



ACTION COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT

Transit Times

The Newsletter of the Action Committee for Transit of Montgomery County, Maryland
Volume 28, Number 1, January 2014

ACT's monthly meetings are held at the Silver Spring Civic Building, One Veterans Place 20910, in the Ellsworth Room at 7:30 PM, the second Tuesday of each month.

The Silver Spring Civic Building is located at the corner of Fenton St & Ellsworth Dr. It is an eight minute walk north from the Silver Spring Metro Station. The nearest bus routes are: Ride-On routes #9, #12, #15, #16, #17, #19 and #20; and, Metrobus routes Z6 and Z8.

Parking is available at the Town Square Garage just across Ellsworth Dr from the Civic Building; it is free after 6:00pm.

For meeting updates check our website listed on pg 2.

Jan 14: Annual Meeting & Election of ACT Officers - see p. 8 for nominations - Come and Vote; Speaker: Shane Farthing, Executive Director, Washington Area Bicycle Association - "Bikeshare in Montgomery - How is it working?"

Feb 11: Speaker TBD

March 11: Speaker: Rob Troup, Deputy General Manager, WMATA - "Red Line Progress Report"

April 8: No ACT meeting. Instead, Book party for Dead End: Suburban Sprawl and the Rebirth of American Urbanism, New book by Ben Ross, former ACT President

May 13: Speaker from D.C. Dept. of Transportation - "DC's Georgia Ave. Corridor Streetcar - Could It Connect to Silver Spring?"

Feature Articles

- ACT President's Message (p. 1)
- County Council Approves Bus Rapid Transit Plan (p. 3)
- Board of Public Works Approves P3 DBFOM Approach for Purple Line (p. 4)
- Working Towards a Walkable Bethesda (p. 6)

ACT President's Message

Tina Slater

For 2014, I want to open with a sincere thanks to all our hardworking ACT volunteers. Whether you leafleted at Silver Spring Metro about the incredible delays in opening the transit center ("Sweet Sixteen" flyers marked the span of time since the project's first conception or "Guess the Date and Win" flyers asked folks to figure out the opening date), whether you'll be distributing "Transit Scorecards" before the June 24, 2014 Primary election - we thank you wholeheartedly, or whether you marched in the Purple Line "train costume" (designed by Bee Ditzler!) at the Thanksgiving Parade in Silver Spring or handed out pedestrian safety flyers at Bethesda Elementary School - we thank you for coming out.

Whether you recently joined ACT to push for more transit in our county, or whether you've been a loyal ACT member for 25+ years (like Nick & Carole Brand, Ross Capon, John Carroll, Tom Fuchs, Bruce Gilson, Quon Kwan, Dick McArdle, Ben Ross, Barbara Sanders) - we very much

In Case of Inclement Weather

On the day of an ACT meeting, if the Silver Spring Civic Building is closed, the meeting is canceled.

A notice will be posted on the ACT website if this is the case. Please check there before going to the meeting, if the weather is questionable.

It's Time to Renew Your ACT Membership

You can renew or join ACT by remitting membership dues. Your membership dues are based on the category of membership that you choose:

\$10 [rider]
\$25 [activist]
\$50 [conductor]
\$100 [engineer]

NEW, join or renew online at our website, or send your check for the chosen category of membership to:

Action Committee for Transit

P.O. Box 7074

Silver Spring, MD 20907

www.actfortransit.org

www.twitter.com/actfortransit

www.facebook.com/actfortransit

You may also give your membership dues to Treasurer John Fay at the next ACT meeting. The address on your check will be used as the mailing address unless otherwise indicated.

Your dues support ACT Activities and this newsletter.

appreciate your support. Whether you work behind the scenes mailing out the newsletter, or whether you stuff envelopes for membership renewals and fundraising - we thank you for your dedication. Whether you have served on the ACT Board or one of its committees, whether you testify and attend hearings, or whether you write letters in response to our action alerts - we rely on your expertise and advocacy. Finally, thank you to Cindy Snow, our staff person, who has handled ACT's administrative duties for 12 years, and to the indefatigable Quon Kwan, editor of our *Transit Times* for 15 years.

Because of 25 years of attention and resolve by dedicated ACT members, the Purple Line nears its Record of Decision. There will be more bumps along the way, but our perseverance and tenacity to press forward will see it through completion. This East-West light rail link will decrease congestion in the Beltway area, amplify access to job centers, and improve air quality. I like quotations, so let's keep this one in mind as we cover the ground until opening day: "Fall seven times, stand up eight" (Japanese proverb).

Another project to pay attention to is a third track for the Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) Brunswick Line. CSX moves its freight trains in this corridor, and to move more passenger trains requires a third track. Add in that Frederick County is expected to grow 36% by 2040 (forecast from Metropolitan Washington Council of Government), and it is clear we must have more capacity. We need to make sure we reserve right-of-way and ask the state to start putting in a third track to accommodate more passenger traffic. In addition, we need to keep an eye on the money - money spent to widen I-270 would be money not available for transit.

Finally, the Montgomery County Council unanimously passed a plan for bus rapid transit (BRT). Ten corridors, comprising almost 82 miles, would connect all the major ridership routes to each other, and to the Purple Line, Metro, and MARC. This could be a huge boon to our county, and would, if built, likely be the largest BRT system in the nation. Keep your eye on this. Our county will grow by 200,000 people by 2040, and we simply cannot keep increasing road capacity. The downcounty has no room for more roads. BRT can carry more passengers per lane than single-occupancy vehicles. Person throughput is where we must focus.

You'll elect a new ACT President and Board at the January meeting. I've appreciated all the knowledge and support of this great group of transit activists. And I will proudly support the next ACT President. Please pass this newsletter on to a potential ACT member and renew your membership (online) today to keep our work moving forward!

County Council Approves Bus Rapid Transit Plan

Quon Kwan

On November 26, the Montgomery County Council unanimously approved the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan aka the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Plan. It covers about 82 miles and 110 stations (not including the already master-planned Corridor Cities Transitway) at a cost between \$1 - \$2 billion. The Plan recommends routes, station locations and, for each segment, the minimum right-of-way. The plan also recommends either 0, 1 or 2 BRT-dedicated lanes to be added to a road's cross-section.

The recommendations in the plan will serve as guidelines. Subsequent project planning studies could indicate that a route should be diverted slightly to serve a major destination or that a station location should be adjusted. It does not specify whether a designated BRT route would be on a reversible lane (one direction in the morning peak, the opposite in the evening peak) or bi-directional lane (both directions in both peak periods, with a periodic lane to allow buses to pass). Including the Corridor Cities Transitway, the plan identifies about 82 miles of mostly dedicated lanes and 21 miles of mixed traffic. Subsequent project planning will determine the details of each route and there will be opportunities for public input. Ten routes were recommended as follows:

- Georgia Ave. North (9.6 miles) along MD 97 between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Olney. Identified as a Metrobus ("Y" routes) Priority Corridor Network in 2011.
- Georgia Ave. South (3.9 miles) along MD 97 between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and the District of Columbia (DC) line. Identified as a Metrobus ("Y" routes) Priority Corridor Network in 2011.
- MD 355 North (15.3 miles) between the Rockville Metrorail Station and Redgrave Pl. in Clarksburg, with two branches in Germantown East.

- MD 355 South (7.8 miles) along Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Ave. between the Rockville and Bethesda Metrorail Stations. Despite the fact that it would duplicate the Metrorail Red Line, it is projected to carry the most riders in the entire BRT plan.

- New Hampshire Ave. (8.5 miles) along MD 650 between the Colesville park-and-ride lot and the DC line. Planning for this route will require cooperation with Prince George's County and DC Governments. Identified as a Metrobus (routes K6, K9) Priority Corridor Network in 2009.

- North Bethesda Transitway (2.7 miles) between Montgomery Mall and either the Grosvenor or White Flint Metrorail Station.

- Randolph Rd. (10.1 miles) between the White Flint Metrorail Station and US 29 operating in mixed traffic. An option is open for a dedicated lane between Veirs Mill Road and Rockville Pike.

- University Blvd. (5.5-miles) along MD 193 between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Langley Park. It would connect to—and, for a short stretch, parallel—the Purple Line. Identified as a Metrobus (routes C2 & C4) Priority Corridor Network this year.

- US 29 (12.3-miles) along Colesville Rd./Columbia Pike between Burtonsville and the DC line with two branches in the White Oak area. Slated for a future Metrobus ("Z" routes) Priority Corridor Network study.

- Veirs Mill Rd. (6.2-miles) along MD 586 between the Wheaton and Rockville Metrorail Stations. Identified as a Metrobus ("Q" routes) Priority Corridor Network in 2009.

Check Out the Calculator!

Find out what your carbon dioxide reduction is/would be by taking public transportation instead of driving?

<http://www.publictransportation.org/tools/carbonsavings/Pages/default.aspx>

Board of Public Works Approves P3 DBFOM Approach for Purple Line

Quon Kwan

On November 6, Maryland State Governor Martin O'Malley and the Board of Public Works (BPW) approved the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) plan to Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintain (aka "DBFOM") the Purple Line through a Public Private Partnership (P3). The Board also approved a competitive solicitation to select a private partnership to DBFOM the 16-mile east-west light rail line between Bethesda and New Carrollton. This is the first transit project in the State of Maryland to use a P3 DBFOM approach. Past State of Maryland projects using a P3 approach were the Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore and the I-95 travel plazas.

A new law setting the framework for P3s in Maryland was enacted in April 2013. The law requires that, among other things, a detailed pre-solicitation report be submitted to the BPW (Governor, Treasurer, Comptroller) and Maryland General Assembly regarding the merits of pursuing a P3 approach to a public project. In July 2013, MTA codified the regulations governing P3s. MTA completed all these requirements for the Purple Line P3 as of November 6.

Use of a P3 means that a single private partnership will be responsible to design, build, operate and maintain the project, as well as to provide \$500-\$900 million in private financing. The \$500 - \$900 million will not count against the State of Maryland's debt limit, thus, freeing up \$500 - \$900 million that would be available for other transportation projects – another reason for using a P3 for the Purple. Private financing sources include equity investors and lenders. A lender is the U.S. Government [under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which does not require MTA involvement.]

P3 projects differ from a typical project in which the state separately bids for the design and construction of the transit line and then operates the system, such as the Baltimore Light Rail.

The total cost for constructing the Purple Line is \$2.2 billion, of which the Federal Transit Administration is expected to contribute \$900 million, State of Maryland has committed \$711 million, P3 will probably finance \$500 million, and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties are to pay for the remaining \$99 million.

The private partnership will manage a team of primarily local workers and contractors to ensure successful delivery of the project. The MTA chose a P3 DBFOM approach for the Purple Line for six reasons as briefed to the BPW:

1. The first reason is the operational factor: the Purple Line is a stand-alone asset in which a P3 approach makes consistently good, high-responsive service more likely. Also, MTA noted that no transit providers in the metropolitan Washington, DC region (including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) expressed interest in operating the Purple Line.
2. Second is the private partnership's ability to manage certain types of risk much better than the public sector. The risk for building the Purple Line compared to that for building the Baltimore Red Line is much lower because the latter involves a 3-mile tunnel with 5 stations. Tunneling more likely encounters unexpected problems (e.g., rock), and thus, is not as suitable for a P3. In contrast, the risks for building the Purple Line are more likely to result from coordination and integration activities, which would be better managed by a P3.

However, for the Purple Line, MTA will retain the risk of schedule delay due to property acquisition and 3rd party agreements. To mitigate such risks, MTA drafted a property acquisition plan, identified relevant 3rd parties, and initiated 3rd party agreements.

3. Third is whole life-cycle planning and cost optimization. By having contractors who build it also be responsible for long-term operations and maintenance, the contractor has greater incentive to manage risks and design a

project that is well operated and maintained over the long-term life of the asset. At the end of the term, the private partnership must hand the asset back to the MTA at a pre-defined level of service and quality.

4. Fourth is the incentive in a P3 agreement to ensure construction schedule adherence and “availability” of the Purple Line. “Availability” (an engineering term) refers to availability of equipment for service as opposed to non-availability due to breakdowns, repair, or replacement. Construction progress payments to the private partnership are tied to achieving agreed milestones for 5 years. Once the Purple Line is operating, annual availability payments (averaging \$100-\$200 million) are made to the private partnership over 30-40 years. MTA will reduce the payments if agreed levels of service and quality are not met. The capital portion of availability payments would be appropriated annually out of Maryland’s Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). The TTF will receive Purple Line fares, which will be set and collected by MTA.
5. Fifth is the ease of innovation. A private partnership can innovate much more quickly and easily than the public sector in operating and maintaining the Purple Line. Because the P3 agreement prescribes “what” is to be built and “what” level of service is to be provided, the private partnership is free to decide “how” best to accomplish the “what” building and performance requirements.
6. Sixth is the financial savings. Contrary to what Mike Madden, MTA project manager, said at the ACT meeting on October 8 that P3 is “not about the money,” almost every P3 project built in North America has been justified on the basis of saving money and time.

MTA did a Value-for-Money (VfM) analysis to compare (i) the risk-adjusted costs of a P3 DBFOM approach versus (ii) a traditional design-bid-build with MTA managing Purple Line construction for 5 years and operating it for 35 years. The VfM analysis showed the P3 DBFOM

approach saved up to 20% in cost over the entire life of the project. Despite the higher cost of private financing, VfM analysis found much greater financial savings in transferring risk and life-cycle responsibilities to the private partnership and in two additional areas:

- (i) A private partnership has the flexibility to streamline its management structure as it sees fit as well as to recruit highly qualified employees. MTA is obviated from having to increase its staffing to oversee the Purple Line operation.
- (ii) A private partnership typically includes an expert from the light rail vehicle designer-manufacturer. With traditional public sector operations and maintenance of light rail, in-house, on-site expertise from the designer-manufacturer is generally not available.

With BPW approval of the P3 DBFOM approach, MTA issued a Request for Qualifications. MTA will select a short list of qualified proposers by the end of 2013 and announce a preferred partner by fall 2014. MTA will recommend the final P3 agreement to the BPW in late 2014 or early 2015 so that construction could begin in spring 2015. Preparing of a P3 proposal could cost a private partnership \$10 million or more of their own funds for a project like the Purple Line – much more than the cost of preparing a proposal for a traditional design-bid-build project.

Vote for Transit in 2014

Be sure you are registered to vote. The deadline to register before the primary is Tuesday, June 3, 9:00pm. To check your status or register online go to: elections.maryland.gov; by phone or to register by mail call 240-777-8500.

Don’t miss out on the opportunity to have your voice heard.

Working Towards a Walkable Bethesda

Wendy Leibowitz

Walkability is what drew me and perhaps, many others to downtown Bethesda. I can walk to grocery stores, Bethesda Library, Strosnider's Hardware, school, playgrounds, and the Bethesda Metro station with its flowing fountain. I envisioned strolling with my daughter, stopping to pet some dogs or to chat with neighbors, and carrying a bag of goods from the farmer's market. She could walk to school and bike in the neighborhood.

A few days after moving in, things began to feel different. I realized I could never tell my daughter, "Run outside and play," let alone, "Have fun walking to school—have a good day!" She seemed anxious when we ventured outside, and I, too, grew anxious about aggressive driving and near-misses, becoming a part of our morning. We accepted our reality, just as we accepted the fact that children, living close to school, were put on crowded school buses. Foreigners are horrified by drivers not yielding to us at crosswalks and drivers beating us across the crosswalk when the light turns green, or — a regular nightmare near our school — turning right on red. Drivers ignoring red lights near our school and the Metro, on streets which are full of pedestrians, terrify our neighbor, new to the U.S.

I had lived in both Manhattan and the Middle East, and experienced aggressive driving and unsafe streets, but the drivers there, as impatient and rude as they were, accepted the pedestrians' right to cross the street. Here in Bethesda, I felt that even when in a crosswalk, some drivers resented my presence, questioning why I wasn't in a car. Then, a near-tragic accident occurred, close to our school: a sport utility vehicle (SUV) plowed into a baby carriage, dragging the carriage under it. The baby miraculously suffered only scratches. Many stopped to help the shaken mother. I realized that I don't have to live in a state of constant anxiety: we have the right to walk safely in our neighborhood, expect the streets to be structured to avoid these accidents, expect our officials to ensure that this accident would not re-occur.

Our officials did respond to repeated e-mails, phone calls and letters: they had zebra stripes painted in the crosswalks and put up speed limit signs in a school zone. You'd have thought they'd built a pedestrian bridge across Arlington Rd. "WOW!" people said, "We've NEVER seen a response so quickly from the county." However, zebra stripes on crosswalks are not enough. Much, much more is needed to make our streets safer to walk. Thus, concerned families launched a Facebook page, "Share the Road Bethesda." It promotes lowering speed limits in school zones, enforcing no-turn-on-red, and designing safer crosswalks, such as with, Lead Pedestrian Indicator lights to give pedestrians a head start, and sidewalk bulbs, to make pedestrians waiting to cross more visible. I don't want to ticket or anger motorists by relying on speed cameras or speed bumps.

A crosswalk on Little Falls Parkway, along the Capital Crescent Trail, adjacent to the Bethesda Pool, in Bethesda exemplifies the kind of respect we need to show each other on the street. Here, pedestrians and cyclists cross carefully; drivers always yield and stop for pedestrians. It's like a little corner of Canada in Bethesda. Here we all seem to calm down, slow down, and cross carefully, but can we do it in downtown Bethesda, near schools? Dare we hope that this kind of respect translates to the rest of the county, where some children cross numbered highways to reach their schools?

We know that change takes time, but we don't have time. There is no sense of urgency except, in selling out to developers of hideous high-rises wanting to turn Bethesda into Rosslyn. Let's take that energy and commitment and pour it into making Montgomery County truly walkable.

How to Give Kids a Safe Walk to School:

SafeWalkToSchool.com

SafeRoutesPartnership.org

SafeRoutesInfo.org

SafeKids.org/walk-way

Rotogravure

ACT Members at the Thanksgiving Parade in Silver Spring November 23rd.

Setting up:



The Purple Line:



The crew:



Photos courtesy of Ralph Bennett.

ACT at the Fenton St Market October 19 - How Do You Get to School?

*With my sister,
via reindeer,
on a unicorn...*



Photos courtesy of Ronit Dancis.

Transit Times

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Silver Spring, MD 20907

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CFT's New Video: *What Rapid Transit Looks Like*

Communities for Transit (CFT), "a new county-based non-profit organization, [focused] on community outreach to build awareness of the compelling case for rapid transit as an effective response to our unsustainable traffic problems," has put together an educational video that explains the various ways that a BRT system could run in the county (repurposed lanes, curb lanes, median lanes, etc.). It also gives some animations to show how traffic signal priority works. To view the video go to:

http://www.communitiesfortransit.org/what_rapid_transit_looks_like

Editorial Remarks

Your Transit Times editor is Quon Kwan. Cutoff date for receiving materials for the next publication is **March 7**. Send your materials to Quon at: gykwan@gmail.com or call him at: (h) 301-460-7454.

ACT Officers Nominated for 2014:

The nominating committee (Barbara Ditzler, John Fay and Ben Ross) recommends the following slate of officers for 2014:

President: Nick Brand
V. Pres (campaigns): Ronit Dancis
V. Pres (Purple Line): Tina Slater
V. Pres (legislative): Jim Clarke
Secretary: Tracey Johnstone
Treasurer: John Fay
Board Member & Land Use Chair: Dan Reed
Board Member: Cavan Wilk

Non-Voting Ex Officio Board Members:

Purple Line Now!: Ralph Bennett
Safe Walk to School: Wendy Leibowitz
Upcounty & MARC: Miriam Schoenbaum
Program Chair: Ben Ross
Social Media: Kurt Raschke

**Come to the Jan. 14 Meeting ready to vote.
Nominations from the floor will be accepted.**

Webmaster: Jeri Roth
Staff Member: Cindy Snow
admin@actfortransit.org