

TRANSPORTATION FACT SHEET INTRODUCTION

The goal and objectives set forth in the circulation element of the 1969 General Plan are being examined to answer the question, "Are they still relevant today?". This fact sheet will provide some background information to help answer that question. It reviews changes in our travel behavior, travel patterns, and the supply of and demand for different means of transportation. To a lesser extent, it takes a look at the future as well.

To be sure, the dated language and changes in the way we live, work, and travel not fully anticipated 20 years ago are reason enough for the revision being undertaken. Yet, in the 1969 goal and objectives is a recognition, found in many of our recent planning documents, that the transportation system is a force that serves, as well as shapes land-use patterns. There is also the recognition that the pace of growth and development should be linked to the timing of the supply of transportation. The clear desire, expressed in the objectives, for a safe, efficient, multi-modal system that does not compromise the character of our neighborhoods and developed areas is a recurring theme of our plans. Then, as now, the task is to refine a vision that can be realized and which future generations will choose to inherit on its merits, rather than discard for its irrelevance.

Montgomery County was, and is, a prosperous jurisdiction in the shadow of the nation's capital. Its political leaders and citizens recognize the importance of personal mobility to economic well-being and a good standard of living. At the same time, they are aware of the imperatives of fiscal prudence, efficient use of land, and a good environment. The refinement of the goal and objectives that will proceed from this fact sheet will help to inform and guide those who will decide how to balance these issues.

Forces shaping the County's landscape prior to the late 1960s remain with us today. Innovations in the technology and delivery of transport,

in particular the automobile and supporting highway networks, made it possible for a great number of travelers to traverse distances quickly. This loosened the hold of the central city, and helped make possible the emergence of suburbs, whose less concentrated pattern of residential and retail development was already well established at the time of the 1969 General Plan. To a degree not anticipated in 1969, employers have found Montgomery County an attractive place to locate for many of the same reasons residents have: less expensive land than in Washington, D.C., a high quality of life, and a good transportation system. The subsequent growth in suburban employment, creating travel between, as well as along, corridors poses one of many challenges to the successful realization of the vision put forth by the 1969 General Plan goal and objectives.

Officials, citizens, developers, planners, and implementing agencies will work together to design complementary land use and transportation systems as sites around the County develop and redevelop. Today, there are several locations in the County which offer alternative models of the land use-transportation relationship for the future. The "Edge City" model, whose current local prototype is the Davis Tract, is a low to moderate density, spread-out office retail development, which is most efficiently served by the automobile traveling along wide, high-capacity thoroughfares. In contrast, "suburban downtown" is a higher density employment and residential development whose focal point is a transit station and whose design brings many activities within walking distance. Local streets are narrower, slowing traffic, and buildings are set closer to the street to the benefit of pedestrians. Bethesda is a local prototype of this. The different transportation systems each of these concepts calls for should be carefully considered in the context of the wedges and corridors vision.

In 1969, this element of the General Plan was called "circulation". The word "transportation" is proposed as a replacement for several reasons. First, "circulation" refers to movement from one

point to another, usually within a certain circumscribed area, whereas the word "transportation" implies movement, but not within any boundary. Second, "transportation" refers to the means, or mode of travel, whereas "circulation" does not.

The following five sections highlight changes in travel behavior, travel patterns, trip time, means of transportation, and supply and demand.

I. CHANGES IN TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

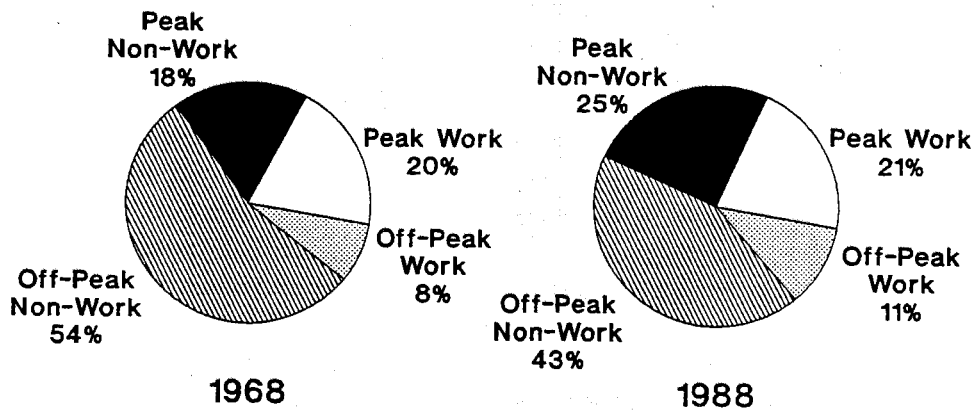
* Growth in both population and employment and more frequent travel by existing residents resulted in more trips in 1988 than in 1968. Overall, the total number of trips made by County residents for all purposes increased by 68 percent between 1968 and 1988. The total daily trip rate has grown from about 2.3 to 2.8 trips per person per day. Non-work trip rates increased from 1.67 to 1.95 trips per person per day, while

work trips per resident worker have decreased, from 1.60 to 1.46 trips per day. Advances in telecommuting, flexible work hours, and increases in part-time work may have contributed to the decrease in the rate of work trips per worker.

* Growth in peak period auto travel exceeds growth in non-peak travel in Montgomery County. In 1988, 46 percent of all trips made by auto drivers and passengers were made during the AM and PM peak periods, up from 38 percent in 1968. In 1988, there was a higher proportion of non-work trips (25 percent) made during peak periods than work trips (21 percent), as compared with 1968 when work trips were more prevalent (20 percent vs. 18 percent). The peak period hours are defined as the hours between 6:00-9:00 AM and 3:30-6:30 PM.

* A major factor influencing growth in non-work trips made during peak periods is the increase in "linked trips". Linked trips are the

More Non-Work Auto Trips Were Made in the Peak Period Than Work Trips; Work Trips In Off-Peak Hours Increased



Source: Metro. Wash. Council of Govts. & Montgomery County Planning Department