



1000 Friends of Maryland, BRIDGE, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Citizen Planning and Housing Association, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Environment Maryland, Innovative Housing Institute, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club – Maryland Chapter

Transportation Funds for a Strong Maryland

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Maryland's economy faces significant challenges. We must spend our transportation dollars more wisely to repair current infrastructure and then invest the balance strategically on projects with high return. We simply have to change our funding priorities to meet today's and tomorrow's demands.

Invest Smarter

Before we ask Marylanders to pay more for transportation we must assure that that we are investing wisely and not continuing the same funding strategies that created the congested, high cost transportation system we have today. Transportation revenues should be increased only if every new dollar is invested more wisely. Maryland's leaders must commit to:

- Maintain and repair existing infrastructure, including roads and bridges before building new;
- Revisit near-term spending decisions and long-term project selection to fund projects that meet the growing demand for more transportation choices that save time and money and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil;
- Spark innovation and cost-savings through a competitive transportation solutions program; and
- Fund the biggest jobs creator, public transportation.

Today most Americans spend more than 50% of their household expenses on housing and transportation – that is simply too much. It is also clear that demographics have shifted in a way that requires we move forward with different investments to meet today's and tomorrow's needs:

- Aging baby boomers want more active and less isolated lifestyles, and as they grow older will need real alternatives to driving;
- More than 70% of households are now singles or singles with kids, meaning the average household size is smaller and families require different housing and transportation needs;
- The “best and brightest” of the younger generation see cars as a burden and seek to live in places that offer more housing and transportation choices.

Maryland is a national leader in prioritizing spending to maintain its roads and bridges and investing in a complete, multi-modal transportation system. But Maryland also faces some hard realities:

- Total annual repair and maintenance needs exceed current annual repair and maintenance spending;
- More than half of Maryland's roads are not in "good" condition. Eight percent of Maryland's bridges are structurally deficient;
- Meeting Maryland's mobility, growth, and environmental goals will require billions in new investment, exceeding current Transportation Trust Fund revenues;
- We have some of the worst traffic congestion in the country.

Marylanders recognize the problem and want new solutions.

In recent polling, voters saw transportation – traffic congestion, the condition of roads and bridges, and the high cost of getting around – as the second biggest issue facing the state, second only to the economy.¹ To solve these problems they support:

- More than 95% of voters in Maryland say that maintenance and repair should be "top" or "high" priority for transportation funding;
- 74% feel that expanding and improving bus, rail, van service, biking, walking and other transportation choices should be a "top" or "high" priority;
- 71% of voters say that buses, carpools, light rail, van service and commuter rail are a good or very good value for the cost; and
- Sixty-eight percent of those polled believe "now is the time for the state to invest in transportation because, if done right, these investments will create new jobs and attract new businesses."

Policy reforms on the following page.

¹ Public opinion polling: Smart Growth America Survey in Maryland: Strategic findings from survey among 325 voters statewide conducted November 16 – 22, 2010 by Hart Research Associates.



Transportation Investments for a Strong Maryland:

Four critical steps forward

1. Fix it First

- **Maintain and repair existing infrastructure, including roads and bridges.** According to numbers MDOT provides the federal government, it would cost the state over \$676 million annually to meet road and bridge repair needs.
- Maintain funding in the FY 2012 budget allocated to fixing our existing infrastructure and **pledge to use increased revenues to increase investment in our existing infrastructure.**
- **Ensure local revenues meet the existing needs** of that jurisdiction, such as roads in poor condition or deficient bridges before building new capacity.

2. Make strategic funding decisions

- We must **revisit near-term spending decisions and long-term project selection.** Last year Maryland passed new legislation requiring every project funded with state transportation dollars to meet specific state goals and criteria. That legislation still needs to be fully implemented.
- **Re-evaluate the projects currently in the Consolidated Transportation Plan** to ensure that every dollar would be spent towards the state's goals and criteria.
- **Require any studies of new transportation projects to meet the same goals and criteria,** so scarce planning resources are not wasted on projects that do not move Maryland forward.
- **Planning for major transportation projects must routinely consider integrated land use, urban design, street network and transit alternatives that will support more efficient development.**

3. Fund the best new ideas through competition

- **Evaluate progressive revenue streams, beyond the gas tax,** for solutions that could better fund a complex transportation system even as more people choose to drive less.
- **Establish a competitive grant system** that rewards innovation and moves forward the projects that best connect people to jobs, strengthen communities, and provide transportation choices.
- **Spark innovation and cost-savings through a competitive transportation solutions program.** There are a number of ways to solve transportation problems, including cost-effective alternatives such as corridor pricing, demand management, and safe biking and pedestrian access. Failing to pursue these kinds of programs aggressively generates congestion that doesn't need to be there and increases MDOT's costs and need for taxes.

4. Fund Jobs

- **Fund the biggest jobs creator, public transportation.** In the recent federal stimulus program, transit projects created twice as many jobs per dollar as roads.

And 61% of Marylanders said they would feel more positively about a governor who favored a plan that “provided more choices such as buses, carpools, light rail, van service, and commuter rail.”

- **Invest aggressively in the Red Line, Purple Line, and MARC Growth & Investment Plan** and move those projects into construction.
- Utilize federal aid for job creation and **require that ½% of federal transportation funds go towards workforce development.**
- Use analysis of job creation and housing affordability to prioritize transit links that **connect people and jobs.**