



The Baltimore Metropolitan Council's

# COG QUARTERLY

Winter / 2018



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## **BALTIMORE BOUND**

Tourism is an important economic generator, supporting jobs, businesses and bringing in tax revenue, while it also enhances quality of life for residents. The Baltimore region is working together to better coordinate tourism services, including transportation challenges, to create a better experience for visitors and thereby boost the local economy.

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## **MAPPIN' IT**

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## **B'MORE INVOLVED**

B'More Involved, the federally required public involvement arm of the BRTB, promotes civic engagement in our region's transportation, planning, environmental justice and equity. This important information is a great way for you to learn more, stay up-to-date on important events, news, and, of course, let you know how you can B'More Involved!

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## CLICK TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT!

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# Letter from the Executive Director

## Planning will be necessary to transport our region's thriving tourism industry



When you look at the national news, it's easy to dismiss Baltimore as a city with great challenges and struggles. But outsiders are discovering what so many of us have known about this region for years: Baltimore is a dynamic destination and it's only getting better.

Forbes started the momentum when it dubbed us No. 14 on ["America's Coolest Cities to Live"](#) in 2012. Then Zagat crowned Baltimore City No. 2 on ["The Top 17 Food Cities of 2015."](#) So it's no surprise (but still quite exciting) that we made the New York Time's ["52 Places to go in 2018,"](#) a list of global destinations.

Our Winter 2018 cover story, "Baltimore Bound," highlights regional tourism and its intersection with transportation (Page 14). The Baltimore region has something for everyone – whether you're a foodie or beer connoisseur, a sports fanatic or patron of the arts, nature enthusiast or leisure lover. The tourism industry is a key component of our economy, and it's an emerging factor in how we approach transportation planning for the future.

We also spotlight Anne Arundel County Executive Steven Schuh, BMC's 2018

Board of Directors chair, who talks about his local and regional priorities in "Leading Locally" (Page 12). Schuh highlights the work of his county's Transportation Commission in its effort to better connect local transportation assets, as well as his leadership in combating the opioid crisis in our region.

In addition, Augie Chiasera, president for M&T Bank's Greater Baltimore and Chesapeake regions, shares his perspectives on how corporate citizens like M&T Bank contribute to Baltimore's economy and shape its future through investment and cross-sector collaboration. Check out the Q&A (Page 10).

On Monday, February 12, BMC launched its new blog. Stomping Grounds - a nod to our big regional backyard - will publish biweekly posts, featuring novel musings on transportation, data, economics, and all things that make Baltimore great (Page 22).

Finally, as you virtually thumb through the Winter 2018 issue of COG Quarterly,

you'll notice some stylistic updates to the publication. We recently unveiled a revamp of our logo, iconography, fonts and color pallet, aimed at unifying and modernizing our brand. Our facade may be new and improved, but at our heart, we remain an anchor for regional collaboration.

As always, thank you for reading COG Quarterly, and please stomp on over to our blog, too.

Sincerely,

Mike Kelly  
BMC Executive Director

IN THE NEWS

# Maximize 2045

## BRTB adopts highway safety targets for next long-range transportation plan, Maximize2045

BMC staff members continue to work with the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) and its advisory groups to develop the next regional transportation plan. The BRTB expects to adopt this plan, known as [Maximize2045: A Performance-Based Transportation Plan](#), by July 2019.

### Regional Highway Safety Targets

The most recent step in this process was the adoption of highway safety targets, which BRTB completed in January 2018. These targets cover the five federally mandated highway safety performance measures:

- Number of fatalities;
- Number of serious injuries;
- Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT);
- Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT; and
- Number of non-motorized (pedestrian and bicycle) fatalities and serious injuries.

The table below shows the highway safety targets for the Baltimore region for the next three years:

### Baltimore Region Highway Safety Performance Targets

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2018	2019	2020
Number of Fatalities	176	171	166
Number of Serious Injuries	1,176	1,153	1,130
Fatality Rate/100 million VMT	0.68	0.66	0.64
Serious Injury Rate/100 million VMT	4.18	4.05	3.92
Number of non-motorized Fatalities	202	195	188

In 2016, the fatality rate/100 million VMT for the region was 0.83, while the national fatality rate/100 million VMT was 1.18, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

### Next Steps

Over the next several months, BMC staff will work with the BRTB and its advisory groups to develop the following critical elements of the long-range plan:

- Population and employment forecasts for the 2024-2045 period (in coordination with the Cooperative Forecast Group);
- Criteria for evaluating candidate projects (in coordination with the Technical Committee); and
- A financial plan (in coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation and local jurisdictions).

### Financial Plan

The financial plan will include forecasts of the revenues expected to be available for highway and transit programs and projects in the region for the 2024-2045 period. These revenues



cover the categories of major capital projects, system preservation, and system operations. The financial plan also will show total estimated costs for the system preservation and system operations categories.

Examples of major capital projects are new or widened roads to expand capacity, major roadway or bridge rehabilitations, and new or expanded transit service.

System preservation covers such activities as roadway repaving, bridge repairs, transit vehicle replacement, non-routine rehabilitations of transit facilities, and maintenance of roadway lighting and signage.

System operations covers routine transit maintenance activities as well as the salaries and wages of personnel who maintain and operate transit and highway systems and vehicles.

### Call for Candidate Projects

Once these elements - population and employment forecasts, project evaluation criteria, and financial plan - are in place, BMC staff will issue a call to local jurisdictions and state agencies to submit candidate major capital projects. Staff expects this call for projects to take place in the summer of 2018. The evaluation of candidate projects will take place in the fall of 2018.

# 2019 FY UPWP

## BRTB to seek public comments on draft Fiscal Year 2019 budget and work plan



The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) will soon welcome comments on its draft [Budget & Work Program](#) for Fiscal Year 2019.

The BRTB adopted a list of regional transportation planning activities last year and is updating the budget for the second fiscal year. This plan includes funding for planning activities from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

The BRTB's Budget and Work Program is known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Transportation Planning. This federally required document details projects, studies and other activities to be completed by BRTB members and BMC staff.

The UPWP includes both local and region-wide activities. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization

(MPO), the BRTB must address many transportation planning topics such as: freight movement and traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety. Beyond these requirements, the BRTB allocates funding to address critical transportation issues specific to the Baltimore, such as improving the coordination between the Maryland Transit Administration and the Locally Operated Transit Systems.

BRTB member jurisdictions and state agencies propose program ideas and release a draft for 30 day public review in February. After weighing public comments, the BRTB officially adopts this work program during its April meeting allowing for two months for federal approval before the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

The metropolitan planning process shall provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors:

- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight; Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency; and enhance travel and tourism.



## Bike / Ped

Thousands of Baltimore region cyclists expected to celebrate Bike to Work Day on May 18

Every spring since 1997, BMC and its member jurisdictions have sponsored [Bike to Work Day in the Baltimore region](#). Bike to Work Day, observed nationally on the third Friday in May, is a time to celebrate the bicycle as a serious and responsible means of transportation.

Bicycle commuting can help reduce both traffic congestion and air pollution. It's also a great way to burn that morning latte.

Baltimore's Bike to Work celebration began very modestly with a handful of riders gathering at the Inner Harbor, sharing coffee, pastries, and experiences. From that humble beginning, the event has grown steadily each year. So much so, that last year's 20th anniversary saw approximately 2,300 cyclists - a new record - meeting at dozens of locations throughout greater Baltimore.

Bike to Work Day 2017 also featured the participation of many of the region's employers, both large and small.

Several hosted pit stops, places where riders could grab a bite, have a drink, and talk with other cyclists of their love of two-wheeling. Many organizations encouraged employees to bike by offering incentives such as free meals, relaxed dress codes, and prize contests. Many others gave their support by contributing cash, services, or prizes.

Find out how to be part of the region's biggest bicycling event by visiting [Bike2WorkCentralMD.com](#). Registration opens in mid-March.



Remember that riding a bicycle is just one alternative to driving alone. You can also carpool, take transit, telework,



This year's effort, which we hope will be the biggest and best yet, is set for Friday, May 18. You can help celebrate biking as a clean, healthy, and fun way of getting around, by leaving your car parked and joining the hundreds who will be cycling on our region's roadways.

or even walk. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, these alternative transportation options can save money. Let us help you discover a new way to get to work. Visit [Cleancommute.com](#) to learn about the various commuter options in the Baltimore region.

## BMC Activities



Each fall, BMC launches an internal campaign to provide monetary donations to the United Way of Central Maryland, which supports families and nonprofits in our region. Our staff raised \$18,965, which will go toward the organization's 2018 programming!

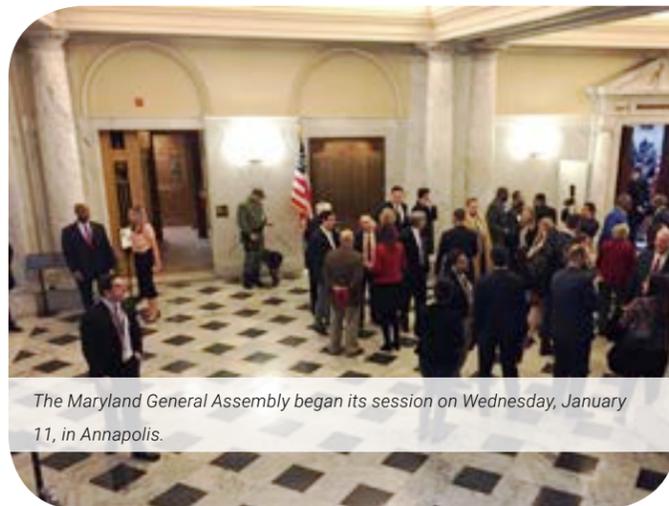
(Above) BMC staff provides United Way of Central Maryland President and CEO Franklyn Baker (center, left) with our donation check. Staff includes (left to right) Todd Lang, Aryn Dagirmanjian, Victor Henry, Kelly Nolan (of the United Way), Robert Berger, Charles Baber, Dan Pontious, Mara Kaminowitz, Bala Akundi, Crystal McDermott, Zach Kaufman, Regina Aris, Russ Ulrich, Blake Fisher, Tamiko Knight, Sara Tomlinson, Laura Van Wert, Monica Haines Benkhedda, Jonathan Mysko, and Brian Shepter.

(Left) Regina Aris, BMC assistant transportation director and chair of the United Way of Central Maryland's Community Partnership Board of Baltimore County, signs BMC's donation check. Photos by BMC staff.

# BMC Activities



(Above) The BMC Board of Directors met on Friday, January 26, in Annapolis.



The Maryland General Assembly began its session on Wednesday, January 11, in Annapolis.



BMC Executive Director Mike Kelly runs into Sen. Bill Ferguson, a BMC board member, on Wednesday, January 11, in Annapolis.



(Above) Mike Kelly welcomes people (left) to BMC's reception celebrating 25 years as an organization at the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Winter Conference on Thursday, December 7, in Cambridge, MD.



(Top) On Thursday, December 21, BMC's congestion management experts Victor Henry and Ed Stylc spoke to WYPR 88.1 FM's Sheilah Kast about [traffic in the Baltimore region](#) and the University of Maryland CATT Lab technology we use to plan. (Above) BMC's Russ Ulrich (center) speaks with Del. Eric Ebersole, of Baltimore County, and Tabitha Ernst, of Anne Arundel County, at the Transportation Association of Maryland's legislative reception on Tuesday, January 16. (Right) BMC's Debbie Groat speaks about the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCCP) during the MACo Winter Conference. All photos by BMC staff.





MAPPIN' IT



# Geographic Information Systems

Visual representations make it easier for planners, public to digest regional building permit database

One of the best tools BMC has for analyzing regional economic development is the [Building Permit Database System](#).

The large database of building permits shows both new construction and alterations that are valued at more than \$50,000. With so much information, it is important to visualize the data in a way that planners and the public can easily understand.

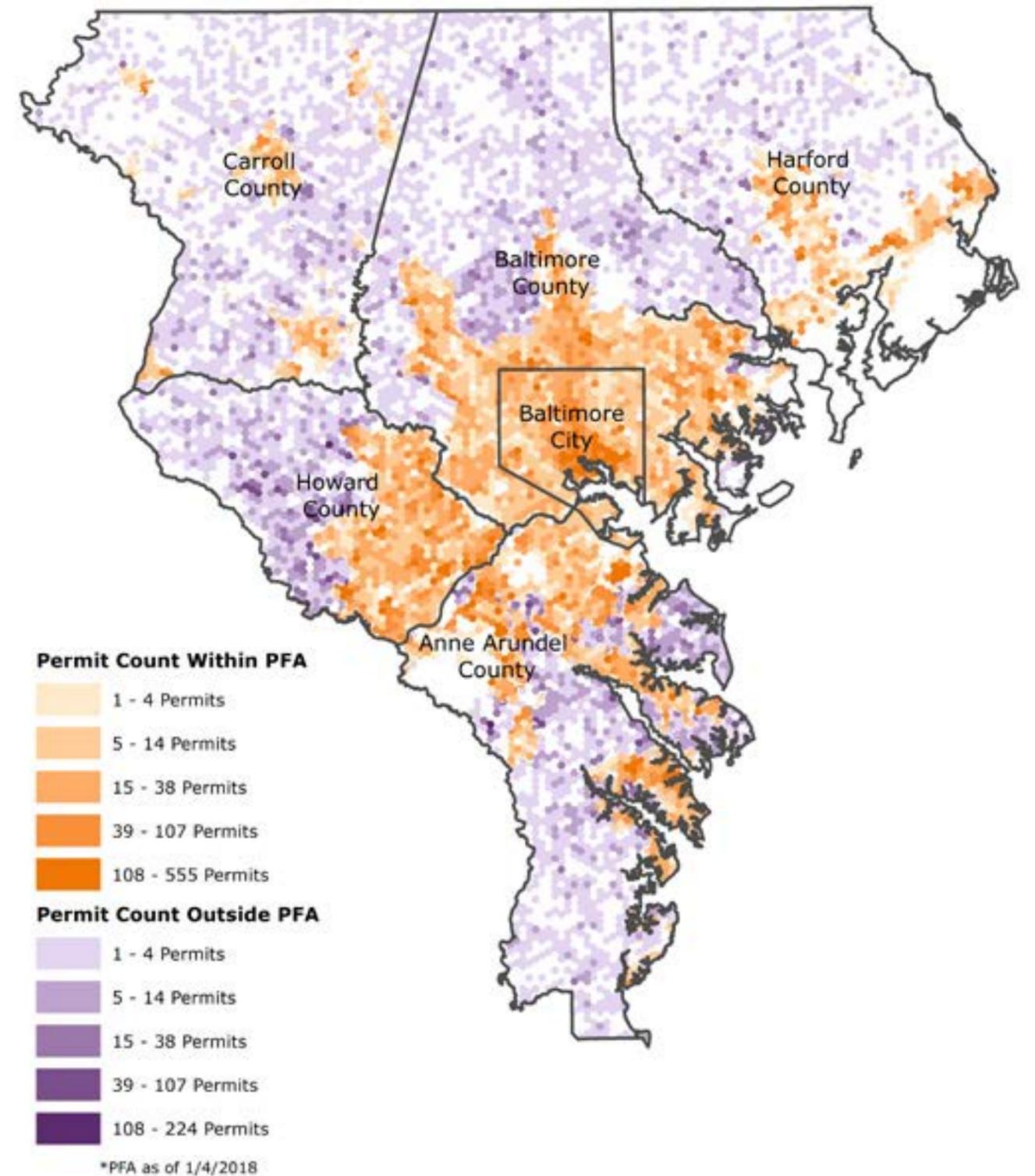
This map shows residential and commercial building permits for new construction that are located inside and outside the Priority Funding Area (PFA). PFAs are existing communities designated by local government where growth and economic development are encouraged. More than 94,000 permits have been aggregated into hexagons.

Showing them as dots would make the data difficult to interpret, but hexagons provide a uniform unit of measure that makes it easy to see concentrations of new building permits across the region.

The orange hexagons show permits issued within the PFA and the purple show the permits outside the PFA. This method highlights where development is being concentrated in preferred areas and where it isn't.

New development in downtown areas is readily visible in the map along with areas outside the PFA where there is growth in residential and commercial development between the PFA areas. Examining the regional patterns on this map may help BMC understand current and future economic development and housing patterns.

**New Building Permits Over \$50,000, 1/1/2006 - 12/31/2016 and Priority Funding Areas (PFA)**



Ask an expert showcases an innovator in the Baltimore region who is at the pulse of his or her industry through a Q&A. We sat down with Augie Chiasera, president of the Greater Baltimore and Chesapeake regions at M&T Bank and vice-chair of the Board of Directors for the Baltimore Development Corporation, to learn more about the public-private partnerships driving our local economy, and how supporting the arts can boost a region's economic value.

ASK AN EXPERT

# Augie Chiasera

## M&T Bank, Regional President



Photo courtesy of M&T Bank.

**1. You've been with M&T Bank for nearly 25 years. Tell us about your career and how your experience with the company has shaped the way you approach your role as president for the Greater Baltimore and Chesapeake regions.**

I have a somewhat unique perspective, having not lived here my entire life. When I relocated to Baltimore 15 years ago, I was able to see and appreciate all that is special and unique about the region - and I am just as enthusiastic today as I was then. As for my career at M&T Bank, I have worked in a number of senior roles within the company which has allowed me to understand and appreciate all the ways that M&T can make a positive difference for our clients, communities and employees.

**2. In September, it was announced that M&T Bank is moving to One Light Street, a new building under construction in the Inner Harbor. How does that move support your business and our local economy?**

At our core, we are a community-focused bank. Just as our relationship with the Baltimore Ravens is about more than our name on [M&T Bank Stadium](#), our new One Light Street headquarters is about much more than a new building. In my

mind, there is no better demonstration of our commitment to this community than investing in a new regional headquarters for our 600 employees in the core of downtown Baltimore.

As a major business, employer and philanthropist in the Baltimore region, One Light Street reflects our commitment to the downtown core of our community. It is my hope that our efforts will spur additional investment in the city and region. Locating our headquarters in the downtown business district is a very tangible way of expressing our belief in Baltimore as a great place to work, live, learn and invest.

**3. Your personal involvement in public service organizations is extensive. Please tell us about the importance of regional partnerships, specifically between public, nonprofit and private organizations. Are there particular examples of which you are most proud, either personally or professionally?**

As bankers, we often find ourselves in the middle of bringing disparate groups together for the betterment of our community. Our former chairman, [Bob Wilmers](#), made it a point to make sure giving back to our communities is

part of the fabric of who M&T Bank is as a corporate citizen. To that end, we often say that when our communities succeed, we all succeed.

Baltimore is blessed with a diversity of foundations, private companies, anchor institutions and public organizations. At times, we have been described as fragmented in our approach to solving problems and we end up under-delivering on our promise. We have the "raw material" in this community to create a metropolitan region that is one of the best places to address and solve urban problems. It is our challenge as leaders to move beyond this fragmentation to affect real change in our communities. I know we can do this.

As it relates to M&T Bank, I am most proud of the work our employees do every day to improve the lives of others in this community. Aside from the more than \$4 million we donate to charitable causes throughout Maryland, our 2,000-plus local employees participate on more than 250 local community boards and donate thousands of hours of their time in volunteer service to others in our community. That is something of which I am very proud.

**4. You serve as the vice-chair of the Baltimore Development Corporation. What do you see as the keys to attracting and retaining businesses in Baltimore?**

Successful economic development is the result of coordination and cooperation across the government, business, education and other not-for-profit sectors. Quality of life and a strong workforce are certainly keys to attracting companies while retention is often a function of continually improving transportation infrastructure, education and public safety. For greater Baltimore, thinking and acting like a region is crucial to harness resources and develop solutions that are beneficial to all parties.

I think the Baltimore region is at a crossroads. We have an extraordinary array of assets and talent - yet we have been unable to leverage these to maximum effect and to achieve our very substantial potential.

Now is the time to come together in a new way to transform the Baltimore region, and create a U.S. market with the highest quality of life for families to live and thrive, for people to visit, and for businesses to succeed.

We have to move from being good at recognizing and identifying problems to being able to develop innovative solutions.

**5. You sit on the board for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Center Stage. How do arts and cultural contribute to our regional competitiveness? Is this part of structuring Baltimore's "new narrative?"**

The arts are a significant driver of the quality of life we enjoy in Baltimore and are a cornerstone of what it means to be a world-class city. I also might mention that both organizations, through their leadership and world-class products, bring the spirit of Baltimore to an international audience through their respective international performances and collaborations. They are not alone in this type of work.

Our cultural institutions are absolutely part of the Baltimore narrative - but this has been the case for a while so I would not consider it a part of something new. I think that we can do a better job of recognizing the important role arts and cultural organizations play in the overall success of our region and talk more publicly about it.

**6. You joined the delegation on BMC's inaugural Chesapeake Connect trip to Cleveland in November. What was your impression of the trip? Were there particular projects or programs that you felt might benefit the Baltimore region?**

The trip to Cleveland was very

informative and was particularly helpful in the context of recent regional trips I attended to Pittsburgh and Detroit. While there are some specific projects and efforts that are intriguing in each city, what left the biggest impression on me in Cleveland is the level of community cohesion around key drivers of regional success.

I learn a lot from seeing how other cities approach their particular issues and then get on with the hard work of coordinating with other community/business leaders to tailor a regional solution that works for them.

**7. Is there anything else that we haven't asked that you would like to mention?**

I had the chance to learn a lot about the critical role regional organizations like BMC can play in identifying infrastructure problems and proposing workable solutions to move our communities forward.

We often focus on addressing problems with little thought to also addressing the issue within a broader strategy. My goal is to concentrate more on solutions and make a difference for the groups with which I am fortunate to work. We could be a national model of a city that collaborates and meets challenges proactively, and strengthen communities by creating opportunities for everyone.



Augie Chiasera (right) and Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh (center) joined more than 40 of the Baltimore region's leaders for BMC's inaugural Chesapeake Connect to Cleveland, Ohio, in November. Photo courtesy of Gregory Wilson Photo.

LEADING LOCALLY

# BMC Board of Directors

## Anne Arundel County Executive Steven Schuh to serve as 2018 Board of Directors chair



(Center) Anne Arundel County Executive Steven Schuh will serve as the 2018 BMC Board of Directors chair. Photo courtesy of Anne Arundel County.

On Friday, January 26, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) hosted a meeting of its Board of Directors at the House Office Build in Annapolis, and unanimously voted to install [Anne Arundel County Executive Steven Schuh](#) as its chair for calendar year 2018.

As Schuh begins his fourth year as county executive, he said he looks forward to continuing both county and regional initiatives – from improving transportation planning to tackling the opioid epidemic.

“Our residents’ lives do not stop at our county or city lines. We must remember that we are all in this together, as our strengths - and weaknesses - can be felt across the region,” Schuh said. “As the incoming chair of the [BMC Board of Directors](#), I look forward to working with my elected and appointed colleagues

from each of our member jurisdictions to enhance our region’s quality of life and economic vitality.”

In 2017, Schuh convened a county-wide transportation commission to bring together stakeholders to create a more integrated network. The commission includes various county departments, from aging to economic development and workforce investment to social services. The commission is charged with considering all of the transportation assets that operate in and around the county, including the [Regional Transportation Agency \(RTA\)](#), [Maryland Transit Administration \(MTA\)](#), [MARC Train](#), [Amtrak](#), [Tipton Airport](#), [Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport](#), and even the [Port of Baltimore](#). Together, the county has strengthened its relationship with [Annapolis Transit](#), cut underutilized bus lines in the western

part of the county, and is on a schedule to improve its infrastructure, Schuh said.



“We’re getting all of the right people in the room together and bringing order to chaos,” Schuh said.

Moving forward, Schuh said that he wants to continue to work to ensure that the county has a transportation network that can get low-income residents to job centers and commuters to work in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., as well as connect the network of trails that run through the County from Baltimore to Annapolis.

“We want to encourage residents and visitors to get outside and enjoy our trails,” Schuh said. “It’s a priority for us, but we know it is going to take time to link all of these assets into one network.”

To stay on schedule, the county is in the midst of updating its [General Development Plan](#), a task that Schuh said should be done more frequently to ensure the plan remains relevant. Legislation passed last year will reduce the time between creation of GDPs by two years. Moving forward, the process to develop a GDP will take the county three years, while updates to small area plans will take five, for a total of eight years. Schuh said that this will keep elements of the plan from going 10-15 years without action.

“It’s become apparent that 10 years is too long to wait between GDPs,” Schuh said. “This will put the county on a much more consistent development path.”

In addition to addressing the county’s infrastructure, Schuh said that Anne Arundel’s GDP will aim to preserve rural lands and prevent overdevelopment. Schuh also touted Governor Larry Hogan’s efforts to increase Highway User Revenue funds for counties. He indicated that the county will use this revenue to step up road construction and improve the system.

“Roads were deteriorating,” Schuh said. “It’s going to be a big undertaking, but additional highway user dollars will help the county keep its roads in operation for residents and businesses.”

Michael Kelly, BMC executive director, said that he looks forward to working closely with Schuh throughout the year.

“County Executive Schuh is a leader whose years of experience representing Anne Arundel County will be an invaluable resource to our organization,” Kelly said. “We look forward to working with him to advance the common priorities of the Baltimore region.”

While leaders in the Baltimore region already work well together, there is great potential for further cooperation and coordination, Schuh said.

“We value our relationship with our neighboring jurisdictions,” Schuh said. “We often talk about how we’re one huge system. We’re all tied together.”

For example, Schuh worked with Baltimore City officials to address rodent infestations in northern Anne Arundel County and its city neighbor. Together Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City have conducted more than 11,000 inspections of businesses and homes, while providing more than 10,000 rat-proof trash cans in Curtis Bay, Brooklyn and Brooklyn Park through the state’s [Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative \(BRNI\) grant program](#).

“Infestation is a challenge that knows no borders,” Schuh said. We’re seeing a dramatic reduction in the rodent



Schuh worked with Baltimore City officials to address rodent infestations in northern Anne Arundel County and its city neighbor. Together Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City have conducted more than 11,000 inspections of businesses and homes, while providing more than 10,000 rat-proof trash cans in Curtis Bay, Brooklyn and Brooklyn Park through the state’s BRNI grant program. Photo courtesy of Anne Arundel County.

population by working closely with residents and coordinating with our partners in City government.”

But Schuh’s main priority for regional coordination is addressing the [opioid epidemic](#), he said.

“Until three years ago, Anne Arundel County residents were largely unconcerned with opioids, Schuh said. “Today, it’s an epidemic.”

Last year, Anne Arundel County had 150 fatal and a thousand non-fatal overdoses. The rise in overdoses has been linked to potent synthetic drugs like Fentanyl being mixed with heroin, said Schuh.

“We’re battling sophisticated international networks of criminals who are manufacturing and distributing these lethal drug cocktails,” Schuh said.

In Anne Arundel County, the narcotics unit is prioritizing interception and prosecution of the dealers and their networks.

“We’re doing a lot to go after those responsible for this crisis. We’ve studied and replicated every model out there,” Schuh said.

For those battling addiction, Schuh

“Until three years ago, Anne Arundel County residents were largely unconcerned with opioids. Today, it’s an epidemic.”  
— Schuh said.

stresses outreach, education and treatment. The county’s [Safe Stations program](#) is making progress in addressing the demand side of the equation. The program allows individuals in need of assistance to walk into any county fire or police station 24 hours a day, seven days a week for access to opioid treatment resources. With over 500 people served since April of 2017, the number of individuals assisted is beginning to outpace the number of overdoses on a monthly basis, explained Schuh.

“We don’t want to put people struggling with addiction in jail, said Schuh.” We want them to get the treatment that they need to recover.”

# Baltimore Bound

It's no coincidence that central MD is on every hot travel list. Our region's tourism industry works in concert to entice visitors to stay and play longer.

On Saturday, May 19, more than 140,000 people will pack into Pimlico Race Course for the 143rd [Preakness Stakes](#), the second leg of the American Triple Crown.

While the six-figure crowd at the prestigious horse race is impressive, more than three times that figure are expected to attend [Light City's](#) installations during three weekends in April, and more than 2 million [Orioles](#) baseball fans will watch games at Camden Yards throughout the 2018 season.

What do these three very different events have in common? Baltimore.

The Baltimore region is thriving with an abundance of activities, from Restaurant Weeks to [Wine in the Woods](#); the U.S. boat shows in Annapolis; the [Maryland State Barbecue Bash](#) to hiking and biking at Gunpowder Falls.

Even [Beyonce](#) chooses M&T Bank Stadium to perform to an enthusiastic and sold-out crowd. These events draw in 25.9 million visitors to the Baltimore region annually.

"Hospitality, history, spirits and sports really are our strengths when it comes to tourism," said Fronda Cohen, [Baltimore County](#) Office of Communications.

"When you have such an abundance of things to see, do and enjoy, visitors want to come back for more."

Tourism is an important economic generator, supporting jobs, businesses and bringing in tax revenue, while it also enhances quality of life for residents. The Baltimore region is working together to better coordinate tourism services, including transportation challenges, to create a better experience for visitors and thereby boost the local economy.

**"** The compact size of our state makes it easy for visitors. You don't have to go very far to find great cultural attractions. **"**  
— Fitzsimmons said.

## Quality of Life

**M**ore visitors mean more revenue and more jobs," said Liz Fitzsimmons, managing director for Tourism, Film, and the Arts with the

[Maryland Office of Tourism](#). "Our goal is to elevate Maryland as a great destination and increase visitor spending in the state."

Maryland tourism brings in \$17.3 billion annually. The tourism industry includes 146,000 full-time employees, making it the tenth largest private employer in the state. In 2016, 42 million visitors explored Maryland.

"The compact size of our state makes it easy for visitors," Fitzsimmons said. "You don't have to go very far to find great cultural attractions."

Visitors may travel to the Baltimore region for one main activity or destination, such as the [National Aquarium](#) or [Darlington Apple Festival](#), but their visits are rarely singular in purpose. Visitors often eat a meal or two, go shopping, catch a concert, stay overnight in a hotel. Many times, these activities are spread out between cities, towns and counties in the region.

"Out-of-town visitors don't differentiate between counties in greater Baltimore," Fitzsimmons said. "So regional cooperation is the key to our success. When we work together, we have a stronger presence."



Annually, 25.9 million visitors come to the Baltimore region. Photo by BMC staff

By cross-promoting activities and destinations around the region, jurisdictions are able to keep visitors engaged for a more sustained period of time. Weekend youth baseball or lacrosse tournaments become long weekends for the family, where a father and son can play game after game, while a mother and other siblings can go hiking, biking or kayaking.

"It's not just a visitor experience. It's a resident experience," Fitzsimmons said. "We're creating and promoting a wonderful place to live."

## Emerging Activities

**T**he Baltimore region is rich with art, music, theater, sports (both professional matches and youth tournaments), and history. But some of the most exciting emerging tourist

activities are culinary. Agrotourism is taking off in the Baltimore region, with about a dozen micro-breweries popping up. Last year, Diageo announced it is opening a [Guinness Open Gate Brewery](#) and Barrel House in Baltimore County, modeled on its legendary Dublin brewery.

"Guinness is going to launch beer tourism as a major attraction and economic generator, not just for Baltimore County, but for the region and state," Cohen said.

Guinness projects that its only U.S. brewery will attract 250,000 visitors annually.

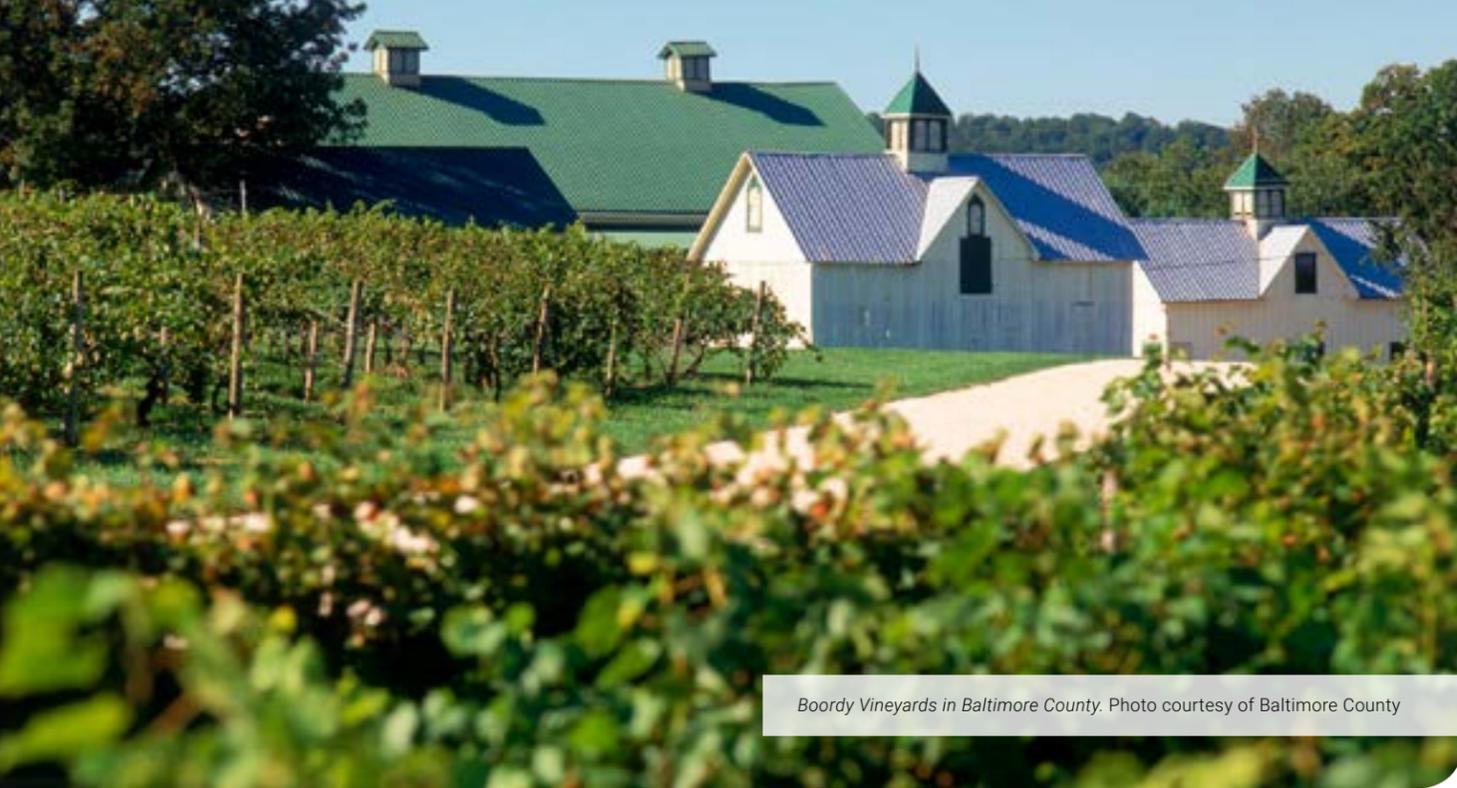
"The opening of the new brewery will have a significant economic impact. It's going to add a whole new dimension to area tourism," Cohen said. "Guinness is going to bring people in, and we hope

they'll stay to enjoy our other craft breweries and attractions."

In 2016, Baltimore County brought in \$1.3 billion from tourism. Approximately 13,000 people, or 5.7 percent of the county's total employment, are tied directly to the industry.

This month, Harford County will celebrate [FeBREWary](#) with its four breweries and hop farm, said Greg Pizzuto, executive director of [Visit Harford](#), the county's 2-year-old tourism department.

"The micro-brewery industry in our area is doing very well," Pizzuto said. "It's something that we're very proud of and will continue to promote."



Boordy Vineyards in Baltimore County. Photo courtesy of Baltimore County

In 2016, the most recent year that data was available, Harford County brought in 1.8 million visitors, who spent \$376 million. That's \$1 million a day in tourism activity. Likewise, tourism in the county employs 7,000 workers.

"Tourism certainly supports many jobs and it's continuing to expand," Pizzuto said.

Harford County's communities, too, have embraced its booming

agrotourism. The [Independent Brewing Company](#) in Bel Air promotes a yoga class called "Bends and Beers," where students can exercise and sip on a cold brew, Pizzuto said.

"We're trying to bring people in, to spend a couple of nights in our hotels, spend some money in the county, and then hopefully go home and tell others what a great time they had," Pizzuto said. "It really comes down to understanding what people are looking

for. Every person who comes is seeking something different."

So Pizzuto is working with the tourism personnel in surrounding jurisdictions to identify those key hobbies, activities or destinations that might attract visitors to Harford County to see if they can be packaged with other nearby activities. For example, Harford and Cecil counties are working together on a chocolate tour, as well as hiking and biking destinations.

"Instead of competition, we try to pitch the region as a whole," Pizzuto said.

#### Transportation and Tourism

In May 2016, the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) announced a new factor for federally required Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to consider in the planning process - enhancing travel and tourism. Since then, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) staff, on behalf of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), has reached out to the local and state tourism industry to address the effect of transportation infrastructure on attracting visitors.



Falling Branch Brewery in Harford County. Photo courtesy of Harford County

“ We need good roads – roads that are safe. And while every state has its pockets of congestion, we’re certainly improving access to our roadways. That continued improvement will bode well for tourism in the long run. ”

– Averella said.

"There are so many moving parts when you look at tourism, whether it's the transportation component or the destination component," said Ragina Cooper Averella, public and government affairs manager for [AAA Mid-Atlantic](#). "We need good roads – roads that are safe. And while every state has its pockets of congestion, we're certainly improving access to our roadways. That continued improvement will bode well for tourism in the long run."

Seventy-four percent of day trippers to Baltimore and 63 percent of overnight visitors arrive in their own vehicle.

Compare those numbers to 18 percent of overnight visitors and 14 percent of day trip visitors who arrive by air; 9 percent and 10 percent, respectively, who take a bus; and 7 percent and 5 percent, respectively, who come into the region by train. In short, tourism in the Baltimore region is easiest for those who own vehicles, because they can get to their destination relatively quickly and move on to the next point of interest.

Approximately two-thirds of visitors who stayed overnight in Baltimore City arrived using their own vehicle. That statistic is particularly important to Averella, who notes that not only is the Baltimore region a popular destination to visit, but it's one that can help people get to other destinations easily, whether by boat or by air.

"Baltimore, in particular, is a unique destination," Averella said. "The Port of

Baltimore is key because people come from all around the Mid-Atlantic to take cruises out of Baltimore."

If visitors are leaving from the [Port of Baltimore](#) to cruise to the Caribbean, they're often arriving a day or two early or staying a day or two after they dock. Then visitors are more likely to spend more time and money in the region.

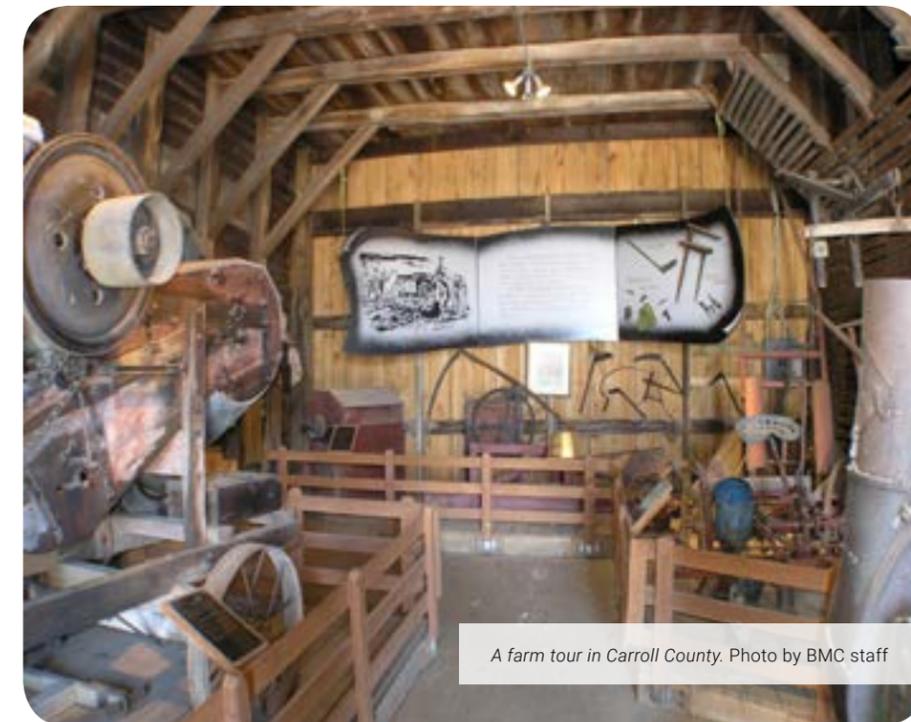
"Our state has a lot to offer, which is why we do so well attracting tourists from all across the region, state and country," Averella said. "Transportation infrastructure is critical to keeping these tourism dollars in Maryland."



For Al Hutchinson, president and CEO of [Visit Baltimore](#), the [Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport](#) and the I-95 corridor are the region's biggest transportation assets when it comes to attracting visitors, both domestic and international. The affordability and accessibility of Baltimore's location on the East Coast, and the airlines at BWI - Southwest Airlines, Air Canada and British Airways - make it a desirable location for people to stay longer and spend more.

"That's a big selling point for us," Hutchinson said.

Visit Baltimore focuses on promoting the story of each neighborhood, so



A farm tour in Carroll County. Photo by BMC staff



Steeplechase in Baltimore County. Photo courtesy of Baltimore County



Photos by BMC staff.

that once in Baltimore City, visitors go beyond the Inner Harbor for food, culture, history and sports, Hutchinson said. No wonder [The New York Times](#), [Zagat](#) and [Travel & Leisure](#) all have written about Baltimore as a destination in the last few months.

Likewise, Visit Baltimore’s [#MyBmore](#) grassroots movement fueled by social media tells those neighborhood stories, but also makes it easy for visitors to search for what they want to see and do.

“Visitors want to go where the locals go, and each neighborhood has something unique,” Hutchinson said. “By promoting

the stories of each neighborhood, we’re able to both empower our residents to be ambassadors for Baltimore, and provide visitors with a more authentic experience.”

Once in Baltimore City, visitors have a plethora of options to get to where they want to go – from [Baltimore Bike Share](#), to the [Charm City Circulator](#), [Maryland Transit Administration \(MTA\) BaltimoreLink bus services](#), [MARC Train](#), [Metro SubwayLink](#) and [Baltimore Water Taxi](#).

However, regional cooperation must also extend into transportation planning, as it relates to tourism and visitors. In the counties, where tourist

destinations and activities are more spread out, more connectivity between modes and destinations would make it easier for residents and visitors alike to travel.

Michael B. Kelly, BMC executive director, said that he looks forward to working more with the local tourism industry to address the transportation challenges that it faces in drawing in visitors.

“Better transportation planning between modes and communities will only help our visitors to maximize their time here and see more of what the Baltimore region has to offer,” Kelly said.



Fort McHenry in Baltimore City. Photo by BMC staff.



A championship tournament in Harford County. Photo courtesy of Harford County



Annapolis by the water. Photo by Mike Boswell, Creative Commons.

# B'more Involved



B'More Involved promotes civic engagement in our region's transportation, planning, environmental justice and equity. This important information is a great way for you to learn more, stay up-to-date on important events, news, and, of course, let you know how you can B'More Involved!

**BRTB SEES PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2018-2021 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- I-95 Express Toll Lane Northern Transition
- I-695: I-70 to MD 43
- I-695: I-95 to MD 122 (Southwest Beltway)
- I-70 & I-695: Triple Bridges Study
- I-83: over Padonia Road
- US 40: over Little & Big Gunpowder Falls

**OPEN FOR COMMENT THROUGH MARCH 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

## Public Advisory Committee to host Every Voice Counts Transportation Academy

**05 MAY** On Saturday, May 5, the BRTB and its Public Advisory Committee (PAC) will host the Every Voice Counts Transportation Academy at Impact Hub Baltimore.

Registration for this event will open in March. To learn more, visit [baltometro.org](http://baltometro.org) or contact [Monica B. Haines Benkhedda](mailto:Monica.B.Haines@benkhedda.com) at or call 410-732-0500 x1047.

Every Voice Counts will bring together 100 residents, community leaders, and non-traditionally engaged participants for a day-long workshop where they will:

- Learn about the transportation decision-making process;
- Identify ways that they can be proactive to improve transportation;
- Learn who to contact and when; and
- Understand how transportation is planned, funded, designed, built and maintained.

### Comment Today!

**12 FEB TO 14 MARCH** The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) [welcomes comments](#) through Wednesday, March 14, on funding updates to the 2018-2021 *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and/or *Maximize2040: A Performance-Based Transportation Plan* for five [Maryland State Highway Administration \(SHA\)](#) projects and one [Maryland Transportation Authority \(MdTA\)](#) project.

The BRTB is scheduled to vote on the amendments on Tuesday, March 27 at 9 a.m.

### #SafeWalks Twitter Chat

**20 FEB** Join the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) and [America Walks](#) on Tuesday, February 20, at 2 p.m. to find out how communities across the U.S. can:

- Achieve safe walking conditions for pedestrians;
- Put people first when designing and planning for safe walks; and
- Understand the challenges and opportunities associated with creating a safe walking environment.



**01 FEB TO 22 FEB** **Carroll County Comprehensive Rezoning Public Meetings**  
[Comprehensive rezoning](#) is intended to bring the county's vision for the zoning code into the future. Public participation is essential to the success of the effort. The county will host outreach meetings by Commissioner District.

**05 MARCH** **FHWA Automated Driving Systems Survey**

Automated Driving Systems (ADS) are increasingly being tested and introduced onto the public roadways. The FHWA is interested in hearing from the public on a [range of issues](#) related to assessing the infrastructure requirements and standards that may be necessary for enabling safe and efficient operations of ADS.

**13 MARCH** **RIC Grant-Hunters Workshop**

Discover what funders are looking for in nonprofits seeking grants and how to find potential funders in this introductory course. Register for the workshop on [Eventbrite](#).

**01 APRIL TO 30 APRIL** **NHTSA Distracted Driver Awareness Month**

[Distracted driving](#) is dangerous, claiming 3,477 lives in 2015 alone. NHTSA leads the national effort to save lives by preventing this dangerous behavior. Get the facts, get involved, and help us keep America's roads safe.

**06 APRIL TO 21 APRIL** **Light City Baltimore, first three weekends in April**

[Light City](#) is a free festival that transforms Baltimore with large-scale light installations, performances, music and innovation.

**01 FEB TO 28 FEB** **Aggressive Driving Awareness Month**  
Take a minute to reflect on your driving habits during February's [Aggressive Driving Awareness Month](#).

**05 MARCH TO 07 MARCH** **National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C.**

The [League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Summit](#) is the premier bike advocacy event of the year, uniting the voices of bicyclists on Capitol Hill. Together, we make our local, regional, and national work a unified force of unstoppable change.

**18 MARCH TO 20 MARCH** **APTA Washington, D.C. Legislative Conference**

[The conference](#) will educate members on federal legislation and policy initiatives; provides them with the opportunity to shape future industry positions and federal transportation policy; and provides direction on the legislative strategy and advocacy efforts.

**04 APRIL** **PAC April Meeting 5:30 p.m. at BMC**

[The PAC](#) is a diverse group of residents, representatives of community organizations, and industry professionals that provide essential independent, region-oriented advice regarding regional transportation planning and related issues.

**24 APRIL** **BRTB April Meeting 9 a.m. at BMC**

The BRTB March meeting will take place at 9 a.m. at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's office, located at 1500 Whetstone Way, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD, 21230.

**01 MARCH TO 31 MARCH** **"Ready? Set? Good!" Spring Awareness Campaign**  
If an emergency occurred today, would you be prepared at home? ["Ready? Set? Good!"](#) is a call-to-action emergency preparedness campaign that encourages people to put aside a portable, battery-powered radio, flashlight and one gallon of water per person, per day to help get them through those first critical hours.

**07 MARCH** **PAC March Meeting 5:30 p.m. at BMC**

[The PAC](#) is a diverse group of residents, representatives of community organizations, and industry professionals that provide essential independent, region-oriented advice regarding regional transportation planning and related issues.

**27 MARCH** **BRTB March Meeting 9 a.m. at BMC**

The BRTB March meeting will take place at 9 a.m. at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's office, located at 1500 Whetstone Way, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD, 21230.

**01 APRIL TO 30 APRIL** **Intersections: Creating Culturally Complete Streets**

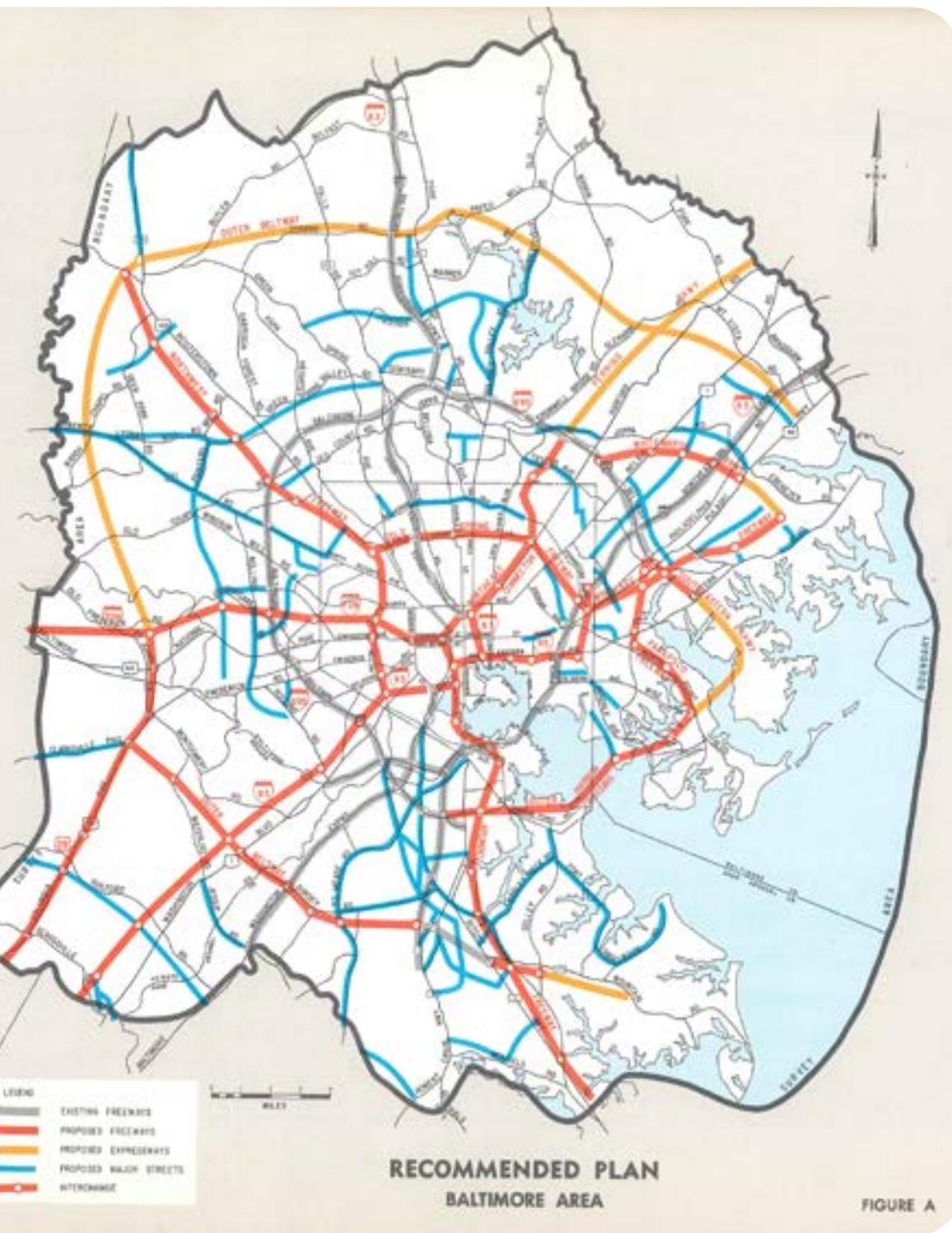
The National Complete Streets Coalition partners with Transportation for America's Arts & Culture team for [its conference](#).

**01 MAY TO 31 MAY** **May is: National Bike Month Clean Air Month Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month**

FROM THE VAULT



# Stomp by our new blog!



Have you ever noticed ramps that don't connect to the highway as you're traveling into or out of Baltimore City along I-95? The [Regional Information Center](#) at BMC has your answer! Here's a hint - the map to your left comes to you from 1965 - the year that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized the march from Selma to Montgomery, and "Mary Poppins" was practically perfect in every way.

But not so fast, knowledge-seekers! If we've whetted your appetites, you'll have to wait. Join us on Monday, February 26, as we publish the full story on our new blog, Stomping Grounds.

*Stomping Grounds* is the BMC's bi-monthly blog, launched on [Monday, February 12](#), that highlights local data that ties back to BMC's area of work, and provides the audience with a better understanding of the Baltimore region.