

# Transit Times

The Newsletter of the Action Committee for Transit, Montgomery County, Maryland  
Volume 13, Number 3, September 1999

---

**ACT's next monthly meetings will take place at 7:30 PM, September 14, 1999 and October 12, 1999 at the Silver Spring Center, 8818 Georgia Avenue.**

**September Topic: To be Determined**

**October Topic: To Be Determined**

## Feature Articles

- ACT Proposes "Smart Growth" Plan for County (p. 10)
- ACT's Comprehensive Bus Plan for Better Service (pp. 1-2)
- Beltway Corridor Study (p. 3)
- I - 270 Corridor Study (p. 4)
- WMATA Approves C8 as Permanent Service (p. 5)
- Georgia Avenue - Randolph Road Interchange (p. 5)
- Transportation Solutions Group Holds Hearing on ICC (p. 6)
- Union Gets Transit Passes for FDA Employees (p. 7)
- News from Across the Nation: Downtown to Tinseltown in 15 Mins.(p. 8)
- Mt. Airy Ride-On Service (p.11)
- Transit Service Improvements (p. 11)
- Extended Weekend Rail Debated (p. 11)
- David Bone Honored (p. 11)

## ACT's Comprehensive Bus Plan for Better Service

Ben Ross

The Action Committee for Transit, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689, and Montgomery County Government Employees Organization (MCGEO)/United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1994 have developed a

comprehensive plan for better bus service in Montgomery County. The objectives of this plan are to increase bus ridership, improve service for current bus riders, and use the taxpayers' and farepayers' money more effectively.

Montgomery County has one of the best suburban bus systems in the country, but it falls far short of meeting our transportation needs. Too often, bus routes are confusing and inconvenient. Waits between buses are too long; buses rarely go straight to a destination without transfers; and riders are confused when different providers serve the same route. Increasing the total amount of bus service is essential, but if new funding is used just to add more routes like those we already have, these weaknesses will limit growth in ridership.

The plan seeks to remedy these problems by using new funding to improve and expand existing bus service while filling gaps with new routes. The plan features:

- Five more cross-county routes (2 new routes and 3 route extensions):
  - Wheaton - Aspen Hill - Shady Grove Metro - Kentlands
  - Bethesda - Silver Spring - Langley Park - University of Maryland
  - Shady Grove Metro - Rockville - Laurel - Fort Meade
  - Briggs Chaney - Aspen Hill - Rockville
  - Glenmont - Aspen Hill - Rockville - Shady Grove Hospital
- A new transit center in the developing transit-friendly community of Kentlands/Lakelands, with bus routes radiating outward in seven directions.
- Four cross-county routes (through lines which cross Metrorail corridors)

to serve Aspen Hill's many bus riders. Now there is only one.

- More frequent service on main transit corridors, including University Boulevard, Veirs Mill Road, and Norbeck Road.
- Added evening and mid-day service on University Boulevard and Shady Grove Road, via Medical Center and downtown Gaithersburg, and elsewhere.
- Straighter, shorter routes in Bethesda and south Gaithersburg.
- Each route will be served by a single provider (Metrobus, Ride-On, or a contractor) at all hours to eliminate confusion.

#### Metrobus

- Y7 Extend to Kentlands (124 & 28) via Norbeck Road, Gude Drive, Crabbs Branch Way, Shady Grove Metro, Sam Eig Hwy, Muddy Branch Square, Main St., and Tschiffely.
- "J6" New express bus route - Bethesda to University of Maryland via Silver Spring Metro and Langley Park. 20 min. peak, 30 min. off-peak; service until 10 PM.
- J1 Add mid-day and early evening service. Increase peak frequency to 15 min.
- J2 Cut mid-day frequency to 30 minutes. (because of added mid-day J1 trips.) Bypass NIH via Old Georgetown Road when J1 is running. Adjust peak frequency to 10 min. in flow direction; 20 min. in counterflow direction.
- J3 Eliminate. (replaced by J1 and 35.)
- "X9" New route - Shady Grove Metro - Rockville - Burtonsville - Laurel - Fort Meade.
- C2 Increase peak frequency to 15 min.
- C4 Increase peak frequency to 15 min.; extend evening service until 11 PM all days.
- Q2 Increase off-peak frequency to 15 min. mid-day and 20 min. Saturday. Extend Saturday service to same closing hour as weekday and Sunday service to 11 PM.
- Y8 Extend Saturday evening service to same closing hour as weekdays.
- L8, T2, Z8 Make service provider (Metrobus) on weekends same as on weekdays.

#### Ride-On

- 39 Add mid-day service. Terminate at Rockville (via Norbeck Road) rather than Glenmont. Increase peak frequency to 20 min.
- 49 Extend to Shady Grove Hospital via Research Blvd. (weekdays only) Increase peak frequency to 20 min. (Service provider may change to Metrobus at community request)
- 46 Extend all trips to Shady Grove Metro via Piccard Drive and King Farm.
- 63 Eliminate. (Replaced by 46 and 49.)
- 74 Add mid-day service.
- 56 Reroute through Lakelands via Main Street.
- 35 Add loop through Rock Spring Park in counterflow direction only. Increase peak frequency to 20 min. and extend service until 10:30 PM.
- 54 Eliminate mid-day diversion to Muddy Branch. (replaced by Y7.)
- 61 Extend service until 11:00 PM Monday-Saturday.
- 43 Add Saturday service; extend service until 9:00 PM Monday-Saturday.
- All Change service provider from contractor to County-operated buses if a route has County buses on any run; otherwise, retain contractor only when it can handle the entire route. Expand fleet by 10 buses first year and 2 buses each subsequent year.

General - Conduct a comprehensive origin-destination study after new service has been in place one year. Realign routes and reallocate service, based on study results and ridership.

## Gasoline Tax

Did you know that the gas tax's buying power has eroded over the last two decades?

Because the average fuel economy has improved from 14.2 miles/gallon (1974) to 28.6 miles/gallon (1997), the average new car generates half the revenue per mile of new cars two decades ago.

-- "The Gas Tax Dilemma"  
Access, Issue No. 14  
Spring 1999

## Beltway Corridor Study

Ben Ross

ACT sent a letter to the State Highway Administration (SHA) regarding the ridership modeling for transit alternatives in the Beltway Corridor Study lauding the fact that the study is making progress and looking forward to the results in the not-too-distant future. Excerpts of ACT suggestions follow:

*A light rail alternative along the "green line" route should be modeled. This route promises much lower costs than any other alternative route from New Carrollton to Bethesda, because surface right-of-way is available from Bethesda to Silver Spring, between College Park and New Carrollton, and possibly along University Boulevard.*

*Ridership along this alignment may be significantly higher for light rail than for heavy rail. The light rail alignment should have a second stop on the University of Maryland campus. It should also have two stops, rather than one, between Adelphi Road and Silver Spring. Both Langley Park and the Maryland campus will have very high*

*numbers of pedestrians accessing the rail line.*

*The study should report the amount of commuter parking assumed at each station. Decision-makers and the public need to know how much parking will be needed.*

*Modeling of student ridership needs careful attention. Students generally have a much higher transit mode share than adult commuters. Also, student ridership is much less peaked in rush hour than other markets. In addition to student commuting, recreational travel to Bethesda (already a center of night life) and Silver Spring (an emerging cinema center) will have a far, far greater mode share than other adult recreational travel.*

*The ratio of all-day to am-peak ridership will vary among alignments. Am-peak ridership should be scaled up to all-day ridership station-by-station, based on the characteristics of each individual station. This is significant for choice of alignments, because we believe that the scale-up factor for the inner alignment will come out around 20-30% higher than for the outer alignment.*

## Are you a spectator?

"Too many of us have become passive and disengaged. Too many of us lack confidence in our capacity to make basic moral and civic judgments to join with our neighbors to do the work of community, to make a difference. Never have we had so many opportunities for participation . . . In a time that cries out for civic action, we are in danger of becoming a nation of spectators."

-- *A Nation of Spectators: How Civic Disengagement Weakens America and What We Can Do About It -- Final Report of the National Commission on Civic Renewal, p.6*

## I - 270 Corridor Study

Quon Kwan

The latest modeling results released by the State Highway Administration (SHA) to the I-270 Focus Group (a citizens' advisory group) predicted more ridership on busway than on light rail. These results provoked Focus Group members because they fly in the face of overwhelming factual evidence. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics 1997 Report shows that over the 10-year period between 1985 and 1995, nationwide bus ridership plummeted 16% while nationwide light rail ridership skyrocketed 56% (new light rail ridership increased 1,349%). The average ridership over all transit modes (except light rail) dropped 11%.

In a June 23, 1999 letter to I-270 Focus Group members, Jim Clarke, Pam Lindstrom, and Quon Kwan, Ed Tennyson chastised the SHA for ignoring the real world and advocating its penchant for pavement.

His letter provided other data supporting the attractiveness of rail. Between 1975 and 1985 transit ridership stagnated in Montgomery County. After the Metrorail Red Line extension, transit ridership increased 250%. With respect to the Metrorail Blue extension to Springfield, there were 2,320 express bus riders prior to Metro and 13,000 rail riders after Metro. Although Springfield has been served by the Shirley Highway express busway since 1970, it lost 2/3 of its bus ridership (even before the arrival of Metrorail) by 1980. Pittsburgh and Ottawa have also lost millions of busway passengers.

Tennyson also questions the SHA's change in position. At the July 1, 1998, I-270 Focus Group meeting, SHA's data showed that light rail to COMSAT would attract 33% more new riders than busway. However, at the recent May 1999 meeting, SHA's data showed that a busway would carry slightly more riders than light rail. Another discrepancy is SHA previous projection of 24,717 weekday light rail riders between

Shady Grove and COMSAT contrasts with SHA's recent May 1999 projection of only 11,800 weekday light rail riders.

Tennyson added that light rail is safer than bus based on the fact that the former has an injury rate of less than one per million passenger-miles while the latter has two to three per million passenger-miles. His letter also points out that light rail has a better fare recovery ratio (50% - 84%) than busway (52% - 67%).

ACT sent letter to SHA on July 12, 1999 disputing the preference for busway and advocating light rail as the transit mode of choice. The letter points out three additional flaws in SHA's analysis.

The first flaw is the SHA ignores the reality in the I-270 corridor in which bus and rail do compete. Almost 8000 daily riders take Metrorail inbound from Shady Grove while about 400 take express buses from Milestone and Lakeforest. The two modes are comparable in travel time. Despite the greater savings on bus fare (\$3 to \$6 per day less than the rail fare plus parking), the overwhelming majority choose rail.

The busway has a second fatal flaw. It would not make bus travel any faster, except for trips between Shady Grove Metro and Washingtonian Center.

The third flaw pertains to the gap between present and future transit ridership. The area's most heavily used bus routes, the 54 and 56, would not use SHA's busway; these routes continually pick up and drop off people in small numbers. It is very doubtful that express routes from Germantown or Lakeforest to the Shady Grove Hospital area would attract enough riders to justify the capital investment of the busway. The ridership needed to justify an expensive capital investment in transit in this corridor can only be attracted by a connection with the larger Metrorail system.

ACT is concerned that SHA may be

making the same unrealistic assumption about rail vs. busway in the Georgetown Branch draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' ridership model used in the Georgetown Branch DEIS assumes that a collector/distributor bus route running on a busway reaps the same benefits as a rail line. Common sense says otherwise, as confirmed by actual travel patterns in the I-270 Corridor.

ACT's letter concluded that SHA should listen to the commuters who are voting with their feet and choose rail as the transit alternative in the I-270 Corridor Study.

Prior to the release of the I-270 Corridor Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2001, Jim Clarke, Pam Lindstrom, and Quon Kwan will be briefing select elected officials on the SHA's flaws.

### Are you an activist?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead

## WMATA Approves C8 as Permanent Service

Quon Kwan

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors on July 8, 1999 at their 1206<sup>th</sup> meeting voted to approve permanent status for the experimental Metrobus regional route C8.

Metrobus route C8 runs from Glenmont Metrorail Station via Randolph Road, New Hampshire Avenue, and University of Maryland campus to the College

Park Metrorail Station.

ACT was instrumental in creating the route during the public hearings conducted by the County Council on Montgomery County operating budget in spring 1998. The C8 was supported by a coalition of civic associations and environmental groups as well as both business and labor. It commenced operation in September 1988.

An August 6, 1998 letter from Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation Director Albert Genetti to WMATA General Manager Richard White requests that the C8 be extended in FY2001 from Glenmont to White Flint. This extension replaces the current Ride-On route 40. (ACT originally requested that the C8 route run between College Park and White Flint in spring 1998, but Montgomery County truncated the C8 at White Flint and put in the Ride-On 40 between Glenmont and White Flint.) This will be a service improvement due to the removal of the need to transfer between the C8 and the 40 with waiting times as long as 25 min.

## Georgia Avenue - Randolph Road Interchange

Quon Kwan

The existing interchange has a Level Of Service "F" and is one of the worst congested in the County. As a result, it was put on the list of network of improvements alternative, i.e., alternative to the InterCounty Connector. This interchange is the current subject of a project planning study by the State Highway Administration (SHA), which recently solicited comments from the public.

In a July 24, 1999, letter to SHA, ACT asked SHA to fully consider bus and pedestrian access to the Glenmont Metrorail Station while designing the new interchange. With respect to this consideration, ACT has two specific comments: reduction of bus access times to the Glenmont Metrorail

Station and an underpass (Georgia Avenue under Randolph Road).

Reduction of bus access times to the Glenmont Station should be the foremost goal of the project because the weekday ridership on buses passing through the intersection is between 10,000 and 15,000. The current road configuration delays bus movements into and out of the station because signal lights are sequenced to favor through traffic. Buses from the station heading northbound on Layhill Road or eastbound on Randolph Road are most severely affected. Adjustments in signal lights are extremely inexpensive and should be addressed in the Transportation System Management alternative for the project.

An underpass instead of an overpass should be evaluated if a grade-separated interchange is pursued. An overpass makes the approach more difficult for pedestrians south of Randolph Road headed for the Glenmont Station. If grade separation is necessary, a DuPont Circle style underpass, similar to the City of Rockville's proposal for the MD 28/ MD 355 interchange is suggested.

ACT members interested in the project may ask to be placed on the mailing list. Write to Mark Radloff, Project Planning Division, Mail Stop C-301, Maryland State Highway Administration, P. O. Box 717, Baltimore, MD 21203 or call 1 800 548-5026.

## **Transportation Solutions Group Holds Hearing on ICC**

Quon Kwan

On June 1, 1999, ACT members, Quon Kwan and Ben Ross, submitted testimony for the record. Kwan's testimony (allowed 3 min. plus an additional 3 min. yielded by Sierra Club member John Faye) pointed out the sham of using transit as an excuse to build the ICC. The first disguise that was exposed was the TSG's calling the ICC an "east-west, value-priced, limited

access, high-speed bus transit parkway."

Kwan remarked that the TSG report was revised since the first draft to deliberately delete the fact that Montgomery County is an ozone non-attainment area. Because the County does not meet the Clean Air Act standards, highway building may not be subsidized with Federal funds unless high-speed bus transit or some other congestion management strategy is incorporated.

There is absolutely no evidence to support the need for high-speed bus transit along any of the ICC alignments. The Maryland State Transit Advisory Panel recommended nine specific new transitway projects, none of which include one along the ICC. There is insufficient density to justify bus rapid transit in the ICC Study Area, unlike the one planned for the Dulles Corridor. Finally, data from the Traffic Analysis Technical Report of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the ICC argues against a transitway: because less than 1,473 trips would be made using high-speed bus transit, spending \$ 1.5 billion would be a waste for such a low number of trips.

ACT's position, presented in Ben Ross' testimony, is that TSG should clarify and emphasize the role of the Georgetown Branch light rail line in enhancing east-west transit. The TSG could have made a far greater contribution by emphasizing projects that enjoy a consensus and can be started soon to relieve congestion. Failing to do so, the TSG fell short of its charge from Governor Glendening to identify a package of transportation solutions that could be implemented quickly.

Second, ACT is clearly opposed to building a limited access highway, whether or not it is called an ICC, for the purpose of carrying express buses, as recommended by the TSG. Such a highway would waste taxpayers' money. Third, he noted the TSG report discussed highway and transit network

improvements inconsistently, with a bias towards highways.

Unfortunately, the majority of the TSG is favoring "an east-west, value-priced, limited access, high-speed bus transit parkway" along an ICC alignment. A minority report of the TSG opposes such a project. Governor Glendening will decide whether to implement the TSG's recommendation. If implemented, the State Highway Administration will have to conduct a supplemental environmental impact statement.

For copies of TSG report: call Gloria Shepherd at 410-865-1131 ACT members are encouraged to write to the Governor to oppose the project: The Honorable Governor Parris Glendening, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401.

## Union Gets Transit Passes for FDA Employees

Quon Kwan

Around February 1999, the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) Chapter 209 scored a victory in getting the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to grant FCC employees (whom NTEU represents) a monthly transit subsidy of \$45. The Federal Service Impasses Panel in 1997 awarded the subsidy for \$30 as an one-year pilot program in NTEU's favor in 1997. At the end of the pilot program, FCC stalled claiming it could not afford the subsidy. NTEU prodded FCC into negotiating the subsidy, and FCC agreed to raise the amount to \$45. The new program will take effect after the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) writes regulations governing administration of the subsidy, and the National Finance Center programs its computers. About 2/3 of FCC's 1500 employees are taking advantage of the transit subsidy. FCC headquarters are at 1919 M St., NW in Washington, DC.

Another NTEU chapter, Chapter 260, is also negotiating transit subsidies -- with

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - Southwest Region. The FDIC -SW Region moved from suburban Addison, TX to Dallas, TX in later 1997, where employees can take advantage of the new light rail system (DART). The price of a DART monthly pass is \$60 compared to \$90 monthly parking. Chapter 260 estimates conservatively that at least 300 employees will forfeit their paid parking for the pass.

NTEU has also completed negotiations with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the agency to provide a transit subsidy to employees in the Washington, DC area. Dick Arkin, an ACT member, is also a NTEU Vice-President. Details of the transit subsidy were not available at press time; however, NTEU is scheduling a press release on or around August 20.

Getting Federal agencies to provide transit subsidies to employees is not all that easy because the subsidies come out of an agency's operating budget, which must be appropriated annually by Congress. However, several drivers favor an agency's participation in the transit subsidy program.

First, labor unions representing Federal employees are prohibited from bargaining over pay raises. Instead, such unions have found an indirect way to increase employee pay. Namely, they bargain over fringe benefit packages, including promotion policies, tours of duty, and of course, transit subsidies.

Second, Executive Order 12191, signed by President Ronald Reagan on February 1, 1980 mandates Federal agencies to promote *Ridesharing, Public Transportation, and Multi-occupancy Travel* (title of the order). Section 1-102 of the Order requires agencies to establish a ridesharing goal expressed as a percentage of full-time personnel. Unfortunately, there are no penalties for an agency's noncompliance.

Third, the Federal Employees Clean Air Act Incentives Act of 1993 allows Federal employees to receive up to \$65/month tax-free in transit subsidies, making permanent Federal participation in a pilot transit subsidy program.

It is these drivers that make the Federal government sector more generous with transit subsidies to employees than the private sector.

More participation by Federal agencies may be expected from a recommendation of the National Capital Region Congestion and Mobility Task Force final report of June 1999. [The first National Capital Region Congestion and Mobility Summit was held in May 1998, attended by your editor, and covered in the September 1998 issue of *Transit Times*.] Page 16 of the Task Force's final report states, "The Federal Government will actively expand the availability of the benefit programs for transit and vanpools." It remains to be seen how Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, will implement this proactive declaration.

At readers' request, a brief column entitled "News Across the Nation" will be featured. In the previous issue, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192's efforts during 1995 in saving AC Transit from drastic cuts in bus service in the east San Francisco Bay area was featured.

## News from Across the Country: Downtown to Tinseltown in 15 Minutes

Quon Kwan

Your *Transit Times* editor was in his hometown, freeway-clogged Los Angeles, for the grand opening of the 4.6 mile, 5-station Metro Red Line subway extension from Wilshire/Vermont to Hollywood/Vine (tinseltown) June 11-12. The line is constructed and operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation

Authority (MTA), the second largest transit agency (first is New York ) in the U.S. L.A. now has 11 miles of heavy rail and 42 miles of light rail.

Kwan volunteered for the Hollywood/Western Metro station near where he grew up, an area once served by streetcars. (A relief depicting two streetcars, passing each other, faces the mezzanine of the station.) Although once lively, the area's decline is marked by adult theaters, pawn shops, and barricaded store fronts. All agree the subway will revitalize the area. Excavations nearby make way for a new supermarket and multi-family housing. An art docent explained that instead of leaving the lot next to the station vacant, the MTA designed and planted a rock garden – an innovation to thwart blight. It will be replaced eventually by a development.

Kwan worked both days in a commemorative T-shirt and matching cap, which were the envy of souvenir-seekers -- including MTA employees -- and are now keepsakes (well worth it!). By chance, he met Luz, who personally guided him on a tour of the L.A. Blue Line two years ago and now an MTA accountant. With ten others, Luz and he handled three pallets worth of transit brochures, maps, bags, and magnets. The brochures were in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Thai, and Armenian. Guess what language was the most requested? The last one because an Armenian community borders the station. Second most requested was Russian although none were in that language. (Stone pavers in the station floor inscribed with Mayan(?), Chinese, and Armenian pictographs symbolize the succession of ethnic groups at this place.) Los Angeles is a cosmopolitan potpourri of ethnic immigrant communities.

Later in the day he worked the station mezzanine stamping "passports." A completely stamped (i.e., imprinted at all five new stations) passport entitled the bearer to a pair of sunglasses. Inundating crowds and



insufficient resources at other stations forced a give-away of glasses and a halt to stamping on June 12. Children loved having their passports stamped, and adults as well as children were disappointed when stamping was halted. Officials estimate 200,000 boardings at the new stations June 11-12. (You can bet the subway is a novelty for auto-addicted Angelenos!)

On June 12, Kwan worked crowd control on the station platform. He directed throngs to the rear to make more room. He kept people away from the platform edge. He reminded riders to allow detraining before entraining. For those detraining, he pointed the way to stairs, escalators, and elevators and tried to keep egresses clear. He assisted the blind. Crowd control was very hectic.

Kwan also took comments from the public. One complimented that Hollywood/Western is the most beautiful station. Besides the aforesaid streetcar wall relief, rock garden, and pictographic stone pavers, a wall section at this station speckled with tiles (each of one solid color – red, blue, black, yellow) pays homage to native Mestizo heritage. Another wall presents fossils uncovered here while digging the subway. Plaques ascribe their extinct fauna sources: mastodons, camels, horses, and bison as well as two significant paleontological findings: one fossil is the oldest known of a species and one fossil collection represents the largest and most diverse group of fishes in California ever reported from the late Miocene (5-11 million years ago).

Kwan also answered questions from Angelenos trying out the new subway. **Why isn't there parking at the subway stations?** The subway stations currently serve inner core or urban area in which bus service feeding the stations is so frequent that passengers are expected to arrive by riding – not driving. **What is the regular fare and is there a transfer charge?** The regular fare is \$ 1.35 (same for bus), and there is a \$0.25 transfer charge between bus routes,

between different rail lines, and between bus and rail. Fare enforcement is by the driver on buses and by roving police officers on rail. **Why don't they extend the subway on Wilshire?** (Skyscraper-lined Wilshire Blvd. is the "main drag" of L.A.) The problem is avoiding the underground deposits of methane. An explosion in the mid-80's prompted Congressman Waxman's legislation banning Federal funds for a subway through this area – also an excuse to detour the subway from Wilshire Blvd. into his district (Pico-Crenshaw).

All of the L.A. Metro stations are of a box-type design, unlike the round ones of Washington, D.C. Each station is truly a work of art; no other system invests as much in art for transit. The Hollywood/Vine station is the most glamorous. Its ceiling is sheathed with film reels. A wall has a relief of a performing stage; two movie projectors are mounted on the mezzanine. Station pillars appear as palm trees. Floor paving resembles the "yellow brick road" from the Wizard of Oz. Musical tunes from "Hooray for Hollywood" line the hand railings. Bus shelters take the forms of a limousine and Brown Derby, and the elevator entrance recalls the Grauman's Chinese Theater.

The Vermont/Sunset station design exterior alludes to an observatory (visible from the station); an interior wall is lit up like a constellation of stars. Polished steel, blue floor (marble), and stylized lighting evoke the bridge of a spaceship. Motifs in the floor show microbes and medical symbols alluding to hospitals served by the station. The walls of the Vermont/Santa Monica station are inscribed with philosophical questions ("What do I believe is true but is not?") reflecting the academic ambiance of Los Angeles City College aboveground. The Braille Institute is collocated at this station. Huge rock formations protrude from the ceilings overhead and from the walls aside at the Vermont/Beverly station rendering the feeling of being inside a cavern.

In contrast to the Washington, D.C.

system, the L.A. Metro system lacks openness and clear lines-of-sight because of pillars and an overhead criss-cross of narrow, long rectangular boxes suspended from the ceiling. The boxes span the platform space to unify utilities providing lighting, signage (train destinations), and loud speakers. The L.A. stations are brighter and lack turnstiles; signs demarcate paid and non-paid areas.

The Metrorail Red Line will be a success due to the density of the areas served and all-day (not just rush-hour) trip generators. The line runs along the three most heavily used bus routes. Two key learning centers, three large hospitals, a major health clinic on the subway will generate riders throughout the day. The world's entertainment capital will also draw tourists via subway. Weekend use will abound at the station near Griffith Park (observatory and Greek Theater). The line also links reverse commuters from the inner city to jobs in West Hollywood, Sunset Strip, and Beverly Hills.

Next to open (in mid-2000) will be six miles from Hollywood/Vine to the San Fernando Valley with 3 new stations: Hollywood/Highland, Universal City, and North Hollywood; 125,000 daily boardings are expected when the 17-mile Red Line is completed.

## **ACT Proposes "Smart Growth" Plan for County**

Ben Ross

ACT has developed a "smart growth" plan for Montgomery County aimed at encouraging growth around Metro stations.

The County Council will be asked to enact the proposal this fall as part of its biennial updating of County planning policies. The plan will be formally presented to the Council at a hearing on September 14.

ACT's proposals calls for new

incentives for development in what the County calls "Metro Station Policy Areas," areas within walking distance of all Metro stations (except Takoma, Forest Glen, and Medical Center).

The plan's key objective is to stop requiring developers building near Metro stations to widen roads. Road widening makes for a less pedestrian-friendly space causing fewer commuters to walk to the station. As a result, a policy aimed at preventing traffic congestion actually creates more traffic.

Details of the plan are as follows:

1. Exempt Metro Station Policy Areas from the proposed development tax. ACT opposes any development tax if this exemption is not provided.
2. In Metro Station Policy Areas, repeal minimum parking requirements for residential projects (including projects with up to 25% retail space) and exempt them from Local Area Review.
3. Ask the Planning Board to develop a floating zone for development on existing parking lots. Such a zone would be partially or fully exempt from minimum parking requirements and Local Area Review, but would be subject to requirements for limited parking, pedestrian-friendly design, orientation of buildings toward the Metro, etc.
4. If "Pay-and-Go" is retained on a geographically limited basis, limit it to Metro Station Policy Areas, rather than "Red Line" policy areas. ACT has no position for or against "Pay-and-Go" in general.
5. Require all commercial and residential leases in the County to quote prices for building space and parking spaces separately, and allow tenants to take a smaller number of parking spaces than offered.
6. Exempt Metro Station Policy Areas from

the County mass transit tax. These areas already financially support mass transit via the fare revenue they generate.

## **Mt. Airy Seeks Ride-On Service**

Ben Ross

The Mount Airy Town Council voted 5-0 on August 2 to ask for State funding of bus service into Mount Airy. The proposal is to extend the Ride-On #90 during rush hour to Mount Airy, which now runs between Shady Grove to Damascus.

The plan originated with a petition circulated by ACT member Cindy Snow of Damascus among Mount Airy commuters who now park in Damascus and take the bus to Shady Grove. A dozen of these commuters convinced Town Council members to overcome fears of crime.

This proposal is especially significant for being the first one for public transit in Carroll County. The operating cost will be approximately \$75,000 per year, and one additional bus will be needed.

## **Transit Service Improvements**

Ben Ross

Significant improvements in service on Metrorail, Metrobus, and Ride-On take effect in September. Included are remedies to some of the worst problems that have plagued County bus riders. Highlights follow:

- Opening of the Green Line through D.C. The rush-hour "Green Line shortcut" will be eliminated, speeding Red Line service between Silver Spring and Union Station.
- Metrobus routes C2 and C4 will run every 20 minutes in rush hour.
- Added runs on Metrobus routes J2, Q2, C4, and Z8 to improve on-time

performance and relieve overcrowding.

- Ride-On routes 5, 16, 26, 46, 55, and 59 will run to midnight or later, seven days a week.
- Free Central Business District shuttles in Silver Spring and Bethesda.
- Service will be extended by half an hour on the C4, 17, 35, 43, 49, 54, 57, 61, 62, 64, and 71.

Metrobus schedules will change when the Green Line opens through D.C. on September 18. Ride-On schedules will change on September 5.

## **Extended Weekend Rail Service Hours Debated**

Ben Ross

Extension of Metrorail service hours to 2:00 am on Friday and Saturday evenings has been proposed by D.C. Councilmember Jim Graham. Metrobus routes that now run after midnight would also be extended.

The proposal has been endorsed by D.C. and Virginia members of the WMATA Board. ACT members are urged to write to Transportation Secretary John D. Porcari at P.O. Box 8755, BWI Airport, MD 21240 in support of the proposal.

## **David Bone Honored**

Ben Ross

The ACT Executive Board voted August 10 to honor David Bone, retiring October 4 after 25 years. As Ride-On's scheduler, Dave worked tirelessly to serve the riders. His unparalleled knowledge of the County's transit system will be sorely missed when future expansion of Ride-On and Metrobus service is implemented.

## Editorial Remarks

Your Transit Times editor is Quon Kwan (w) 410 290-0370 (h) 301 460-7454; please direct your comments, criticism, and submission of articles to him for the next issue.

## ACT Officers

President - Ben Ross  
 Vice President (Land Use) - Richard Hoyer  
 Vice President (Networks) - Harry Sanders  
 Vice President (Service) - Tom Fuchs  
 Treasurer - John Carroll  
 Program Coordinator - Richard McArdle  
 Co-founders - Harry Sanders and Ross Capon

## Membership

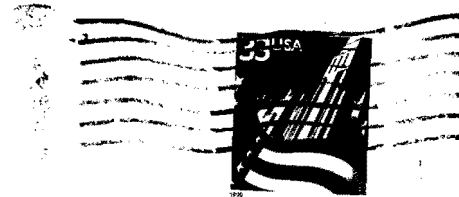
To join Action Committee for Transit, choose one of the categories: \$10 (regular), \$25 (activist), or \$50 (conductor). Send your check for the chosen category of membership to:

Action Committee for Transit  
 P.O. Box 7074  
 Silver Spring, MD 20907

Alternatively, you may give your membership dues to Treasurer John Carroll at the next ACT meeting. The address on your check will be used as the mailing address unless otherwise indicated.

## Transit Times

Action Committee for Transit  
 P.O. Box 7074  
 Silver Spring, MD 20907



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Harry Sanders  
 1710 NOYES LN  
 SILVER SPRING MD 20910

C99