

# Action Committee for Transit

[www.actfortransit.org](http://www.actfortransit.org)

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## TESTIMONY ON THE GERMANTOWN MASTER PLAN

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The proposed Germantown Master Plan is not transit-oriented development.

The staging requirements, listed on page 51, require construction of five major highway projects. The staging requirements give lip service to one transit project by requiring approval of a site plan that leaves room around a future transit station, but no construction is required. Five highways, no transit.

Montgomery County has a long history of sprawl development that is advertised as transit-reliant. We keep building highways that create more traffic jams and more pollution, while we draw transit routes on maps without building anything. Where is the North Bethesda Transitway? The US 29 Transitway? The Glenmont-to-Olney Transitway?

The attached chart summarizes the record. The plan is approved, development and road-building charge ahead, and the transit remains just a line on a map in the Planning Board office.

The plan proposed here is more of the same. Not one, but two lines are drawn on the map for the Corridor Cities Transitway. One of them is not even under study by the state. Neither of them would attract many riders in Germantown. The overwhelming majority of Germantown residents who use transit ride the Red Line — Germantown transit commuters' average travel time to work is 58 minutes — and the Corridor Cities Transitway would take 15 minutes longer to get to Shady Grove than the buses on I-270.

The main transit connection to Germantown today is the Ride-On Route 100 shuttle to Shady Grove. This will remain true until we build a fast rail connection that goes directly to the Red Line without detouring to Great Seneca Highway. ACT's Corridor Cities flyer, with a map showing potential routes, is attached.

With the price of gasoline skyrocketing, the Germantown Master Plan must genuinely promote transit. Development should not be linked to highway building. We recommend:

- Create a moderate-density, walkable downtown Germantown within walking distance of the Germantown Transit Center. Mix housing and jobs in a ratio that provides employment for the proportion of Germantown residents who work near home and does not promote sprawl housing development in Frederick County.
- Connect the Germantown Transit Center to the I-270 HOV lanes with a bus-only roadway and slip ramps directly onto the HOV lanes. Require construction of this connection as a staging requirement for early phases of the Master Plan.
- Require construction of a direct rail line to Shady Grove with travel time less than 20 minutes as a staging requirement for later phases of the Master Plan. Preserve Corridor Cities Transitway right of way for use in this future rail line.
- Promote mixed-use development of housing and retail as infill on existing parking lots along major bus corridors.

China and India are using an increasing proportion of the world's oil resources. The amount of driving in this country will inevitably decline. By preparing now for the transition to greater transit use, we can take advantage of this trend to build more livable communities. We must stop giving lip service to transit and really plan for it. The Germantown Master Plan needs to go back to the drawing board.