



ACTION COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT

Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

Transit Times

The Newsletter of the Action Committee for Transit of Montgomery County, Maryland
Volume 25, Number 3, July 2011

ACT's monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM, the second Tuesday of each month, at the DHHS Silver Spring Center, 8818 Georgia Ave 20910, in the Woodside Conference Room.

The Silver Spring Center is located on the northwest corner of Georgia Ave and Spring St, just south of Ballard St and east of 1st Ave. Enter the parking lot from Ballard St next to the big Woodside Methodist Church. Enter the building on the Georgia Ave side.

It is a ten minute walk north of the Silver Spring Metro Station; it is a two-block walk from the nearest Ride-On #5 stop; and, the Metrobus "Q" and "Y" routes pass in front of the Center.

For meeting updates check our website listed on pg 2.

July 12: Speakers: Dan Hoffman and Barnaby Zall, Friends of White Flint - "Building public support for Smart Growth: The White Flint story."

Aug 9: Speaker: Margaret Schoap, Coalition for Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended - "What's wrong with the plan to extend Mid-County Highway?"

Sept 13: Speaker: Gus Bauman, Chair, Blue-Ribbon Commission on Maryland Transportation Funding - "Maryland transportation funding."

Do you want to be a sponsor of ACT's 25th anniversary celebration?

We have three categories of sponsors:

Engineers @ \$1000,
Conductors @ \$500,
Stationmasters @ \$250.

Please let us know you want to be a sponsor by writing to admin@actfortransit.org and send a check payable to ACT:

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

All names received by July 31, 2011 will be listed on the invitation.

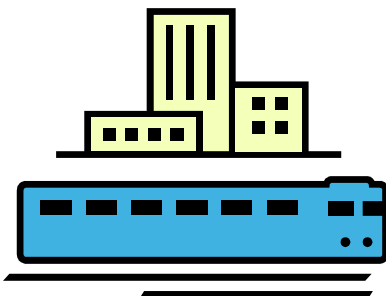
Feature Articles

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MTA will set up an escrow account (about \$40,000 per campus laboratory) to provide shielding and/or active cancellation systems to ensure any electromagnetic interference (EMI) from the light rail line does not exceed certain thresholds at existing and future research laboratories for 30 years. Also, MTA will design the light rail line to ensure that ground-borne vibration (near any vibration-sensitive facility) do not exceed certain thresholds for 30 years. MTA will design the track and electric traction power system to control stray current from the light rail line. Through a combination of source mitigation, vehicle-borne mitigation (such as skirts and cowls), receptor mitigation, and/or maintenance practices MTA will control noise generated by the light rail line.

MTA will establish a monitoring program to check whether EMI, stray current, noise, and vibration from the light rail line are excessive. MTA will also establish a protocol to correct system failure(s) that result in excessive EMI or vibration from the light rail line at campus research facilities. In particular, MTA will use a split wire, high-low power supply or comparable technology for the traction power system to control EMI.

Once the Project is operational, the UM Shuttle routes to the College Park Metro Station and Silver Spring will be discontinued. The MTA and UM will explore an agreement wherein the costs saved by discontinuing such routes would be transferred to MTA to allow all members of the UM community to use the entire Purple Line at no or reduced cost.



Bus Rapid Transit Proposal

Tina Slater

On March 18, 2011, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and its contractor, Parsons Brinkerhoff presented a study of a proposed county-wide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. The purpose of the study was to test the viability (i.e., cost-effectiveness, ridership, and travel times savings) of a BRT network in providing access to activity centers in the county. BRT costs about \$15-20 million/mile. The county wants to figure out what corridors would be most suitable, advance these corridors to the Planning Board to adopt as changes to the Transportation Master Plan. The 16 BRT corridors follow:

Viers Mill Rd. (already on Master Plan)
 Georgia Ave. (Wheaton – Silver Spring)
 (already on Master Plan)
 Muddy Branch Rd.
 MD 355 (Rockville - Clarksburg)
 New Hampshire Ave. (FDA complex in White
 Oak – Fort Totten)
 Randolph Rd.
 US 29 (Silver Spring – Burtonsville)
 North Bethesda Transitway
 Georgia Ave. (Wheaton – Olney)
 W. Montgomery Ave to Science Ctr.
 Connecticut Ave. (Bel Pre Rd. to NIH)
 MD 355 (Rockville – NIH or Bethesda)
 Old Georgetown Rd, (Mid-Pike Plaza to
 Montgomery Mall)
 University Blvd. (Wheaton to Langley Park),
 Inter-County Connector
 Mid-County Highway (Clarksburg - Shady Grove
 Metro)

NOTE: Purple Line & Corridor Cities Transitway included in the BRT network

Attractive BRT stations would be built with excellent pedestrian and bike paths and safe bike storage. BRT buses would be equipped with bike racks. Stations would be spaced every ½ mile (min), depending on route. BRT frequency would be 10 minutes or less during peak period.

All fares (same as Metrobus or Ride-On) would be collected before boarding. There would be real-time arrival information (via station displays, phone, or internet).

BRT buses (440 required for full network) would be high-capacity, articulated vehicles with low-floor boarding and multiple doors. There would be a consistent fare system across jurisdictions (accepting possibly SmartTrip and credit cards with a chip). BRT buses would run in either exclusive busways separated from other traffic, bus-only lanes, or mixed flow with queue jumper lanes for buses. Different routes have different options, and options can vary within a route (e.g., a route may run in a median until it gets to urban district where the median disappears.) Locations of additional bus garages and maintenance facilities have not been identified yet.

The proposed BRT network would cost \$2.5 Billion in capital outlays for 125 miles of routes. This cost excludes right-of-way costs for road widening associated with building busways, bus-only lanes, and queue jumper lanes.

The next steps are for the county and the contractor to gather public feedback and generate the final report. The county will coordinate with Maryland State Department of Transportation, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Prince George's County, and District of Columbia to identify capital and operating funding sources; then enter state planning, including environmental impact analysis, and then advance to corridor design and construction.

**Car Free Day
Is
September 22, 2011**

Faith-Based Groups Advocate Transit in Midwest

Quon Kwan

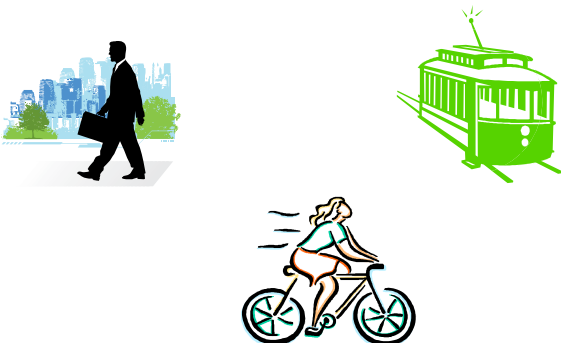
Three cities in the Midwest have faith-based groups advocating light rail transit: St. Louis, St. Paul, and Detroit. Let's look at each of these cities.

In 2007, the East-West Gateway Council of Governments approved extending the MetroLink light rail system 17 miles to connect the north and south portions of St. Louis, MO. Currently, the MetroLink runs predominately east-west. The new North and South extension will spur economic development, open access to jobs as well as stimulate job growth in areas of high poverty and unemployment. The new MetroLink extension costs \$971 million. In April 2010, after an 8-month campaign by Metropolitan Congregations United, the voters resoundingly supported transit with a 63% "YES" for a ½ cent sales tax increase in the County of St. Louis (¼ cent sales tax in the City of St. Louis) raising \$75 million/year, including expanding MetroLink. The new line will carry 12,700 people/day. This April 2010 vote was a major victory although similar transit measures in St. Louis lost in 1997 and 2008. Had the April 2010 vote failed, transit in St. Louis would have been cut back to half of what it was in 2008.

The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit in St. Paul, MN, is a \$957 million light rail that will connect the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the State Capitol complex, Midway area, and University of Minnesota. The project includes 11 miles of new rail, connects to two existing rail lines, builds 18 new stations, and will carry 40,000 riders/week by 2030. The Central Corridor has been a case study for changing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) policies. FTA policies had been so narrow that they created a possibility for new projects to lead to decreased transit service. Advocacy by ISIAH, along with three lawsuits, succeeded in reinstating three stops in low-income, underserved communities. ISIAH is a non-profit

coalition of 90 congregations in the Twin Cities. ISAIAH backed a 2008-funding proposition to continue local support, not just for the Central Corridor line but also for future light rail expansion. The Central Corridor line will be the backbone of a transit system with seven new corridors that will double transit service in the seven-county metropolitan area.

The M-1 RAIL, a 3.4-mile starter line that will connect Downtown Detroit to the New Center District, is one of the city's top development projects. Private and philanthropic sources donated \$125 million to serve as the city's matching share to the \$500 million in Federal funds. In addition, the project also got \$25-million in federal stimulus money with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood praising Mayor Bing for pressing M-1 RAIL. The line will extend 9.3 miles along Woodward Ave. The Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength (MOSES) believes that the M-1 should be the first step in a light rail system through a region suffering from one of the highest unemployment rates in the country while having a skilled work force ready to rebuild the community's infrastructure. MOSES' Clergy Caucus said, *"Because transportation is so vital to one's personal well-being and to the well-being of our community, we contend that the development and maintenance of a rapid transit system in Southeastern Michigan is not only necessary, it is the right thing to do."* MOSES has worked since the 1970's for regional transit in metropolitan southeastern Michigan.



CUTA Evaluates Federal Candidates by Their Positions on Transit

Press Release of CUTA on April 27

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), which represents public transit organizations, is Canada's counterpart to the American Public Transportation Association in the U.S. CUTA exhorted Canadian federal party leaders to take action to keep Canada's cities moving by supporting transit. According to a public opinion survey conducted for CUTA by Harris Decima just prior to the May election, a majority of those surveyed believe it is important to have access to public transit in their community. Yet only 29% believe the federal government is doing enough to support public transit infrastructure.

Each of the federal parties has identified their positions on public transit, either in official response to CUTA's federal election questionnaire or from published campaign platforms (this is similar to what Action Committee for Transit has done). The Canadian federal parties include:

Conservative Party of Canada:
 Liberal Party of Canada:
 New Democratic Party of Canada
 Bloc Québécois:
 Green Party of Canada:

"In its own way, each party has indicated that it supports transit," says Michael Roschlau, CUTA President. "CUTA is pleased to see these various announcements and policy statements; however, we are calling on party leaders to specifically get things rolling now by adding a dedicated top-up to the existing federal gas tax fund for transit. The fund is in place, it works and we all understand it."

Canadian transit ridership continues to set all-time records, carrying over 1.82 billion passenger trips per year, and is increasing at a rate two or three times the rate of population growth.

Book Review of *Seven Rules for Sustainable Communities: Design Strategies for the Post-Carbon World*.

John Fay

The book (200 pp) is authored by Patrick M. Conlon and was published by Island Press in 2010.

Because of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions worldwide, latest estimates show that the North Pole will be ice free in summer by 2012. Official government policy in the U.S. and Canada is to reduce GHG emissions by 80% by 2050. GHG are emitted from buildings (50%), transportation (25%) and industry (most of the rest). Cities cause 80% by how they are built, what's inside the buildings, and how we move between buildings.

The author says that alternative energy sources, cap and trade, and more fuel-efficient cars will simply slow the growth of GHG as population expands unless a new balance is struck between people and the systems of air and water by building more compact, energy-efficient, pedestrian- and transit-friendly regions.

After describing the problems with GHG and how we came to this state of affairs (namely, post-WWII housing and road policies primarily), Condon articulates seven rules for making urban areas work again:

1. Restore the Streetcar City
2. Design an Interconnected Street System
3. Locate Commercial Services, Frequent Transit, and Schools within a Five-minute Walk
4. Locate Good Jobs Close to Affordable Homes
5. Provide a Diversity of Housing Types
6. Create a Linked System of Natural Areas and Parks
7. Invest in Lighter, Greener, Cheaper, Smarter Infrastructure

The author's first rule, to which ACT members can relate, is "Restore the Streetcar City." He doesn't mean the streetcar *per se*, but the system it was part of and helped create. In streetcar cities most homes were within a 5-minute walk (¼ mile) of a streetcar arterial. Civic life extended the length of the arterial not just at nodes (or transit-oriented development). Few people live close to nodes but most live close to a corridor, however gruesome. In addition, most transit resources are devoted to getting people from regional edges to the center, yet jobs have been migrating outwards since streetcar days and will continue to do so.

The next few rules build on the first: replace the *cul-de-sac* street system with an interconnected grid system, and locate commercial services, schools and jobs within a 5-minute walk of affordable homes. Schools now typically are sprawling big boxes reached only by cars or school buses, while fewer than 5% of all workers in the U.S. and Canada can conveniently get to their jobs by transit. Job sites do not have to be huge campuses but can fit into a street grid. At the same time we should make use of the ubiquitous 1950—70 era strip malls. They can be redeveloped for mixed use with a concomitant benefit of increased density needed for transit.

Planning from WWII to about 2000 included not only the *cul-de-sac* street system but also homogeneity in residential landscapes. Exclusionary zoning has created narrow monocultural neighborhoods, which have difficulty adapting to demographic changes. Due to the trend toward smaller families in recent years, the number of housing units has grown faster than the population. Between 1978 and 2007 the number of housing units rose over 50% while population increased by 30%. Meanwhile, from 1970 to 2005, average size for a new home rose by 162%.

The final rules pertain to adapting urban development into the existing watersheds and using "lighter, greener, cheaper, and smarter infrastructure." Montgomery County is coming to grips with low impact development (LID) and is in

the forefront of the state in that regard, but much remains to be done. Condon wants localities to put stream networks front and center when laying out sites, not back into a ditch (literally) where they are trashed. A good example is Fredrick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace of stream parks in Boston. In the area of smarter infrastructure, Condon calls for a drastic reduction in above-ground parking. In Vancouver, all projects over 25 gross dwelling units per acre have underground parking. Below this density, parking is on streets, alleys or garages – generally no need for surface parking lots.

The author's conclusion: Love one rule, love them all. It is hard to argue that if we follow all his rules we would live in a much more sustainable, healthy environment. From 1950 to 2000, he says, the mechanics of North American cities changed entirely. We can shift back in the next 50 years but we have to start now.

SmarTrip and CharmCard

John Carroll

Most people in the DC area have heard of the SmarTrip Card, but have you heard of the CharmCard? SmarTrip and CharmCard are interchangeable. Either card will get you around Washington, Baltimore, and in-between. The CharmCard is a rechargeable fare card issued by the Maryland Transit Administration. The CharmCard sells for \$2.50 while the SmarTrip card still sells for \$5.00. Why is that? Hmm.

Card users may use the web services offered on the WMATA website to manage their cards. Because these cards can be lost or damaged, it is worthwhile to register. My six year old card got a crack in the edge and stopped working. I'm told the antenna goes around the edge of the card. No problem. The site makes it easy to transfer your balance from a lost or damaged card to another card. Go to www.wmata.com/fares/smartrip/.



Facebook

Tina Slater

Looking for Friends? Yes, ACT is looking for Friends for its Facebook page. We post a few articles on Facebook each week, and you can visit whenever you choose. We now have 17 Friends. Can we reach 100 Friends by the next newsletter?

If you use Facebook, please "Like" us at our [Action Committee for Transit](#) Facebook page (By the way, there are two Facebook pages with that name, only one is active -- the one with the blue and green logo of the train and cityscape, like the logo at the top of the newsletter).

See in the next issue how many Friends found us!

Transit Times

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Transit Times, vol. 25, no. 3, July 2011

Countdown to the
Gala celebration of ACT's 25th Anniversary!

October 11, 7 - 9 pm

Near the Takoma Park Metro



Three months to go.

Invitations with more details will be sent out
closer to the date.

Volunteers needed to help with planning.

Editorial Remarks

Your Transit Times editor is Quon Kwan. Cutoff date for receiving materials for the next publication is **September 13**. Send your materials to Quon at: gykwan@gmail.com or call him at: (h) 301-460-7454.

ACT Officers/Staff for 2011:

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