



A SYMPOSIUM ON TRANSPORTATION, GROWTH, & THE ECONOMY

SYMPOSIUM BACKGROUNDER

Overview

As throughout the country, and the world, Maryland faces unprecedented challenge in how to balance interrelated and, in some instances, competing objectives:

- **Build and sustain a diverse and growing economy**, including by providing a well-functioning and supportive transportation system.
- **Positively influence global climate change, air and water quality, and our critical natural ecosystems**, including by addressing the adverse impacts of past growth and economic gains on our environment.
- **Improve our general quality of life**, including by combating congestion, reducing travel delay, and improving travel time reliability.

In short, we must work to ensure that going forward we minimize the harm and maximize the gain, by making certain that our actions are informed by and responsive to what is today known about the complex relationships among our transportation system, the economy, and the environment. Simultaneously meeting these objectives is not easy and requires that carefully chosen tradeoffs be made, in both the near and longer term. Making these tradeoffs requires further research and analysis but most importantly it requires open and active dialogue among policymakers, technicians, and the public.

Background Facts & Figures

What is the Current State of Travel Demand, VMT, and Congestion in Maryland?

- The State's annual VMT per capita in 2005 was 10,056, only slightly less than the national average of 10,087. Projected average annual VMT growth between 2006 and 2030 is over 1.7% per year, compared to forecast population growth of just below 0.8% (resulting in an increase by 2030 of over 51 percent over 2007 annual VMT levels). Rural Interstates and Principal Arterials are expected to experience the highest growth in VMT. Due to the economic downturn, reductions have occurred and can be expected to continue.¹
- According to Texas Transportation Institute, Maryland ranked fifth worst in the nation for congestion on urban interstates. Washington, DC is 2nd and Baltimore 22nd among the 85 large urban areas in terms of highway congestion in 2005. The cost of this congestion is estimated at \$2.3 billion (\$545 per person) in Washington and \$1.2 billion (\$486 per person) in Baltimore.
- According to the 2000 US Census, Maryland has maintained somewhat higher shares for transit and carpooling than are typical for the nation (7.2% vs. 4.7% and 12.5% vs. 12.2%, respectively). 74% of Maryland workers commuted in a single occupancy vehicle. About 3.1% of Maryland workers worked at home and 2.4% walked to work. More recent estimates show increases in the use of public transportation and decreases in driving – both alone and in carpools.

¹ This and other statistics are from A Report to the Maryland General Assembly, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Appropriations Committee regarding State Plan on Congestion, Maryland Department of Transportation, December 2008.

Why Has Travel Demand Grown Over Time?

- **Population increases** – by 2020, the population of Maryland is projected to increase to approximately 6.8 million.
- **Rising incomes** – Median household income has risen from \$39,386 in 1989 to \$70,400 today.
- **Increases in the number of drivers and vehicles per household** – the Motor Vehicle Administration projects an increase in the driving age population of 18.5% between 2008 and 2028. In the same period, the number of registered vehicles and licensed drivers are expected to significantly increase (39.3% and 23.9%, respectively).
- **Other forces**, including land-use patterns, housing costs, and other factors.

What are the Primary Options to Address Transportation-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions?

- **Technological changes** to fuels, vehicles, and transportation system construction, maintenance, and operations
- **Behavioral changes** achieved through:
 - Education
 - Lower emission travel options such as carpools, rail transit, pedestrian access, freight rail
 - Alternatives to travel such as telecommuting
 - Land use and housing strategies
 - Pricing, including congestion pricing
 - Direct regulation (e.g., odometer monitoring, odd-even driving days, etc.)

What are the Primary Options to Address Congestion?

- **Improve system operating efficiency** (e.g., synchronized traffic signals, traffic flow management, roundabouts, speed management, etc.)
- **Manage demand** through:
 - Travel options (e.g., carpooling, transit)
 - Alternatives to travel (e.g., telecommuting programs)
 - Congestion pricing
- **Deploy land use policies and housing strategies**
- **Build more capacity**

What Has Maryland Already Done and What are Next Steps?

- Maryland is employing a range of travel demand management (TDM) strategies to combat congestion and reduce VMT growth, including programs aimed at providing alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel such as carpooling, car sharing, transit, teleworking, and flexible work hours. MDOT also is encouraging transit-oriented development and providing park-and-ride facilities to encourage transit use and carpooling.
- While many actions and programs are underway to address both congestion and VMT growth in Maryland, today's Symposium is intended to inform the discussion of next steps.