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ACT Slams Montgomery County DOT's Anti-Transit Policies

The Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation has become systematically hostile to transit riders and pedestrians, charges a front-page article in the [January 2010 issue](#) of the Action Committee for Transit's quarterly newsletter, *Transit Times*. "The county's traffic engineering philosophy," commented ACT president Ben Ross, "is to push pedestrians, bicycles, and buses out of the way so that there are more cars on the road."

The 600-member advocacy group backed its charge with a five-point bill of particulars:

- MCDOT forced a four-month halt in the Maryland Transit Administration's work to design a [new Metro entrance](#) in Bethesda which will also serve as the future Red Line - Purple Line connection.
- MCDOT [opposes provisions of the White Flint master plan that would make Rockville Pike more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists](#). It insists that the road's overriding function is to carry high-speed traffic into D.C.
- MCDOT is trying to divert \$40 million that has been designated for improved pedestrian access to the Medical Center Metro station and use the money to build an automobile underpass. The underpass is part of a [larger highway-building scheme](#) whose full extent is being kept secret from the public.
- MCDOT plans to [waste \\$80 million](#) by building an overpriced \$80,000-per-space garage in Bethesda, even though the garage across the street isn't full.
- More than a year has gone by since ACT made [specific suggestions](#) of cost-free ways to speed up bus movement, and the county still has not responded.

"That's not even the end of it," added ACT vice president Hans Riemer. He pointed out that the county DOT has [stalled completion of the Metropolitan Branch bicycle trail](#) through Silver Spring and insists that local streets should be built with wide lanes that encourage cars to move at unsafe speeds.

Riemer observed that MCDOT's policies undermine the county's efforts to promote smart growth and non-automobile transportation. "Our Transportation Department is years behind the times," he said. "The kinds of places their policies create--like today's Rockville Pike--are often the most difficult and unpleasant places for people to live, to visit, to commute. These policies destroy community life and they are less and less effective at promoting economic growth. The path we are on is unsustainable."

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