

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE GREAT TRANSPORTATION?

A photograph showing the interior of a bus. Passengers are seated, and the view is looking down the length of the vehicle. A red text box is overlaid in the center.

2015 Transportation Report Card Central Maryland Region's Grade: D

**WE'RE FAILING TO LINK
PEOPLE TO JOBS.**

**LONG COMMUTES
COST THE REGION.**

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRAL MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE GREAT TRANSPORTATION?

The Problem

Too many people in Central Maryland face transportation-related barriers preventing job access. Public transportation is too often unreliable and does not efficiently connect to employment centers. Traffic congestion results in too many wasted hours and excess emissions.

Transportation Projects Can Take Us In Many Directions

Maryland has many plans and competing spending priorities. Some will help solve the problem and some will make it worse.

Grading the Results

This Report Card tells us if the projects and policies are taking us in the right direction. Transportation isn't an end. It's a means to get where we want to go. This Report Card measures the things that will improve if our transportation system does its job better.

CENTRAL MARYLAND REGION'S GRADE: D

A Great Transportation System Grows the Economy



ACCESS TO JOBS VIA
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

D



ACCESS TO JOBS VIA DRIVING

D



DISPOSABLE INCOME

F



STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

C

A Great Transportation System Gives You Choices



COMMUTE MODE

C



DISCONNECTED
COMMUNITIES

F



WALKABILITY

C+



RELIABLE TRANSIT

D

A Great Transportation System Keeps You and Your Environment Healthy



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

C



AIR POLLUTION

D



COMMUTE TIME

D



CONGESTION

D



ACCESS TO JOBS VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the percentage of our region's jobs that a typical resident can get to in 60 minutes or less using forms of public transportation including buses and trains.

OUR GRADE

D. A typical resident of Central Maryland can only get to 11% of the region's jobs in under an hour using public transportation.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system supports economic growth. It tells us whether the region's public transportation system is helping connect workers with employers. Many low-skill and mid-skill workers do not have a car, which cuts them off from many job opportunities. Businesses need reliable access to a larger labor pool to compete and grow.

WHO IS DOING IT BETTER?

We believe that to earn an A a regional transportation system should provide access to at least 25% of a region's jobs in 60 minutes or less via public transportation. The Salt Lake City metro region where Utahans since the 1990's have expanded the light rail system and overhauled their network of bus routes earns an A. A typical Salt Lake City resident can get to 25.4% of the region's jobs in under an hour on transit.





ACCESS TO JOBS VIA DRIVING

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the percentage of our region's jobs that a typical resident can get to in 20 minutes or less by driving.

OUR GRADE

D. It will come as no surprise to Central Marylanders that driving to work has gotten worse: the number of jobs reachable in a short drive (10 min., 20 min., or 30 min.) all went down between 1990 and 2010.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system supports economic growth. Driving is the best option for many residents in the region to get to work. If a typical resident can reach more and more jobs in convenient driving times it is a sign of a great transportation system.

WHO IS DOING IT BETTER?

We believe that to earn an A a regional transportation system should show improvement in access to jobs via car. A typical Salt Lake City resident could get to more jobs in under 20 minutes by driving in 2010 than was possible in 1990.



Note the “Who’s Doing It Better?” sections under the Access to Jobs Via Public Transportation and the Access to Jobs Via Driving indicators. Both highlight the Salt Lake City region. Since 1997, the year in which Maryland last expanded the Baltimore regional transit system, Utahans have opened three new light rail lines, an 88-mile commuter train, a streetcar, a bus rapid transit line and an expansion to the downtown intermodal hub. Not surprisingly, over that period access to jobs via transit got better. But it is important to point out that it also got better via driving. This demonstrates that investing in transit can be an effective way to benefit users across the entire transportation network, not just transit riders. Also important: since 2001 (the earliest year for which we could find comparable data) the Salt Lake region’s gross domestic product has grown faster than the Baltimore region’s as shown in the table here. (<http://bit.ly/1Xngl97>)



DISPOSABLE INCOME

GRADE: F

DEFINITION

The Center for Neighborhood Technology has established 45% of household income as the affordability threshold for combined transportation and housing expenses. This indicator analyzes how many households in a metropolitan region spend more than 45% of their income on transportation and housing.

OUR GRADE

F. In the Central Maryland region 58% of households exceed the affordability standard.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system supports economic growth. For most U.S. households transportation is the number two largest expenditure after housing. In some cases household savings due to lower housing costs are offset by higher transportation costs, and vice versa. Spending less on housing and transportation means more money in your pocket and that buying power supports local business and strengthens the economy.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

The Washington, D.C. region has only 38% of its population exceeding the affordability standard. Despite being perceived as the more expensive place to live, D.C. shows it can be more affordable when accounting for lower transportation costs attributable to high quality transit service and walkability.





STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

GRADE: C

DEFINITION

This indicator averages the grades that a state receives from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) for roads, bridges, and transit.

OUR GRADE

C. The ASCE gave Maryland a B- for bridges, a C- for roads, and a C- for transit in its latest evaluation.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system supports economic growth. Transportation infrastructure was a huge factor in the economic growth in the U.S. and in greater Baltimore in the 19th and 20th Centuries and is critical to our competitiveness in the 21st Century. If we let it break down, we choke the flow of goods and people that drive our regional economy.

WHO IS DOING IT BETTER?

Sadly, no state receives A's from the ASCE for its bridges, roads, and public transportation infrastructure. In 2010, the ASCE estimated that deficiencies in America's surface transportation systems cost households and businesses nearly \$130 billion. This included vehicle operating costs, travel time delays, safety costs and environmental costs. Making it our priority to fix existing infrastructure is an investment in our economic future and essential for improving mobility.



A Great Transportation System Gives You Choices



COMMUTE MODE

GRADE: C

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the percentage of commuters in the region who get to work by walking, biking, transit, or carpooling.

OUR GRADE

C. Only 18% of our regional population commutes by walking, biking, transit or carpooling.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system gives you choices. Driving is a convenient travel mode for many trips, including your commute to work. However, the problem is when driving is the only feasible way. High-performing transportation systems provide choice and opportunities for multi-modal transportation without forcing residents to use a particular mode. We believe a 30% share of biking, walking, transit and carpooling is evidence of a robust multi-modal system.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

Of our peer regions, the Seattle area offers the most choice as indicated by 24% of its commuters using alternatives to driving alone.





DISCONNECTED COMMUNITIES

GRADE: F

DEFINITION

This indicator measures what percentage of a region's workers commute at least 45 minutes one way to get to work.

OUR GRADE

F. In Central Maryland 22% of workers spend 45 minutes or more commuting to work. Many of the workers enduring long commutes are concentrated in centrally located neighborhoods. In Baltimore City 26% of the population live in neighborhoods where more than a quarter of workers commute at least 45 minutes one way to get to a job.

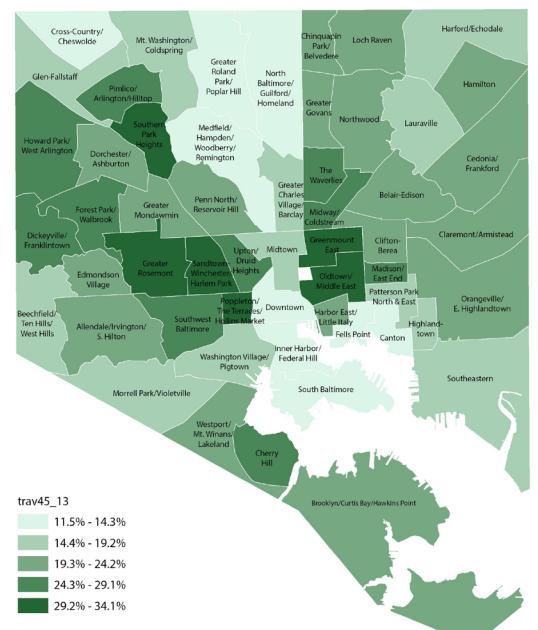
REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system gives you choices. A 2015 study by Harvard economists found that poor children who grow up in some cities and towns have sharply better odds of escaping poverty than similar poor children elsewhere. Among the nation's 100 largest cities, the one where children face the worst odds of escaping poverty is the city of Baltimore. The study found that the single strongest factor affecting the odds of escaping poverty is commuting time. Backing up the national finding, the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance has found a strong correlation between neighborhoods where the highest percentage of workers commute at least 45 minutes and neighborhoods showing signs of distress including the highest levels of unemployment and poverty and the lowest life expectancies.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

Every similarly sized region in the country scores significantly better than our region on this measure. From San Diego to Charlotte, Seattle to Orlando, the percentage of workers in our 16 peer regions who commute 45 minutes or more ranges between 9 and 18. At 22% Central Maryland is an outlier on this key indicator of upward mobility.

Percent of the Population that Travels More than 45 Minutes to Work, 2009-2013



Source:

The Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

A Great Transportation System Gives You Choices



WALKABILITY

GRADE: C+

DEFINITION

This indicator shows how easy and attractive it is to walk in a city. It uses scores given to each U.S. city by Walkscore.com which measures the number of destinations such as schools, parks, restaurants, grocery stores and other common destinations that are in close proximity to a residence and averages those scores across an entire city.

OUR GRADE

C+. As our region's principal city, Baltimore has an average Walk Score of 66 on a 0-100 scale. WalkScore.com considers this score as "Somewhat Walkable".

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system gives you choices. In some places it's easy to walk to buy milk or to get from the train station to your workplace. On the other hand, some places are built in a way that leaves driving as the only way to get around. Having more walkable places in the region gives you the option of doing some errands without needing to drive, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and leaves roadway capacity for other trips.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

San Francisco earns a Walk Score of 84 which indicates that most errands can be accomplished on foot.





RELIABLE TRANSIT

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures on-time performance by the various modes of the Maryland Transit Administration: local bus, Metro Subway, Central Light Rail, MARC commuter rail, and mobility shuttles. It uses the share of total ridership of each mode to calculate a weighted average on-time performance for the entire system. Because this data is self-reported by MTA, we also look at on-time performance issues as reported by MTA customers through the Rate Your Ride tool.

OUR GRADE

D. MTA reports an 86% on-time performance across all modes when weighted by ridership. It should be noted that MTA defines on-time as ranging from one minute prior to five minutes after scheduled arrival time and performance only includes vehicles on the street. MTA does not factor in delays experienced by riders when a vehicle is removed from a route. Possibly for those reasons transit riders frequently report late service: 42% of Rate Your Ride reports are for vehicles that were late or skipped a stop.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system gives you choices. Reliability tells us whether the system gets people to work, classes and appointments on time. If public transit is unreliable then many people will not see it as a viable choice. For employers, an unreliable transit system affects employee turnover and productivity.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

A number of our peer regions report higher on-time performances than MTA, including Denver, Kansas City, and Charlotte.



A Great Transportation System Keeps You and Your Environment Healthy



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

GRADE: C

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the percent of a region's population that participated in physical activity during the past month. It is based on the Centers for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey.

OUR GRADE

C. In the Central Maryland region 77% of adults reported participating in physical activity, which is lower than most of our peer regions. This is also a contributing factor in the prevalence of obesity, which affects 25% of our region's population.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system is keeping you and your environment healthy. Physical activity can significantly reduce people's risk of chronic diseases and is associated with improved quality of life, emotional well-being, and positive mental health. Transportation infrastructure and policies can positively impact physical activity levels by encouraging bicycling and walking. Additionally, people are more likely to walk when they use public transportation and the lack of an adequate public transit system may mean that opportunities for physical activity are lost.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

The Denver region has a higher rate of physical activity (83%) and a lower rate of obesity (20%) than Baltimore.





AIR POLLUTION

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the number of times during 2014 when measured levels of ozone exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standard.

OUR GRADE

D. In the Central Maryland region there were six times during 2014 when ozone levels exceeded the standard. The Baltimore metropolitan region is a non-attainment area under the EPA's 2008 standard for 8-hour ozone levels.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system is keeping you and your environment healthy. Ozone is one of four pollutants the U.S. EPA lists as transportation-related. Ozone in the upper atmosphere is beneficial because it shields the earth from the sun's ultraviolet radiation, but high concentrations of it at ground level are a major environmental and health concern. Emissions from cars, trucks, buses and other vehicles help cause ground-level ozone to form. Breathing ozone can scar your lung tissue, reduce your lung function, and trigger chest pain, coughing, and congestion. It can worsen asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

There were no measures of ozone levels in the air in the Minneapolis – St. Paul region during 2014 that exceeded the EPA's standard.



A Great Transportation System Keeps You and Your Environment Healthy



COMMUTE TIME

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the average number of minutes that commuters in the region spend getting to work.

OUR GRADE

D. With an average commute time of 31 minutes, the Central Maryland region has the longest commute time among our peer regions and is the 6th worst of all metro areas in the nation. Transit riders suffer the most with an average commute time of 55 minutes, which is the second longest among our peer regions.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system is keeping you and your environment healthy. Longer commute times mean more time in sedentary positions (for those not biking or walking), more fuel consumption and more emissions. They mean less time for family or civic activities. Lack of physical activity is associated with obesity and numerous negative health outcomes. Longer commute times are bad for our bodies, our environment and our communities.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

Minneapolis has an average commute time of 25 minutes compared to the national average of 26 minutes and has a transit commute time of 41 minutes that is also below the national average of 49 minutes





CONGESTION

GRADE: D

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the number of hours of travel delay an average car commuter experiences due to congestion.

OUR GRADE

D. The average car commuter in the Central Maryland region wastes 47 hours each year in traffic congestion.

REASON

This is an indicator of whether our transportation system is keeping you and your environment healthy. Increased congestion means longer commute times, excess fuel consumption, and increased vehicle emissions. It is also indicative of inefficient land use policies, sprawl, and a mismatch between where workers live and where the best jobs are located.

WHO'S DOING IT BETTER?

This indicator is complex, because congestion can also be a sign of economic health. Driving at rush hour gets better during a recession, but for the wrong reasons. Drivers in the Cleveland, St. Louis and Pittsburgh regions experience less congestion than drivers in the Central Maryland, but they also have slower economic growth. The San Diego region gets it right. Their economy grew faster than the Central Maryland region's economy from 2001-2014 (as shown in this table here) but the average driver spends 11% less time idling in traffic.



A GREAT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM GROWS THE ECONOMY, GIVES PEOPLE CHOICES AND KEEPS OUR ENVIRONMENT HEALTHY. WE NEED MORE AND BETTER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR OUR REGION.

A great transportation system must:

- **Be safe and reliable.**
- **Better connect communities and job centers.**
- **Be affordable for families and workers.**
- **Have up-to-date, well-maintained infrastructure.**
- **Give residents options to travel efficiently to schools, jobs and recreation.**
- **Be energy-efficient and healthy for the community.**

In many of those areas, the Central Maryland region is failing. But we can, and should, do better.

Great transportation is crucial for families, employers and the region.

Tell your elected officials that we need to invest in improving the Central Maryland region's transportation system.

Visit <http://www.congressweb.com/cmta> to contact your elected officials today.

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