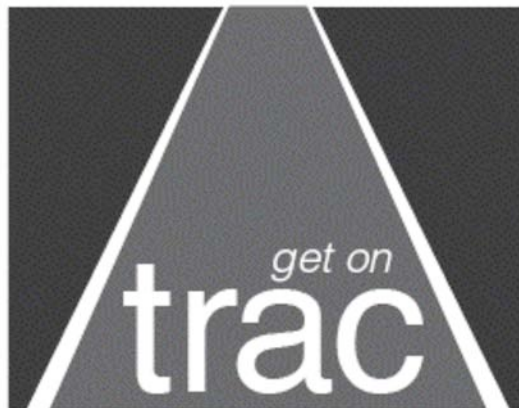


**A Comparison of the Number of Travelers Riding MARC
and Driving I-95 and MD-295
*between the Hours of 5 and 9 a.m.***

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Summary

MARC matters! MARC service removes a significant number of vehicles from congested I-95 and MD-295. A comparison of the number of people driving south in the I-95/MD-295 corridor during rush hour to the number of people riding the MARC train reveals that MARC carries 10% to 13% of the people south across MD-100 between 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and north across MD-100 between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., up to 21% of travelers are on the train. If MARC service were terminated, traffic loads and travel times on those roads would increase significantly. Conversely, if MARC ridership were increased by 50% to 100%, peak vehicle loads and travel times would fall. These numbers actually under report the train share because the highway numbers include inter-state and freight traffic while the train numbers exclude AMTRAK passengers.

Between 5:00 and 9:00 a.m. the southbound trains average 91% to 95% of sitting capacity, and during the peak 6:00 to 8:00 time operate well above 100% of capacity such that conductors have expressed to the author concerns for passenger safety because of overcrowding. These numbers, based on one sample in 2002 and two in the fall of 2005, have remained remarkably consistent. The MARC train carries a significant fraction of the southbound commuter traffic and would likely carry more if its capacity were increased. When high quality transit that meets people's needs is provided, it will be used. These findings, which highlight the importance of MARC, imply that the reason more people do not ride the train is a lack of capacity rather than a lack of demand.

The quickest and least expensive way for MARC to contribute to Maryland's goal of doubling transit ridership and the only way to significantly increase MARC's fare box recovery is to fill the counter flow empty seats. That is to increase the commuters bound for Baltimore. If good MARC service with good connections can capture 10% of the Washington bound traffic, then good MARC service with good connections to major employment centers in Baltimore City coupled with good advertising should be able to attract more than 5% of the I-95 traffic northbound from the Columbia region and southbound from the White Marsh area. These one to two thousand potential riders going to Baltimore would fill otherwise empty seats, provide 2,000 to 4,000 additional rides per day (a 6% to 12% increase), boost MARC revenue by \$1.5 to \$3 million a year, and reduce highway congestion inbound to Baltimore. However, providing the required connections will require significant MTA operating changes in Baltimore, such as improved connections, and increased morning northbound service to community stations such as St. Denis.