

*Preliminary Assessment of Transportation Issues Related to
Proposed Casino at Gateway South*

DRAFT - 9/16/09

This memorandum summarizes the perspective of the City of Baltimore, Department of Transportation (DOT), with regard to transportation system capacity and potential improvement needs related to the siting of a casino facility in the Gateway South redevelopment area. While a comprehensive transportation analysis and plan for the subject development is underway, pursuant to both the State's requirements for Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) siting and the City's traffic impact ordinance, **DOT is quite comfortable that the casino can be accommodated with only modest improvements to the local transportation network.** These improvements relate more to the quality of the local infrastructure (i.e. roadway resurfacing, replacement of traffic signals, etc.) rather than the capacity of the transportation system.

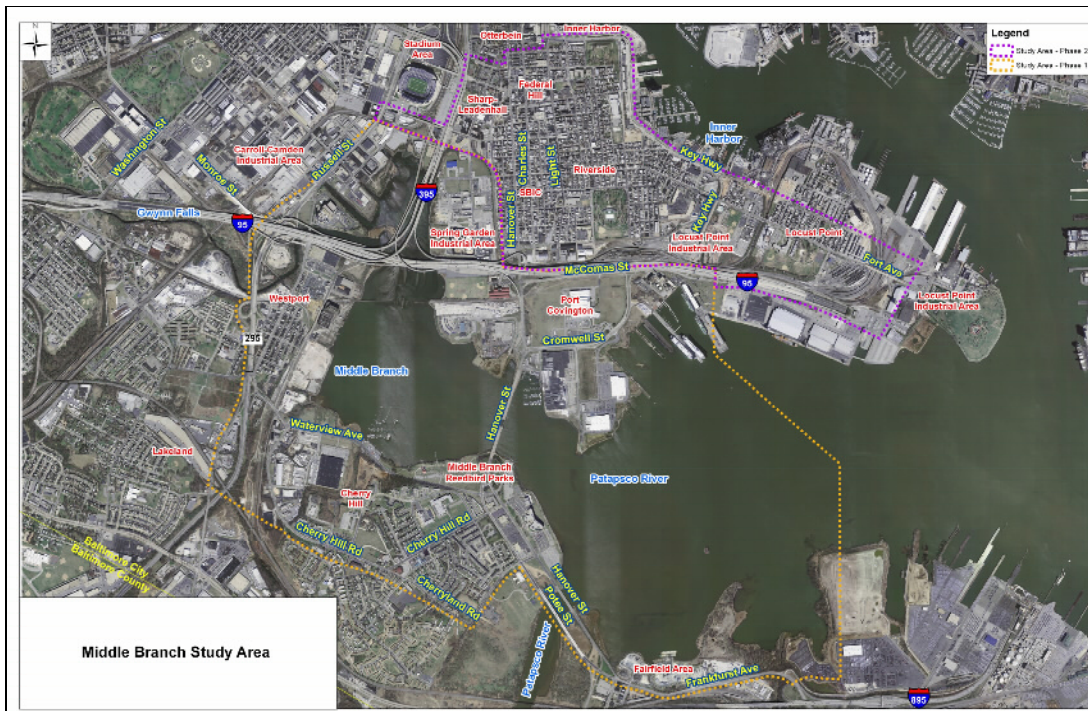
More importantly, given the several proposed developments in the Middle Branch redevelopment area, we believe that a **comprehensive, but incremental and shared-burden approach is required, rather than placing the full costs of infrastructure improvements on the "last mover" in a dynamic real estate market.** Our experience, for example, in Southeast Baltimore shows, that a comprehensive, subregional approach to transportation planning and investment is more equitable than a parcel-by-parcel, development-by-development approach.¹ To this end, although unrelated to the proposed casino, the Department of Transportation is planning to introduce legislation this Fall replacing the traffic impact ordinance requiring negotiations on a development-by-development basis, with an ordinance that assesses traffic mitigation fees on the number of unmitigated trips generated per development.

Comprehensive Transportation Planning for the Middle Branch Redevelopment Area and Considerations from the Gateway South Redevelopment Plan

In the Fall 2008, DOT initiated the Middle Branch Transportation Plan for the area outlined in Exhibit 1, below. The purpose of the Middle Branch Transportation Plan is to comprehensively assess the area's multi-modal transportation network for issues of capacity, quality and safety, based on existing travel conditions and land uses, and to identify transportation system improvements based on future development potential. This plan built a detailed quantitative data set from traffic counts, transit ridership databases, the City's pavement management system, field observations, development proposals, and from other sources. Multiple stakeholder interviews and community meetings were held to gather qualitative data, identify goals and desires, and to consider alternatives.

¹ This is probably more true in an urban environment like the proposed Gateway South location that is largely built-out than it is for the proposed suburban and rural VLT locations.

EXHIBIT 1 - MIDDLE BRANCH TRANSPORTATION PLAN AREA



The western side of the Middle Branch area is well-served by multiple modes of transportation (see Exhibit 1A) beyond its proximity to the Interstate Highway System (I-95, I-895) and regional highway network (Russell Street, Hanover Street, Washington Boulevard, etc.). Three Blue Line (Central Light Rail Line) stations – Cherry Hill, Westport and Hamburg Street – connect the Middle Branch area to downtown Baltimore, BWI Airport and the MARC Train (at Camden Yards). Multiple MTA bus routes serve the area and connect to a Greyhound intercity bus terminal just south of the proposed casino site. The Gwynns Falls Trail provides excellent bicycle access from surrounding neighborhoods, providing another option for accessing the area.

EXHIBIT 1A - MULTIMODAL NETWORK



From a technical traffic capacity perspective, intersection level of the service (LOS)² in the Middle Branch area today functions quite well. There are no intersections in the study area, see Exhibits 2A & 2B, which operate at an unacceptable level (i.e. motorist delay of more than 56 seconds at a particular intersection).

² Level of Service is a method of describing how well traffic is moving based on motorist delay.

EXHIBIT 2A – EXISTING LOS – PHASE I STUDY AREA

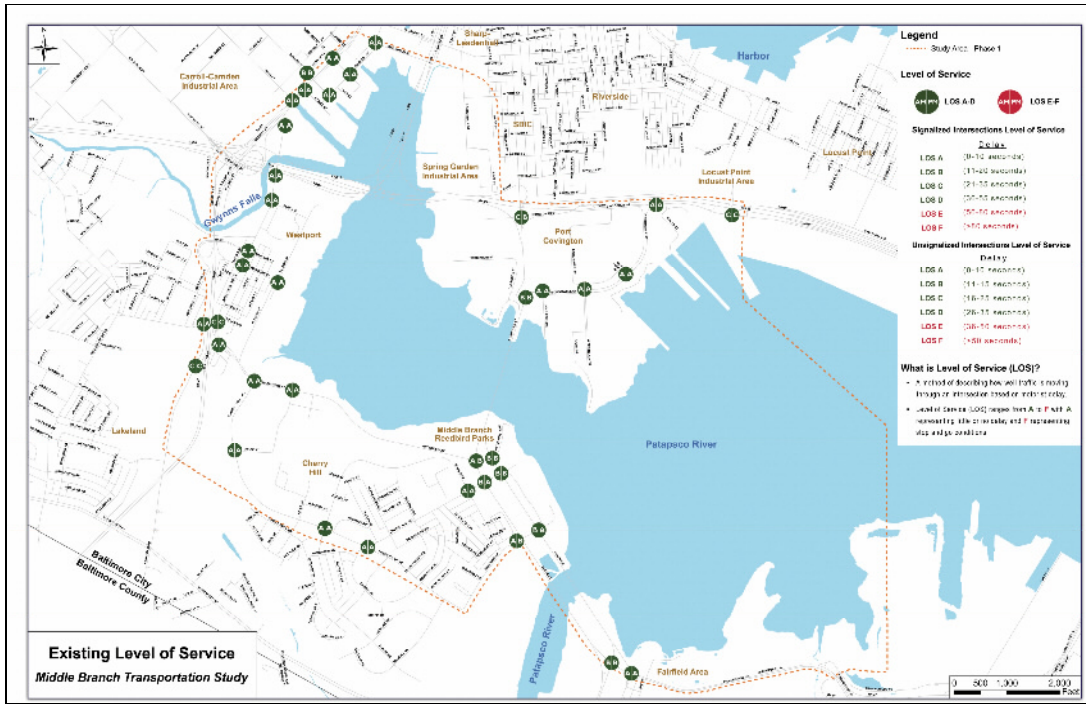
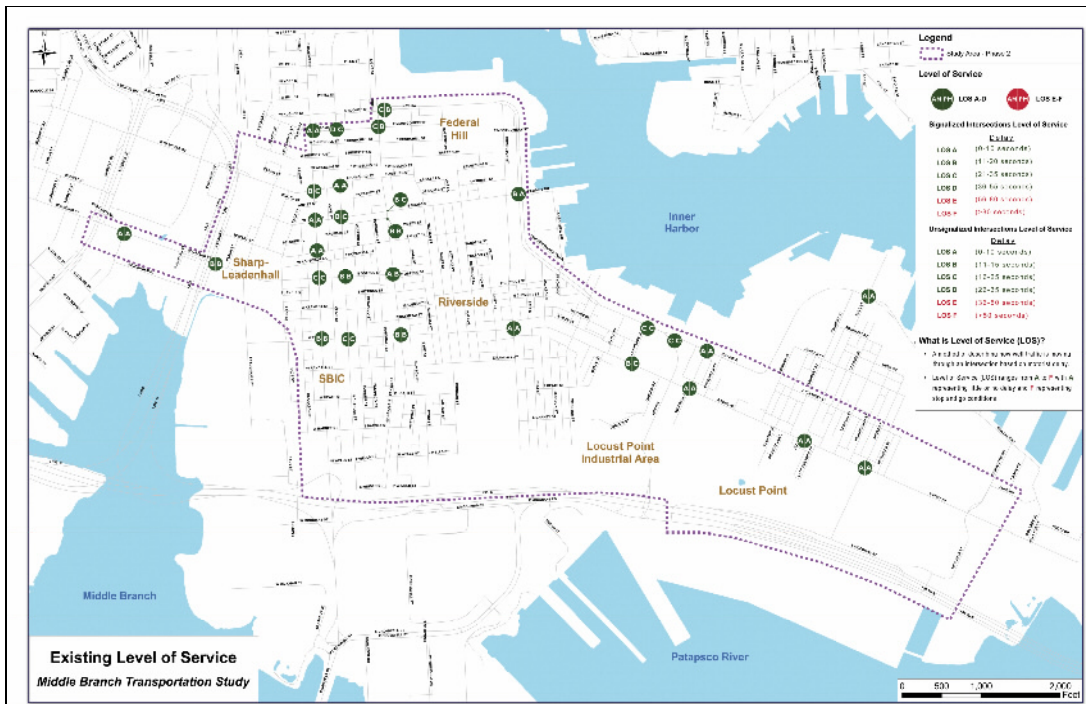


EXHIBIT 2B – EXISTING LOS – PHASE II STUDY AREA



Under future development conditions (full build of multiple developments in design-year 2030) and with capacity/safety improvements programmed for the area near Westport, only 2 of the 24 intersections in the western portion of the Middle Branch area, see Exhibits 3A & 3B, would experience at unacceptable levels of service. Those two, Russell Street/Bush Street and Russell Street/Bayard Street, are within a block of the proposed casino.

EXHIBIT 3A – FUTURE LOS – PHASE I STUDY AREA

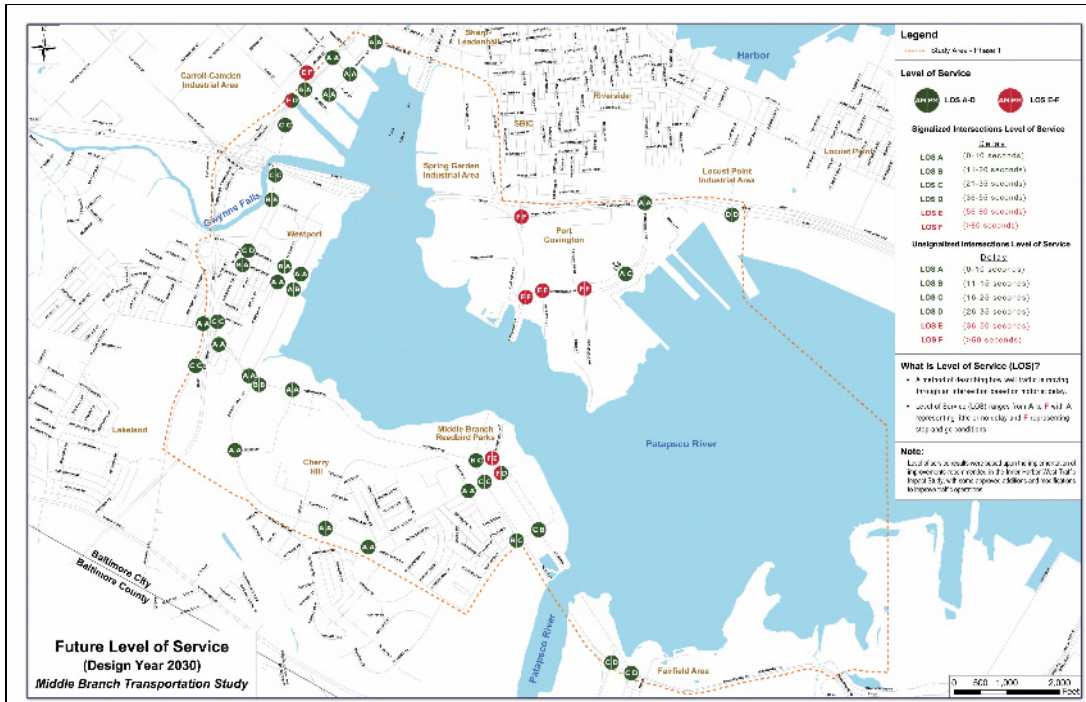
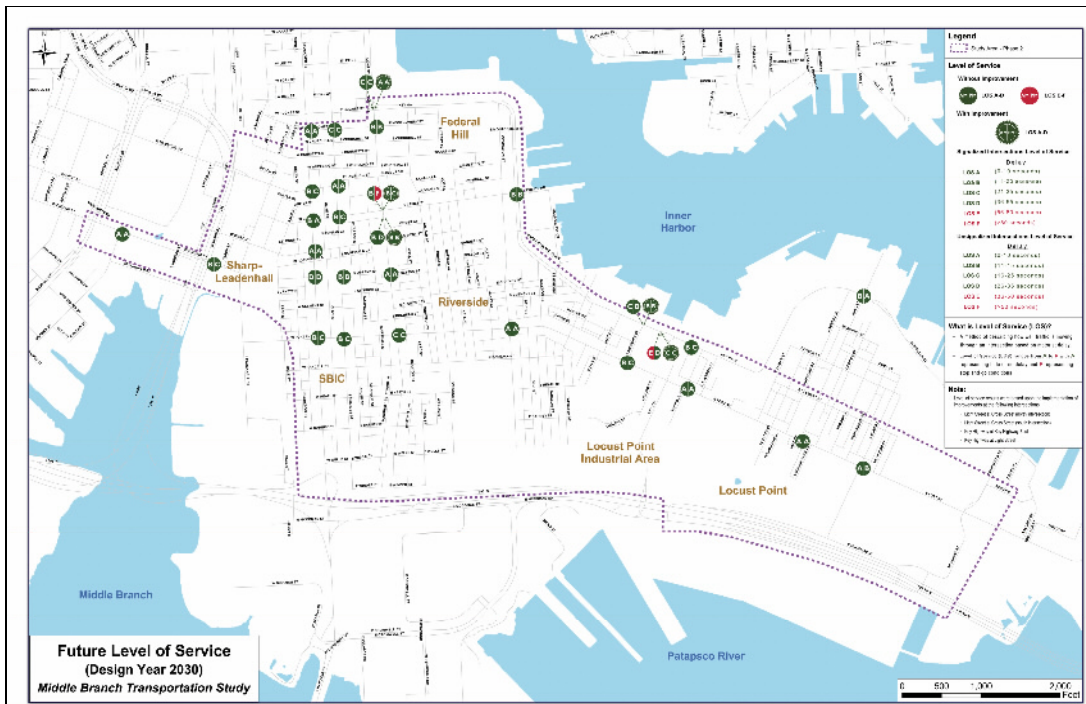


EXHIBIT 3B – FUTURE LOS – PHASE II STUDY AREA



Potential mitigation options for the two failing intersections noted above were established when the proposed casino site had been under a more intensive and traditional mixed-use redevelopment plan.³ Due to the change in market conditions and slowing of the development program for Gateway South, these mitigation options were not taken to full design; however, a conceptual traffic mitigation plan was developed that would have returned these intersections to a more acceptable level of service. The mitigation plan assumed reversing certain one-way traffic flows, signaling the intersection at Worchester Street and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle trips to/from the site. These strategies are contained in the Gateway South Planned Unit Development Ordinance (PUD) and controlling of future development on the site.

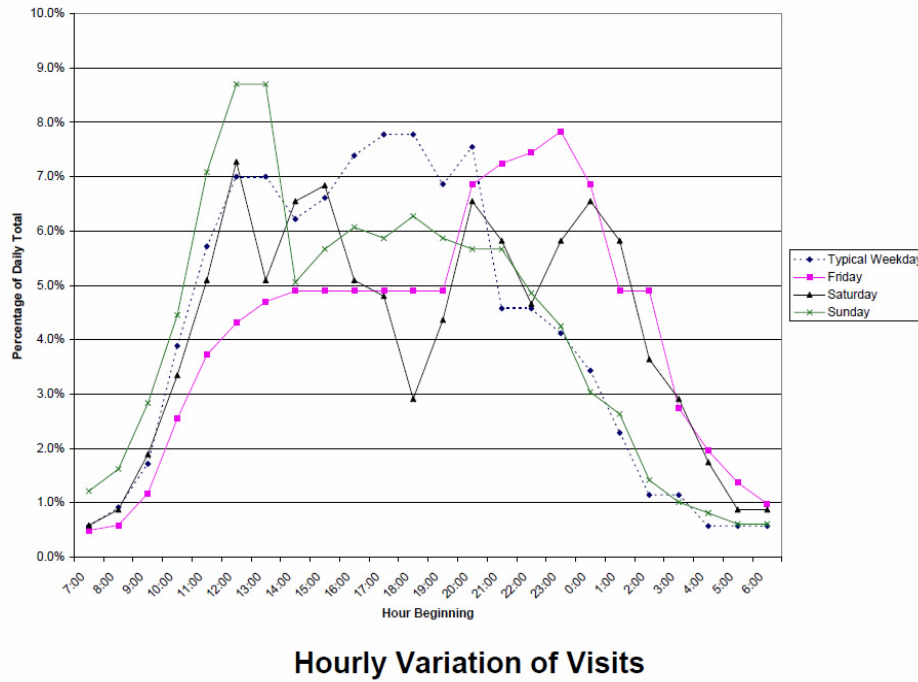
Comparing Casino Traffic Impacts to the Gateway South Traffic Impacts

Based on preliminary analysis by DOT and its consultants, the proposed casino development program has a lesser traffic impact than would have been generated by the proposed Gateway South development. First and foremost, all intersections in the study area operate an acceptable level of service during off-peak travel times. Secondly, given the travel patterns associated with a casino i.e. more multiple-occupant vehicles and motor coaches, and a more dispersed pattern of

³ The Gateway South Traffic Impact Study was based on 1,176,000 SF of office space, 152,000 SF of retail space, a 20,000 SF inter-city bus terminal, a 90,000 SF sportsplex and 3,300 parking spaces, yielding 15,682 daily trips and 2,190 afternoon peak hour trips.

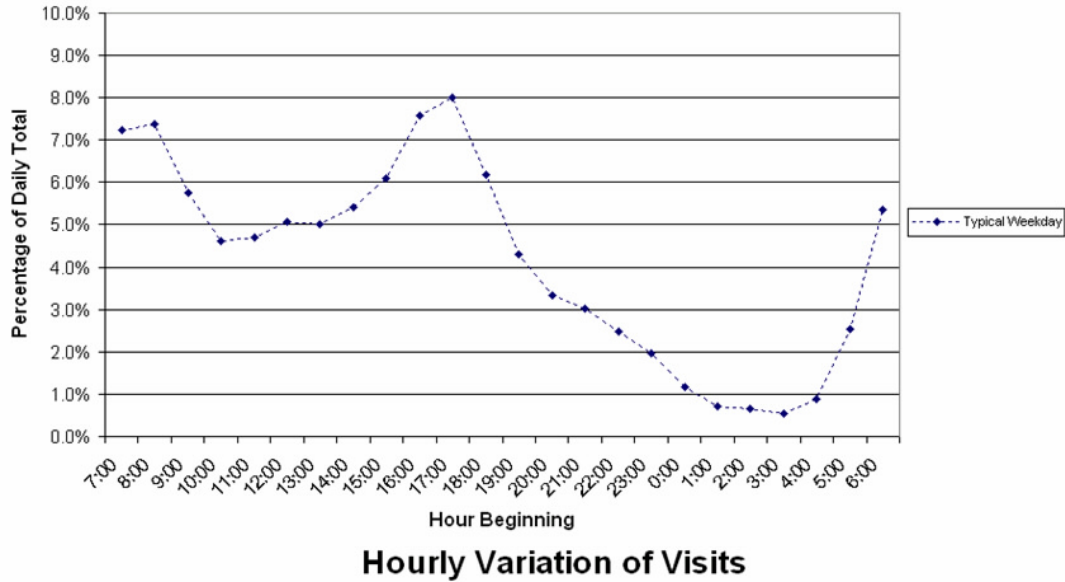
arrival and departure (see Exhibit 4A)⁴, the impacts on and during the critical peak-hour local and regional travel patterns can be assumed to be much less significant than a traditional residential, office or retail development plan.

EXHIBIT 4A – GRAPH OF TIME OF DAY TRAVEL PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH CASINO



⁴ Source: Casino Niagara in Niagara Falls, Canada (graph was presented in the Stadium Event Traffic Impact Study prepared for the Majestic Star Casino in Pittsburgh, PA; GAI Consultants, Inc and IBI Group, September 2007)

**EXHIBIT 4B – GRAPH OF TIME OF DAY TRAVEL PATTERNS
ON RUSSELL STREET BETWEEN BAYARD STREET AND WORCHESTER STREET**



Improvements Already Programmed for Construction in the Area

Given the comprehensive transportation planning approach for the Middle Branch, the City of Baltimore has already programmed \$_____ for transportation improvements for the area. These improvements include both roadway capacity and safety improvements as well as operational/intelligent transportation systems improvements to maximize existing system capacity. Longer-term planning is underway for more intensive transit service and interchange improvements to further improve regional highway access, and the implementation of transportation demand management strategies is ready to move at the pace of development efforts.

TABLE 1 - PROGRAMMED IMPROVEMENTS IN RUSSELL STREET CORRIDOR

Improvement	Schedule	Cost
MD 295/Russell Street ITS improvements (fiber optic cabling, CCTV for incident detection, traffic detector upgrades, etc.)	Fall 2009 advertisement; Spring 2010 construction	\$1,200,000
Replacement of Variable Messaging Signs leading to Camden Yards Sports Complex	Fall 2009 advertisement; Spring 2010 construction	\$2,300,000
Reconstruct MD 295 interchange at Annapolis Road/Waterview Avenue for safety and capacity enhancement.	Fall 2010 advertisement; Spring 2011 construction	\$6,000,000 ⁵
TOTAL		\$9,500,000

Areas for Detailed Study

Baltimore City Ordinance 06-345 requires a third-party Traffic Impact Study for any land use greater than 15,000 square feet, where a zoning change or building permit is required. The Ordinance focuses on general traffic conditions (intersection levels of service) While overall traffic levels of service are expected to remain acceptable for all but the two previously-cited intersections, there are some highly-localized issues which require more detailed operational analysis and coordination with stakeholders. With the concurrence of the Local Development Council (LDC), DOT has laid out an aggressive schedule for analyzing these issues and preparing options for mitigation. Among the issues which the DOT and LDC have identified for additional analysis and planning are:

- Preparation of the Hamburg Street station (Blue Line/Central Light Rail) to accommodate additional walk-up patrons, connections to local/shuttle bus service, etc.
- Management of at-grade railroad crossings at Warner, Bush, Bayard and Ridgely Streets to minimize additional pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.
- Notwithstanding the net gain in on-site parking at the casino site, resolving issues associated with motorcoach and general parking during Orioles and Ravens games and other special events.
- Maintaining vehicular access to South Baltimore neighborhoods during Orioles and Ravens games and other special events, due to road closures normally associated with such events.
- Commercial vehicle access to Carroll-Camden Industrial Park due to the closure of a portion of Warner Street, now used as an informal turn-around for trucks arriving in the area from the south.

Comment [j1]: This issue sounds to be solely related Orioles/Ravens events and not related to Casino traffic

Raising these issues should not be viewed as placing any conditionality on DOT’s support for the proposed casino location; simply, we are pointing out to the Site Selection Commission that a

⁵ Does not include \$11,000,000 for reconstruction of Annapolis/Waterview Bridge over 295 being performed simultaneously

finer level of detail is required as the overall project moves from its concept phase into detailed design and operations planning phase. Preliminary solutions for many of these issues have been identified by DOT but require a fuller vetting with stakeholders.

Infrastructure Quality Improvements are Greatest Need

Like many areas in the City transitioning from industrial to commercial and residential uses, the Gateway South area is in need of basic roadway maintenance, from the resurfacing of streets to reconstruction of traffic signals and improved street lighting. As part of its MOU with Baltimore City Entertainment Group, the City has committed \$2 million towards necessary infrastructure improvements. The City further expects that Local Impact Funds will be used for further infrastructure improvements, either on a PAYGO basis or by issuing County Transportation Bonds (via MDOT) to be repaid by the Local Impact Funds. Specific infrastructure quality improvements will be determined based on the City's asset management approach and in consultation with the BCEG and the LDC.

Comment [j2]: Are these transportation only?

Comment [j3]: I assume County includes the City?

Conclusion

The Gateway South area of Baltimore's Middle Branch redevelopment area is well-suited to handle additional traffic associated with a proposed casino. Excellent regional highway access and multimodal travel options make Gateway South an ideal site for such a facility, as traffic impacts will be generally limited to major roadways – not nearby neighborhoods. While issues of unique concern to the adjoining residential and industrial communities need to be addressed, they are not a barrier to the successful development of a casino in Gateway South. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation, therefore, recommends approval of the Gateway South casino application by the Baltimore City Entertainment Group.