

TRAFFIC

Study: Congestion costs area motorists \$426M

By Andrew Cannarsa
 Examiner Staff Writer

The time Baltimore-area motorists spend stuck in traffic adds up quickly and costs drivers in the long run.

Commuters in the Baltimore area spent 30 million hours of additional time on the roads and 19 million gallons of additional gas as a result of traffic congestion in 2005, according to the federally sponsored Urban Mobility Report released this week by the Texas Transportation Institute.

The additional time and fuel costs the public an equivalent of \$426 million a year, according to the report.

The **Greater Baltimore Committee** is urging the state to increase funding to the Transportation Trust Fund by as much as \$600 million a year, said Donald Fry, president and CEO of the GBC. The Baltimore region faces population increases and increasing demand because of about 40,000 new jobs coming to the area due to the Base Realignment and Closure program.

"We are facing a situation in which

our roads are more and more congested every day," Fry said. "If we don't address this, we're going to have even more gridlock than we do today."

"There is no 'magic' technology or solution on the horizon, because there is no single cause of congestion," Tim Lomax, a research engineer at the Texas Transportation Institute, said in a statement.

Existing public transportation within the metro area prevented \$200 million in additional delays, according to the report. Traffic congestion has worsened steadily since the report first began tracking travel in 1982.

"For decades, we've tried to fight traffic congestion by building new roads," Johanna Neumann, policy advocate for Maryland PIRG, said in a statement. "We need to expand bus and rail systems to reduce the number of drivers on the road. Doing so will reduce our nation's dependence on fossil fuels and address congestion problems before they cripple our metro rsegon."

acannarsa@baltimoreexaminer.com

