

# Action Committee for Transit

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

November 5, 2009

Mr. Phil Andrews  
President, Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave.  
Rockville, MD 20850

Subject: Growth Policy

Dear Mr. Andrews:

Is a hair of the dog the way to cure a drunk? Of course not, and more asphalt is no remedy for the hangover from a fifty-year binge of auto-oriented sprawl.

The basic concept of the current Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance is that congestion can be prevented by adding lanes to intersections in the vicinity of new buildings. But this is a medicine that only makes the underlying disease worse. Walking to train stations and bus stops becomes difficult and dangerous, so more people drive. Economic incentives drive new development into outlying areas where transit is unavailable and driving distances are long. Traffic that makes its way through newly widened intersections just creates more jam-ups in the surrounding areas.

Traffic congestion is not an isolated problem; it is a regional disease. Its cause is too much driving, not a localized lack of road capacity in a few business centers. As things now stand, the APFO treats the symptom and makes the disease worse.

The Planning Board's growth policy recommendations are a very modest step toward the needed reversal of course. We strongly urge you to approve the recommended changes for White Flint. We also support (i) using the full capacity of urban roadways at LOS E; (ii) transfer of trips to Metro stations under PAMR; (iii) more accurate trip generation rates; and (iv) expansion of the White Flint policy area. We support the alternative PAMR procedure, but with stricter criteria for "high-quality transit." We oppose the creation of a Life Sciences Policy Area.

Sprawl development and highway widening have created a transportation mess. The APFO is part and parcel of this failed policy. It does not prevent traffic jams; it creates them. A change of course is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Ben Ross  
President