

# INTERSECT

NEWSLETTER

June 26, 2001

OF THE

Volume 5 Number 5

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

## The Purple Line: Linking Communities

To promote enthusiasm and support for the Inner Purple Line, WRN and the Action Committee For Transit are excited to announce the publication of "Get On Line – The Purple Line." This brochure describes the benefits of the proposed Purple Line, which could cut travel time for hundreds of thousands of area commuters by linking major suburban centers and existing rail and bus lines. The Purple Line is a proposed rail line that would encircle Washington, D.C., providing a quality alternative to driving on congested highways. The Purple Line would support efforts to direct growth and investment into existing communities. It would serve suburban residents while also dramatically improving access to suburban jobs for residents of Washington, D.C. The most promising Purple Line option is a light rail alternative that generally runs inside the beltway and should be fully integrated with the Metrorail and bus systems, preferably operated by the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA). Our favored option would be the inner Purple Line; stops in Maryland would include: Bethesda, Silver Spring, Langley Park, College Park, University of Maryland, New Carrollton, and Largo Town Centers. The Purple Line would cross into Virginia and connect Alexandria with Oxon Hill and Tysons Corner to Bethesda.

The first decisive steps toward the Purple Line have been made in Maryland. At its June meeting, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved a contract to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail, a segment of the Inner Purple Line. This proposed 4.4 mile light rail line with a hiker/biker trail would run along an abandoned railroad right-of-way between

Bethesda and Silver Spring. While Virginia's progress toward the inner Purple Line has been slower, a Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation study of the feasibility of rail in the Beltway corridor between Franconia-Springfield and Tysons Corner (initiated by state Delegate David Albo, R-Springfield) was completed in March 2001 and has concluded that this is a viable future investment worthy of further (and more detailed) study. In Prince George's County and Northern Virginia activists continue to speak out in favor of rail across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. WMATA recently published a promotional brochure to this regard, entitled "Metrorail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge," which gives details of WMATA's vision for this segment of the Inner Purple Line.

"Get On Line" includes a regional color map of what the Metrorail system would look like with the Purple Line and explains the benefits of the Inner Purple Line light rail as a transportation alternative for the Washington region. The brochure is soon to be available at: <http://www.washingtonregion.net>. Please contact the WRN office for bulk copies for distribution at community meetings.

## Car Sharing Comes to the Washington Region

"The day will come when the notion of car ownership becomes antiquated. If you live in a city, you don't need to own a car," commented the Chairman of Ford Motor Company, William Clay Ford Jr., in *The Observer*, UK, on Sunday November 12, 2000. Chairman Clay Ford is an advocate of car sharing; a

*(Continued on page 2)*

**INTERSECT** is a publication of the

**WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK**

**FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

WRN advocates transportation investments, land use policies, and community designs that enhance existing communities and the environment of the National Capital Region.

1777 CHURCH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036

PHONE: (202) 667-5445 FAX: (202) 667-4491

EMAIL: [STAFF@WASHINGTONREGION.NET](mailto:STAFF@WASHINGTONREGION.NET)

WEB: [HTTP://WWW.WASHINGTONREGION.NET](http://WWW.WASHINGTONREGION.NET)

Cassie Seiple, Managing Editor. Comments and articles welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of WRN.

*(Continued from page 1)*

concept that would provide an alternative to individually owned cars, making vehicles accessible at convenient locations without the added hassle and expense of ownership and permanent parking. Several companies are pursuing plans to have car sharing available to the Washington region by the end of this summer. This is exciting news for D.C. CarShare, a local nonprofit group that has advocated for car sharing programs in D.C. for several years.

Car sharing already exists in 450 European cities; programs vary but car sharing eliminates the need for users to pay for gas, insurance, maintenance and parking by charging a fee based on duration of use and location of the pickup. According to Zipcar, a car sharing company that has had success in Boston and is moving to the Washington region, if you plan on driving fewer than 10 hours a week, car sharing is an economical option. Research in Europe demonstrates that each car sharing vehicle replaces four to eight privately owned vehicles, thereby reducing traffic congestion and the environmental impacts associated with driving (<http://www.zipcar.com>).

As one of the first transit agencies to make an effort to promote car sharing, WMATA's goal is to make car sharing a component of Metrorail, Metro bus, and its 'SmarTrip' smart card technology. WMATA is in the process of reviewing car share program proposals from all over the country and will select one or two this summer to be located on WMATA controlled parking lots. Zipcar plans to launch its car sharing program this summer as well. Zipcar is currently looking for adequate parking spaces around the region, particularly in densely populated neighborhoods (please contact Zipcar with parking leads: <http://www.zipcar.com/parkingSpotsWanted.jsp>). D.C. CarShare encourages regional car sharing programs to make their services available to all neighborhoods in the urban core of D.C., as well as outlying suburbs. According to D.C. CarShare, both WMATA and Zipcar have an understanding of the importance of equitably distributing car sharing vehicles throughout the region.

Car sharing programs are most successful when they are integrated into an overall alternative transportation network – that provides for bikes, pedestrians and transit – and implement a simple yet flexible rate system, report Daniel Sperling, Susan Shaheen,

Conrad Wagner in "Carsharing and Mobility Services: An updated overview" (<http://www.carsharing.net>).

For more information on local car sharing efforts, please contact Michelle Garland of D.C. CarShare at [mgarland@transact.org](mailto:mgarland@transact.org).

### **Fairfax Approves Merrifield Town Center**

Fairfax County recently made strides in supporting livable communities by approving the Merrifield–Dunn Loring Metro Station plan that would create two town centers connected by a main street, on June 11, 2001. The connected town centers emphasize mixed–use, pedestrian friendly designs, which are essential for successful transit–oriented development. Once realized, this plan will make walking more convenient by incorporating a grid layout, keeping buildings close to sidewalks with street front retail, and designing for pocket parks.

Testimony in favor of the station plan by the Coalition for Smarter Growth, Washington Regional Network, and the Sierra Club noted that such design is the best way to reduce traffic congestion and to protect more open space in Fairfax because it concentrates more of the region's growth around metro stations in walkable town centers. The groups asked for inclusion of a Purple Line Rail link along the nearby Gallows Road continuing to Tyson's Corner. They also requested aggressive use of land swaps to protect open space and that the county sponsor functional design forums with strong citizen participation. These forums, facilitated by architects, transportation planners, and bike/pedestrian experts could sketch out the actual design of these town centers, designs that should be incorporated into the comprehensive plan and would provide more specific guidance to developers.

Citizen concerns at this hearing focused on traffic congestion in particular, making it all the more important that the town centers be designed to maximize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips and the future Purple Line rail link.

### **Congressman Wolf Cancels Northern Potomac Bridge Study**

"I have come to the conclusion that it would be very

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

difficult, if not impossible, to build a new bridge without negatively impacting established neighborhoods or cutting through parkland,” said Congressman Frank R. Wolf (R-VA) after asking the Federal Highway Administration to cancel the study of a Northern Potomac bridge and connecting highway.

In the past month, over 1,500 people attended community forums on Congressman Wolf’s new bridge study. Residents expressed concern about the community and environmental impacts of the proposed bridge and western bypass and they largely advocated solutions that would bring people more choices: a circumferential purple rail line, Metrorail to Tysons Corner and more jobs at Metro stations. The majority of the residents who came out to community forums oppose another bridge and connecting outer beltway segment because they believe another highway will bring more traffic to the region without relieving traffic congestion on the beltway or other key roads. Their opinions are confirmed by a recent Montgomery County study (the Maryland Transportation Policy Report), which found that the best way to shorten the average commute is to invest in transit and more jobs with access to transit.

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, commended Congressman Wolf for listening to his constituents and the region’s residents and noted that, “the \$2 million could [instead] be spent on a comprehensive regional study on land use and transit to figure out how the region can provide people with real choices. The real solution is not about more bridges and highways but about reducing the amount people have to drive by creating more walkable suburban communities and focusing jobs and mixed-use development at Metro stations and more affordable housing near where people work.”

### **Alexandria to Put “SmartBikes” on Road**

Alexandria, Arlington, and Annapolis are developing a SmartBike program – a bike-sharing plan that would greatly contribute to the region’s transportation choices. Alexandria and Arlington are collaborating with the Washington Metropolitan Area transit Authority (WMATA) to develop the SmartBike

concept, which is designed to function by a customer waving his/her SmarTrip card over the target on a specialized bike rack to unlock a SmartBike. The SmartBike can then be returned to another rack for a small fee. SmartBikes themselves are built to be durable and theft proof, with solid rubber tires to prevent flats, and an adjustable seat post. Racks would be located at Metrorail stations, commercial centers, tourist attractions, and large office buildings.

Successful SmartBike programs exist in the Netherlands, France, and Singapore and are planned to be implemented for the first time in the U.S. this year in Annapolis. With 140,000 SmarTrip cards in use, SmartBikes in the Washington region would be readily available to a large group of transit riders. Arlington and Annapolis plan to use a modified SmartBike program designed by Adshel, an advertising company, in exchange for advertising on bus shelters. In Alexandria, the first key steps are fundraising and designing the rack and software; the design of the bikes would likely mirror the successful models currently used in the Netherlands, says Paul DeMaio, Transit Specialist for the City of Alexandria.

Bike activists and interested commuters suggest contacting local elected officials to show your support for SmartBikes and excitement about the potentials of spreading this innovative program throughout the region. Besides collaborating with WMATA, the City of Alexandria is interested in making SmartBikes a resource for teaching bicycle maintenance and safety in local classrooms. According to DeMaio, the integration of SmartBikes into existing transit services would provide individuals from areas like Old Town, the Rosslyn – Ballston Corridor, and downtown D.C. with an exciting and convenient transportation option. Contact [paul.demaio@ci.alexandria.va.us](mailto:paul.demaio@ci.alexandria.va.us) for more information or visit <http://www.members.aol.com/\humorme81>, the ‘citybike’ link.

### **Guns vs. Cars: Which is the Greater Threat to American Children?**

“When I worry about my kids’ safety, I think about far more likely threats [than homicide by adolescents]: drugs, driving young--or getting hit by a car while crossing the street” Gregg Easterbrook states in a

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

March 26th *New Republic* column (<http://www.tnr.com/032601/easterbrook032601.html>). Easterbrook continues:

“...in 1999, the year of the Columbine massacre, 28 students nationwide were killed in schools, while 840 kids under age 20 were killed when struck by cars as they walked, often to school...Measured by collision deaths per mile traveled, it is 36 times more dangerous to walk than to be in a car, yet the government spends roughly 150 times as much on highways as on pedestrian safety according to the Surface Transportation Policy Project. For the past two years Montgomery County, Maryland, the Washington suburb where I live, has seen more pedestrians killed by cars than homicides.”

A recent Washington Post article confirms “pedestrian accidents have become one of the biggest public safety concerns in Montgomery County, prompting police, county officials and legislators to try to find ways to make roadways safer. In the past two years, more people in the county have died from pedestrian accidents than from homicides” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A37738-2001Apr4.html>).

However, the risks our youth face while traveling are not limited to shortfalls in pedestrian safety. In 1999, 3,481 youth between the ages of 16 and 20 were killed while driving a vehicle and another 1,379 were killed in vehicles driven by young drivers, according to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>). Besides making intersections safer and designing streets to calm traffic (narrower streets, speed bumps, wider sidewalks, landscaping, on-street parking) local governments can invest in transit alternatives and make biking and walking safer and more convenient in order to reduce youth’s reliance on cars.

### **Amtrak Takes “Bikes-on-Board”**

On May 5, Amtrak began a "Bikes-on-Board" program for selected routes within the Northeast Corridor. The program allows Amtrak riders with bicycles to simply roll their bikes into a new specifically outfitted baggage car, where a member of

the train crew secures the bike in the rack. Bikes-on-Board is a product of Amtrak's partnership with the East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA), with support from the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). ECGA is a non-profit organization working to establish a network of trails from Maine to Florida. Although hundreds of miles of trail are open for use, there are still significant gaps to be filled. Until new trail construction occurs, many of those gaps can be filled by a ride on bicycle-friendly Amtrak trains. Unlike airlines, Amtrak charges only a nominal fee to reserve a space in the bike rack. “We want to be as inviting as possible for people who want to use rail,” said Amtrak Vice-Chair Michael Dukakis, “...it makes good sense for Amtrak to respond to a growing market for ecotourism and adventure travel.” For schedules and information, call #1-800-USA-RAIL. For information on cities served by Amtrak "Bikes-on-Board" service and the East Coast Greenway trail segments located near those train stations, visit <http://www.greenway.org>.

### **Report Finds Travelers Want More Travel Options**

from *Transfer* (STPP's biweekly email newsletter)

“Moving Ahead,” a new survey by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) finds that a majority of the public favors expanding public transportation and building bikeways and sidewalks, while new roads are much less popular. Respondents favored transit, bikeways and sidewalks by over 60 percent. Those dissatisfied with the highway system wanted more improvements to pavement conditions, more effective ways to deal with traffic delays during construction, and more community-oriented transportation enhancements such as transit services, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities. To read "Moving Ahead: The American Public Speaks on Roadways and Transportation in Communities," visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/movingahead.htm>.

### **The Fannie Mae Foundation Supports Transit-Oriented Development**

WRN would like to thank the Fannie Mae Foundation for awarding WRN a Redevelopment Program grant. WRN’s Redevelopment Program promotes community-enhancing redevelopment at Metrorail stations using the visual tool, “Metro in Your Neighborhood.”

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Fridays, 8:45am. Join Rock Creek Park advocates for the **"Friday Morning Beach Club,"** a weekly demonstration calling for improved recreational access in Rock Creek Park. Bicyclists will enter the southbound lane of Beach Drive and travel through Rock Creek Gorge, supporting the call for part-time weekday closure of portions of the road to cars. Participants gather in a picnic grove across from the U.S. Park Police station on Beach Drive, just south of Military Road.

Tuesday, June 26, 6:30pm **The District of Columbia Division of Transportation Public Meeting on the reestablishment of the DC Bicycle Advisory Council** at the Reeves Center, 2000 14th Street, NW (14th and U, U Street Metro, limited bicycle parking in basement garage - enter on U Street) Community Room, 2nd Floor. The 18-member council will consist of 5 DC government representatives and 13 community members and act as an advisory body to the mayor. For more information call: Jim Sebastian, Bicycle Program Manager, 202-671-2331.

WMATA and the other regional bus services are holding **Regional Bus Study Stakeholder Meetings** that focus on ways to improve bus service. Contact WMATA's Project Manager, Art Lawson at 202/962-2429 or [alawson@wmata.com](mailto:alawson@wmata.com) with questions, or visit: [http://www.wmata.com/about/expansion/bus\\_study.htm](http://www.wmata.com/about/expansion/bus_study.htm). Upcoming stakeholder meetings: June 27, 2001. 7-9pm. Alexandria City Hall, Room 2000 302 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, June 28, 2001. 1-3pm. Montgomery County Executive Office Building Auditorium 101 Monroe St., Rockville, MD, and June 28, 2001. 7:30 - 9:30pm. Arlington County & Falls Church Courthouse Plaza, Third Floor County Board Room 307 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201.

Wednesday, June 27, 2001, 6 - 9pm. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) will hold a **Location and Design Public Hearing for Reconstructing US-1 in College Park** between the Capital Beltway and the University of Maryland's South Gate. The hearing will be held at the University of Maryland's Ritchie Coliseum (US-1 and Rossborough Dr). This is an important opportunity to advocate for bike lanes on US-1. To sign up for the list of speakers or to obtain a project brochure, contact Nicole Washington in SHA's Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering by phone #1-800-548-5026 or email [nwashington@sha.state.md.us](mailto:nwashington@sha.state.md.us).

Monday, July 9 VDOT will hold the Fairfax component of their series of **"Virginia Transportation Program Meetings,"** at the Fairfax Town Hall. Comments related to these hearings may also be sent in writing to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (c/o The Honorable Shirley J. Ybarra, Chairman, 1401 E Broad St, Richmond VA 23219) up to 10 days after the hearing date. Please call 804-371-4864 for more information.

Wednesday, July 18, noon-2pm. **Transportation Planning Board (TPB) public comment and official meeting.** 777 N. Capital St, NE (Union Station Metro). For more information call 202-684-5923 or visit <http://www.mwcog/trans/cmtes.html>.

**JOB LISTINGS**

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy seeks a **Manager of the National Transportation Enhancements**

**Clearinghouse** (NTEC). The NTEC is a partnership project between RTC and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). For more information about NTEC and the Transportation Enhancements program see <http://www.enhancements.org/>. For a complete job description see <http://www.enhancements.org/manager.htm>.

Friends of the Earth (FOE), a national environmental advocacy organization seeks an **Interior Department Watchdog** to work with policy and legislative staff to monitor the administrative, legislative and budgetary actions of the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). To apply: Send, email or fax cover letter, resume, and short writing sample to: Lisa Martin, Interior Department Watchdog search, Friends of the Earth, 1025 Vermont Avenue, NW Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005 Fax: (202) 783-0444 Email: [jobs@foe.org](mailto:jobs@foe.org).

Zipcar, the car sharing company coming to the Washington region seeks a **Director of City Operations** as well as a **Director of Business Development**. For more information, visit: [www.zipcar.com/opportunities](http://www.zipcar.com/opportunities).

**Support *Intersect*, Join WRN**

This newsletter is a free service to those interested in creating more livable communities. Please help WRN continue to report on these issues; join WRN and support *Intersect*. WRN welcomes all donations but a basic membership is \$35 for individuals and \$200 for organizations. Please send checks payable to WRN, 1777 Church St, NW, Washington DC, 20036. WRN is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

WRN would like to thank the following for their recent contributions: Andrea C. Ferster, Marylin W. Hoskins, Janet W. Brown, Stephen A. Cerny, and Deborah Katz.