



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

## TRANSIT TIMES

Volume 2, Number 2. April - June, 1988.

### NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**A RESOUNDING CALL TO ACTION!** The Editor of this renowned serial reminds its readers that this is YOUR newsletter as much as his. Once again, he solicits you to contribute to the Times whenever possible. (You can send stuff to the P. O. box in Silver Spring, if you like. Harry is pretty good about forwarding mail). Currently, there is only an elite core of two dedicated contributors besides myself (the Editor gives them eternal thanks). Here are the items the Times has tried to cover: "significant" changes in service or fares, new technology, public hearings and other ACTivities. Additional ideas are welcomed. In general Transit Times tries to report news not covered by the commercial media. This creates its own problems since I would like to get news at the neighborhood level, but can't be everywhere at once. My only request is that you clarify ambiguous terms such as "ICC."

**MTA COMES TO COUNTY.** On Monday, April 25 the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) began serving Montgomery County. Two routes are currently operated. One is called the "I-270 Flyer" and operates between Thurmont and the main Greyhound/Trailways terminal in the District. Intermediate points include Frederick, Clarksburg, Rock Spring Park, the Bethesda Metro station and Chevy Chase Circle. Three trips (both inbound and outbound) are offered each weekday rushhour. Fare from Frederick is \$2.00. The contracting company is the Catoclin Mountain Stage Lines. The second route is called the "Route 29 Flyer." It operates from downtown Baltimore to downtown Washington via Columbia, Burtonsville and Silver Spring. The fare from Columbia is \$2.50 and the service is operated by Eyre. Eleven trips are operated, including midday. The county transit information center does have the schedules.

**RIDE-ON PROMOTION.** Another series of free concerts is being sponsored by Ride-On. One was held in Wheaton Plaza on April 23. As usual, county personnel were on the scene to answer questions, hand out maps & schedules, and solicit comments from riders. (Just in case you're curious, the musician played a hammer dulcimer this time. A band played dixieland jazz up at Shady Grove last summer). There are plans to have another concert in Silver Spring sometime in August.

**RIDE-ON SUMMARY:** The most significant changes this quarter were in Takoma Park. Effective May 1, routes 3, 13 and 18 began using 21-seat gasoline-powered busses (instead of the standard 31-seat diesel busses). Route 17 no longer goes to the

Takoma Station, but rather finds itself on Philadelphia Avenue. Peak hour frequency on route 13 has been doubled. Midday and weekend service was added, as well as a special "Maple Avenue Shuttle." Peak frequency on route 18 has been multiplied by a factor of 3. Not only has the number of available seats increased, but patrons should be able to make better connections. Some area residents opposed these changes. It is unclear to this editor why they would, since service is more frequent and exhaust should be less of a problem. It is also unclear how citizens managed to convince the County to implement such a major change. Ride-On has been using diesel busses in this area since its beginnings in 1975. The route structure has remained essentially unchanged since 1978. How could ACT find enough clout to, say, multiply service on route 55 by a factor of 3?

**EXTENDED METRORAIL HOURS (and times for peak fares)** A public hearing was held on June 1 by WMATA to get comments on the extension of hours of subway operation and the extension of the period during which peak subway fares would be charged. Tom Fuchs of ACT was the only member of the public to bother to show up for this. He suggested that 5:00 am service be initiated daily. He suggested that there should be at least some time in the morning during which off-peak fares would be charged. If WMATA really needs additional income to justify opening earlier, then a modest increase in peak fares would be in order. Metrorail began weekday operation at 5:30 am on Monday June 27. The times during which peak fares are charged were extended accordingly. Metrobus service changes too minor to mention also occurred. (Included in the docket was a proposal to extend subway service and the higher fares to 5:00 am at an unspecified date).

**SILVER SPRING CBD traffic plans** were the subject of two public meetings at the Silver Spring Armoryplace. The first was held on June 1. Harry Sanders attended along with roughly 50 other citizens. The second meeting was held on June 6. Again, roughly 50 people attended. Notables in attendance were County Transportation Chief McGarry and County Council Chairperson Crenca. Only 5 citizens testified, all of whom spoke against some phase of the proposals. ACT members Harry Sanders and Tom Fuchs spoke. Harry concentrated more on the Georgetown Branch and the need for more sidewalks. Tom spoke more about the proposed changes in the bus system. Both suggested increases in MARC service and light rail. Both wondered why Metrorail's extension to Wheaton had not been mentioned in the proposal.

**OUR SPEAKER AT THE LAST GENERAL MEETING** was David Cottingham of the Coalition of the Capitol Crescent Trail. Mr. Cottingham gave a slide presentation describing their concept for use of the Georgetown Branch. Their main interest is a loop trail using Rock Creek Park and the Georgetown Branch. He described how the Coalition was made up of many diverse organizations, with some supportive and some strongly against transit use. He felt that ACT would be welcome at a future meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### RAIL COMMITTEE

#### 1. Georgetown Branch

Laurel Sand and Gravel (Kingdon Gould) is negotiating to buy the

Georgetown Branch from CSX. With negotiations having failed so far, the Interstate Commerce Commission will likely set the price. There was no agreement on whether ACT should write a letter to the Commission recommending a lower appraised value. However, it was decided that individual letters would be helpful.

## 2. US 29

The attendees agreed that light rail on US 29 has a much lower priority than the Georgetown Branch. We need a volunteer to help Ross Capon on this effort.

## 3. Statewide Study

The Maryland Department of Transportation is conducting a study of 15 to 20 potential transitway corridors (including US 29 and the Intercounty Connector. The "dogs" will be culled out by this October. We need a volunteer to follow this study.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE** Nick Brand has been appointed the new chairman of this committee. Nick has prepared a well-put-together flier for distribution to homes, civic associations and transit users along the Bethesda-Silver Spring corridor.

**BUS COMMITTEE** The Bus Committee wrote another letter to the county DOT. This second letter reiterated our support for more frequent service and evening operation, particularly on Ride-On routes in the Rockville Area. The County has responded to both of our letters and declined to implement any of the proposed changes. The main reason for not increasing service was a lack of funding. Other suggestions included the idea that all bus routes departing from Rockville with the same destination would depart from the same shelter. (ACT felt this would increase ridership in Rockville, but not in Silver Spring because the number of riders there is already too great for the shelters to hold. The County declined this proposal because of the complexity of the route system and the need to coordinate schedules). On a positive note, bus ridership increased 16% last year.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

YEAR	MEMBERSHIPS	DUES	INTEREST	EXPENSES	CUMULATIVE BALANCE
1986	21 New	\$119.00	\$ 0.49	\$ 24.00	\$ 95.49
1987	19 New/10 Renew	\$237.00	\$ 7.50	\$167.57	\$172.42
1988	12 New/18 Renew	\$200.00	\$ 2.41	\$ 90.00	\$284.83
TOTAL	52 New/28 Renew	\$556.00	\$10.40	\$281.57	

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE/CONSTITUTION

The Constitution was approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none against. It is now in effect. The following slate of officers was elected since no other nominations were made by mail. Please note that several positions remain vacant,

particularly in the Rail Committee. Volunteers should contact Harry Sanders.

Co-Chairmen: Tom Fuchs and Foster Morrison  
Vice-Chairman: Ross Capon  
Recording Secretary: Harry Sanders  
Treasurer: Bruce Gilson  
Program Chairman: (vacant)  
Rail Committee Chairman: (vacant)  
Bus Committee Chairman: Tom Fuchs  
Community Outreach: Nick Brand  
Newsletter Editor: Tom Fuchs

#### SCHEDULE AND AGENDA FOR UPCOMING MEETING(S)

The July meeting has been moved to Wednesday, July 27th due to scheduling conflicts. Same time (7:45 pm), same place (Silver Spring Community Center). State Senator Frank Shore has agreed to speak.