

Up-To-Date News on Citizen Involvement



As part of our public involvement efforts, BMC has an exciting new electronic newsletter - *B'More Involved*. This e-newsletter is published 2-4 times per month and includes information on transportation planning, environmental justice, and citizen involvement.

In each issue of *B'More Involved*, you will find out how you can:

- **Speak out!** – find out about how to comment on transportation plans, programs, etc.
- **Get involved!** – get details on important events, training, and meetings in the region.
- **Learn!** – read the latest news about transportation and other planning issues, as well as when a new issue of *BRTB Notes* newsletter or other BRTB reports, statistics, and data are published.
- **Connect!** – keep up to date on the work of the BRTB Citizens Advisory Committee and the Transportation Equity Task Force. We also include information about community meetings and events so you can connect with others and get involved locally.
- **Act!** – receive Action Alerts about important meetings and learn how you can get involved.

Registering for *B'More Involved* is easy! To join our mailing list, just go to www.baltometro.org/eNews/BMoreInvolved.htm. There, you can sign-up for *B'More Involved*, as well as see past issues.

For more information, to provide us with feedback, or to let us know of things we should include in future e-newsletters, please email mhaines@baltometro.org or call (410) 732-0500 x1047.

Recent Tragedy Reminds Us of Need to Drive Safely

The recent tragedy that killed a local construction worker on the inner loop of the Baltimore Beltway draws our attention to the importance of work zone safety. Safety, defined as one of the three key goals by The Federal Highway Administration, is also one of the region's guiding principles, identified in *Transportation 2030*. This principle directs us to begin identifying projects and programs that reduce the number of crashes and fatalities for motorists, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians on our transportation facilities.

Unfortunately, Maryland roads are not as

safe as they could be. Traffic fatalities claimed 651 lives in 2003, of which 270 were fatalities in Central Maryland. Additionally, fatalities within work zones more than doubled in the last few years in Maryland, increasing from 7 in 2001 to 17 in 2002. Work zone safety has become a growing safety concern for Maryland.

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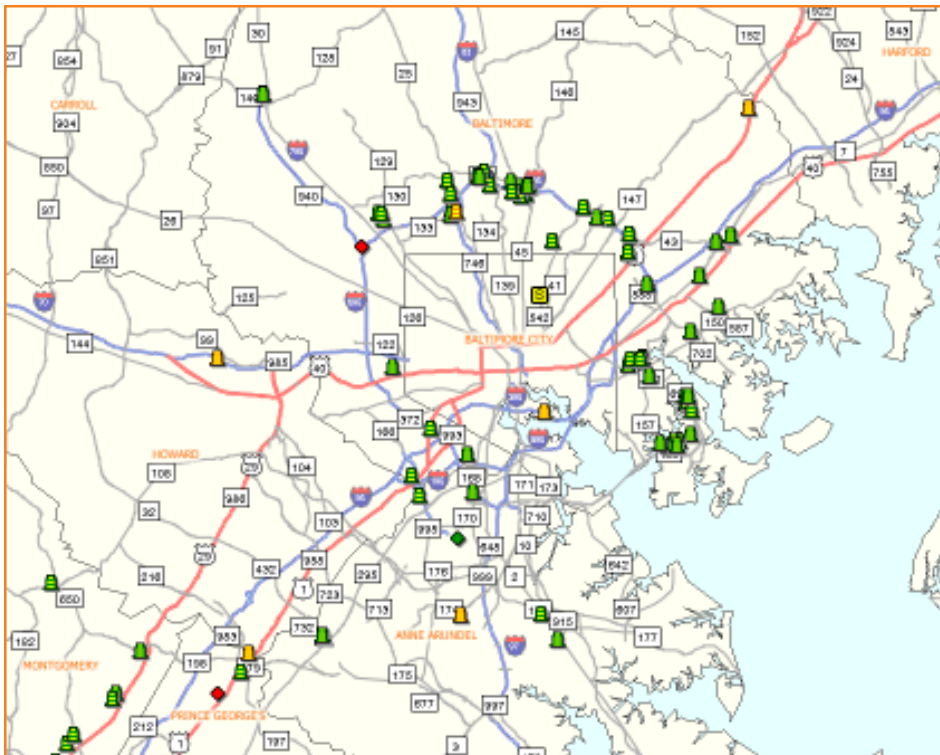


See Orange? Think Safety!

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Orange is the standard color for work zone activity. Orange signs communicate distances to work areas and the proper steps necessary to proceed safely. By thinking orange, you can save someones life or your own. Remember, crashes are no accident – you hold the key!

To get details about current construction projects and schedules, go to: www.chart.state.md.us/MapNet and click on “Road Work.” You can also call the construction hotline at (800) 323-6742.



An example of a map created by the CHART Web Mapping service of MD State Highway Administration. The map program allows users to view current traffic and emergency road conditions from across the state.

The BRTB in Action

At the December meeting of the BRTB, the members considered two action items. Approval was given to Resolution #05-6, accepting Round 6-A regional socioeconomic data and Resolution #05-7, adopting Transportation 2030: The 2004 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan. These two items resulted from one to two years of work and included the input of citizens, committees and numerous staff from many organizations. Five informational items were presented to the BRTB including: redundancy security analysis, regional travel time analysis based on field work, a briefing on “Journey-to-Work” data from the Census, results from the November 6 Community Dialogue on environmental justice, and a briefing on the travel needs for the elderly.

10 Tips for Driving Safely in Work Zones

- U Expect the unexpected!
- U Slow down! The majority of fatal work zone crashes occur on roads with speed limits of 55 mph or greater. Behind the wheel, you are in control.
- U Don't tailgate! Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you.
- U Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the construction workers and their equipment.
- U Pay attention to the signs!
- U Obey road crew flag worker.
- U Stay alert and minimize distractions (cell phones, changing radio stations or reaching for objects.)
- U Keep up with the traffic flow.
- U Schedule enough time to drive safely and check radio, TV and websites for traffic information.
- U Be patient and stay calm. Saving lives is much more important than saving time.

* Source: US DOT <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>

Walkable Community Workshops

The Walkable Community Workshop [WCW] program was held in the Baltimore region on March 14-17, 2005. The WCW program concentrates on identifying real-world pedestrian problems and solutions for communities. During each workshop, the trainers deliver a presentation on the elements of a walkable community and solutions to common problems. The trainers then lead participants on a walking tour (called a “walkabout” or “ped audit”) of a pre-determined local study area. During the walkabout, trainers emphasize thinking about and trying to understand the perspective of a pedestrian in the community. After the walkabout, participants gather in small breakout groups to identify both general and specific measures to improve conditions for pedestrians. The trainers compile these ideas and lead a discussion to prioritize the measures.

For the workshops, the National Center of Bicycling and Walking [NCBW] provides a team of two trainers to present eight four-hour workshops over a five-day period. The workshop trainers are well-known professionals with diverse backgrounds, from diverse fields of work — including planning, transportation engineering, public health, policy, and program development. As a result, the trainers have extensive experience in the development of walkable communities. They also have an excellent understanding of the details of pedestrian facili-

ties design, as well as how decisions on transportation and land-use can affect the completion of such facilities.

For each selected workshop location, attendees will include community residents; elected officials; pedestrian and bicycle advocates; local, regional, state and federal agency staff drawn from transportation, planning, parks and recreation, schools, public works, tourism and economic development; business owners and business association representatives; and leaders of faith-based organizations.

The Maryland Highway Safety Office [MHSO] will fund the program both in the Baltimore region and across the state. The BMC will coordinate the program in

conjunction with host communities in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore and Carroll counties.

To prepare for the March 2005 program, BMC participated in the coordinator training held November 11-14 in northern California. The training was led by Walkable Community Workshop instructors Dan Burden, Bob Chauncey and Peter Lagerwey. The training consisted of dash-board and walking tours of towns and cities with discussions on defining the elements of walkable communities and tutorials on preparing for and providing the support needed to deliver successful workshops. The training also included one real-time Walkable Community Workshop in Salinas, California.



Wide walkways complemented by trees and furniture make this city street a walkable environment. WCW participants will learn about the 4 E's of walkable communities — Education, Engineering, Encouragement, and Enforcement.

Census Data Reveals Commuting Patterns

Knowing where people live and where they work are key elements in developing a transportation plan. Using criteria such as residential density, employment density and total acreage, BMC identified thirty-one activity centers in the Baltimore region that fall into eight categories:

- Downtown Core
- Suburban Employment Centers
- Government Centers
- Mixed-Use Centers
- Emerging Employment Centers
- Regional Airports
- Employment Centers
- Industrial Centers

Each of these activity center types is based on specific criteria that can be found, along with a map of the centers, at www.baltometro.org/c2K/activitycenters.html. This page also includes other maps and information noted in this article.

The number of employees in each of these centers had already been identified through employment tallies. However, determining where workers in these activity centers began their work trips is crucial to improving our travel demand modeling.

Where are people who work in our region traveling from?

To answer this question, staff used data from the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTTP). Using each of the thirty-one activity centers as a destination, staff compiled CTTP worker information for every area within the region that sends workers to these sites. Since the census data can be broken into very small analysis zones, staff summarized the worker origination data by Regional Planning District (RPD). An RPD is a special “neighborhood-sized” statistical area developed in the 1970s in conjunction with local planning agencies. A map depicting all 94 RPDs in the Baltimore region, with associated community names, can be found on the BMC website.

As a quick way to show the most prominent origins to the activity centers, staff created a series of “Top Ten” lists, showing the ten RPDs that contribute the most employees to each activity center. The lists also show what portion of all workers at an activity center originate in its top ten RPDs. A complete listing of all origin areas in the Baltimore region can also be found on our website.

How is this information useful?

By studying commuting patterns, we can identify the origins of traffic congestion. This data can then be used by staff to fine-tune the performance and accuracy of the travel demand model.

A clear example of the kind of important information we find is seen when we explore commuter patterns to the Downtown Baltimore Activity Center. This center is one of ten activity centers in Baltimore City and contains the heart of the region’s transit system.

While the top 10 RPD’s bring employment to downtown from both inside and outside of Baltimore City, they account for only 30 percent of the employment in the CBD. This means that the other 70 percent of downtown workers travel from the far reaches of the region to get to work. It also shows us that this Activity Center attracts workers from 92 of the 94 RPD’s in the Baltimore region.

The large reach of this one central activity center demonstrates, in a dramatic way, why our region’s commuters encounter so much traffic congestion and delay as they travel to and from their jobs.

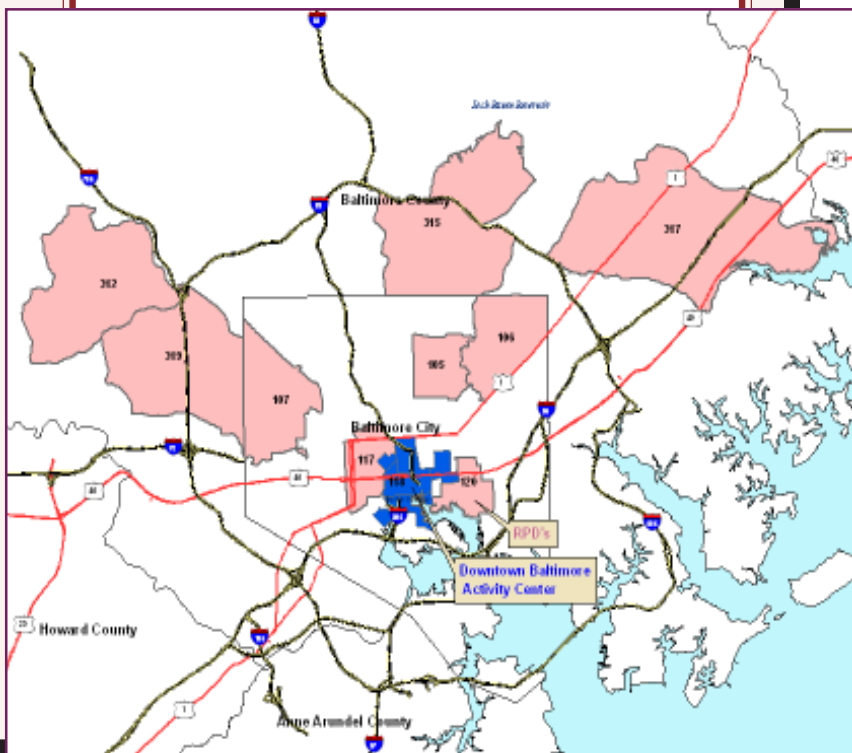
The remaining worker flow information for Downtown Baltimore and the other activity centers can be found on the BMC website. Stay tuned for more information about the CTTP!

Downtown Baltimore Activity Center

The Downtown Baltimore activity center draws employees from 92 of the 94 Regional Planning Districts (RPDs) in the region. The Top Ten RPDs sending employees to Downtown Baltimore are:

- RPD 117 – West Baltimore, Baltimore City
- RPD 319 – Liberty/Lochearn, Baltimore County
- RPD 120 – Highlandtown, Baltimore City
- RPD 315 – Towson/Loch Raven, Baltimore County
- RPD 107 – Forest Park, Baltimore City
- RPD 106 – Hamilton, Baltimore City
- RPD 317 – Perry Hall/Whitemarsh, Baltimore County
- RPD 312 – Randallstown, Baltimore County
- RPD 105 – Govans/Northwood, Baltimore City
- RPD 118 – MetroCenter, Baltimore City

These RPDs can be seen in the map shown below. The Downtown Baltimore Center RPD is shown in blue. The other nine RPD's are shown in pink.



Breathe Easy?



Baltimore Regional Air Quality

On December 17, 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a list of all of the areas of the country that do not meet the standards set for levels of fine soot in the air. In other words, they are in “nonattainment” of the standards. The Baltimore region, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties, as well as Baltimore City, has been designated a nonattainment area for fine soot.

Soot is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets in the air. Fine soot, called PM_{2.5}, is soot in the air that is smaller than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter. This means that it is around 1/30th the size of a human hair. Sources of fine soot include power plants, vehicles, industry and smoke from fires. Fine soot is dangerous because it is small enough to breathe into the lungs. It can cause respiratory problems and heart problems. It is especially dangerous for children, the elderly, people with asthma, and those with heart or lung disease.

Because there are counties in Maryland that do not meet the standard, the state is required to develop a plan on how to reduce the amount of fine soot in the air to meet EPA's standards. The state will submit this plan to EPA by 2008. For more information, please visit www.epa.gov/pmdesignations.

Exciting New Data Released

In December, the BRTB formally endorsed the use of Round 6-A socioeconomic forecasts for use in region-wide transportation planning, as well as by public and private organizations. The forecasts were created by the Cooperative Forecasting Group (CFG) and were used in the creation of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan - Transportation 2030. Each year the CFG prepares projections of population, households, and jobs within the Baltimore region for a minimum of twenty years.

What does this data tell us?

This new data shows that the region will add nearly 345 thousand new residents, a 13.7 percent population increase, between 2000 and 2030. Although the region will add only 204,000 households during the thirty year period, this increase represents a 21.3 percent jump in new households. Projections of employment indicate that between 2000 and 2030, our area will add almost as many new jobs (336,800 or 22 percent) as it added people.

By 2030, the region will contain almost 2.9 million residents, up from the 2.5 million people we had in 2000. We are also expected to have nearly 1.2 million households and almost 1.9 million jobs. Baltimore County, currently the largest jurisdiction, is expected to experience the largest population increase, adding more than 78,000 new households. Anne Arundel County and Baltimore County are each expected to add about 47,000 new households.

Howard County is expected to add the most employment to the region with 100,000 new jobs by 2030. This will represent about 1 of every 3 jobs added to the regional economy. Anne Arundel County will fall just short of that by adding 95,000 jobs.

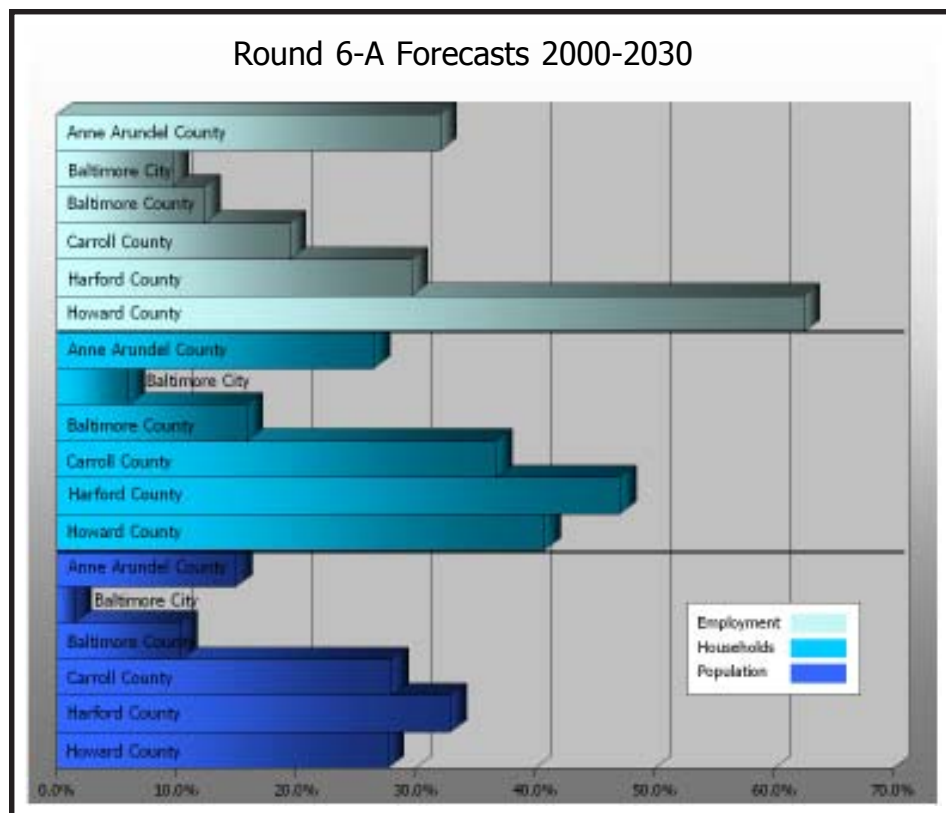
Of particular interest are the newest projections for Baltimore City. This data shows that Baltimore

City's multiple decade trend of population loss is expected to reverse itself by the end of the current decade (2010). At that point, the City's population is expected to hold for the following 20 years at about 660,000 people. It also predicts that Baltimore City will reverse its household loss by adding about 15,000 households in the next 25 years.

What does this mean for our transportation system?

The double digit population, household, and employment projections show the expectation of substantial new residential and commercial growth in the outer suburbs. The slowest growth rates are projected to occur in the urban core of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. As robust development continues to occur farther from the urban core, we can expect congestion and delay to continue. New jobs and people will be dispersed in communities and activity centers that are farther from the center of the region.

These conditions will challenge local, regional, and state transportation planners to devise more cost-effective and efficient transportation infrastructure to meet the expected need.



1st Traffic Signal Operations Forum A Great Success

On December 8th, more than 100 traffic engineers and signal technicians from the Baltimore and Washington regions attended a Traffic Signal Operations Forum at Howard Community College in Columbia, MD. The program covered various technical and signal operations topics, including:



- Quick and easy ways to improve signal timing
- Guidelines for using video cameras with signal timing
- Local experiences using light emitting diode (LED) signals
- An overview of change intervals (yellow and all-red times) in signal operations

The speakers were mostly from local and state transportation agencies. This gave attendees a chance to learn about some of the successes and issues faced by their peers. This was very helpful during the LED session. Since some agencies have been using LED signals for several years and others are just beginning to install them, there was a good discussion about difficulties experienced with the LED signals and how they were overcome.

The Forum was sponsored by the Traffic Signal Subcommittee of the BRTB, the Washington Regional Traffic Signals and Operations Working Group of the Transportation Planning Board, the Washington DC Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The event was a great success, and we hope to make this an annual event.

Tax Time! New Deductions for Commuters

Have you ever received a New Year's gift from the IRS? Well, if you are one of the hundreds of people throughout our region taking advantage of *Transit Pass Benefits*, you did.

As of January 1, employers may now give employees who share a ride to work up to \$105 in vouchers or passes, *per month*, to cover the costs of transit or vanpool commuting, tax-free.

Employers may deduct this benefit as a normal business expense. Unlike ordinary wage payments, no federal payroll taxes are paid on transit commuter benefits. Employees, in turn, do not pay income taxes on these benefits, except on amounts over \$105 (per month).

These federal incentives can be combined with a number of state initiatives offered under the Commuter Choice Maryland programs.

Commuter benefit programs are good for everyone. Employers save on taxes, reduce parking demand and costs, and recruit and retain valuable workers. Employees receive an employer-paid commute subsidy, lower taxes, and less stressful commutes. The entire region is also helped by less congestion and cleaner air.

To learn more, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-04-71.pdf or Maryland's Commuter Choice programs at www.md.state.md.us/CommuterChoice.



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We're on the Web! Visit www.baltometro.org

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