be derived from a 2005 decision by the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC, that will add tens of thousands of new jobs in and around area military bases, including an estimated 22,000 at Fort Meade.

The result will be a major increase in traffic and, without improvements, several area roads will reach "failing capacity" over the next two decades, said Howard County traffic planner Ben Pickar.

With similar issues across the region in mind, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board is in the process of drafting "Transportation Outlook 2035," a plan developed by Howard County and other Baltimore region jurisdictions to prioritize transportation projects -- and secure state and federal funding for them.

The regional transportation board, comprised of representatives from the offices of the mayors of Baltimore city and Annapolis, county executives from Baltimore County, Anne Arundel, Harford, Howard and the Carroll County commissioner as well as John Porcari, the secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation, creates a long-term plan every four years. This is the first time, however, the board has outlined proposals with BRAC in mind.

The draft plan of the board, which is chaired by Howard County Executive Ken Ulman, is going through a series of public meeting across the region -- the first of which was held Tuesday night in Ellicott City.

After reviewing public feedback and drafting amendments based on responses and the most up-to-date BRAC projections, the final plan is scheduled to be approved on Oct. 23.

Wider roads a priority

Several of the high-priority upgrades in Howard County are slated for routes leading to Fort Meade.

Under the proposed plan, Route 32 would expand from two to four lanes between state Route 108 and Interstate 70 and from six to eight lanes from the Cedar Lane exit to the Anne Arundel County line.

The draft plan also calls for a new interchange at Maryland Route 175 at its intersection with U.S. Route 1, and 175 would be widened from two to five lanes from Route 1 to the Anne Arundel County line.

The route would also be widened on the Anne Arundel County side leading past Fort Meade and to Arundel Mills Mall.

"These routes have been a top priority of the county for years," said Kent Menser, who is executive director of Howard County's BRAC office. "BRAC reinforces and supports those priorities."

Interstate 95 would also be widened from four to five lanes in each direction in Howard County.

However, don't expect to see these projects start tomorrow. It can take as long as eight years to get in the state's funding rotation, Pickar said.

None of the projects have target completion dates earlier than 2015.

Howard County is also out of the loop on regional rail projects under the plan.

An extension of the Washington, D.C. Metro rail transit system to either Fort Meade or Baltimore Washington International airport, could make the regional transportation board's next draft proposal, Pickar said.

The draft plan does call for pedestrian and bike path improvements, including along Route 32; however, more study is needed before any details about its exact location is known, Pickar said.

E-mail Nate Sandstrom at [Nate Sandstrom@patuxent.com](mailto:Nate.Sandstrom@patuxent.com)



Road expansion on horizon

Plan would widen 5, build 2 new ones to handle BRAC growth

By Julie Scharper

Sun reporter

August 5, 2007

Five roads would be widened and two new roads built to accommodate the workers and residents who are expected to flock to Harford County as part of the military Base Realignment and Closure process, according to a preliminary transportation plan for the region.

Among the changes: An 8-mile stretch of Churchville Road would be widened to four lanes, a segment of Belair Road would become a six-lane highway and a new road would be built in the Perryman West area of the county, according to a long-term plan presented by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board at a public meeting last week.

The plan calls for more than 80 highway, transit and bike or pedestrian path projects to be constructed in Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties between 2013 and 2035.

"The plan must be fiscally constrained and allow, first of all, for maintenance projects, which are then considered based on projected growth patterns and reducing congestion," said Karin Foster, a transportation manager for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the organization that staffs the regional transportation board.

Many Harford residents who attended the public meeting Tuesday in the County Administration Building said they wanted more public transportation options and less road construction. Several expressed dismay about plans to widen certain roads.

"Don't try to bring the city into the country," said Carolyn Hicks of Joppa.

But representatives of the transportation board and the county's Department of Planning and Zoning said that changes are necessary to handle an expected surge in commuters.

Among the seven jurisdictions, Harford County is forecast to see the greatest percentage growth in employment - 72 percent by 2035 - as the number of jobs in the county jumps from 96,000 to 156,000. The entire metropolitan region would see about a 29 percent increase in jobs, according to the board's projections.

The county's population is also expected to increase at a greater rate than the region as a whole. About 30 percent more people would live in Harford County in 2035 than today, boosting the population to 285,000.

The metro region's population is expected to swell by 18 percent, from 2.5 million to nearly 3 million, according to data .

The new plan marks the first time that the transportation board has considered changes wrought by the military's Base Realignment and Closure program.



Sun photo by Kenneth K. Lam, July 31, 2007
Regina Aris of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council fields questions from Harford County residents after presenting a draft long-range plan for highways in the area.

The board, which is composed of county executives, mayors of Baltimore and Annapolis, and representatives from the state's departments of transportation, environment and planning, drafts a prioritized list of long-term projects every four years, under federal guidelines.

Anthony S. McClune, Harford's deputy director of planning and zoning, stressed that the plans were preliminary and that planners were open to citizens' comments.

A final plan is scheduled to be released in late October, said Foster of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

The highway projects, which are estimated to cost \$33.4 billion in 2007 dollars, will be federally funded, Foster said.

Among projects slated for the county is the construction of a four-lane state road - Route 715 - that would stretch from U.S. 40 to Churchville Road and be completed in 2020. Another two-lane road is planned to connect U.S. 40 at Mitchell Lane to Canning House Road in the Perryman West area in 2025.

The county's first project, set for 2015, would be the expansion of Route 24 from four lanes to six between Singer Road and Business Route 1.

Segments of U.S. 1 and the U.S. 1 Bypass would be enlarged in 2020 under the plan.

Churchville Road, or Route 22, is set to expand in two parts. In 2020, it would be widened to four lanes between Fountain Green Road and Interstate 95, according to the plan. A decade later, the section between I-95 and the gates of Aberdeen Proving Ground would be expanded to six lanes.

Several residents said that they were concerned that an expansion of Churchville Road would disturb the peace of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"If we turn that into a superhighway, that's where the traffic is going to go - and that's contrary to the land-use plan," said Janet Hardy of Abingdon. She questioned why Churchville Road would be expanded rather than Pulaski Highway, which is located in the county's development envelope.

Other transportation plans for the county include the relocation of the MARC station in Aberdeen and the construction of nine biking and pedestrian trails throughout the county.

Kevin Racine, a Havre de Grace resident and vice president of the Transit Riders Action Council, said the county needed to expand bus lines.

"It's very difficult to use public transportation to reach other counties or the northern part of this county," he said.

Hicks, of Joppa, expressed concerns about highway workers employed by the county.

"We, as citizens of Harford County, have seen these road crews where two guys are holding signs and the rest of them are sitting there chewing the fat," she said. "You feel like getting out of your car and saying, 'Hey, get off your butts and get to work - that's our tax money you're wasting.' "

julie.scharper@baltsun.com

Public meetings on the regional plan will be held Aug. 21 and Aug. 28 at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's offices at 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore 21224. For more information or to submit a comment, visit www.baltometro.org.

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/carroll/bal-ca.transit05aug05,0,7750799.story



Officials propose transit plans

Expanded roads, new trails included in regional draft

By Arin Gencer

Sun reporter

August 5, 2007

Within the next 30 years, Carroll County residents could drive along a Manchester bypass, zip through lanes added to expanded state roads or bike half a dozen new trails, according to a draft plan for transportation throughout the Baltimore region.

Prepared by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, the plan includes about 90 capital projects planned from 2013 to 2035.

It divides an anticipated \$33.4 billion in federal and state funding into three categories: operations, preservation and expansion.

While highway projects consume nearly \$9 billion or so, some of the funds are set aside for transit, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, operations and air quality.

"This plan doesn't just come about over a couple of months. It takes a lot of time," said Frank Johnson, a representative on the transportation board, during a public presentation last week. "It's very much of a long-range plan."

Numerous factors played into the plan's development, said Johnson, whose role involves acting as a representative to the board in the absence of county Commissioner Dean L. Minnich, one of its 10 regional members.

Johnson, Minnich and other local officials highlighted projects specific to Carroll during the session at the county office building, where residents gathered to survey and comment on the proposal.

The jurisdiction's projects (with planned opening dates):

- Widening Route 26 to six lanes to create continuous right turn lanes between Route 32 and the Liberty Reservoir (2015) -- and to four lanes from Route 32 to Route 27 (2025).
- Increasing Route 32 to four lanes from Route 26 to Howard County border (2020).
- Beefing up Route 140 to eight lanes from Market Street to Sullivan Road, with full interchange at Route 97S. (2020).
- Creating new two-lane Manchester Bypass from Brodbeck Road to north of Route 86 (2030).

Also detailed were a number of 8-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian pathways:

- Wakefield Valley Community Trail: along Route 31 connecting New Windsor and Westminster (2015).

- Trail from Piney Run Park to Sykesville's Millard Cooper Park (2015).
- Trail running along the north and west branch of the Patapsco River going from the Liberty Reservoir to east of Westminster (2020).
- Monocacy River Scenic Greenway: along the river, passing through Frederick and Carroll (2020).
- Patapsco Regional Trail: between Mount Airy's Watkins Park and Sykesville's Main Street, along the river's South Branch (2020).
- Little Pipe Creek Trail: from Union Bridge to New Windsor (2025). Although they might follow highways, the trails would be off-road, separate paths, said Bobbi Moser, a comprehensive planner in the county's Department of Planning, in response to one resident's question.

John Lopez, of Finksburg, said in lieu of trails, he'd rather see projects funded to solve "horrible traffic problems from the county line to Westminster" on Route 140.

Yet the plan has to be "multimodal," accounting for other forms of transportation, explained Regina Aris, policy manager for the transportation division at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

"Roads support a lot of movement," Aris later said, "but it's not for everybody."

Outside of Carroll, there are also plans to expand Route 32 to four lanes, from the county line to Interstate 70.

Minnich said creating easier access to the interstate will be necessary for economic development, which could help to "cut down on the number of people who are leaving the county" for work and bring more incoming commuters.

For Eldersburg resident Nancy Dunn and others, the proposal sparked questions about timing.

"These plans are fabulous, but the time frame we're looking at is way out there," Dunn said. Traffic "choke points" in the southern part of the county and other areas will need some relief if business development is to continue, she said.

"I'd like to see some of it happen sooner," Dunn said.

Last week's meeting was one of several held throughout the region, and part of an updating process that occurs every four years to meet federal requirements.

The public review period for the plan, which lists projects for Baltimore City and surrounding counties, ends Aug. 29.

Besides the local presentations, another public meeting is scheduled at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council on Aug. 21 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. The regional transportation board is expected to meet with elected officials Aug. 28 at the same location.

The final plan will serve as a recommendation to the state Department of Transportation, Minnich said, and eventually should lead to discussion and prioritization of projects -- an "ongoing round robin of negotiations and reassessments and replanning."

arin.gencer@baltsun.com

To comment on the regional transportation plan, go to www.baltometro.org, e-mail mhaines@baltometro.org, or write the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board at 2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD. 21224.

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/baltimore_county/bal-md.co.transport08aug08,0,1811286.story



Regional plan includes widening county roads

Owings Mills, Hunt Valley congestion targeted

By Julie Scharper

Sun reporter

August 8, 2007

Congested roads in growing Owings Mills and White Marsh are scheduled for widening in the next decade under a new long-range regional transportation plan, but relatively few other upgrades to roads maintained by the county have been proposed to handle projected increases in traffic in the next 30 years.

Although the population of the county is expected to increase about 13 percent and the work force about 17 percent, the draft plan, "Transportation Outlook 2035," includes few county-managed road projects.

That contrasts with several nearby counties, which project greater population and work force growth as a result of the military base realignment plan.

"We're in a very, very critical funding situation with the state right now," said Emery Hines, the county's manager of transportation planning. He said he hopes more federal funds will be available when a new long-range plan is drafted four years from now. The state has \$40 billion in unmet transportation needs.

The regional plan, drafted by state and local officials from across the region, calls for more than 80 highway, transit, and bike or pedestrian path projects in Baltimore and the five surrounding counties from 2013 to 2035. Public meetings are being held this month to discuss the plan, and the final version is to be released in October.

The preliminary plan does include significant improvements to roads in Baltimore County maintained by the state. On the west side, Reisterstown Road is to be widened to six lanes between Garrison View Road and Owings Mills Boulevard in 2013. A new interchange would connect Interstate 795, the Northwest Expressway, with Dolfield Road and Pleasant Hill Road in 2015 to alleviate congestion caused by traffic at Owings Mills Town Center.

"There's a tremendous amount of traffic in that area," Hines said. "It's very striking to see how much traffic is there on the weekend, it looks like rush hour."

On the eastern side of the county, Philadelphia Road is to be expanded to four lanes between Rossville Boulevard and Cowentown Avenue in a project planned for 2014, and an interchange is to be built at the White Marsh Boulevard-Philadelphia Road intersection in 2015.

In the northern part of the county, the long-planned construction of a connection between Paper Mill Road and Shawan Road in Hunt Valley is scheduled for 2013.

Motorists heading west on Paper Mill must turn right on York Road, then left on Shawan to reach Interstate 83 or the

town center, a quirk known as a dogleg. The new road would expedite east-west traffic in the Hunt Valley area.

Several county projects are designed to improve transportation across the region, including the widening the Beltway to eight lanes in two sections, between I-83 and I-95 north in the northeast and between I-95 south and Security Boulevard in the southwest. Another project, scheduled for 2020, involves widening I-95 south from the Beltway to the Howard County line.

Construction of the Red Line, an east-west mass transit system that would stretch from Patterson Park to Woodlawn, would ease travel between the city and the county and would give workers a new way to commute to Social Security, Hines said.

Phyland John Lansing, retirees who live at Charlestown in Catonsville, said they are happy that the Red Line construction is planned.

"I think the Red Line has the potential to bring both sides together," Phyl Lansing said after reviewing the plan at a public meeting Monday night in Towson.

Some representatives from a community group in the northern part of the county said they were disappointed that more road improvements were not planned for their area.

"The commercial area in Loveton has just expanded exponentially," said Kirsten A. Burger, president of the Sparks-Glencoe Community Planning Council. York Road and Interstate 83 are often clogged through that area, she said.

Hines, the county transportation manager, said other projects have been planned in that area in the past but were rejected because of community opposition.

"In many places in the county, people feel that they don't want new roads or widened roads because it would bring more traffic," he said.

julie.scharper@baltsun.com

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Caution: Slow change ahead

08/08/07

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Editorial

We have seen the future, and it's apparently the tail light of the car in front of us.

That's the conclusion to be drawn from a work session last week in Westminster with members of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board.

The BRTB is working on its "Transportation Outlook 2035," a document that details transportation needs throughout the Baltimore region -- including Carroll.

The board will approve this plan in the fall, then forward it to the Maryland Department of Transportation with the hope that it meshes with state priorities (and money).

The good news is that most of the big-ticket items sought for Carroll are in the plan. The bad news is that they're so far away a telescope might be needed to see 'em.

Upgrades on Route 140? Look for those in the year 2020.

The widening of Route 32 from Sykesville to the Howard County line? Also 2020.

The Manchester Bypass? Pull up a chair ... 2030.

These timetables can be discouraging; even more so for folks from Finksburg who have been lobbying for improvements to the intersection of route 140 and 91 -- that project isn't even on the list, even though county officials have made it their highest "conservation priority."

The reality is that these lists are always in flux. Projects move up or down with the will of the people ... or in some cases the whim of politics.

Commissioners Dean Minnich and Michael Zimmer attended last week's workshop. Minnich, who sits on the BRTB, said the statewide needs for transportation and infrastructure improvements are daunting (and that was before we all started

worrying about bridges). But he said projects can move based on many factors, including county pressure and willingness to "negotiate."

It's no secret that the project to widen Route 32 from Liberty Road to Macbeth Way -- starting this month in Eldersburg -- was moved from the drawing board to the street by the county's contribution of \$2.5 million for a project that's squarely in the state's domain.

Such investments make sense in certain areas because they'll pay off -- more road capacity can mean more employment and better tax revenues. So a \$2.5 million investment turns into a higher tax base and better traffic flow.

Trouble is, most of the projects down in Carroll's future are so huge that county contributions will be a drop in the bucket. Maybe we can trade seed money for magic beans.

And we can speak up. In the coming months, as they do every year, state transportation officials will host more hearings and workshops to set the stage for transportation planning. Attend and speak out. Squeaky wheels in Carroll can be heard even in Annapolis.

For more details on the BRTB effort and its continuing review, go to www.baltometro.org.

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www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-bz.bizcal11aug11,0,7748170.story



Business Calendar

August 11, 2007

Events

Wednesday

Baltimore Regional Transportation Board // public review of long-range plan for the area's transportation network, 5 p.m., Room 346, Benton Building, 417 E. Fayette St.

Carroll projected to have highest growth in state

Transportation Board plans for bicycle, pedestrian paths and five road projects

By MARY SCOTT
ADVOCATE STAFF WRITER

The addition of six bicycle and pedestrian paths in the county, along with five highway and interchange projects are in the plans for Carroll County, according to a meeting held Aug. 1 by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board.

The meeting was held in Westminster to update citizens on Transportation Outlook 2035. Every four years, the Baltimore region is required by the federal government to update its long-range transportation plan.

The BRTB is a metropolitan planning organization with a 10-member board that looks at transportation issues across the region. Commissioner Dean Minnich represents Carroll County on the BRTB.

Projected changes in population, employment and land use patterns and their effects on travel, congestion and air quality in the region are all being taken into consideration in the plans.

Carroll County is projected to have the highest growth rate in the state of Maryland by 2035, with a projected population of 234,000, according to the BRTB.

Transportation Outlook 2035 includes major capital projects from 2013-35 and includes highways, transit, bicycles and pedestrians and management and operations.

According to Frank Johnson, senior assistant county attorney, the plans for the county are balanced between community needs, fiscal restraints and air quality standards. Johnson led the presentation.

Six bicycle and pedestrian projects are planned for the county between 2015 and 2025. The Wakefield Valley Community Trail will run from Md. 31 in New Windsor to Westminster. The Piney Run to Sykesville Trail will travel from Piney Run Park to Millard Cooper Park in Sykesville. Both of these trails will be 8-foot-wide trails and are on the schedule for 2015.

Three pedestrian trails are planned for 2020. The North

and West Branch Patapsco Trail will run from Liberty Reservoir to east of Westminster. The Monocacy River Scenic greenway will be an 8-foot-wide trail in a greenery corridor along the Monocacy River that runs through Frederick and Carroll counties. The Patapsco Regional Trail will go along the South Branch of the Patapsco River.

By 2025, the Little Pipe Creek Trail is planned to link New Windsor and Union Bridge along the Little Pipe Creek corridor.

Bobbi Moser, who represents Carroll County on the Technical Committee and the Travel Analysis Advisory Group, said she thinks the bicycle and pedestrian trails will be utilized.

"Once they're in place, I think it's a situation where you build it, and they will come," Moser said.

Five highway and interchange projects are planned

between 2015 and 2030. The widening of Md. 26 from Md. 32 to Liberty Road is planned to provide continuous right turn lanes. This means there would be six lanes total: four through lanes and two auxiliary lanes. For 2020, the BRTB plans to widen Md. 26 to the Carroll and Howard county line from two lanes to four lanes.

The BRTB also has big plans for Md. 140 in 2020. From Market Street to Sullivan Road, it is planned to widen the road to eight lanes. A full interchange at Md. 97 South is planned, along with continuous flow intersections at Center Street and Englar Road. There are also plans to widen Md. 26 to four lanes from Md. 32 to Md. 27 by 2025.

A Manchester Bypass is planned for 2030. It will be a new two-lane road from Brodbeck Road to north of Md. 86.

Johnson said there is a possibility of major economic development in the Sykesville area because the number of people commuting out of the area is only half the number of people commuting into the area.

"We want to balance it out," Johnson said.

Minnich agreed.

"We can't stop growth. We can only manage it," Minnich said.

The projected cost of Transportation Outlook 2035, which includes 93 projects for the region, is \$33.4 billion, which comes from federal and state funds. Of this money, \$8.7 billion is being allotted for expansion, and \$6.8 billion is for preservation. The remaining \$17.9 billion is for operations costs, which includes traffic signals and real-time data systems used for traffic reports among other things.

**"We can't stop growth.
We can only manage it."**

Dean Minnich

commissioner and Carroll representative to the BRTB

Get involved

For more information, call Transportation Representative Jeanne Joiner at 410-386-2145 or Commissioner Dean Minnich at 410-386-2043 or log on to <http://www.baltometro.org>.

Several residents at the meeting were concerned about the six pedestrian trails and asked why money was being spent on them instead of relieving other areas of congestion in the county. Johnson explained the money for pedestrian projects come from a separate "pie" than the money allotted for highway projects.

None of the plans are firmly in place yet. They are currently in the public review and comment period until Aug. 29. Public meetings are scheduled until Aug. 17 about the plans, and elected officials will hear comments at a BRTB public meeting. The BRTB will vote on Transportation Outlook 2035 on Oct. 23.

Mary Scott can be reached at 410-857-3316 or mary.scott@westminsteradvocate.com.

Provided by:



Other News

Transportation Outlook 2035 Public Meeting Scheduled in Baltimore City

On Wednesday, August 15, Baltimore City residents will have the opportunity to meet with local transportation officials and discuss plans to improve highways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities over the next 20 years. The meeting will be held in the Charles L. Benton Building, 417 E. Fayette Street in Room 346. The public is invited to stop by any time between 5 and 8:30 pm and there will be formal presentations at 6 and 8 pm. [Click here for more information.](#)

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8/13/07

Carroll County Times

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Lack of funding delaying Manchester bypass

By Kathryn Leiter, Times Staff Writer

Friday, August 17, 2007

It's a lack of money, not a lack of desire, that is slowing down progress on the Manchester bypass project, according to town officials.

The town and county have been discussing the bypass every year, but the main component holding back the project is the state supplying the money, Mayor Chris D'Amario said. The Town Council is still looking into ways for the project to move forward, he said.

It's not just D'Amario and the current council that haven't moved forward with the bypass, said Commissioner Dean Minnich. Past mayors and council members debated the bypass as well, he said.

Manchester and Hampstead's initial plan of a joint bypass that was started nearly 40 years ago was sidelined when a previous mayor and council voted against the bypass, forcing Hampstead to make it a solo project in the '80s, D'Amario said.

Manchester has tried to get back into the state spotlight, but the money has not been available, he said.

During Tuesday night's council meeting, Manchester resident Debra Howe discussed an Aug. 1 transportation meeting where residents were invited to learn more about the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's plans for the county's roads in the future. No Manchester officials attended the meeting, Howe said.

The Manchester bypass project has been around regionally since 1993, said Regina Aris, manager of plan and policy at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

The documents on the proposed bypass showed that since 1993, the bypass has been put in and taken out of the regional long-range plan, she said.

The reason for it to be removed from the plan is most likely the fiscal constraint, Aris said.

The Manchester bypass took a different hit when Gov. Parris Glendening signed Smart Growth into a law in 1997.

Smart Growth is a way to preserve open space and protect the environment from rapid growth. In 1999, the state ruled that the Manchester bypass did not comply with Smart Growth sprawl control laws and was denied funding.

Despite the different setbacks in the past, the town is hoping for a breakthrough in the future.

D'Amario said Manchester is looking to come up with an alignment with the Hampstead bypass on the west side of town to put on the town and county's comprehensive plan.

In a pre-election interview in May, candidates were asked their opinion on the possible Manchester bypass.

Councilman Ryan Warner also showed support for the bypass, saying the town needs to work toward making the bypass Carroll's top road priority.

"This is well on its way to happening," Warner said.

Reach staff writer Kathryn Leiter at 410-751-5909 or kathryn.leiter@carrollcountytimes.com.

I'm with you wrote on Aug 17, 2007 10:47 PM:

"No need to explain to me buddy... I'm with you...just want to make sure we got the good word out that all the smartiest ideas are here in the CC Time Forum. "

TO:TO no to gate wrote on Aug 17, 2007 10:19 PM:

"The reason I posted twice is that this post may not be seen after today - the other will due to it's volume vs other posts. Glad you're reading all posts though. "

To: No to Gate wrote on Aug 17, 2007 10:03 PM:

"Let's make sure we post the same comments in every forum...that way the bozos will know we are extra serious. You only got two of the three current Manchester forums with the same post....and I couldn't find any of your posts in the sports section...Please get with the program!! "

The children wrote on Aug 17, 2007 9:35 PM:

"We don't need a bypass. What we need is more of our taxpayers money to go into the education fund. What about the children? The children? "

NO to GATE wrote on Aug 17, 2007 9:23 PM:

"Glad I got your attention with my sarcasm. The GATE IS about SAFETY for our kids. It will inconvenience many, but it's the price that all concerned people should be willing to bare. Think of the INCONVENIENCE that will happen to a child for the rest of their lives if they get maimed in some way. I won't have that burdon on my shoulders. PUT IN THE GATE - SAVE OUR CHILDREN. Next meeting all parents bring your children. Council should explain their lack of safety measures taken "

To: No to gate wrote on Aug 17, 2007 8:58 PM:

"I agree, you don't need a gate. What you need is your mouth washed out with soap and a major overhaul of your attitude. Kids (children) are not brats. You are joking about the extra 5 minutes to work, right? I am not even taking your comment seriously because it is so outlandish. If you are serious about your opinion, you, sir or madam, do need one thing that will fix all your problems -- an enema. Shame on you. "

get rid of our commissioners, wrote on Aug 17, 2007 8:53 PM:

"the answer is simple "

NO to gate wrote on Aug 17, 2007 8:13 PM:

"NO to gate: The gate will inconvenience ME. It may make the area safer for the kids, (brats), in the neighborhood. But what about ME. It may take ME an extra 5 minutes to get to work, the HELL with the darn kids. All the kids do is make noise and such, who cares. No to the roadblock, I don't need increased safety for the kids. I don't have any. What about ME!!!!!! "

Get ready for the traffic wrote on Aug 17, 2007 4:10 PM:

"We don't get a lot of traffic in WV when school is out. Has anyone noticed that?? Maybe everyone should get out on the streets for the first week of school and try to make the traffic go away. Or maybe we can start charging a toll to come through the developments. "

Traffic slow down wrote on Aug 17, 2007 3:34 PM:

"Politicians, like diapers, have to be changed frequently, and for the very same reason. A single lie destroys a whole reputation of integrity." - "

What? wrote on Aug 17, 2007 2:07 PM:

"What? Riley said something? Darn, I missed it! Just drive 5 miles an hour through the neighborhoods, but stay near the middle of the road, because they will pass you! It's really quite fun to see how mad you can make them. If it happens a couple times a week, they will not risk it, and stay on RT 30 "

Resident had the right idea wrote on Aug 17, 2007 1:43 PM:

"When the resident from either WV or CO got up and said to park on the streets since there are no police to ticket us, that was a great idea. When 30 opens up onto Hallie Way, and the traffic find its way up to WV and CO, all we have to do is park on the streets and slow the traffic down so that they get tired of taking the "slowest route", slower than 30. We can all take turns slowing traffic down to a halt through our neighborhoods, then maybe something will be done. "

who cares wrote on Aug 17, 2007 1:41 PM:

"I did hear about him not wanting to remove parking spaces. What, is he king now? Does he make the rules for the entire town? If you all want something done about congestion and feel that will help, you need to be vocal about it. Who cares what an old washed up individual thinks. Westminster and Hampstead have left turn lanes through their major traffic intersections and you don't see backups there. "

Riley's thoughts wrote on Aug 17, 2007 12:17 PM:

"Riley doesn't want to remove the parking spaces! Didn't you hear that in the July meeting? "

congestion wrote on Aug 17, 2007 11:44 AM:

"You want to talk congestion? And yet all this construction is going on in Manchester/Greenmount Area? It sure isn't going to be PA drivers that are causing the congestion, it's going to be Manchester traffic. Once again, PA drivers get blamed for Manchester's problems. I hate to say it folks, PA drivers have been driving through Manchester for years. Hasn't the housing development been increasing, causing more residents, therefore more traffic? If they would get rid of a couple of parking spaces through the light in Manchester, we wouldn't be talking about traffic. "

Free money wrote on Aug 17, 2007 11:08 AM:

"The bypass can get free money from the commissioners, they are throwing away millions on an airport expansion that is not needed. The commissioners want there jet set buddies to fly in and not have to deal with the congestion at BWI, so now the citizens have to deal with the congestion on the roads. We need some educated people running our county, not country bumpkins. "

To Thomas K. wrote on Aug 17, 2007 8:47 AM:

"The answer is no. The Main Street Revitalization Project was not lieu of dollars for the bypass. The Main Street project was a separate take it or leave it thing. "

Thomas K. wrote on Aug 17, 2007 7:17 AM:

"Didn't Manchester's leaders at the time give in to Spenddenning's smart growth foolishness, and take money for Main Street improvements as a payoff for eschewing the bypass? The fallacy of smart growth in this case is that neither Spenddenning, or his successors, have any control over development in PA, and it is PA traffic that causes much of the congestion. "

PA Drivers Create Bypass wrote on Aug 17, 2007 1:09 AM:

"No money ...No problem. Congesting on Route 30 has caused the PA motorist to create there own bypass. We now have the Whispering Valley Bypass free of charge. Soon to come will be the Hallie Hills Bypass. The town council would also like all concern citizens to "bypass" future council meetings due to stressful situations. "

1954 wrote on Aug 17, 2007 12:01 AM:

"Councilman Riley brags that he has been involved in this town since 1954. Is he one of them; who 40 years ago decided that the Manchester bypass was not needed? It is a shame the two towns weren't onboard together years ago. This would have made the project less expensive if they piggybacked off of each other. We have a long fight ahead getting this bypass in before 2030. "

Do region's leaders dream in color? Surely not in green

08/23/07

By Doug Miller

I'll say this much for the chief executives of Baltimore and its surrounding counties: They had the chance to make some grandiose promises that no one could have called them on, but they refused to pander. They took the pragmatic approach.

God help us all.

The county executives of Howard, Anne Arundel, Harford, Carroll and Baltimore counties, along with Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon, comprise the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, which recently released its long-term plan for getting people around. Called "Transportation Outlook 2035," the document lists 49 highway projects, including new roads, upgraded interchanges and a whole lot of road-widening jobs, including most of the highways in Howard. Projected cost: \$6 billion.

A couple of pages later, you'll find a grand total of five transit projects, mostly improvements to existing facilities. The region's leaders assign a figure of \$2.2 billion to new public transportation projects to be completed between now and 2035.

"Ideally, the region would want to keep all roads, bridges and buses in good condition, eliminate all congestion and build a transit system everyone would love to ride," reads a passage from the panel's report. "Unfortunately, this scenario costs more than our available resources."

The vision just comes roaring off the page, doesn't it?

Compare this to the 30-year plan the board put out in 2004. The new plan hikes the bill for expanding the ever-expanding highway system by 61 percent, while expansion of mass transit actually loses \$200 million.

"It's not a rational response to the problems we have with our transportation infrastructure," said Lee Walker Oxenham, who chairs the Sierra Club of Howard County's political committee. "It's absurd to think we can get out of this mess by building more roads. With the planet in crisis, you'd think we'd start to think long-term. This plan doesn't even acknowledge the problem."

Transit advocates I spoke to expressed dismay and observed that this plan is antithetical to the principals of "smart growth" to which the state is supposedly rededicated with Bob Ehrlich bounced from the governor's office.

"We can't afford better mass transit" is something you'd expect to hear in a tight budget year. But we're talking about 2035, when most of the politicians who make up this board might not even be alive, let alone in public office. Some outside-the-box thinking could reap some crucial benefits -- less traffic, less pollution and an easing of our addiction to foreign oil and its consequences -- and yet would have cost them nothing. Humor us, huh?

If the panel were to lay out more ambitious plans for transit that didn't pan out, there is one guy who might still be around to face the music. That's our own County Executive Ken Ulman, who happens to be the board's chairman. He'll actually be attending his first meeting on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Elected county executive just last year, Ulman has colored his early tenure green, creating an advisory panel to study environmental policy, pushing through new building regulations and putting county employees in hybrid cars. "Outlook 2035" bears little resemblance to this policy profile.

To this point, of course, the plan has been the work of staff people from the local governments. The "Outlook 2035" document was largely complete before he took office.

"I don't like to give that answer, but in this case it happens to be true," Ulman said this week.

Ulman said he shares the frustration that this plan leans so heavily on road-building, and that he hopes to help steer the region's course more toward the transit side. Among the projects he'd like to see: Extension of the Washington Metrorail's Green Line to Laurel Park and eventually BWI Airport, more connections of rail and bus lines and a rapid bus or rail line along Route 29 connecting Howard County with Silver Spring.

The deadline for public comment on "Outlook 2035" is Wednesday. You can download a copy at baltometro.org.

E-mail Doug Miller at Doug.Miller@patuxent.com

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Do region's leaders dream in color? Surely not in green

08/23/07

By Doug Miller

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I'll say this much for the chief executives of Baltimore and its surrounding counties: They had the chance to make some grandiose promises that no one could have called them on, but they refused to pander. They took the pragmatic approach.

God help us all.

The county executives of Howard, Anne Arundel, Harford, Carroll and Baltimore counties, along with Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon, comprise the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, which recently released its long-term plan for getting people around. Called "Transportation Outlook 2035," the document lists 49 highway projects, including new roads, upgraded interchanges and a whole lot of road-widening jobs, including most of the highways in Howard. Projected cost: \$6 billion.

A couple of pages later, you'll find a grand total of five transit projects, mostly improvements to existing facilities. The region's leaders assign a figure of \$2.2 billion to new public transportation projects to be completed between now and 2035.

"Ideally, the region would want to keep all roads, bridges and buses in good condition, eliminate all congestion and build a transit system everyone would love to ride," reads a passage from the panel's report. "Unfortunately, this scenario costs more than our available resources."

The vision just comes roaring off the page, doesn't it?

Compare this to the 30-year plan the board put out in 2004. The new plan hikes the bill for expanding the ever-expanding highway system by 61 percent, while expansion of mass transit actually loses \$200 million.

"It's not a rational response to the problems we have with our transportation infrastructure," said Lee Walker Oxenham, who chairs the Sierra Club of Howard County's political committee. "It's absurd to think we can get out of this mess by building more roads. With the planet in crisis, you'd think we'd start to think long-term. This plan doesn't even acknowledge the problem."

Transit advocates I spoke to expressed dismay and observed that this plan is antithetical to the principals of "smart growth" to which the state is supposedly rededicated with Bob Ehrlich bounced from the governor's office.

"We can't afford better mass transit" is something you'd expect to hear in a tight budget year. But we're talking about 2035, when most of the politicians who make up this board might not even be alive, let alone in public office. Some outside-the-box thinking could reap some crucial benefits -- less traffic, less pollution and an easing of our addiction to foreign oil and its consequences -- and yet would have cost them nothing. Humor us, huh?

If the panel were to lay out more ambitious plans for transit that didn't pan out, there is one guy who might still be around to face the music. That's our own County Executive Ken Ulman, who happens to be the board's chairman. He'll actually be attending his first meeting on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Elected county executive just last year, Ulman has colored his early tenure green, creating an advisory panel to study environmental policy, pushing through new building regulations and putting county employees in hybrid cars. "Outlook 2035" bears little resemblance to this policy profile.

To this point, of course, the plan has been the work of staff people from the local governments. The "Outlook 2035" document was largely complete before he took office.

"I don't like to give that answer, but in this case it happens to be true," Ulman said this week.

Ulman said he shares the frustration that this plan leans so heavily on road-building, and that he hopes to help steer the region's course more toward the transit side. Among the projects he'd like to see: Extension of the Washington Metrorail's Green Line to Laurel Park and eventually BWI Airport, more connections of rail and bus lines and a rapid bus or rail line along Route 29 connecting Howard County with Silver Spring.

The deadline for public comment on "Outlook 2035" is Wednesday. You can download a copy at baltometro.org.

E-mail Doug Miller at Doug.Miller@patuxent.com

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News Digest

August 26, 2007

Meeting to focus on transportation

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board will hold a public meeting with local elected officials and the community at 5 p.m. Tuesday at 2700 Lighthouse Point East, in the 2700 block of Boston St., Room 310, in Baltimore, to present Transportation Outlook 2035.

In Harford County, only one mass transit improvement was listed on the plan, and that was to move the Aberdeen MARC station. The list below is what county officials requested and were granted, in order of priority:

- Route 24 from Singer Road to U.S. Business 1: widen from four to six lanes.
- Route 22 from Route 543 to Interstate 95: widen from two to four lanes.
- U.S. 1 Bypass from Hickory Bypass to Route 147/Business U.S. 1: widen from two to four lanes and improve interchange.
- U.S. 1 from Route 147/Business U.S. 1 to Route 152: widen from four to six lanes.
- Route 715 from U.S. 40 to Route 22: new four-lane road.
- Perryman West from U.S. 40 at Mitchell Lane to Canning House Road: new two-lane road.
- Route 22 from I-95 to APG gate: widen from four to six lanes.

There will be strict time constraints for presentations at the meeting, so one speaker must be designated to represent a community group. Individuals who wish to speak on their own behalf may do so.

The deadline for submitting comments on the plan is Wednesday.

Information: 410-732-9566.



Regional rapid transit system among projects pushed by transportation coalition

Baltimore Business Journal - 1:35 PM EDT Monday, August 27, 2007 by [Scott Dance](#) Staff

A coalition aiming to improve regional transit is proposing an amendment to a recently released draft of a long-term transportation plan, suggesting money shift from road to mass transit projects.

The Movement of Organizations for Regional Expansion of Transit, or MOREtransit, argues that the heavy focus on road projects of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board's Outlook 2035 draft plan won't serve the region's needs.

The regional transportation plan draft currently budgets \$2 billion for transit and \$6.2 billion for highway projects.

The group's amendment proposes equalizing funding for transit and road projects, calling for:

- \$3 billion for a regional rapid transit system,
- \$550 million for a new passenger rail tunnel between Penn Station and West Baltimore,
- \$488 million for improvements to the MARC Penn Line,
- and \$200 million for improvements to the MARC Camden Line, all totaling \$4.3 billion.

The amendment also proposes scaling back to \$3.9 billion for highway projects and \$61.8 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

In the report, the group recognized the constrained state budget for transportation projects but said funding should be shifted from roads that would duplicate transit projects or are not immediately expected to be congested.

The regional rapid transit system the group proposed would replace the Red Line and would incorporate not just the eastern and western corridors as in that project, but also the north and northeast corridors. Details weren't outlined in the amendment.

The regional transportation board, an arm of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, released the draft in July and then held a series of public meetings seeking input on the plan. MOREtransit will present its amendment at the board's meeting at 5 p.m. Tuesday at 2700 Lighthouse Point East.



Scrapping of traffic-congestion plan urged

Proposal tilts too heavily toward highways, mass-transit advocates say

By Michael Dresser, Sun Reporter

August 29, 2007

A coalition of mass-transit advocates urged the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board yesterday to scrap its \$8.7 billion draft plan for traffic congestion relief over the next 28 years, contending that the proposal is heavily skewed in favor of highway projects.

The advocates are attacking a potential blueprint for what the region's transportation system would look like in 2035. They say the draft Transportation Outlook 2035, prepared by local governments and the transportation board's staff, directs too much money to road projects, including many that would encourage sprawl and violate the state's Smart Growth policies.

At a public hearing last night, speakers almost unanimously turned thumbs down on a plan that critics described as lacking in regional vision.

Advocates demanded a roughly even split of the funds to finance a full regional rapid transit network and MARC system improvements.

The Greater Baltimore Committee expressed disappointment that the draft didn't include a Metro system extension to Morgan State University and Good Samaritan Hospital.

Gregory Schaffer, president of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, asked why the East Baltimore campus, with more than 6,300 employees, had been left out of plans for a new transit line and a MARC system upgrade.

A contingent of Harford County residents urged the board to take the money proposed to widen Routes 22 and 24 and spend it elsewhere.

And in a moment of semi-comic relief that left some onlookers wincing, transit enthusiast Art Cohen sang his testimony to the tune of Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans," renamed "The Region of Old Excuses."

The board is made up of the mayors of Baltimore and Annapolis, the top elected officials of Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard, Harford and Carroll counties, and the secretaries of three state government department. Its job is to develop a plan for long-range transportation projects involving federal funds. In a measure of the little-known board's influence, all of its elected members showed up for parts of the hearing.

The board estimated this year that \$33.4 billion would be available through 2035 for operations, preservation and expansion of the region's transportation system.

The transit advocates' counterproposal focuses on the board's plans for \$8.7 billion to expand the system, including \$6 billion for highways and \$2.2 billion for transit projects.

A coalition of organizations and citizens -- the Movement of Organizations for Regional Expansion of Transit, or MOREtransit -- called for spending \$4.3 billion on transit and \$3.9 billion on roads. MOREtransit expressed concern that the board's draft "is in conflict with the very goals that plan has established."

"The plan devotes 71 percent of the budget to highways in order to increase mobility, and still congestion will increase dramatically compared to today's levels," its report says.

The draft plan identifies one "regionally significant" major transit project, the proposed \$1.4 billion east-west transit route from Woodlawn to the Fells Point-Canton area known as the Red Line.

Harvey Bloom, transportation director of the board's affiliated Baltimore Metropolitan Council, denied that the draft would give transit short shrift.

"We went with what the [Maryland] Transit Administration was providing us as a priority, and the Red Line was that priority," Bloom said. He added that the apparent decrease in transit funding in the 2035 report reflects not a cut but a revision in costs estimates for the Red Line.

MOREtransit urged the board to scrap the Red Line and adopt its vision of a "Baltimore regional rapid transit system" serving the northern and northeastern transportation corridors out of the city in addition to the east and west. It estimated the cost at more than \$3 billion.

Unlike the transit coalition, the Greater Baltimore Committee did not support a shift of funds away from highways to transit projects or a scrapping of the Red Line. But GBC President Donald C. Fry told the board that the plan's omission of the Metro extension on the so-called Green Line and other elements of an ambitious 2002 rail plan were disappointing.

"It send a bad message as to what this region's priorities are," he said.

Fry also faulted the draft for not focusing more on the Pentagon's base realignment and closure process, which is expected to bring thousands of jobs and more traffic to Maryland.

Transit advocates contend that an expanded MARC, with stations serving Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground, would be critical to handling a commuter influx.

The MOREtransit report accuses the board of putting too much emphasis on wider roads, saying that widening accounted for 36 of 49 proposed projects. Many of the projects, it suggested, run contrary to Smart Growth and would foster sprawl.

Bloom disputed the suggestion, saying the road projects identified by local jurisdictions would largely serve areas that have been developed.

"Now we're playing catch-up," he said. "I don't think this highway construction is going to perpetuate additional sprawl."

Joseph T. "Jody" Landers III, executive vice president of the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors and a former City Council member, summed up the tenor of the hearing after two hours of testimony.

"I don't sense a whole lot of enthusiasm for this plan either in the audience or among elected officials," he said. "We need to go back and redo the plan. We need a plan that has a sense of urgency."

michael.dresser@baltsun.com