



**CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



**Southeast Baltimore
Transportation Action Plan**





A Message from Mayor Sheila Dixon...

After many years of technical studies and stakeholder discussions, I am pleased that we are finally moving from analysis to action with the release of the Southeast Baltimore Transportation Action Plan. The continued growth and development in Southeast Baltimore is vital to the economic health of our entire City; and, in order to foster and sustain an economic growth strategy, we must also develop improvements to our transportation system. Traffic congestion can put a damper on the success of our neighborhood and economic growth efforts.

This plan represents the first steps toward a balanced transportation system for Southeast Baltimore. While major transportation capacity improvements such as the Red Line, a new East Baltimore MARC station, completion of the Boston Street connection to I-95 and the re-building of Central Avenue are still a few years away, the improvements and new services that are part of this plan can all be implemented within the next three years.

I am committed to implementing this plan through our Capital Improvement Program, by partnering with the Maryland Transit Administration, and leveraging private investment. As this plan is being released, we are re-prioritizing nearly \$1 million within our existing Capital Improvement Program and have negotiated several Traffic Mitigation Agreements with developers in Southeast Baltimore totaling an additional \$1 million. I am pleased that the Maryland Transit Administration has also committed to make several components of the Action Plan topics of a meeting within the next few months.

Thank you for being a part of Baltimore's continued progress and for your help implementing the Southeast Baltimore Transportation Action Plan.

Sheila Dixon
Mayor, Baltimore City



A Message from Director Al Foxx...

The Transportation Action Plan was initiated with the hope that we could manage and possibly reduce traffic congestion in the Southeast corridor of Baltimore City. Safer movement and improved modes of travel would lend itself to a safer and easier commute for all who visit and live in this wonderful area. This plan is undoubtedly a big step forward in the revitalization of the great City of Baltimore.

With new housing development, economic growth and revitalization efforts, it is important that we look toward the future and take those steps to analyze and improve upon better traffic management strategies. We could not have possibly completed this preparation without the encouragement and input from the good citizens of Southeast Baltimore. Support was solicited by implementing extensive outreach that allowed stakeholders an opportunity to respond and provide feedback to the proposed plan. Although we faced many challenges, the working partnership between residents and city agencies representatives resulted in solutions that worked in the best interest of our mutual goals. With the reinforcement and assistance of all involved, we anticipate that this action plan will be widely accepted and welcomed.

The Department of Transportation would like to take this opportunity to thank all who worked tirelessly and participated in this effort to bring the Southeast Baltimore Transportation Action Plan into print. We look forward to a continued relationship with the residents of Southeast Baltimore to keep traffic moving safely.

Alfred H. Foxx
Director of Transportation

Acknowledgements

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation wishes to acknowledge the following individuals from its staff and other City agencies for their participation in developing this plan:



Baltimore City Department of Transportation

Bimal Devkota, Transportation Engineering and Construction
Jessica Keller, Chief, Planning Section
Jamie Kendrick, Deputy Director
Margaret Martin, Chief, Transportation Engineering and Construction
Frank Murphy, Deputy Chief, Traffic Division
Raj Sharma, Signals Section Leader, Traffic Division
Kevin Sullivan, Planner II
Waltia Waddy, Southeast Community Liaison

Other City and State Agencies

Michael Deets, Maryland Transit Administration
Emily Ellickson-Brown, Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods
Terrance Hancock, Baltimore Development Corporation
Laurie Feinberg, Baltimore City Department of Planning
Erin McVay, Office of City Councilman James B. Kraft
Peter Little, Baltimore City Parking Authority

Additionally, the Baltimore City Department of Transportation acknowledges the dedication of Paul Silberman, Sabra-Wang & Associates, for leading the technical analysis used in creating this action plan.

Finally, the Department is grateful to the several hundred members of the public whose comments on the draft plan have shaped its final recommendations. Their hopes and hard work for strong, vibrant neighborhoods in Southeast Baltimore is a testament to Baltimore's continued revitalization.

Introduction

The purpose of the Southeast Baltimore Transportation Action Plan is to identify, design and implement practical short-term strategies to improve the traffic flow in Southeast Baltimore. After several years of analysis by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe Center, local transportation consultants, Baltimore City government staff and community leaders, this plan outlines specific actions with proposed roadway improvements, transit upgrades and strategies to reduce the demand for vehicle travel.

The continued growth and redevelopment in Southeast Baltimore has significantly increased the number of trips for commuters than had been experienced during the past few decades. Former industrial sites generated relatively few trips compared to the office buildings, rowhomes and condominium buildings that now dot the Southeast waterfront. The challenge for the Baltimore Department of Transportation is to allow for continued growth while managing the transportation network in a comprehensive and responsible manner that is environmentally suitable.



All of the strategies in this document can and will be implemented within the next few years at a relatively modest cost. In general, the strategies in this plan can be done with minimal construction effort and without acquiring new rights-of-ways. Where possible, the cost of specific projects will be borne by those developers who participate in the Traffic Mitigation Agreements, although not every necessary improvement is fully attributed to a specific new development project.

Public Input into the Southeast Plan

In order to educate citizens about each of the proposed actions and to ensure the support of an informed public, the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Community Outreach Section designed and implemented an extensive stakeholder outreach process to inform and educate the residents in the target area about the benefits of the proposed project and to ensure they have an opportunity to respond to the proposed strategies. Event notification flyers were distributed to Southeast Baltimore community associations and businesses in May 2007. DOT staff went door-to-door in the Southeast neighborhoods to distribute flyers and talk to business owners. Five open house meetings were scheduled in the Southeast corridor in June 2007 in order to reach as many residents as possible. The first three open houses were focused on daytime residents of the area (business owners, commuters, etc.) and held in the morning. The last two open houses focused on permanent, fulltime residents and were held in the evening. Additionally, the DOT staff met with area community organizations to present the plan. During each meeting, agency representatives encouraged them to submit questions, comments and suggestions for the plan by Friday, July 13, 2007. The following chart summarizes the 560 comments that were submitted:

Growth and Development in Southeast Baltimore

Southeast Baltimore has undergone a major transformation during the last 40 years. Previously, the waterfront was used primarily for industrial demands that depended on the water, including canneries, ship building and port-related services. As the nature of industry changed, the area became increasingly truck dependent, and much of Baltimore's industrial waterfront was abandoned. In the 1980s, the City developed plans that designated some of the waterfront areas for mixed-use redevelopment and others for industrial protection. Those plans are still being implemented today with minor variations. The area from the Museum of Industry on the south side of the harbor to the Canton Waterfront Park on the southeast were designated for relatively high density redevelopment and the remainder to be protected for water dependent uses, primarily port related.

 Department of Transportation Southeast Transportation Plan Public Comments 	
<i>Comment</i>	<i>DOT Response</i>
Fleet and Aliceanna Street one way conversions/ Eastern Avenue parking restrictions	The Department of Transportation (DOT) is withdrawing the recommendations to convert Fleet and Aliceanna Streets to a one-way pair and implement peak-hour parking restrictions on Eastern Avenue at this time. Delegate Pete Hammen has offered to convene a working group of Fells Point area residents to work with DOT to develop alternative strategies to move people to and through Southeast Baltimore.
Parking 1. Re-evaluate the entire Fells Point area for Residential Permit Parking 2. Install meters in the entire Fells Point area and give residents permits so that they can park in any of the metered areas of the community 3. Establish a parking area at the old GM plant and provide shuttle service to downtown 4. Install angle parking to discourage speeding	The Baltimore City Parking Authority has agreed to conduct a study of parking management options to increase the availability of parking spaces without constructing new garages.
Mass Transit/Carpooling 1. Put pressure on employers to establish carpooling incentives 2. Implement Flexcar program as soon as possible 3. Improve bus routes so that service connects Fells Point/Canton to Hopkins Hospital and delivers riders near the Hopkins Metro Station 4. Offer free public transportation from Canton, Federal Hill and Pigtown to downtown 5. Establish large ferry service 6. Extend subway service to Canton/Dundalk area	DOT is working with several major employers to encourage carpool incentives to lessen the traffic impact throughout the southeast corridor. The Parking Authority of Baltimore City is working to bring car sharing to Baltimore by the end of the year. The MTA has agreed to implement several changes to bus routes to better serve the needs of southeast. A commuter-friendly water taxi/shuttle plan is being developed to encourage residents to travel across the harbor instead of commuting by car.
Truck Traffic Apply zero tolerance for illegal truck movement	The Baltimore City Police Department has signed an MOU with the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) that allows MdTA police to conduct targeted enforcement activities throughout designated areas of the city. DOT is also pursuing Weight in Motion Enforcement technology to assist with illegal truck traffic enforcement. Ultimately, State legislation would be required in order to bring this type of technology to the city.
Traffic Calming Install 4 way stop signs, traffic diamonds, and speed humps to eliminate speeding	The procedures for Traffic Calming have changed as a result of the recommendations of the Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Friendliness Task Force, which included community representatives from around the City. Effective August 1, 2007, a number of changes have been incorporated into the process-the most significant being that all requests for traffic calming must be submitted through a community association.
Misc. 1. Implement commuter tax for vehicles that go downtown 2. Offer tax incentives for people to live where they work	These recommendations are outside the purview of the Department of Transportation were not evaluated as part of this plan.

In 2002, the redevelopment was extended to Danville Street in Canton and include a high-density, mixed-use redevelopment of the former Exxon property now known as Canton Crossing.

Beyond the water's edge, the rail lines are primarily used to separate the industrial areas from the redevelopment areas to support the port of Baltimore and the rail lines that serve the port with adequate industrial land. In addition to the basic land use and zoning, the nature of some industrial uses has changed. We now see trends that modern industrial development is very different from the smokestack businesses. In the newer industry, land development tends to mix the office and the warehouse or the office and the manufacturer. Examples of these types of development will be seen at the Chesapeake Business Park, the former GM plant and, to a lesser extent, the Brewer's Hill development.

In addition to land use, the City recognizes the historic importance of these communities and has supported both the federal and local historic district designation for Fells Point. This will insure the new development is compatible with older existing structures.

Though much of the Southeast area has been designated for mixed use, the market has only recently caught up with that vision and zoning concept. Until recently, most of the redevelopment was either residential or commercial, but now the market is catching on and has become truly mixed use. In the future we hope this area will be an example of the "LIVE, EARN, PLAY, LEARN" concept.

Traffic Growth Projections

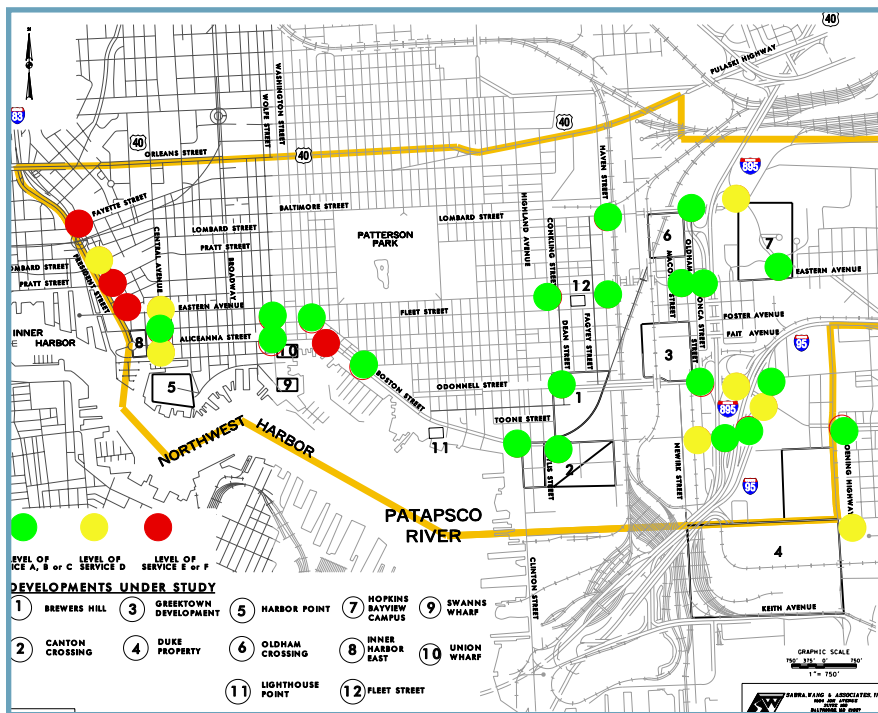


Figure 1: Current Intersection Level of Service

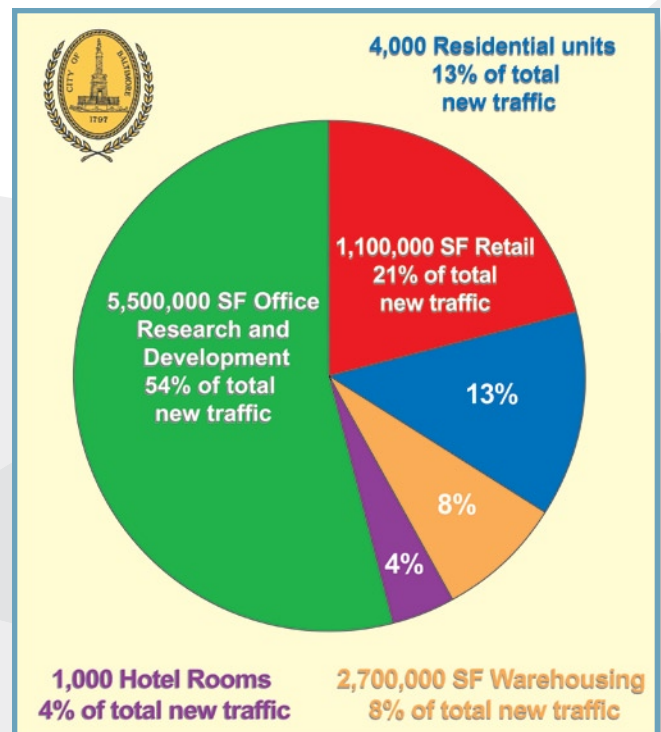
The existing traffic conditions in 2012 for Southeast Baltimore are summarized in Figure 1. It is important to note that the Level of Service represents a technical analysis by which travel delay can be measured. Residents or commuters might feel that traffic is far worse than an A or C rating at a given intersection – but the technical modeling capacities allow for objective and comparative analysis.

Congestion is considered “unwanted” travel time that suggests there is a perceived difference between the ratio of acceptable to unacceptable travel times. Congestion represents that point where the ratio of free flow traffic to saturated travel conditions reaches an unacceptable level, with variation either in absolute terms (travel time takes a lot longer in peaks) or in terms of unpredictability (peak travel times can be acceptable but on occasion are significantly longer).

Different land uses produce different travel patterns and volumes. For example, warehouse use generates relatively little traffic compared to an apartment complex or a condominium building. Office and retail outlets tend to generate the most traffic. Illustrated is the projected trip generation, at full build-out for each of the developments considered in this analysis.

In developing this plan, the DOT worked with other City agencies to identify all known development projects that had or were about to enter the development pipeline. Because the market for commercial space and residential units changes frequently, DOT has chosen a fixed point in time to evaluate known development projects. Changes in development programs and (additions or reductions in space or use) new projects and/or cancellations were not factored into the analysis. By using this approach, it is acknowledged that traffic conditions could be better or worse than projected, but the analysis offers a snapshot from which alternative traffic management strategies could be selected.

Chart 1: Projected Growth 2008 - 2020



In summary, the total potential build-out for study developments in Southeast Baltimore is generated according to the following land-use categories shown in Chart 1.

Based on the development plans identified and assuming no improvements will be made to the roadway network or public transportation system, the traffic conditions in 2012 are projected in Figure 2. This projection assumes 50 percent build-out of the three largest developments in the study area: Canton Crossing, Bayview and Harbor Point.

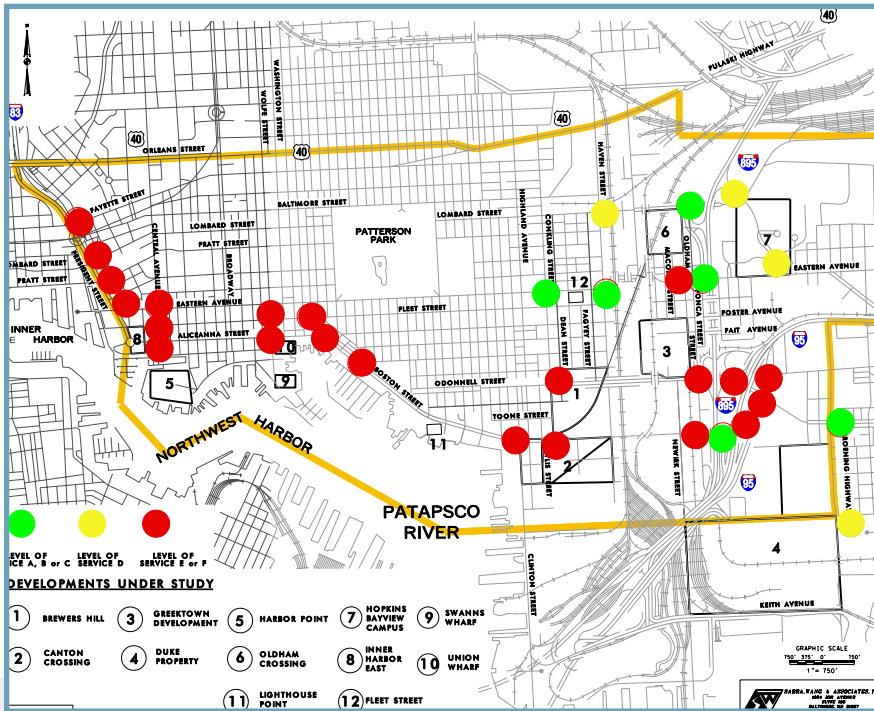


Figure 2: Projected 2012 Intersection Level of Service

In summary, 22 of 34 critical intersections in Southeast Baltimore are projected to operate at a failing level of service by 2012 without any improvements, compared to only three failing today. More than 20,000 projected new private vehicular trips in the critical afternoon/evening peak hours are anticipated. By comparison, the typical gateway corridor in Baltimore City – Reisterstown Road, Harford Road – carries approximately 20,000 vehicle trips in a 24 hour period per day.

Recommendations

In the short-term, the lack of strong public transportation in Southeast Baltimore significantly restricts the likelihood of a shift to public transportation for many of the projected 20,000 new peak hour trips. While this plan takes a multi-faceted, multi-modal approach to managing traffic growth, many of the action steps improve critical intersections/ bottlenecks and maximize the use of the existing grid network by emphasizing alternative routes and better management of traffic signals. The plan also calls for implementation of new local shuttle bus service, altering MTA bus routes and emphasizing non-auto modes such as walking, bicycling, water taxi, etc. with seamless interaction between them all.

The future traffic flow will be a mix of cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles. Single occupant vehicles on these roads should not be given priority over any other road users. Alternative forms of transport to the car will be promoted. The road system should be cognizant to the presence of cyclists and pedestrians through the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan and a pedestrian-friendly urban design.

Road and Intersection Improvements – Canton/Dundalk Area

Several opportunities exist in the Canton and Dundalk areas to expand or adjust intersections to make traffic flow more freely:

- O'Donnell Street and Conkling Street: The angle parking on the west side of Conkling Street between O'Donnell & Dillon Streets will be converted to parallel parking.
- O'Donnell Street Cut-off: Build a second eastbound through approach lane from I-895 and a second eastbound receiving lane beyond the O'Donnell Street cut-off.
- Boston Street and Clinton Street: Build a third eastbound approach lane on Boston Street, dedicated for right-turn movements onto Clinton Street and a new northbound left turn lane from Clinton Street onto Boston Street.
- Boston Street and Ponca Street: Convert the westbound right turn lane to a share-right through lane, adding a westbound receiving lane and implementing exclusive and permissive signal phasing for northbound and southbound left turns. The I-95 N ramp combined with creating a third eastbound approach lane dedicated for left-turn movement on to I-95 N ramp
- O'Donnell Street and Ponca Street: Build a third eastbound approach lane dedicated for right-turn movement onto southbound Ponca Street and the I-895 S ramp.

Road and Intersection Improvements – Fells Point/Harbor East Area

Due to the constrained right-of-way and the desire to maintain Fells Point's historic and walkable characteristics, there are very few options to expand road capacity in the Fells Point/Harbor East area. Two recommended improvements are:

Central Avenue

This will become the preferred route for travelers going to/from I-83 to the Canton and Fells Point, as it will free President Street to serve traffic coming to and from the Inner Harbor and Harbor East/Harbor Point. Specifically, the Central Avenue plan includes:

- Re-striping to accommodate two lanes in each direction. Angle parking spaces south of Fayette Street will be converted to parallel parking and improved street lighting will be made.
- Central Avenue signals have been synchronized and left turn signal installed for northbound traffic at Fayette Street
- Westbound Fayette Street will be re-striped to provide an optional second right/through lane at President Street /I-83.

Broadway and Fleet Street

- A left turn signal will be installed for southbound Broadway traffic at Fleet Street. Other signing and striping improvements will be made to reduce intersection blockages caused by the confusing traffic signal spacing.



Transit & Water Taxi Improvements

Strategies to improve public transit are a high priority and require actions both by the City and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). These improvements will reduce the number of vehicles entering the Southeast corridor and improve pedestrian/bike access in the area. Additionally, the City will work with the operator of the Water Taxi to make this service a viable option for people who commute around the Inner Harbor.

Shuttle Service

The City of Baltimore has issued a “Request for Proposals” to transportation firms to work with the City to plan and operate shuttle services in the waterfront and downtown communities. The City and its partners believe that to be successful, the system of land-based transit must be:

- A fast, frequent, economical and reliable alternative to private auto use.
- Linked to quality transfer locations and parking facilities.
- Closely integrated with the location and schedule of water-based transit service.
- Operated by a single entity, in close coordination with water-based transit services.
- Serve multiple ridership markets (commuter, resident, tourist, etc.).
- Environmentally friendly.
- Have a simple fare-medium that integrates with the MTA services and City and privately-owned, fringe parking facilities, if possible.

While specific routes are still under consideration, it is envisioned that one route will serve the area between Harbor East, Fells Point and Johns Hopkins Hospital. A future route could serve the Canton area.

MTA Service Improvements

Until the Red Line is constructed, bus service will be the dominant transit mode in Southeast Baltimore. The DOT believes that significant bus service improvements can be made at relatively little cost and attract a new ridership segment to MTA bus services. Specifically, the DOT is working with the MTA to:

- Improve the frequency of service on the #13 line between Canton and the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.
- Adjust commuter bus service (#120, 410, 411 and 412 lines) from White Marsh and the Harford county area to serve the Bayview campus, Canton Crossing and Fells Point/Harbor East.

In addition, changes implemented on the #11 line to re-route service from downtown to Fells Point and Canton via Fleet/Aliceanna and Boston streets were recently completed.

The DOT and the MTA are also committed to improving bus stops in Southeast Baltimore with better customer information, new shelters and real-time bus arrival information.

Traffic Management Improvements

In May 2008, the DOT's new Traffic Management Center (TMC) will open and house new technologies to monitor congestion and provide real time travel information to road users. It will identify problem routes to subsequently reassess in an effort to maximize capacity. Additionally, the TMC will be responsible for incident management (accidents, special events, etc.) to avert congestion before it occurs by adjusting signal timing, deploying variable message signs, dispatching Traffic Enforcement Officers or sending out public notices through text messages, e-mail networks and websites. While the Traffic Management Center will have citywide capabilities, special attention is being paid to Southeast Baltimore. The DOT will also add 20 new traffic-monitoring cameras to the Southeast area.

Transportation Demand-Reduction Strategies

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a set of specific strategies designed to reduce demand placed on the system. Reducing congestion is ultimately about influencing human behavior, and the DOT will provide incentives, encouragement and leadership, as well as solutions and direct services where necessary. DOT continues to study travel patterns by working directly with employers and developers. Collecting this data will identify trips that can be made by alternatives to private cars, highlight routes for pedestrian and bike traffic, and promote car sharing and public transit.

A unified and expanded workplace-based TDM program can provide tangible benefits for the City and its constituents, including residents, businesses and commuters in the Southeast. Effective workplace-based TDM can improve traffic flow and lead to improvements in air quality. It can also save parking costs for employers and offer commuters less costly and shorter commutes.

Examples of TDM Strategies may include:

- Car sharing
- Transit services of all types
- Guaranteed rides home
- Park and ride
- Incentives to use alternative modes and reduce driving
- Commuter financial incentives
- Vehicle use restrictions
- Distance based pricing
- Parking and land use management
- Land use density and clustering
- Bicycle parking
- Shared parking
- Policy and institutional reforms
- Asset management
- Operation and management programs

Promoting Bicycle Travel

To create a comfortable environment for cycling, the 2006 Bicycle Master Plan highlights the need for improved bike facilities and increases the number of bike routes. To be effective, these routes need to be consistently marked, continuous and clear to the bicycle network user and to the motoring public. Implementation of the Southeast Baltimore portions of the Bicycle Master Plan will begin in Fall 2008. Aliceanna Street and Bank Street will serve east/west bike travel and Broadway and Conkling Street will serve north/south travel. All new development — whether residential, commercial or industrial — will be encouraged to make provisions for bicycle parking and connections to cycle routes.

Managing Truck Traffic

Keeping commercial vehicles on their designated routes is a major challenge in Southeast Baltimore because of construction-related traffic from major development projects and continued industrial land-use in the middle of residential areas, and in the Port of Baltimore.

While truck traffic is necessary to maintain commercial and industrial activity, it is possible to reduce its impact on communities. Clear and consistent signage along designated truck routes is the simplest solution and signage will be improved throughout the corridor. However, many truck routes have not been examined for their appropriateness and practicality in several decades. The DOT, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the Maryland Transportation Authority and the Maryland Port Administration are conducting an audit of existing truck routes to analyze and ultimately re-route from residential neighborhoods, especially during early morning and overnight hours. This audit will also identify traffic calming measures that can be implemented to keep trucks from using unsuitable roads as short cuts. However, in many urban locations, physical measures may not be appropriate due to requirements for emergency vehicles to access adjacent neighborhoods.

The DOT continues to work with the police and freight operators to alleviate the problem of illegal truck movements, especially on Dundalk Avenue, Fleet and Aliceanna streets, and portions of Boston Street and Broening Highway. A recently signed agreement expands resources to allow the Maryland Transportation Authority Police to conduct commercial vehicle inspections within the City limits. To further expand enforcement capabilities, the DOT is studying “Weight in Motion” technology to allow for automated enforcement, similar to red light and speed enforcement cameras.

Parking and Car-Sharing

Adding a significant number of parking spaces in Southeast Baltimore will further degrade the transportation network and undermine the market for new transit services. Yet, the DOT and the Baltimore City Parking Authority recognize that more can be done to better manage the supply of parking spaces to meet current demand. The Parking Authority, in cooperation with the DOT and community organizations, will conduct a more comprehensive analysis of parking management in Southeast Baltimore. In addition to this study, the following improvements will be implemented:

- Review residential parking permit zones.
- Increase enforcement through automated license-plate recognition technology.
- Increase on-street parking supply with selected angled-parking conversions.
- Establish fringe parking locations near major highways that will be paired with shuttle bus services.

The DOT and the Baltimore City Parking Authority, along with many other stakeholders, are also working to bring car sharing to Baltimore. Along with the downtown area, Southeast Baltimore has been identified as a priority area for implementation of this program. A successful car sharing system will reduce parking shortages and congestion by reducing residents' reliance on a private auto, but still offers them the flexibility of access to personal transportation when needed. By making driving a "pay-as-you-go" proposition without a large initial investment, car sharing is likely to reduce two-car households in Southeast Baltimore, decrease vehicle miles traveled, reduce congestion, improve air quality and save residents money.

Long-Term Outlook

This plan covers improvements to the road and transit system, bicycle network and strategies to reduce travel demand during the next three years. The effect of these improvements should keep traffic flowing at a reasonable level through 2012. Without significant additional transportation capacity, however, the ability of our transportation network in Southeast Baltimore to function properly will be greatly compromised.

While a handful of significant roadway expansion projects are technically feasible, the Department of Transportation does not view them as the primary solution to the likely traffic congestion beyond 2012. The community desire does not exist for alterations of traffic patterns to one-way pairs, nor does the simple geography of our vibrant neighborhoods permit for major road expansions like those proposed in the 1960s.

At the same time, pursuing significant investments in mass transit is a lengthy, complex and expensive proposition. Although already several years in the planning stages, we are still a few years away from the first "shovel in the ground" construction of the Red Line transit project planned for 2012. We must prepare now to integrate the Red Line into our communities and come to agreement on a final project alignment that is affordable and efficient. Compromise will be required, but service quality must not be sacrificed in bringing the Red Line to and through Southeast Baltimore.

A new East Baltimore MARC Station and Red Line connection at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Campus will be an effective tool to capture commuters coming from the I-95 and U.S. 40 corridor in Baltimore and Harford counties before commuters enter the congested core of Southeast Baltimore. But this project also requires complicated engineering and relies on coordination with the Amtrak, CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. The East Baltimore MARC Station could be realized within five years if all parties come together and push forward for engineering solutions.

Finally, some roadway expansions and reconstruction will be necessary to provide more capacity and a better connection from Boston/O'Donnell Street to I-95. Reconstruction of the storm water culvert underneath Central Avenue from Orleans Street to the water's edge is also a high priority project.

Taken together, the above mentioned projects represent millions of dollars in new investment that needs to be made by the federal, state and city governments along with significant private sector participation. With these investments, we can accommodate the residential and business growth in Southeast Baltimore for many years to come. Residents of Southeast Baltimore and those who earn, learn and play in the area must come together, build consensus and help create the path forward on these projects.