

# County to increase transit for BRAC

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Anne Arundel officials hope the 22,000 anticipated workers Fort George G. Meade's expansion will bring to the region will come by the busload.

County planners hope to bolster Anne Arundel's public transit network, particularly in the under-served west county area, before the impact of the Base Realignment and Closure process is felt.

Speaking at the Annapolis Regional Transportation Management Association's annual meeting last week, Robert C. Leib, a special assistant to County Executive John R. Leopold for BRAC, said many of the incoming workers bring a culture of commuting via transit. Transit will play a "primary role" in planning for BRAC.

More than 4,000 employees of the Defense Information Systems Agency in Arlington, Va., will be relocated to Fort Meade by 2010. Those workers, Mr. Leib said, are used to Northern Virginia's robust transportation network and bring a culture of transit commuting.

"We recognize this is a requirement," he said. "These are Northern Virginians. They're used to commuting."

The county is purchasing additional buses to run between the New Carrollton Metro stop, the MARC station and Fort Meade. Additionally, Mr. Leib said a federal grant will pay for additional transportation studies to highlight critical road and transit needs in west county.

"It's going to offer more opportunities for people living (in west county) now and going to Fort Meade,"

ARTMA Executive Director Heather McColl said.

Mr. Leib said officials from across the region have managed to winnow the \$5 billion in anticipated transportation project needs for BRAC down to \$1.2 billion for the most pressing concerns.

But Donald C. Fry, president and CEO of the **Greater Baltimore Committee**, worries BRAC counties will not receive the funds necessary to cope with the worker influx after he said the General Assembly failed to adequately address transportation funding during the special session.

The former Harford County delegate and senator said: "transportation doesn't really get attention until it becomes a crisis."

The \$450 million that will be raised for transportation projects through the sales tax increase is far short of the \$600 million realistically needed to address the state's growing congestion, he said.

A 30-year transportation outlook compiled over the summer by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, which includes Baltimore, its six surrounding counties and Annapolis, was universally panned this summer for its lack of transit planning.

Area officials asked planners to take a second look at it with an eye toward transit. The second draft shuffled more of the region's anticipated \$8 billion federal allotment, particularly for the Red Line in Baltimore, but still remains heavy on the road projects, to the dismay of some participating jurisdictions.

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(See TRANSIT, Page D5)



Page 1 of 1

