MD Highway Congestion Is As Bad As You Think, Getting Worse

Two-thirds of the workers in the Baltimore region face a commute of more than 30 minutes. See the 10 worst morning and evening commutes.

By [Deb Belt, Patch National Staff](#)

Traffic delays are growing are on Maryland highways, and hurting the quality of life, officials say. (Image via Shutterstock)

HANOVER, MD — Traffic jams and delays on Maryland's highways is as bad as you think, and only getting worse, a report released Thursday says. Most drivers in the Baltimore region face a commute of more than 30 minutes to get to work, and the state's top transportation official called it a "congestion emergency."

TRIP, a national transportation non-profit research group based in Hanover, issued the report that says the region has some of the worst traffic problems in the country. Drivers in the Baltimore metro lose 50 hours of their lives to congestion, which equals about $1,200 per year. (See the 10 worst morning and evening traffic sections below.)

"The report found above the 1.9 million jobs available here in the Baltimore area only 30 percent of those jobs are accessible in a 30-minute time frame," said Rocky Moretti, director of research and policy of TRIP. "The state needs to very aggressively address traffic congestion."

Pete Rahn, secretary of transportation of the Maryland Department of Transpiration, said [congestion on the state's highways](#) is an emergency and it's only getting worse. At a press conference Thursday he promoted implementation of Gov. Larry Hogan's plan to widen highways, expand express tolls and add

mass transit as a way to ease congestion, WBAL reports.
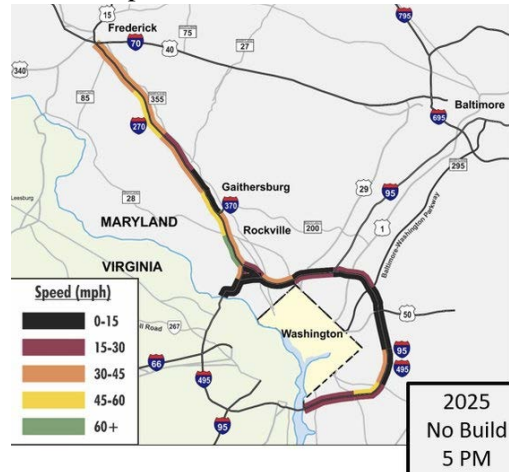
Drive times are estimated to slow even more on Maryland highways without big changes, officials say. Graphic by MDOT

Maryland's major urban highways and roads ranked No. 1 nationally in 2017 for the average amount of traffic carried daily per-lane-mile, and second nationally in average daily commute length from 2013 to 2017. The state averages 10,962 vehicles per mile, and a commute time of 32.7 minutes, according to TRIP.

While Baltimore area drivers spend 50 hours a year trapped in traffic, it's even worse in the Washington, D.C., region, where drivers lose 87 hours stuck on the road, the report says.

In its 2017 annual mobility report, the SHA ranked the state's most congested sections of highways and most congested sections of arterial (non-freeway) roadways. The worst morning highways are:

- I-495 Outer Loop - US 1 to US 29
- I-695 Outer Loop - I-795 to Edmondson Ave
- I-695 Outer Loop - US 1 to MD 41
- I-270 Local Southbound - Shady Grove Rd to Montrose Rd.
- I-95/I-495 Inner Loop - MD 5 to I-295
- US 50 Westbound - MD 704 to MD 295
- I-695 Inner Loop - MD 140 to I-83

- I-270 Southbound - Montrose Rd to I-270 Spur
- MD 295 Southbound - MD 32 to MD 197
- I-95 Southbound - MD 212 to I-495

The most congested evening routes are:

- I-695 Inner Loop - MD 139 to MD 542
- I-270 West Spur Southbound - I-270 Split to I-495
- I-495 Inner Loop - Virginia State Line to I-270 West Spur
- I-495 Outer Loop - MD 187 to Virginia State Line
- I-495 Inner Loop - MD 355 to MD 97
- I-495 Inner Loop - MD 650 to MD 201
- I-270 Spur Northbound - I-495 to I-270
- MD 100 Westbound - MD 713 to US 1
- I-95/I-495 Inner Loop - MD 202 to MD 214
- I-695 Outer Loop - US 1 to MD 170

Hogan has recommended a $17.8 billion transportation plan to alleviate congestion and handle the state's growth. It includes:

- Widening about 70 miles of interstates through a public-private partnership, including I-495 from south of the American Legion Bridge to east of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and I-270 from I-495 to I-70, including the east and west I-270 spurs.
- A traffic relief plan for portions of the Baltimore Beltway from I-70 to MD 43.
- An active traffic management program for I-95 from MD 32 to MD 100.
- The expansion of express toll lanes on I-95 from MD 43 to MD 24.
- The completion of the Purple Line from the Bethesda Metro Station to the New Carrollton Metro Station.
- Improvements to the BaltimoreLink transit system, the METRO system and the MARC system.
- A statewide expansion of the smart traffic signal program.