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Home > City Residents Need Public Transit

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Car Ownership in Baltimore Metropolitan Area		
Geographical Area	Number of Households Without Vehicles	Percentage of Total Households
Baltimore City	93,000	36%
Central East and West Baltimore City	24,000 (66,000 residents)	60%
Anne Arundel County	9,000	5%
Baltimore County	27,000	9%
Carroll County	2,000	4%
Harford County	4,000	6%
Howard County	4,000	4%

Source: 2000 US Census and Baltimore Metropolitan Commission

While many of us can't even think of going anywhere without our private automobiles, the Baltimore Region is home to many people who have never had or no longer have that possibility. Who are these transit-dependent people? They are the very young, the very old, those who have disabilities which prevent them from driving, and the thousands upon thousands who cannot afford car ownership. Where do they live? They live all around the five counties - and especially in Baltimore City - which together make up the Baltimore Metropolitan Region. Because they depend on mass transit, they need options which are vastly better than those existing today in the Baltimore Region. They need more transit routes, faster travel times, more frequent runs, better coverage at night, much more interconnection between different transit modes (chiefly rail and bus), and better security. Without these improvements, a large portion of the transit-dependent population remains isolated and therefore less able to become and stay employed, seek medical care, attend college, and participate in many aspects of city life that those with mobility might take for granted. Public transportation is much more affordable on an individual level than car ownership. Public taxes for public transportation, coupled with some recovery at the fare box, cost the individual citizen far less than all the costs associated with purchasing, insuring, operating, maintaining, and parking a car. Getting a driver's license in Maryland alone costs more than \$300.00. The "LIVE" section of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan (LEPL Plan), which

was approved in 2006, addresses many of these problems under Goal 3: Improve Transportation Access and Choice for City Residents, and Objective 2: Facilitate Movement throughout the Region. Page 89 of the LEPL Plan states: **STRATEGY:** Create intermodal transit hubs in areas of low automobile ownership **MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:** Increased transit ridership **RETURN ON INVESTMENT:** Improved transportation accessibility and employability Over 30% of City residents have no cars; it is the City's priority to provide and support transit service for residents who choose not to or can't afford to own cars. In order for Baltimore City to realise its potential as an employment center for the 21st century, the City must partner with public and private entities to expand and enhance transportation options in the region. Creating transit hubs in areas of low automobile ownership as well as connecting these hubs to destinations (e.g. work, school, recreation, daily activities) will increase the efficiency of transit usage for city residents. The situation for people in Baltimore City who are transit-dependent can border on desperate, given the relatively sparse and poor performance of our current bus system and the coverage limitations of our rail transportation system (Metro & Light Rail). It is important to get some perspective on the size of this problem in terms of the number of city residents who are dependent on transit. The "transit hub" approach in the LEPL Plan does not go far enough for the over 230,000 city residents (living in 93,000 households) who live in the City without a vehicle. Central West Baltimore and East Baltimore are the most transit-dependent areas of Baltimore City. For purposes of comparison, and to understand the distribution of private automobiles around the region, the table above includes similar data from each of the five surrounding counties. Within these two most transit-dependent regions of Baltimore City, 66,000 people out of the total 110,000 living there (or 60%) have no vehicle. This amounts to three out of every five persons living in those two areas. Unfortunately, most of the bus routes which pass through these neighborhoods are on their way from downtown to somewhere else – either in North Central, Northwest or Northeast Baltimore. They are literally commuter routes which are "just passing through." This means that the majority of transit-dependent persons have to take a bus downtown first and then come back out. In other words, there is very little direct public transportation within and between areas in central West and East Baltimore—all this on top of what are already extremely long waiting times for many of these buses. What is needed now and for the future is to plan and make available a massive increase of transit services and options to the residents of central West and East Baltimore, with more bus lines and much more frequent service. Future plans with regard to light and heavy rail services, bus rapid transit, and trolley service in Baltimore should also be designed to serve these neighborhoods, which are often overlooked when public transportation is being planned. Beyond these two central city areas, there are other people both in the City and the surrounding counties who are transit-dependent, or who would otherwise choose to become transit riders if the Baltimore City officials can really accomplish the goals laid out in their Master Plan. To accomplish this substantial increase in mass transit, there will have to be an infusion of new support from the local chief executives who sit on the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, along with members of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Governor's Office, and members of Maryland's General Assembly and its delegation in the US Congress. This new support will require an "attitude adjustment" about public transportation, based on a carefully crafted new Transportation Vision for Central Maryland in the 21st Century. This support must include new policies, programs, system-based approaches, and funding. It must endure well into future years and extend beyond the particular terms of public service of local, state, or federal officials and political representatives. Other metropolitan areas around the U.S. have done this - the Baltimore Region can do it too, and for the sake of its own

future, it must!

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Links:

[1] <https://indyreader.org/issues/springsummer-2008>

[2] <https://indyreader.org/contributor/art-cohen>