



Baltimore Metropolitan Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



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Our Mission

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council is committed to identifying regional interests and developing collaborative strategies, plans and programs which will improve the quality of life and economic vitality throughout the region.

Who We Are

BMC is the organization of the region's elected executives. The BMC Board is composed of the Mayor of Baltimore, the executives of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford and Howard counties, and a member of the Carroll County Board of Commissioners. BMC's staff works closely with the staffs of member jurisdictions.

History

BMC carries on a tradition of formal regional planning that began half-a-century ago in 1956, when the Baltimore Regional Planning Council was created within the Maryland Department of Planning. In 1963, the Regional Planning Council (RPC) emerged as a separate state agency.

In 1989 the name of the organization was changed to Baltimore Regional Council of Governments (BRCOG) to reflect the RPC's resolve to serve as the regional voice of local government. In 1992, recognizing the need for a smaller, more efficient organization, the Maryland General Assembly dissolved BRCOG and created BMC as a private nonprofit organization of the region's elected executives.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chairman of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, it is my pleasure to work closely with the elected leaders of our member jurisdictions to improve the quality of life of all of our region's citizens. Through BMC, our local governments work together, collectively focusing on issues ranging from water quality and pedestrian safety to sustainability and emergency preparedness. Never has this cooperative spirit been more important for our region.

As our nation faces an economic downturn, local governments throughout the country are struggling to maintain services despite diminishing resources. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council helps local government to get the most out of every tax dollar and ensures that our region remains among the most livable in the entire country. While these are certainly not easy times for any of us, I am proud of the work the Baltimore Metropolitan Council is doing to get us through this rough patch while laying a solid foundation for our collective future.

This year, BMC has undertaken the task of coordinating long-range transportation and land use planning initiatives to ensure that our region remains equally attractive to both business and families for generations to come. At the same time, BMC is focusing on today's most pressing issues. Every day, BMC staff works on projects ranging from sustainability and emergency preparedness to the upcoming census and federal stimulus funds. With BMC's aid, initial shovel ready projects have already begun and BMC staff is in the process of helping us apply for and distribute additional money for transportation related projects.

Perhaps the most tangible benefit of regional cooperation is the innovative work of the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC), the procurement arm of BMC. BRCPC organizes the significant purchasing power of our member jurisdictions to buy everything from office furniture to electricity at a discounted rate, saving us millions of dollars every year. These savings allow our member jurisdictions to continue to offer exceptional local services despite the temporary economic downturn.

I know that I speak for each of my colleagues when I say we sought public office not in spite of the challenges it would present, but because of those challenges. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of BMC staff, our region is well positioned to collectively turn our present struggles into future opportunities. I thank the Baltimore Metropolitan Council for the often unheralded but always essential effort they provide to the people of the greater Baltimore region.

John R. Leopold

*Anne Arundel County Executive
Baltimore Metropolitan Council Chair*



THE VIRTUAL CROSSROADS OF THE REGION



BMC's web site is a busy place. It's the repository for vast amounts of socioeconomic data about the Baltimore region, as well as a wealth of information about BMC's work in transportation planning, environmental protection, cooperative purchasing, emergency preparedness and more. The web site has become an invaluable resource for both staff and the public at large.

However, as more and more information was added, it became more and more difficult to find things, even for staff. In addition, the site needed to be upgraded to conform with federal disability access requirements, and focus groups recommended some design changes to make the site more appealing and easier to navigate.

The redesign began in December of 2008, and the newly refurbished web site went live in early August of 2009. The most obvious difference is the appearance of the front page, which features a new color scheme and photos of the six member jurisdictions. The navigation buttons that connect to topical content are aligned on the left side of the page, followed by the calendar of events. There's also an area where visitors may enter an e-mail address to subscribe to BMC's e-newsletters and receive updates.

The navigation buttons and e-mail subscription box appear on the left side of every page. Related internal and external links are also listed on the left, leaving the rest of the page available for content. This should result in a more user-friendly experience, and minimize the need to scroll.

The top of each page includes buttons to change the size of the type on the page for ease of reading, as well as buttons to share content on social networking sites such as Facebook, send a page by e-mail, and print the page. There's also a new Google custom search feature that returns results with no ads or pop-ups. Finally, the Babelfish translator was replaced with Google Translate, which will translate any page into one of more than 40 languages, ranging from Albanian to Vietnamese.

Visitors to the web site look for everything from information about cooperative bidding opportunities and job openings to meeting minutes and agendas. They can find information about ridesharing and park and ride lots, how to prepare for an emergency, and economic and demographic profiles of each of the 94 Regional Planning Districts in the region.

In FY 2009 the site received more than 940,000 page views, 10.6 percent more than in FY 2008. According to Google analytics, visitors came from 3,915 cities in 144 countries on 6 continents. They accessed the site via computers, hand-held devices and even the Playstation 3 and Nintendo Wii. Nearly 300 people signed up for BMC's e-newsletters via the web site. No matter where in the world you are, or what kind of device you're using, access to the Baltimore region is never more than seconds away.



CENSUS 2010

Stand Up & Be Counted

Every 10 years since 1790, the United States government has undertaken to count the population to determine representation in Congress and the apportionment of taxes. In that first census, U.S. marshals began enumerating the population on the first Monday in August. The census was conducted in August until 1830, when it was moved to June 1. It wasn't until 1930 that April 1 became "Census Day."

The 2010 Census will provide a snapshot of how many people were in the U.S. as of April 1, 2010. Census questionnaires will be mailed to every household in the United States in March of 2010. A second form will be mailed to households that fail to respond. A Census worker will visit homes that still fail to respond.

The 2010 Census will account for all residents living in the United States and ask for name, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and housing tenure. 2010 Census data will be used to make decisions affecting legislation and spending on housing, highways, hospitals, schools, assistance programs, and scores of projects and programs that are vital to the health and welfare of the U.S. population and economy. That's why it's so important for every household to respond honestly and accurately.



Every household will receive what used to be known as the "short form." The form takes less than 10 minutes to complete. More detailed information that used to be gathered on the "long form" is now collected in the American Community Survey (ACS). The survey provides current data about our communities every year, rather than once every 10 years. It is sent to a small percentage of the population on a rotating basis throughout the decade. No household will receive the survey more often than once every five years.

Census data is an important factor in BMC's planning activities. Staff use Census data to update the travel demand model used in transportation planning, produce long-range forecasts of population, households and employment; and identify social and economic changes throughout the Baltimore region. BMC also uses Census data to develop survey samples for private and public sector organizations.

You can find Census data for the Baltimore region at www.baltometro.org.



2008 AERIAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION SURVEY

Indicates Worsening Traffic in Some Areas

Anyone who does much driving in the Baltimore region has their own opinion about where the worst traffic backups occur. BMC, through the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), conducts an aerial survey every three years to identify changes in congestion by location and duration. The 2008 aerial survey highlighted several areas of increased congestion in the Baltimore region.

The aerial survey found that the ten most congested freeway chokepoints in the region in 2008 were:

1. Eastbound US 50 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from MD 2 to MD 70*
2. Eastbound I-695 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from I-83 to MD 45*
3. Eastbound MD 100 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from I-97 to MD 174*
4. Inner Loop I-695 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from US 40 to I-70*
5. Outer Loop I-695 (7:30 to 8:30 A.M.) from US Route 1 to MD 41*
6. Southbound MD 295 (7:30 to 8:30 A.M.) from MD 198 to Anne Arundel/Prince Georges County Line*
7. Northbound US 29 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from MD 32 to Broken Land Pkwy
8. Eastbound MD 100 (7:30 to 8:30 A.M.) from MD 103 to I-95*
9. Outer Loop I-695 (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) from I-895 to MD 295
10. Northbound MD 295 (4:00 to 5:00 P.M.) from MD 198 to MD 32*

** These locations experienced an increase in congestion from 2005.*



In addition to collecting information on these areas of acute congestion, the survey also identified corridors in the region that experienced sustained congestion over long distances. The Outer Loop of I-695 (the Baltimore Beltway) between US 1 and I-83 takes the top spot in the morning peak period, with an estimated delay of 7.5 minutes. In the evening peak period, the Inner Loop of I-695 from I-83 to Harford Rd experiences the longest delay at an estimated 9 minutes.

The survey of the region's roadway system was conducted over multiple days during the morning and evening peak periods. To determine the level of congestion on freeway segments, the survey measures the number of passenger cars per mile per lane.

Overall, traffic congestion in the region has decreased since the 2005 survey. The survey showed that the overall number of lane miles identified as congested or heavily congested in both the morning and evening peak periods have dropped back to 2002 levels. Localized improvements aimed at increasing capacity have improved conditions in some areas, contributing to the decrease in traffic congestion.

BMC has partnered with the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transportation Authority to commission aerial traffic surveys since 1999 to monitor congestion on the region's roadways during morning and evening peak periods. For more information on the survey, including an interactive database application, visit the BMC website at <http://www.baltometro.org/maps-and-data/interactive-mapping> and click on Using Aerial Photography to Measure Congestion Trends.



PURCHASING POWER MEANS DOLLARS SAVED



Managing and reducing energy costs is a critical responsibility of state and local governments and agencies. Many state and municipal agencies have focused on energy efficiency, which provides savings as well as environmental benefits. The Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC), a standing committee of BMC, saw a fiscal opportunity in energy deregulation and developed strategies that have proved successful at saving millions of dollars per year for the region.

Initially, BRCPC discovered they were able to establish a lower price per kilowatt by joining together to purchase electricity for its member jurisdictions through retail contracts. The new price was just a few cents less expensive, but our governments use a lot of kilowatts and the savings began to add up.

In 2005 BRCPC partnered with South River Consulting to develop an even more effective electricity procurement strategy—purchasing power directly from the wholesale market. This program saves participants more than \$11 million annually.

BRCPC's initial success did not go unnoticed. After its formation, BRCPC's Energy Board received inquiries from government and quasi-government entities about how they could take advantage of the savings. Now, BRCPC purchases energy for public schools, community colleges, museums and other taxpayer funded cultural and educational institutions.

BRCPC has received national acclaim for its innovative approach to the purchase of our region's energy.

In 2006 the National Institute of Government Purchasing (NIGP) awarded the prestigious Innovations in Public Procurement Award to BRCPC. This award recognizes the high level of innovation and accountability that BRCPC

brings to the procurement of electricity, and the value of the procurement strategy.

In January of 2009, Steve Myer, Chair of the BRCPC Energy Board, was awarded the Stanley D. Zemansky Award by the Maryland Public Purchasing Association. The award honors the professional who has given exemplary service and made outstanding contributions to the public procurement profession.

BRCPC and its predecessors have been an important element in obtaining savings and lowered administrative costs for the region since the 1960's.

The original "Metro" office furniture contract yielded savings of 10-60 percent to participating governments. That updated contract remains in place and continues to offer substantial discounts from retail prices.

Another regional success story is the large lamp contract, now including fluorescent ballasts, featuring discounts greater than 80 percent off retail.

The public works group has established contracts for fence construction, field lighting construction, and traffic signal construction, among others. The concept provides convenience and lowered administrative costs for its participants.

The public schools group has put regional contracts in place for materials of instruction, calculators and related instruments, athletic equipment repair, and IT staff, among others.

BRCPC efforts reduce the costs of supplies and services to operate government and education by more than \$1,000,000 each year.

BRCPC has emerged as a shining example of how our governments can find the best uses for tax dollars through cooperation and innovation. BMC is proud of BRCPC's accomplishments and is excited by the potential for even greater savings by this group.



FY 2009 HIGHLIGHTS



Clean Commute Initiative Continues to Grow

Every May since 1997, BMC and the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board have been reminding the people of our region that personal transportation choices affect the air we all breathe. What began modestly as Clean Commute Week became Clean Commute Month (CCM) in 2002. Each year since then, CCM has grown, and the 2009 edition proved to be the biggest and best so far.

This year's activities included appearances by BMC outreach staff at local events, Bike to Work Day rallies, commuter appreciation events at MARC stations, and Clean Car Clinics. The clinics featured free inspections designed to help drivers keep their vehicles running cleaner and more efficiently.

Over 1,000 people registered to participate in Bike to Work Day at rallies throughout the region on Friday, May 15, 2009. For the first time this year, in addition to rallies in each of BMC's member jurisdictions, three universities participated: the College of Notre Dame of Maryland; Johns Hopkins University - Homewood campus; and Morgan State University.

All of these activities were supported by a radio advertising campaign encouraging people to try alternatives to driving alone. In addition, the **cleancommute.com** web site provided updates on CCM events, as well as information on a variety of commuting alternatives.

BRTB Funds Projects to Improve Air Quality

In March of 2009 the BRTB approved funding for \$1 million worth of air quality improvement projects under its Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) Competitive Selection Process.

CMAQ is a federal program administered jointly by the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations to fund projects that reduce air pollution emissions from the transportation sector. Its purpose is to help areas with air quality problems to reach and maintain good air quality.

The BRTB approved four projects totalling \$1 million.

- Adaptive control software for twelve intersections in Anne Arundel County. This software involves cutting-edge technology to perform dynamic fine-tuning of signal timing, in order to reduce the need for vehicle idling at intersections.
- Transit equipment for Baltimore City's new Charm City Circulator, beginning service in late 2009.
- Two diesel hybrid electric transit buses for Howard Transit.
- A second year of operational funding for a Transportation Management Association in Southeast Baltimore City.

Household Travel Survey Shows Wide Variety of Travel Patterns

In 2007 and 2008, more than 4,600 Baltimore region households completed travel diaries documenting a day of their activities.

Preliminary results show that activities vary widely from household to household. An equally wide variation in travel patterns is also expected.

The Household Travel Survey also collected demographic data on household members and details of the trips they made, such as trip purpose and mode of transportation. The ongoing analysis of the survey data should lead to a more nuanced picture of travel in the Baltimore region.



FY 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

(CONTINUED)

Region Receives Funds Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

On February 17 of this year, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) into law. The Recovery Act provided the Baltimore region with a total of approximately \$294 million in additional federal funding to maintain and improve existing transit systems, roads and bridges. An additional \$1.5 million in Recovery Act ferry boat funding was awarded to the City of Baltimore to help the City construct docks and purchase two all-weather vessels.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Supports Emergency Preparedness Campaign with \$10,000 Grant

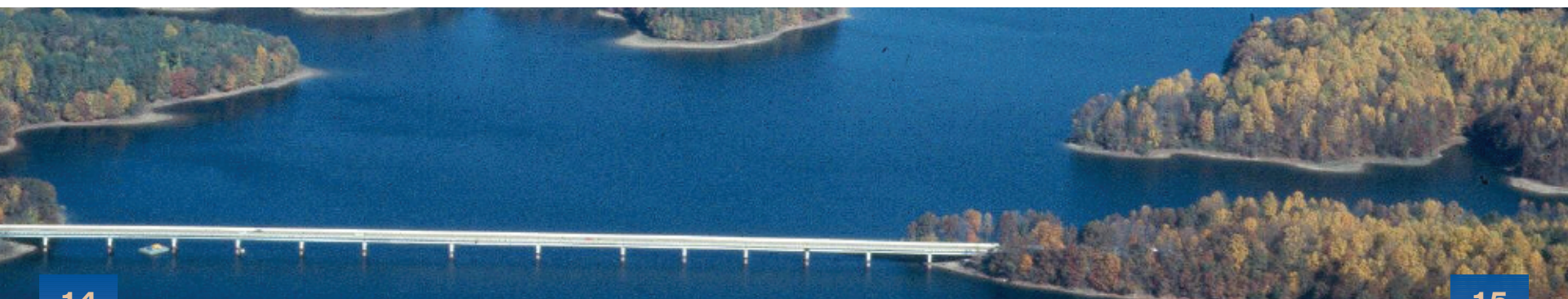
Thunderstorms, hurricanes, blizzards, hazardous chemical leaks, water main breaks – these are just a few of the things that can disrupt or even threaten our lives. Since 2006, BMC's award-winning *Ready? Set? Good* campaign has sought to prepare area residents for any kind of emergency. Based on survey results showing that TV was the most effective way to reach the region's residents, *Ready? Set? Good* ran its television spot on WBAL-TV and sponsored the interactive weather page on wbaltv.com. A \$10,000 grant from Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., helped support the campaign. Since 2007, Wal-Mart has donated more than \$10 million for disaster preparedness and disaster relief efforts.

BMC Celebrates 25th Anniversary of Reservoir Watershed Agreement

The Baltimore drinking water reservoirs provide an average of 186 million gallons of clean, safe water every day to 1.8 million people in the Baltimore region. In 1984 the region's leaders recognized that the reservoirs, owned by Baltimore City, and their watersheds, located in Baltimore and Carroll counties, were a regional asset, for which they shared responsibility. On June 4 of that year, the elected executives of Baltimore City and Baltimore and Carroll counties joined with other interested parties to sign the 1984 Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement.

The Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement provided goals for reservoir management and protection and established a Reservoir Watershed Protection Subcommittee and a Reservoir Watershed Technical Group to implement the new agreement. The two committees carried out their responsibilities in pursuit of the policies, goals and program commitments set forth in the 1984 Agreement and the accompanying Action Strategy.

In 2005 the region's leaders signed a new Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement, reaffirming their commitment to protect the reservoirs and established new goals and an expanded and updated Action Strategy; In 2009 the committees issued its Biennial Progress Report for 2006-2007 on the implementation of the 2005 Action Strategy.





FY 2009 PUBLICATIONS

2008 Baltimore Regional Transportation Survey; Final Report.

By WBA Market Research, 2008.

Results of a consultant's survey on changes in regional transportation habits and business practices in response to rising energy prices and on public opinions on environmental concerns. Online at www.baltometro.org/reports/BaltimoreRegionalTransportationSurvey2008.pdf.

Annual Report 2008.

January 2009.

Annual report of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Online at www.baltometro.org/reports/BMCAnnual2008.pdf.

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 2009, the Regional Information Center responded to more than 2,000 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.



Baltimore Region FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program for Transportation Planning.

May 2009.

Annual report detailing work to be accomplished. Online at www.baltometro.org/UPWP/UPWP2010.pdf.

BRCPC 2008 Annual Report. Spring 2009.

Annual report of the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee. Online at www.baltometro.org/brcpc/Report2008.pdf

Travel Time Assessment — Aberdeen Proving Ground & Fort Meade Commuter Routes.

February 2009.

To support households and businesses relocating to the Baltimore region as a result of new Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)-related employment, BMC has collected data on traffic conditions on selected commuter routes in the most affected areas. Online at www.baltometro.org/reports/TravelTimeBRAC.pdf.





FY 2009 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

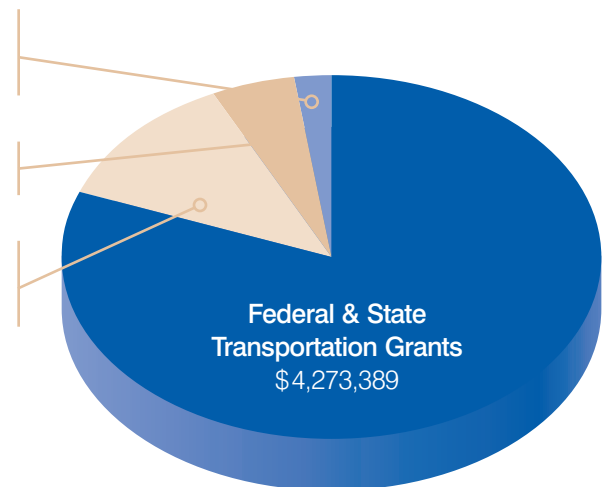
- The Great Recession affected everyone in Fiscal Year 2009, and BMC was no exception. Revenue declined by nearly 4 percent from FY 2008. However, BMC management and staff were able to reduce operating expenses by 2 percent and once again, BMC finished the fiscal year in the black.
- Local government contributions to BMC declined by about \$500, but direct contributions to local government increased by almost \$275,000.
- The metropolitan planning organization (MPO) passed \$679,343 in federal transportation funds directly to local governments, including the City of Annapolis.
- The cooperative purchasing program's electricity procurement strategy is saving local governments approximately \$11 million per year, while other cooperative purchasing contracts result in savings of more than \$1 million per year.

Revenue \$5,269,125

**Special Contracts
& Other Income**
\$120,672

Special Grants
\$265,559

**Local Government
Contributions**
\$609,505

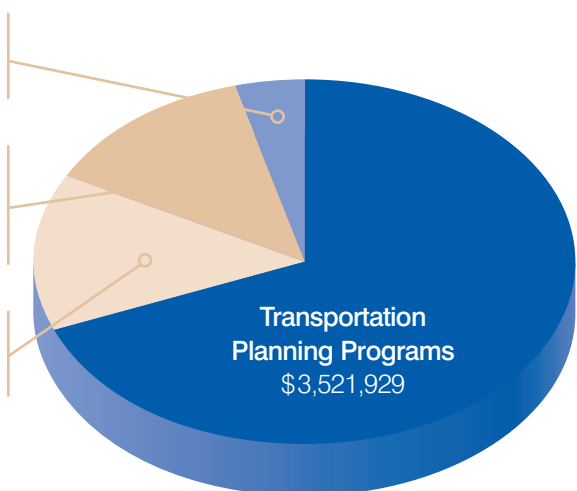


Expenditures \$5,127,934

**Direct Services to
Local Government**
\$186,930

**Direct Contributions
to Local
Governments**
\$679,343

**Operations &
Supporting Services**
\$739,732





NOTES

BMC Board of Directors

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Anne Arundel County Executive



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