



Baltimore Metropolitan Council

Annual Report 2008

Message from the Chair

I am proud to say that during my tenure as Chairman of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, our organization has continued to reach across jurisdictional lines to improve the quality of life for our current residents while laying a solid foundation of success for future generations. As local governments across the country prepare for environmental and economic challenges, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council remains a model for cooperative and innovative government.



Each member of the BMC brings unique regional knowledge, experience, and resources to our organization. The charge of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council is to utilize these assets to enhance the region while balancing our rich history and traditions with a shared vision for our economic and cultural potential. In 2008, BMC worked towards this goal through an increased focus on sustainable growth, regional fiscal cooperation, and an award-winning emergency preparedness program.

A particular point of pride was the establishment of the Baltimore Regional Sustainability Taskforce. The members of BMC see sustainable growth as an indispensable component of local government and the taskforce solidifies our region's position at the forefront of this new and exciting arena. The taskforce will enhance BMC's already impressive sustainable government credentials through programs such as Clean Commute Month and Bike to Work Day, as well as a strong focus on commuter friendly development projects and reservoir protection.

In 2008, BMC saved our taxpayers \$12 million through the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC). This figure is a testament to the potential of progressive and collaborative government. Purchasing everything from office furniture to electricity on a regional basis, BRCPC helps the region maximize every dollar of taxpayer money it spends. As state and federal funding become scarce, savings such as these will enable each of our member jurisdictions to maintain the level of service that our constituents expect and deserve.

Regional cooperation is nowhere more important than with regard to emergency preparedness. This year, through the work of our Urban Area Work Group (UAWG), we continued to promote *Ready? Set? Good*, an initiative that educates our citizens to be prepared with the essential tools to successfully deal with unexpected emergencies. *Ready? Set? Good* garnered national acclaim and was recognized by both the National Association of Counties and the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy as an efficient and effective program to be replicated across the country.

All of this exciting progress is made possible by the work of the BMC staff who provide unparalleled effort and expertise to all of our regional endeavors. To be sure, 2008 will be remembered as a challenging year by our local governments, but it will also be remembered as a year when the governments of the Baltimore region met that challenge with a steady hand and found opportunity for cooperation and growth that was both economically and environmentally sound.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Ulman', set against a dark blue rectangular background.

Ken Ulman
Howard County Executive
BMC Chair

Transportation



Planning

Validating the Planning Process

As the local metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) is responsible for several key products as part of a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) process. These products include a long-range transportation plan, a short-range implementation plan, an annual work program, air quality assessments, and a congestion management process. The BRTB undertakes this work in coordination with state agencies and other partners. An important part of the planning process is providing for public participation.

Every four years the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) reviews the region's transportation planning process to re-certify the BRTB as the recognized MPO. Re-certification began in June of 2008 with a public meeting and a call for public comments. After a thorough review, DOT re-certified the BRTB in early FY 2009.

Amending the Long-Range Transportation Plan

When the Maryland General Assembly passed a revenue enhancement package during a special session in 2008, it left the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

(BRTB) with a problem—what to do with extra money. The revenue enhancement package was expected to produce nearly \$340 million more over the next 20 years than the BRTB budgeted in *Transportation Outlook 2035*, the region's long-range transportation plan. In response to public input and amid concerns about escalating gasoline costs, the BRTB determined that additional funds for capital expansion should be directed toward a combination of short- and long-term transit projects. The BRTB issued a call for public input on the kinds of projects that should be included. Comments were to be reviewed and evaluated, with periods for public comment through early 2009.

Improving the Quality of the Air We Breathe

The Baltimore region does not meet federal standards for ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter. Transportation is a major contributor to ozone pollution, which can make breathing difficult for anyone, especially children and the elderly. Particulate pollution is even more serious, and has been implicated in heart as well as lung problems. In FY 2008, BMC and the BRTB administered transportation initiatives to help clear the air.

For the first time, the Maryland Department of Transportation authorized the BRTB to award \$1 million in federal funds for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects in the Baltimore region. CMAQ, a program of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, provides funding for initiatives that reduce polluting emissions from transportation sources. Local governments and public-private partnerships with local governments were eligible for funding, and were required to provide a cash match of at least 20 percent.



After a competitive review process, the BRTB awarded grants for six projects:

- Traffic signal timing for seven corridors in Baltimore City;
- Traffic signal coordination in the City of Westminster;
- Purchase of three hybrid bucket trucks for the Baltimore City Department of Public Works;
- Pollution-reduction retrofits to 26 Baltimore City fire trucks;
- Start-up costs for a Southeast Baltimore transportation management association (TMA); and
- Purchase of one hybrid electric bus for Howard County.

Once again BMC and the BRTB sponsored Clean Commute Month in May to educate citizens on the relationship between air quality and personal transportation choices. BMC staff members, assisted by representatives of state and local agencies, spoke with visitors to such events as the Baltimore Flower Mart, Towsontown Festival and Carroll County Herb Festival. Clean Commute Month was also promoted on local radio stations and at www.cleancommute.com. At least once during the month, residents were encouraged to try an alternative to driving alone—carpooling, taking transit, walking to work, riding a bike or telecommuting.

Commuter appreciation events at park-and-ride facilities serving transit riders were a way of thanking those who embraced the clean commute message. Harford County Executive David Craig joined BMC staff to greet early morning commuters at the Edgewood MARC Station with coffee and other goodies. A similar event was held at the Harry S. Truman park-and-ride outside Annapolis.

Recognizing that not everyone can give up driving, BMC also coordinated a series of free Clean Car Clinics. Certified mechanics performed safety checks on fluid levels, belts and hoses, lights, tires and brakes, and gave each owner a checklist of items that would improve their vehicle's performance. Anything that improves gas mileage saves the driver money, and also reduces the emissions that contribute to air pollution.

On the wet and chilly morning of May 16, more than 200 brave souls (of the record 800 who had pre-registered) donned rain gear and hopped on their bicycles for Bike to Work Day. For the first time, Bike to Work rallies took place in all six jurisdictions. A satellite rally was also held at Northrup Grumman in Anne Arundel County. The die-hard cyclists, including Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon, enjoyed hot coffee and healthy snacks provided by local sponsors. Participants were also entered in drawings for prizes.

Improving the Safety of the Region's Highways and Byways

On June 11, 2008, BMC launched a regional highway safety campaign focused on distracted driving by teens. The campaign, developed in cooperation with the Maryland State Highway Administration, complements *Choose Safety for Life*, a statewide effort to reduce vehicle crashes, save lives and reduce severe injuries.

The regional effort was initiated by BMC's Board of Directors and featured each of them in a radio spot that aired on local stations. The messages were directed at parents and focused on the risks of distracted driving by teens and how to help teens avoid those risks, by making and enforcing rules as well as by setting a good example. The campaign included a web site, www.drivesafebaltimore.com, which provided more detailed information about safe driving habits.

Anything that distracts a driver from the primary task of operating a motor vehicle is unsafe. Distractions have traditionally included adjusting vehicle controls, personal grooming, eating, tuning the radio,



Anything that distracts a driver from the primary task of operating a motor vehicle is unsafe.

talking with passengers, reading newspapers or maps and attending to children. Technology has created a new spectrum of distractions—talking on cell phones, checking e-mail, texting, and using mp3 players and GPS navigation devices. For teens who haven't yet mastered driving, distractions create an additional level of risk. Imperfectly learned vehicle control skills, inexperience with anticipating and identifying hazards, and an increased willingness to take risks all contribute to the high crash rate of young drivers.

AAA estimates that 3 million crashes occur nationwide each year as a result of distracted drivers. In the Baltimore region, distracted driving accounted for more than 500 fatalities and 95,000 injuries during the 10-year period between 1997 and 2006.

Reservoir Watershed Protection Program

Ensuring the Quality of the Region's Drinking Water



History

Since 1984, BMC has managed a cooperative program to protect one of the region's most valuable assets—our water supply. The Loch Raven, Prettyboy and Liberty Reservoirs together provide high-quality water for approximately 1.8 million people in the region. In 1984, Baltimore City, Baltimore and Carroll counties, Baltimore County Soil Conservation District, Carroll Soil Conservation District, the Maryland Departments of Agriculture and the Environment, and BMC signed a landmark Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement. The signatories reaffirmed the agreement in 1990, 2003 and 2005. The Reservoir Watershed Management Program:

- Monitors water quality trends in the three metropolitan water-supply reservoirs;
- Promotes regulatory policies and actions by state and local government agencies which will protect the reservoirs;
- Addresses emerging technical issues involving the reservoirs; and
- Evaluates and comments on land-use trends, local government policies, utility plans, and proposed land-use decisions in the watersheds that could affect one or more of the lakes.

New Strategies and Implementing Commitments in the 2005 Reservoir Agreement

The 2005 agreement included many action commitments to address issues facing the watersheds. Each signatory has contributed to the commitments, and

work has steadily progressed since the signing. In early 2009, the Reservoir Technical Group and the Reservoir Watershed Protection Committee expect to release a comprehensive Progress Report detailing those efforts, which include:

- Performing a detailed technical study that evaluates the existing reservoir/watershed water quality monitoring datasets, and makes recommendations for improved monitoring in the future;
- Completing the development of in-lake and watershed models which estimate the average annual sediment and nutrient loadings to Loch Raven and Prettyboy reservoirs;
- Agreeing to new annual loading-goals for sediment and/or phosphorus for Loch Raven and Prettyboy reservoirs;
- Increasing staff support for the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District;
- Implementing new capital projects and operating controls for public sewerage systems in the watersheds;
- Committing local capital funds to projects to restore degraded stream channels or tributaries to the watersheds—Lower Spring Branch, a direct tributary of Loch Raven (Baltimore County) and the Patapsco Pond watershed, tributary to Liberty Reservoir (Carroll County);
- Conducting a cooperative field study of the water-quality benefits of regular street-sweeping and storm drain-inlet cleaning;
- Establishing a comprehensive forest resource management program in the Baltimore County portion of the watersheds to help protect water quality;
- Reviewing and commenting on 190 rezoning proposals in the Baltimore County portions of the three watersheds, in connection with the county's 2008 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process; and
- Participating in the Carroll County “Builders for the Bay” project, which recommended alternative land development policies and criteria that would reduce the potential for adverse runoff-related impacts on local waterways.



The Baltimore Urban Area Work Group (UAWG) is a committee of emergency planners and first responders from BMC's member jurisdictions plus the City of Annapolis. The UAWG meets regularly to assess the region's needs to be prepared for any emergency, from a major weather event to a terror attack. The UAWG is responsible for applying for funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and allocating the funds to projects that will benefit the region.

In FY 2008 the UAWG administered the Community-Based Critical Infrastructure Protection Grant Program and reviewed applications for FEMA grants to nonprofits. A total of nearly \$1 million was awarded to

Emergency Preparedness Keeping the Region Safe and Secure

19 organizations throughout the Baltimore region. The grants, ranging from \$11,000 to \$75,000, were used to enhance security at facilities judged to be at risk for terrorist attacks. Projects included upgrades to access controls and security systems, surveillance cameras, shatter-proof glass, and improved lighting. This was the third round of awards to nonprofit organizations for infrastructure improvements. Nearly \$1 million was awarded to 30 organizations for security enhancements in 2005, and \$650,000 was awarded to 35 organizations in 2006.

The Public Information Subcommittee of the UAWG produced a print piece and placed media buys for the *Ready? Set? Good* campaign to educate residents about household preparedness, emphasizing the need

The *Ready? Set? Good* campaign encourages residents to be prepared for emergencies with a radio, flashlight and water.

for a radio, flashlight, and at least one gallon of water per person per day for a minimum of three days.

Local radio stations ran messages in September of 2007 and May of 2008.

- MTA buses carried the *Ready? Set? Good* messages around the region, encouraging residents to visit www.readysetgood.org for more information.
- WBFF/WNUV became media partners with *Ready? Set? Good*, running the 30-second TV spot in May and June, and featuring *Ready? Set? Good* at its Free Friday Flick for families at KinderFarm Park in Anne Arundel County.

In September of 2007,

BMC was notified by the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy that *Ready? Set? Good* had been selected for inclusion in its *Promising Practices: Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Tools* web site. This database is available to emergency planners nationwide.

Ready? Set? Good also received a 2008 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties. The annual NACo Achievement Award Program is a non-competitive project that seeks to recognize innovative county government initiatives. The award-winning programs provide NACo members with an extensive database of successful model county programs to imitate and utilize in their own jurisdictions.



Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee

Stretching Tax Dollars

**Strategic Energy Initiative:
Saving Local Governments
\$14.9 Million in Energy
Costs**

In FY2008, the strategy of purchasing electricity directly from the regional grid and multiple wholesale suppliers resulted in savings of more than \$14.9 million for local governments and participating agencies, when compared with the electricity company's default (PoLR) rate. The Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC), a BMC standing committee of the region's procurement officers

developed the wholesale portfolio approach to purchasing electricity, in conjunction with its independent energy advisor, South River Consulting.

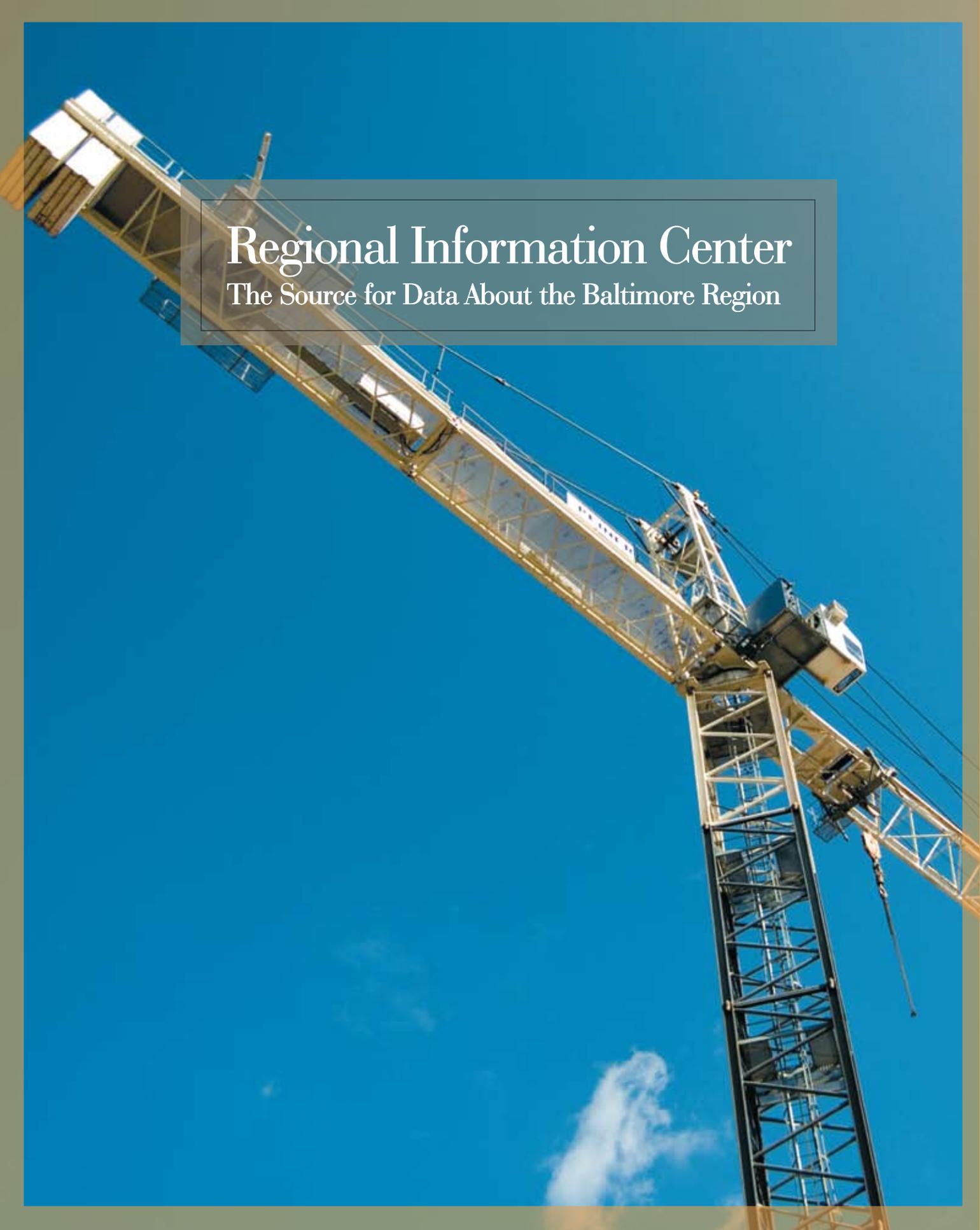
The portfolio includes 3,000 BGE commercial electric accounts. Participants include the Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard county governments; the Baltimore County Public Libraries and Revenue Authority; Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Harford County public schools; the cities of Aberdeen, Annapolis and Bowie; and the Baltimore Museum of Art and Walters Art Gallery.

In FY2008 BRCPC also entered the natural gas market, employing the same managed portfolio approach.

Cooperative Purchasing

In addition to savings in electricity purchasing, BRCPC collaborates on bid requirements and contract administration for local governments for needed goods and services. A regional office furniture contract became effective in January 2008, incorporating the work of an ad hoc committee of government and education partners. First reports indicate that expenditures under the new contract will be in the range of \$10 million per year, with buyers realizing savings of 20 to 66 percent. Many tax-funded agencies at the local and state levels who are not members of BRCPC are also able to make purchases using this contract.

BMC provides staff support to the committee. The cooperative purchasing program consistently provides annual cost reductions and administrative savings in the million dollar range to local governments in the region. BRCPC has established subcommittees of experts for energy, public schools and public works. The cooperative purchasing program began in 1971.



Regional Information Center

The Source for Data About the Baltimore Region

The Regional Information Center (RIC) at BMC, a branch of Baltimore City's Enoch Pratt Free Library system, is a repository for regional and urban planning materials with a focus on local demographic information, economic development, transportation planning, land use and environmental issues. RIC also continues to provide staff support to BMC's Building Permits Data System subscribers and BMC's website content management needs.

Frequent users of the RIC include small and large businesses; non-profit organizations and community groups; government agencies; students; and the media. In Fiscal Year 2008, the Regional Information Center responded to more than 2,300 requests for information from walk-in visitors, e-mail and telephone.

Contact the Regional Information Center at 410.732.9570 to request information or make an appointment. The Center is open to the public by appointment between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Data and Mapping Services

BMC provides both private and public clients with services such as demographic and economic forecasting, technical support for strategic planning, custom mapping, geo-coding, and statistical analysis.

Contact BMC's Business Development Coordinator at 410.732.9561 if your organization is interested in learning more about these services.

Building Permit Data

BMC has been compiling the region's building permit information and organizing it into a standardized data-

base for many years. The resulting information provides a continual record of plans for new and renovated residential, commercial/industrial and institutional building projects. The BMC staff itself makes use of this information as a leading indicator of new regional development patterns.

Specialty contractors, real estate analysts, economic development professionals and others may subscribe to this information, through either printed monthly, quarterly and annual reports or the searchable online database, which is updated weekly.

Stay Up-to-Date with E-News from BMC

BMC and the BRTB publish a variety of free e-newsletters and can send you other information by e-mail. Contact the RIC by phone (410.732.9570), fax (410.732.9488) or email (ric@baltometro.org) to receive any or all of the following:

B'More Involved – Timely information about transportation planning, environmental justice and ways to participate in regional issues.

BikePed Beacon – Electronic newflash detailing current news, events, and more related to biking and walking in and around the Baltimore region.

Environmental News Brief – Covers news related to air quality and transportation in the Baltimore region.

Legislative Weekly Report – Weekly update on transportation, community development, and environmental related legislation in the Maryland General Assembly.

Maryland Moves: A Freight News Monthly – Updates on news and conferences of interest to the freight community.

On Transit – On Transit, provides subscribers with periodic updates of important transit information from around the region, state, and nation.

Press Releases

Requests for Proposals

Announcements of Programs and Events

FY 2008 Publications

2007 Limited English Proficiency Plan for the Baltimore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). November 2007.

The intent of this plan is to ensure that where substantial numbers of Baltimore region residents who do not speak or read English proficiently exist, these individuals have access to the planning process and published information, and that public notification is provided in other languages. Online at www.baltometro.org/content/view/555/392/.

2007 Participation Plan. Guidelines and Expectations for Public Involvement in the Baltimore Regional Transportation Planning Process. 2007.

Explains the ways in which the public can participate in transportation planning for the Baltimore region. Online at <http://www.baltometro.org/content/view/905/560/>.

Annual Report 2007. October 2007.

Annual report of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Also online at www.baltometro.org/reports/BMCAnnual2007.pdf.

Baltimore Region FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for Transportation Planning. April 2008.

Annual report detailing work to be accomplished. Also online at www.baltometro.org/UPWP/UPWP2009.pdf

Baltimore Region Transportation Improvement Program 2008–2012. December 2007.

Report issued annually by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, listing timing, cost and rationale for transportation improvements to be made in the region over the 5 year period. Also online at www.baltometro.org/TIP/TIP2008_12Final.pdf

Baltimore Region Travel Demand Model Version 3.3; Performance Check & Analysis for 2005. December 2007.

Documents the model development and performance check analysis to simulate person travel and ultimately traffic conditions for the year 2005, and builds on the 2000 validation report published in January 2007. Online at www.baltometro.org/reports/TravelModel_PerformanceCheck_Dec07.pdf

Baltimore Regional Freight Profile; Final Report.

June 30, 2007.

Cambridge Systematics conducted this analysis of anticipated growth in goods movement in the Baltimore region between 2003 and 2030, its impact on traffic congestion, and plans to accommodate the growth.

BRCPC 2007 Annual Report. Spring 2008.

Annual report of the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee. Also online at www.baltometro.org/brcpc/Report2007.pdf.

Conformity Determination of Transportation Outlook 2035 and the FY 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. November 2007.

Annual update of analyses showing that planned transportation improvements in the region conform with air quality goals. Also online at www.baltometro.org/reports/Conformity2008_12.pdf.

Round 7A Cooperative Forecasts.

Population, household and employment estimates and projections in five-year intervals, 2000-2035. Jurisdiction totals online at www.baltometro.org/CP/Round7A_jur.pdf. Order form for data at the Regional Planning District or the Transportation Analysis Zone level at www.baltometro.org/CFG/CoopForecastsOrderForm.pdf.

Transportation Outlook 2035: Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan. November 2007.

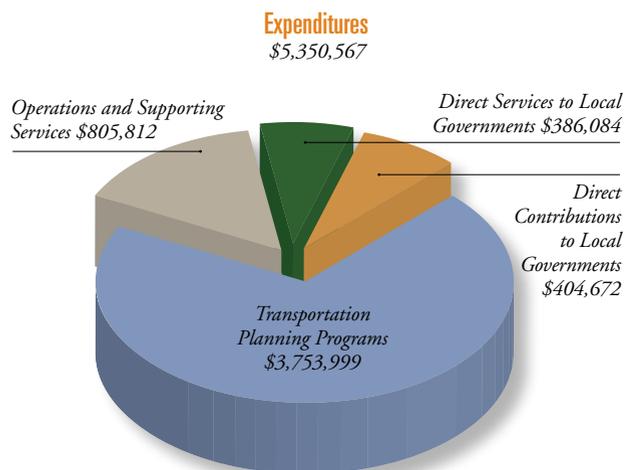
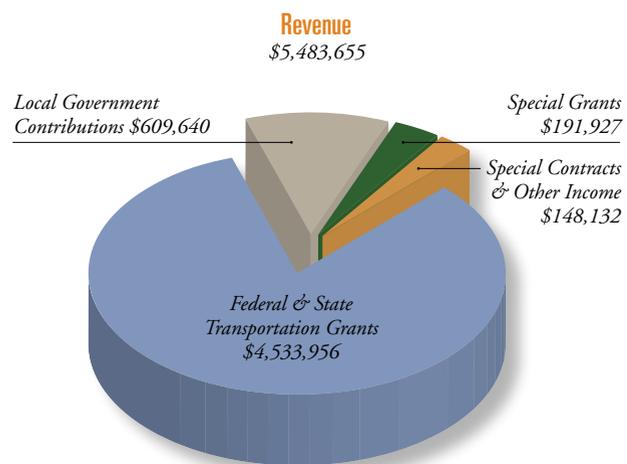
The region's long-range transportation plan is a blueprint of the major transportation investments proposed for implementation by 2035 in the six jurisdictions in the region. Also online at www.baltometro.org/reports/TravelModel_PerformanceCheck_Dec07.pdf.

Providing Value for Money

BMC has value as a forum for regional cooperation, but its value to the member jurisdictions can also be measured in dollars and cents.

- Local government contributions to BMC from dues plus assessments for the reservoir management, cooperative purchasing and clean air programs total about \$609,000.
- In return, \$800,000 in federal transportation funds pass through the MPO directly to local governments, including the City of Annapolis.
- The cooperative purchasing program saves local governments, excluding libraries and school systems, more than \$5 million per year in electricity costs alone, plus \$1.3 million on other purchases.

Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Highlights



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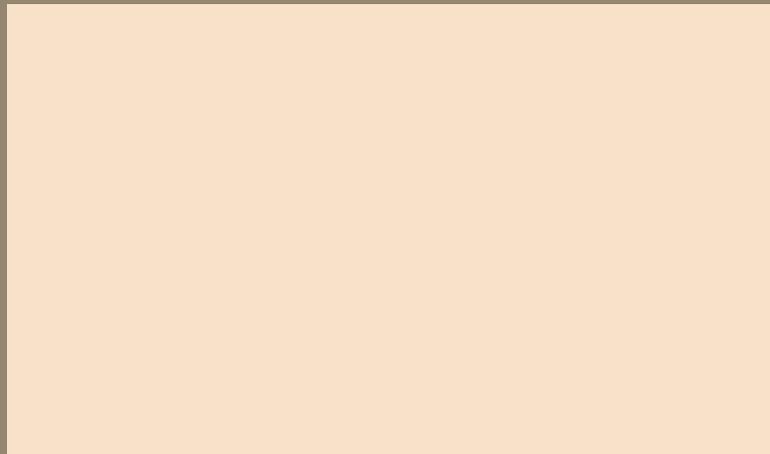
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How can BMC help you?

-  Support for Strategic Planning
-  Custom Mapping
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-  Statistical Analysis
-  Demographic/Economic Forecasting