

## Study: Traffic costs D.C. \$2B, Baltimore \$1 billion annually



(Greg Whitesell/Examiner)  
Roadway congestion costs the D.C. area more than \$2 billion a year, and the Baltimore area more than \$1 billion a year, according to findings from the Texas Transportation Institute.

Melissa Frederick, The Examiner  
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### WASHINGTON -

The fact that snarled traffic sucks up gas money and time is not news, but a new study commissioned by three area business organizations puts a dollar amount on the cost of such hassles.

Roadway congestion costs the D.C. area more than \$2 billion a year, and the Baltimore area more than \$1 billion a year, according to findings from the Texas Transportation Institute.

The Greater Washington Board of Trade, the **Greater Baltimore Committee** and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce funded the study.

"This was an attempt to figure out what we're dealing with, and how much worse the situation can get," said Donald Fry, president of the Greater Baltimore Committee.

While the number of peak period travelers has increased by 71 percent since 1982, the number of lane-miles of freeways and connecting streets has only gone up by 35 percent, researchers found.

If things continue as they are, individuals will spend 65 million hours stuck in traffic and waste 45 million gallons of fuel annually by 2032.

To fight the problem, the groups are proposing a \$600 million increase in Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund; currently, Gov. Martin O'Malley is requesting a \$400 million increase.

"At \$400 million, you're only treading water," Fry said.

Maryland Transit Authority spokesman Richard Solli said it will ultimately be up to elected officials to determine how much money needs to be added to the budget, but that additional transit is clearly needed to fight the congestion problem.

"We see studies like this all the time," Solli said. "Things have gotten worse, and people are recognizing it — but clearly MTA is just one piece of the puzzle."

A report released last month by the same institute found D.C. to have the second-worst traffic in the nation.

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