

off-peak weekday and weekend congestion do so at levels *below* those experienced during the typical weekday peaks.

- **Average and Spot Speed on Freeways:** Observation from aerial surveillance of freeway congestion shows that the weekday peak periods typically have three to four hours of congested conditions, but data from the State Highway Administration traffic detectors show that there can be significant day-to-day variation.
- **Route Specific Speed and Travel Times:** Travel time and speed data for a sample of specific routes show more congestion in the evening peak period than the morning peak period. The data also show that while much congestion is based upon the alternating and conflicting flows of traffic at intersections, the location of the congestion can extend far back in queues from the intersection. The ratio of the slowest to the fastest route travel time may vary from 150% to 250% slower, which for long routes can be as much as 20 to 30 or more minutes of delay. There is a diurnal variation in route travel times that is similar to that observed for the variation in traffic volumes.
- **Short-term Forecasts of Congestion based on New Development:** When compared with the base case, in the year 2010 the County's road network will add 10% more lane-miles countywide through the transportation improvements contained in the regional Constrained Long Range Plan. Countywide during the evening peak hour, the network will also experience a 19% increase in vehicle-miles traveled, a 13% decrease in average speed, and a 65% increase in the number of lane miles operating between 80% and 100% of capacity.
- **Expanded Periodic Tracking of Congestion Including Sampling of Monitored Traffic Operations Data:** Enhanced data collection by directly tracking and periodically sampling congestion conditions, sampling the on-going monitoring of traffic operation activities, and changes in data policies will improve the analysis contained in future Annual Development Approval and Congestion reports.

## 2. Introduction

On October 28, 2003, the County Council passed Resolution #15-375 approving the 2003-5 Annual Growth Policy (AGP) Policy Element. Section F4 of the resolution is titled Annual Development Approval Report, and states the following:

*The Planning Board must submit to the County Council by September 1 each year an updated report listing and describing significant developments approved by that date or expected to be approved by the following July 1 that would impact road and school capacity. The report must include a prioritized list of road and intersection improvements based on current and projected congestion patterns and additional anticipated development.*

This report is intended to meet the requirements set forth in Section F4 of the resolution. The role of this report is to provide current information on both development approvals and the state

of congestion in the County that enables the Council to make informed decisions on where to target transportation infrastructure and operational investment during the next state and county budget cycles. The report is presented annually, and because this is the first report contains a significant amount of new information, it is being presented well prior to September 1. As the report is given again in upcoming years, the depth and breadth of the data and analysis will increase.

Even though this report is primarily on the subjects of congestion and development approvals, the process of prioritizing transportation improvements is *inextricable* from the broader planning goals and policies set forth by the Planning Board and County Council, which are codified in the various area and functional master plans and sector plans for the County. The principles espoused in those documents and in the General Plan, such as focusing investment in the County's designated growth areas, providing a safe and multimodal (highways, transit, bikeways and sidewalks) transportation system, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, investing in County's urbanized centers, providing geographic balance in transportation investment, and others still are considered in preparing the priority lists of projects contained in the report, even though they are not explicitly enumerated in the Council resolution. To ignore these principles would be disingenuous to the citizens invested in the County's planning process.

### 3. Development Approvals and Planned Transportation Improvements

According to the Round 6.3 Cooperative Forecasts, Montgomery County will add 23,000 households (about a 7% increase) and 45,000 jobs (about a 9% increase) during the years 2005 to 2010. Table 3.1 shows the forecasts for the years 2000-2010

Table 3.1: Round 6.3 Cooperation Forecasts 2000-2010, County Totals

<b>2000</b> Round 6.3 Households 325,000	<b>2005</b> Round 6.3 Households 347,000	<b>2010</b> Round 6.3 Households 370,000
<b>2000</b> Round 6.3 Jobs 545,000	<b>2005</b> Round 6.3 Jobs 585,000	<b>2010</b> Round 6.3 Jobs 630,000