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Source: Action Committee for Transit

## HAGERSTOWN-AREA POLL FAVORS MARC EXTENSION OVER I-270 WIDENING BY OVER 70%

Hagerstown's NBC-25 television station finds that viewers overwhelmingly prefer transit over highway widening as a way to deal with traffic on I-270.

In an internet poll taken last Thursday and Friday, the station asked "What is the best solution for dealing with traffic congestion on I-270?" Extending MARC commuter rail to Hagerstown was favored by 502 viewers, or 73%. Only 184 respondents, or 27%, supported adding more lanes to I-270. Here are the results:

[http://your4state.com/content/poll/?poll\\_id=3952](http://your4state.com/content/poll/?poll_id=3952)

The poll is not based on a scientifically designed sample, and it is subject to sampling biases that are likely to tilt the results to some degree. But it has substantial value in assessing public opinion, given the landslide result, the large sample size, and the way the poll was publicized (it was announced on the Hagerstown TV station and its website, and nowhere else). Little doubt can remain that extending MARC is a very popular idea in Washington County.

The station ran the poll after reporting on a plan developed by the Action Committee for Transit to expand transit instead of widening I-270. One element of the ACT plan is to extend MARC commuter rail service to Hagerstown, using a partially abandoned railroad line. The full TV report is here:

<http://your4state.com/content/fulltext/?cid=75022>

The entire ACT plan is shown on the attached map. In addition to the Hagerstown rail service, it includes an extension of Metro's Red Line to Germantown, all day MARC service between Frederick and Union Station in Washington, and a pair of new light rail lines. One light rail line would go from Shady Grove to Clarksburg via Kentlands and Germantown. The other would run in the middle of Route 355 (Rockville Pike and Frederick Avenue) from White Flint out to Lakeforest Mall and connect to MARC, the Red Line, and the other light rail line at Metropolitan Grove. Full text of the plan is here:

<http://www.actfortransit.org/archives/positions/2009Jul26PsnVision270.pdf>

"This poll shows the breadth of support for transit in Maryland," commented ACT president Ben Ross. "It's a myth that transit is only backed in Baltimore City and Montgomery and Prince George's County."

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