

Action Committee for Transit

www.actfortransit.org

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring, MD 20907

December 7, 2008

Mr. Isiah Leggett, County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Subject: Bus Rapid Transit - immediately and without cost

Dear Mr. Leggett:

Bus Rapid Transit has been widely advocated in recent weeks as an option for improving the county's transportation network. The Action Committee for Transit has identified numerous locations in the county where Bus Rapid Transit concepts could be put into service immediately, without any capital expenditure. A list of specific recommendations is attached.

We urge you to take immediate action on these items. Not only will they improve the speed and reliability of bus service, and thereby attract more riders, but they will yield cost savings for Ride-On and WMATA. We estimate that the aggregate annual saving, because bus drivers will spend less time waiting at traffic lights, would be in six figures.

The core concept of Bus Rapid Transit, which these measures exemplify, is that the movement of buses carrying large numbers of passengers is prioritized ahead of the movement of single-occupant vehicles. Without a policy of priority for buses, any Bus Rapid Transit plan is doomed to failure; the buses will be stuck in the same traffic as autos. Implementation of the attached list of actions will be a practical test of whether the institutional, political, and policy framework now existing in the county is compatible with successful implementation of BRT. We suggest that MCDOT staff suspend advocacy for BRT alternatives on the Purple Line and Corridor City Transitway rights of way pending the results of this experiment.

ACT has long been a strong supporter of Bus Rapid Transit concepts as a means of upgrading bus service. While buses cannot substitute effectively for rail on high-ridership trunk corridors, they are an essential part of our transit network and they need to be made better. The attached list of BRT actions offers a means of making transportation progress even in this time of fiscal stringency. We encourage you to move forward.

Sincerely,



Ben Ross
President

cc: Mr. Phil Andrews, County Council President
Mr. Royce Hanson, Planning Board Chair
Mr. Nat Bottigheimer, WMATA
Mr. Phil McLaughlin, MCDOT, Ride-On route planning

Bus Rapid Transit Concepts That Could Be Implemented Immediately

1. **Rockville:** At Church St./Hungerford Drive intersection, move stop line for cars approaching intersection on westbound Church Street to the east, beyond the driveway used by buses exiting the Metro station, so that buses leaving Metro station are not blocked by automobiles backed up at signal.
2. Reduce period of signal cycle at Church St./Hungerford Drive intersection to one-half of current duration (so that average wait until next green light is cut in half).
3. **Bethesda:** Reduce period of signal cycle from 100 to 50 seconds at Woodmont/Edgemoor and Old Georgetown/Commerce intersections where buses exit Metro station.
4. Adjust signal synchronization so that buses leaving Bethesda Metro and turning left onto Woodmont Ave. hit green lights when turning left onto Montgomery Ave. and at subsequent signals on Montgomery Ave.
5. **Medical Center:** Allow left turns by buses from northbound Rockville Pike onto Cedar Lane at all hours.
6. **Glenmont:** Increase the duration of the green signal for buses leaving the Metro station onto Georgia Avenue.
7. Adjust signal synchronization so that buses leaving Metro station and turning left onto Georgia Ave. hit green lights at subsequent intersections (Georgia/Layhill, Layhill/Glenallen, and Georgia/Randolph intersections).
8. Increase the duration of the green signal for left turns from southbound Georgia Ave. onto Randolph Road.
9. **Silver Spring:** Allow westbound buses on East-West Highway to use existing right-turn lanes to bypass queuing at Jones Mill Road and 16th Street. (This is an element of the TSM alternative in the Purple Line DEIS but can be implemented independently.)
10. **Montgomery College:** Move bus stops at Montgomery College's Germantown and Rockville campuses from beyond parking lots to directly in front of the academic buildings.