



The O'Malley/Brown Plan for Transportation

Setting the Course for a First-Class Transportation System

Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown believe that first-class transportation is the key to a high quality of life and a strong economy. They believe that Maryland should help families spend more time together and less time in traffic, and that the solution to our transportation challenges lies in a comprehensive approach that includes smart growth, public transit, and careful expansion of roadways. They believe that an efficient, well-managed statewide transportation system is fundamental to business competitiveness, economic development, and homeland security.

According to a recent mobility study, unless the right policy choices are made, by 2030 both metropolitan Baltimore and Washington, DC will be plagued by congestion worse than Los Angeles.¹ Unfortunately, over the last four years, the right policy choices haven't been made. We must reform the planning and funding of Maryland's infrastructure or business development and quality of life will suffer. One road or one rail line will not solve the state's transportation needs. Instead, we should use a full range of transportation solutions to combat the state's traffic nightmare.

Paths to Progress:

As Maryland's next Governor, Martin O'Malley will:

Invest in Transportation Across Maryland to Decrease Congestion:

- **Support funding for Maryland's transportation infrastructure.** The current debate on funding is a zero-sum game because the Ehrlich administration hasn't shown responsible leadership in facing Maryland's long-term transportation challenges. Instead, his regime assaulted the Transportation Trust Fund, diverting over \$300 million to non-transportation programs.² In the first thirty days of holding office, Martin O'Malley will audit transportation funding to determine the state's true financial profile and account for the Ehrlich-imposed imbalances. On the heels of this audit, he will follow the precedent of the Thornton Commission by empanelling legislators and experts to develop a 10-year funding plan for transportation. The commission's findings and recommendations will be expected within 6 months of its creation.

Given the state's highway congestion, persistent air quality problems, and the rising cost of gasoline, we must increase transit ridership. First, Maryland should move away from

¹ "Building Roads to Reduce Traffic Congestion in America's Cities: How Much and at What Cost?", David T. Hartgen and M. Gregory Fields, Reason Foundation – The Galvin Mobility Project, August 2006.

² "Empty Tank in Maryland", *Washington Post* Editorial, December 15, 2003.

“farebox recovery” as the primary means of measuring cost-effectiveness. The current administration has used this requirement as cover for harmful cuts to transit service (bus routes eliminated; fares raised; Light Rail frequencies decreased; services cut during the so-called Greater Baltimore Bus Initiative “restructuring”). Second, Martin O’Malley will establish performance measures that accurately reflect the efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction of Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), compared to their peer agencies across the country. By implementing a performance-based management philosophy, we can maximize the benefit of every transportation dollar and restore balance within the transportation planning process.

The O’Malley administration will work with the General Assembly to develop a long-term plan to ensure that transportation funding keeps pace with inflation, providing the resources to reduce the backlog of unfunded highway and bridge projects. Maryland’s project pipeline must be full to address the aging of our infrastructure. For instance, nearly thirty percent of the state’s bridges are considered structurally deficient in 2005, based on standards established by the Federal Highway Administration.³ The current administration’s capital program responds to the pledge to build the Inter-County Connector (ICC), but it doesn’t respond to the needs of commuters and businesses in every region of the state. Without a steady stream of design and engineering projects in the coming years, Maryland will be playing catch-up for decades.

- **Diversify the source of transportation funds.** The Ehrlich administration’s single-minded pursuit of the ICC has jeopardized the future of Maryland’s highway and transit system by committing an annual debt payment composed of federal dollars that would have funded projects all over the state.

In the not too distant future, fuel tax revenues will likely decrease as vehicles get more and more efficient. Furthermore, transportation budgets suffer because inflation diminishes the value of the state gasoline tax, fixed at 23.5 cents a gallon. A thorough examination of the current sources of funding for the Transportation Trust Fund is merited before we face a full-fledged transportation crisis like our Virginia neighbors.

- **Implement cost-effective highway rehabilitation and enhancement.** Martin O’Malley will carefully steward state funds to improve the transportation system. Rather than base Maryland’s entire transportation program on one project as the Ehrlich administration has done with the Inter-County Connector, Martin O’Malley intends to govern with a comprehensive strategy for roadway preservation and expansion. Highway construction isn’t cheap – based on recent estimates, the 19-mile Inter-County Connector will cost \$115 million per mile.⁴

Maryland’s capital improvement program should achieve three goals: predictable completion of projects (large and small); safe travel conditions for motorists and carriers; and efficient use of funds. To accomplish these goals, Martin O’Malley will use objective measures of success (congestion reduction and road travel reliability) to govern funding decisions, not political favoritism or wishful thinking. Capacity will be added

³ National Bridge Inventory 2005, *Better Roads Magazine*, www.betterroads.com

⁴ Maryland State Highway Administration, Inter-County Connector Project – FAQs, www.iccstudy.org

when it will provide a real solution to a real problem, but only after a careful, transparent analysis.

Set Aggressive Goals for Regional Transit Mobility

- **Balance local impacts, affordability, and federal matching funds with urgency.** Like our neighbors in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Virginia, Maryland needs an ambitious transit program to help alleviate congestion and draw commuters toward bus, rail, and subway. Under the current administration, the state's major transit projects have lacked adequate public participation and rigorous technical analysis. Martin O'Malley is strong proponent of public transit– but he will demand significant returns on investment and a higher standard of operations management.

Having championed transit projects in Baltimore, he is acutely sensitive to the current administration's practice of offering up unpopular, infeasible alternatives for review as a way to forestall real progress. Rather than ignore local community concerns, the O'Malley government will create an open and participatory process for advancing major transit projects, namely the Purple Line, the Corridor Cities Transitway, the Red Line, and the Green Line to Morgan State University. He understands that it is important to listen to community needs and provide choices. Focus will be placed on developing fast, convenient, and reliable transportation while meeting federal thresholds for funding.

- **Focus on performance and commit to relentless follow-up assessments.** According to a recent survey, only 41 percent of MTA buses along the routes selected for review ran on-time.⁵ And the problems aren't restricted to the buses. The Ehrlich administration has done a poor job with the basics - trains break down; fare systems don't work; ridership suffers from poor marketing. To increase transit use the state must use a multi-pronged approach, including customer service initiatives like on-time performance, real-time schedule information, and more bus shelters; seamless and connected service delivery (e.g., transit centers, rail/bus schedule coordination, regional farecards); high levels of service (frequency and hours of operation) determined by the type of community and time of day; technical assistance directed to local governments and developers about transit-oriented development (TOD); aggressive marketing of existing services; and selected additions to rail lines.

The MARC train is a perfect example of the tired performance of transit service in Maryland. Even though MARC ridership is up more than 50% over the past 10 years, trains are over-crowded and we face a shortage of spare locomotives and facilities to store and repair equipment.⁶ Peak hour trains routinely have hundreds of people standing in the aisles by the time they reach Washington. Plus, on weekends when the service isn't running, citizens can't use the lines to visit recreational, entertainment, and cultural destinations.

To address these problems, the system needs to add cars to lengthen the trains and expand capacity. Rail administrators also need to work closely with the private railroads to make track improvements that will allow more trains during rush hour. The O'Malley

⁵ "MTA fails on-time tests", *Baltimore Sun*, June 14, 2006. Also www.cphabaltimore.org.

⁶ Baltimore Transit Alliance, BTA Updates, August 7, 2006. www.gbc.org

administration will create a concrete plan to double the capacity of MARC train service by making wise investments in track and rolling stock as well as expanding hours of operation.

Promote Smarter Long Term Planning and Growth

- **Restore Bob Ehrlich’s cuts to the Office of Smart Growth.** Martin O’Malley’s Department of Planning will ensure Maryland grows in smarter ways that depend less upon new highways and increased traffic. A sensible transportation plan will link public investments to development initiatives, compact housing, and job markets. The current administration has demonstrated a troubling disregard for local needs through its anemic Priority Places program. Four years into the Ehrlich administration, there have only been **six communities** selected for Priority Places state-assistance, and there is no evidence that once the press conferences are completed this designation is followed up with meaningful support. Smart growth only works if there is a regional or state-wide framework. Martin O’Malley will rebuild working relationships with local governments in every county – not just six select communities - to achieve meaningful neighborhood conservation and responsible development.
- **Bring transparency to the decision making process.** Transportation projects are expensive and built for generations, so communities have a right to an open, transparent process where all the costs and benefits are known. Martin O’Malley will require public agencies to perform aggressive outreach during project planning, especially to the people who are typically underrepresented in the process. It is only reasonable to expect formal and informal hearings before any major project decision. Instead of walling off the public, local government and the press to government affairs, Martin O’Malley will share relevant information with the citizenry, making planning and budget documents available in libraries and government offices as well as on the web.
- **Create new focus on “Main Street” enhancements.** Main Street is a more than a section of state highway; it’s a state of mind. Main Street is where we live, shop, learn, and enjoy our libraries, recreation centers, and public space. Main Street often forms the identity of Maryland communities, but it’s too often the last place we’re willing to invest, especially when it’s part of the state highway system. The O’Malley administration will make improving Main Street a priority through a process where local communities are in the driver’s seat. Streetscaping, resurfacing, drainage, sidewalks, lighting, and pedestrian safety features are not luxuries. They are the investments that make a community work and feel proud. In Baltimore, Martin O’Malley has made historic Main Streets a priority in 10 neighborhoods, investing in sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, street furniture and road restoration.

Prioritize Transportation Projects To Support Economic Development and Quality of Life

- **Award planning grants to local governments to help foster new business and community development.** The current administration has lost respect for one of hallmarks of Maryland’s history - sound planning for the future. Transportation investments are one of the most important tools that a governor has for economic and community development. Highway ramps, transit service for employees, cost-effective-

shipment of goods through the Port of Baltimore or BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and other improvements are primary components in business retention and attraction. Likewise, transportation is a critical component of statewide community development and redevelopment strategy. The O'Malley administration will partner with local governments to facilitate the necessary technical analysis (traffic studies, public outreach, environmental reviews) to reach wise decisions on development options.

- **Capture the full benefit of BRAC-induced job growth by creating a federal facilities czar and executing a formal recruitment plan.** The Ehrlich administration's recent history with economic development should give Marylanders pause. Four years after making biotech development one of the state's most important priorities, the governor has little to show for it. The failed bid for the \$600 million Novartis vaccine plant this summer is a case in point. A similar failure with the military base relocations would be disastrous.

Sadly, it looks like Maryland is in for a repeat performance. There is no high-level engagement on BRAC from the administration. Local planning efforts are running dangerously behind and require help from the state. The current BRAC transit plan has a 30-year implementation schedule which encourages pie-in-the-sky commitments – hardly the way to instill confidence in new residents and employers. MDOT compiled a list of all pre-existing road projects near military installations and rolled out a “plan” for mitigating traffic and encouraging transit use. As usual, the Ehrlich plan is asphalt-centric, poorly communicated, and offers little in terms of commitments to transit, like a Green Line extension. We must have a concrete recruitment strategy in place so families understand the great opportunities provided by Maryland schools, neighborhoods, and employers.

There is no evidence to suggest that Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has preserved room within the Transportation Trust Fund to address the growth dynamic linked to BRAC. In the very least, a traffic impact study is needed for the road networks connecting to Aberdeen Proving Ground and to Fort Meade. MDOT appears to believe that widening I-95 near Aberdeen Proving Ground is a silver bullet. As Governor, Martin O'Malley will aggressively pursue projects to mitigate congestion and air pollution by seeking real solutions within years, not decades.

- **Improve workforce mobility by strengthening core public transit services.** To win over commuters, mass transit must provide frequent, predictable buses and trains during peak hours. Businesses and workers also should expect a reasonable level service late into the evening. Many of our transit stops fail to meet a basic standard for comfort, security, and convenience. Maryland is trailing the rest of the country in intelligent transportation systems (ITS) – smart card technology and real-time schedule information. These types of services play a tremendous role in the transit user's experience – both in terms of ridership attraction and retention. As he did in Baltimore, where his administration won the prestigious Gartner Group award for innovation in information technology (IT), Martin O'Malley demand nation-leading performance for public programs.
- **Establish aggressive goals to improve Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) service.** With federally-mandated requirements for heightened security on the horizon, MVA's

job is set to get even harder. Maryland needs to start implementing legislation (the federal REAL ID Act) next year and it will impact significantly the ability of the MVA to deliver its core services. MVA will have to have the necessary manpower with training and the appropriate resources to accomplish this task. While MVA has embraced technology, there hasn't been sufficient investment in technology to prepare not only for the REAL ID changeover but the additional "e-services" to help MVA continue to keep up with its other core missions of tag and titling services, tickets, flagging, insurance verification and licensing.

Maryland drivers have limited patience for red tape – they want results. We need to ensure homeland security protections are honored, while delivering quality service – shorter waiting times at the MVA and quicker trips around the state. With the introduction of cutting edge technology, we can dramatically reduce the waiting times at MVA facilities. Martin O'Malley will maximize the use of web transactions, self-help kiosks, and automated phone service. He will also support technology which will allow motorists to pay for on-street and off-street parking with transponders similar to E-ZPasses – saving people time and making life more convenient

Protect the Environment and Achieve Resource Conservation

- **Focus on alternative modes of travel.** Building on the “Main Streets” program, Martin O'Malley will support new initiatives to promote walking and bicycling as alternatives to short auto trips, thereby reducing cold start emissions. These programs will place special emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle safety, school and park connectivity, and transit linkages. In Baltimore, O'Malley administration worked with Congressman Ben Cardin to complete the 14-mile Gwynns Falls Trail, a multi-purpose path lacing the city's Westside. Furthermore, Martin O'Malley brought stakeholders together in Baltimore to adopt a Bicycle Master Plan for the city in 2006, assigning nearly a \$1 million in planning, design, and construction to implement a Collegetown Network.⁷

At the state level, it is important that highway, street, and transit designs keep pedestrians and bicyclists in mind by including refuge area at crossings, continuous sidewalks, shoulders and bike lanes, and adequate lighting. In partnership with local governments, Martin O'Malley will look for opportunities to construct hiker/biker paths, such as the one proposed for the Purple Line.

- **Broaden the reach of energy-saving technology.** In 2005, the Energy Efficiency Forum bestowed its leadership award on Martin O'Malley for his effort to create an Energy Conservation Office in the Department of Public Works.⁸ This specialized office oversaw the dramatic energy-use reduction associated with the upgrade of heating and cooling systems in major office buildings, generating annual savings of \$1 million. In 2006, the city launched the conversion of 1,300 traffic signals to LED technology, reducing energy consumption by over 80% percent.⁹

⁷ Baltimore City Capital Improvement Program 2006-2011.

⁸ Baltimore Department of Public Works, News Release, June 14, 2005. www.baltimorecity.gov

⁹ "LED stoplights may save city \$1million a year", *Baltimore Sun*, October 14, 2006.

As governor, he will develop a “green” policy overlay that encourages MDOT planners and engineers to incorporate the latest “green” designs and materials in their facilities and buildings, achieving LEED-certification for every new MDOT facility. O’Malley will rapidly expand the introduction of hybrid MTA buses, currently representing only 10 buses among a total fleet of 800.¹⁰ He will ensure the state explore the use of bio-diesel for state vehicles and equipment.

- **Partner with government agencies and private companies to initiate car sharing programs in urban areas.** Car-sharing programs, which provide cars and light trucks for individuals and businesses at convenient, centralized places, can reduce the need for owning and operating a vehicle. These programs give customers a relatively cheap transportation option without the hassle of long-term parking, vehicle maintenance, or auto financing. Martin O’Malley supported car-sharing in Baltimore, and city-wide implementation is expected in late 2006.

As governor, Martin O’Malley will direct state agencies to evaluate the benefits of car-sharing programs and achieve fleet reduction when car-sharing alternatives are merited. He will also encourage universities, hospitals, and businesses to incorporate these programs into their operating plans.

¹⁰ Maryland Transit Administration, Annual Report, 2005.