

INTERSECT

NEWSLETTER

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OF THE

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WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

“The Future of Metro” WRN Forum January 10, 2002

As our region grows, how will Metrorail and bus service accommodate new riders, improve service to existing communities, and increase access and convenience for people of all incomes?

Join us for a regional discussion with:

Peter Benjamin, Washington Area Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Roy Kientz, Maryland State Secretary of Planning and former Executive Director of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, and

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board and WMATA Board member

Thursday, January 10th, 2002 1777 Church Street, NW, D.C. (Dupont Circle Q St. metro) – refreshments at 7pm, program at 7:15pm.

Please R.S.V.P. attendance only to Cassie Seiple at WRN, 202/667-5445, staff@washingtonregion.net.

D.C. Council Debates Push for New Affordable Requirements in Housing Bill

by Cassie Seiple, WRN Coordinator

After seven months of outreach and deliberation, the D.C. City Council scheduled hearings to formally consider the Omnibus Housing Bill and associated amendments, the next of which will be the D.C. Council Legislative meeting on Tuesday, December 18th. Affordable housing activists characterize the debate as a decision on what kind of

city residents want Washington to be. Housing activists say they want to see more benefits directed toward lower-income groups facing rising rents and displacement.

On Tuesday November 6, after considerable organizing by housing groups, Council member Jack Evans' Committee on Finance and Revenue held a hearing on the reworked draft of the housing legislation. Over fifty affordable housing advocates attended, asking that more of the assistance that the city provides go to support low-income families, especially renters. Testimony recognized improvements to the new draft, most notably full funding for the Title V, Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), with a more substantive advisory board. Despite these gains for families living below the D.C. median income level, WRN board member Janet Brown expressed concern that most provisions of the whole bill still favor middle-income households and developers.

On the following Friday, November 9, Council member Kathleen Patterson, supported by Council members Jim Graham, Kevin Chavous, and Adrian Fenty, introduced five amendments to the Housing Production Trust Fund to extend the benefits of the Committee's revised bill (14-183) to low-income families. Council member Jack Evans accepted three of Patterson's amendments, including lowering the definition of “low-income” from 80% of Area Median Income, or AMI (\$60,000 a year for a family of four) to 60% of AMI (\$51,000, approximately the median income for D.C.), increasing the percentage of funds committed to extremely low-income households from 30% to 40%, and adding to the Fund's advisory board representatives of low-income tenants and advocates

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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.

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

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for the disabled community. The other two amendments, were withdrawn, and will be re-introduced for full council consideration along with two different versions of the housing bill on December 18th where considerable deliberation is expected.

Council member Harold Brazil held a surprise meeting of his Economic Development Committee on the 9th to mark up the same bill. Backed by Council members Chavous and Fenty, Graham introduced two amendments. One would require inclusionary development – a requirement that developers of new residential buildings of more than 20 units must include 10% of affordable units, half for under 30% AMI (\$25,500) and half for under 60% AMI (\$51,000) if the builder receives assistance of any kind from the city. Brazil, Evans, and Catania expressed concern that the amendment would be a disincentive to developers. The second amendment would create a tenant assistance program, funded by 5% of the Trust Fund each year. Brazil, Evans, and Catania opposed Mr. Evans on grounds, with which some housing activists agree, that the Production Fund should not be used for services. Council member Harold Brazil's Committee on Economic Development scheduled a committee mark up for Graham's amendments to the Housing Bill, for Wednesday, December 12th in which over six hours of testimony from Mayor Anthony Williams' staff, developers, and the real estate industry preceded that of any affordable housing activists.

On Tuesday, December 18th at 10a.m. the housing legislation will come before the entire council for the first of two required readings before voting. The second reading is expected during the first legislative session in January. Housing advocates hope to reach their goal of getting the HPTF into the District's 2003 budget now being crafted.

WRN's Janet Brown praised the accomplishments of affordable housing activists in raising awareness of this issue, "the Council members and the Mayor's representatives and other interested parties at the hearings all recognize that D.C.'s affordable housing movement, this broad array of housing advocates, are united, determined, resourceful, effective – and still on the case!" Visit <http://www.zzapp.org/cisdc> and <http://www.washingtonregion.net> for more information.

Purple Line Endorsement will Benefit Inner Beltway Communities

by Ben Wiles, WRN Intern

After months of debate, Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening, the Montgomery County Council, and a Prince George's County Council committee endorsed the inner Purple Line. The line, expected to be completed by 2012, will connect Bethesda to New Carrollton by way of a mostly above ground trolley system similar to those found in Dallas, TX, Portland OR, and Baltimore, MD.

"This Purple Line will provide transit to people who need it most," said Gov. Glendening, announcing his endorsement outside a New Hampshire Avenue strip mall in Langley Park. "It will take thousands of cars off our roads, [and] encourage smart growth development in some of our oldest communities and town centers."

Local community groups applauded the Montgomery Council's 7-2 vote, supporting Glendening's decision. This decision bodes well for Langley Park residents,

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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.

WRN would like to thank the following for their recent contributions: WRN thanks the following individual and organizational donors for their continued support of WRN's programs advocating for livable communities in the National Capital Region: Walt Rybeck, Allen Muchnick, Rebecca Harriett, Dawn Alexander, Jeff Lee, John & Gail Harmon, Gerald Allen Schwinn, Dale Tibbitts, Anne Ambler, Joanne Droppers, Harry Sanders, Simi Batra, Bill Mosley, Richard Reis, Kent Cooper, Tim Stephens, Linda Keenan, Marc Elrich, Merrill Boone, Jeffrey Blum, Bill Wilkinson, Lee Epstein, Meade Berman, Ancient Forest Adventures, and the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area. Thank you!

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where, according to a statement by Montgomery County Hispanic leaders, “the largest concentration of transit riders in Montgomery County live...a heavily Hispanic neighborhood which is served only by buses...light rail transit will...make thousands more jobs reachable in a reasonable travel time [and] give our young people access to the educational opportunities at the University of Maryland.”

County Executive Douglas Duncan, who favors an outer alignment, argues that the inner line will do little to reduce traffic congestion. “I prefer the outer because it’s where the growth is going to be, I think its more future oriented, and it allows people to access Metro from further out.” Since the inner Purple Line endorsements, outer Line supporters suggested a variety of new alternatives to providing light rail access to existing communities – such as tunneling under the beltway.

County Council President Blair G. Ewing voted for the inner Purple Line. “It provides transportation options to people much more likely to use mass transit because their incomes are lower,” he said. Prince George’s County Councilman Peter Shapiro (D.-Brentwood) added that “it’s smart growth, revitalizing older neighborhoods.”

According to state transportation officials, the financial and environmental benefits of light rail with TOD designs implemented at station areas along with the Council and Governor’s endorsement, put the state in a good position to receive funding from Congress, which is scheduled to reauthorize its federal transportation spending in 2003. “We must be united, or we will not receive national funding,” says Glendening. The next hurdle for the Purple Line is a Maryland State Legislature endorsement to initiate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

***Intersect* January 2002, a preview**

The next *Intersect* will include a summary of WRN’s November forum, “The Future of Washington’s Neighborhoods”, with Dr. Alice Rivlin of the Brookings Institution, as well as the latest transportation planning news from Maryland and what Virginia groups think Governor elect Mark Warner can do for smart growth.

Metro Considering Improvements to its Land Development Program

In an unprecedented departure from routine closed-door decision-making, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“Metro”) is inviting public comment on a draft policy paper on “Joint Development” – its land development program, covering public involvement, objectives of the joint development program, parking replacement requirements, staffing for the program and other issues affecting how Metro develops its lands.

In part, in response to pressure from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and WRN, Metro proposes to adopt promoting transit-oriented development as a new goal for the Joint Development Program. This goal includes giving priority to projects that reduce automobile dependency and increase pedestrian/bicycle originated transit trips, enhance surrounding area connections to transit station, provide mixed uses and active public spaces.

The policy revision also calls for improved public involvement, but only offers to require that developers contact a list of community organizations before submitting their proposal for Metro’s review. This falls far short of the kind of public outreach that CBF and WRN have advocated for, and the model that the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) agency has provided with a Station Area Planning Division to bridge the gap between transit, real estate development, and community-based station area planning.

Metro is reconsidering its 1:1 parking ratio replacement requirement for commuter parking at its stations. Currently, all commuter parking must be replaced by the joint development, regardless of the potential benefits in ridership of transit-oriented development or improved pedestrian access to the station. For example the 340 long term and 47 short term surface parking spaces at the Rhode Island Metro station must be replaced by a developer without consideration of alternative investment strategies to improve pedestrian access to the station. How Metro is willing to reconsider commuter parking replacement requirements is unclear from the proposed Joint

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Development policy revision.

The Metro report, which includes the recommendations, is posted at: <http://www.wmata.com/bus2bus/jd/jointdev.htm> and is available for public comment. Metro's Joint Development Subcommittee is considering adoption of the revised policies. The deadline for comment had been extended until January 19, 2002.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation's reports on Joint Development and Metro Parking Policies can be found at: "Building Healthier Communities with Metrorail: Improving Joint Development Opportunities" <http://www.cbf.org/resources/pubs/>.

Rethinking the Role of Parking in the Region

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF's) has just released a second report in a series on potential Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) reforms, "Building Healthier Neighborhoods with Metrorail: Rethinking Parking Policies." The Bay Foundation considers better use of the \$10 billion Metrorail system to be an important part of the solution to managing growth so that it enhances existing communities and lessens impacts on the Chesapeake Bay.

The CBF report is aimed at helping the Metro board and local jurisdictions more creatively consider how investment policies can provide better access to stations. The report focuses on reexamining the role of park-and-ride and whether building giant parking garages at Metrorail stations is the best use of land and funds to improve system access and the system's role in meeting the travel needs of the region. The report finds that current decisions about parking facilities tend to be based on the narrow, short-term objectives of storing more cars at stations, with little consideration for the opportunity costs and continued inefficiencies resulting from such choices. CBF points out that park-and-ride access negates much of the air quality benefit of transit use, as automobile commute trips generate much Bay-harming NOx emissions simply by turning a car engine on. According to the CBF, Metro's current *de facto* parking policy wastes much of the potential of the transit system to reduce

pollution and stimulate development of healthier communities.

Building Healthier Neighborhoods with Metrorail: Rethinking Parking Policies is available at: http://www.cbf.org/resources/pubs/rethinking_parking.pdf

New Report Calls D.C. Traffic and Pollution Estimates Flawed – Computer Model Underestimates Air Pollution, Overestimates Traffic Congestion

Recent official air quality and transportation predictions for the metropolitan Washington area are severely flawed, according to a study released December 10th by a coalition of Washington area environmental and civic organizations. The findings indicate the region will continue to fail to meet federal health-based air quality standards.

The independent audit, conducted by prominent transportation consultant Norm Marshall, Smart Mobility, Inc., finds that the regional Transportation Planning Board (TPB) computer modeling of transportation congestion and regional air quality used faulty data to paint a worse picture of traffic congestion and a rosier picture of air pollution than is truly the case.

According to the report:

- The computer model, and the way that its data have been manipulated, significantly overestimates future traffic growth and congestion, especially on major roads and bridges. This overestimation of future traffic demand can be falsely used to support the need for additional highway capacity.
- The model significantly underestimates expected air pollution from the region's cars and trucks. Vehicle emissions of smog-producing volatile organic compounds are likely 14% higher than estimated by TPB for 2005.
- The model fails to account for traffic that will be attracted to new roads and fails to reflect how people will shift travel in response to congestion.
- Substantially expanding road and bridge capacity to "solve" congestion problems is an ineffective approach

to such problems, as demonstrated by recent research.

The report was issued by Environmental Defense, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Solutions Not Sprawl, Piedmont Environmental Council, Audubon Naturalist Society and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Copies of the report are available on the web by visiting: <http://www.environmentaldefense.org/programs/transportation/TPBModelReport.pdf>

Building Your Toolkit

The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Initiative, launched a new TOD website to disseminate best practices, case studies, and other resources to TOD practitioners in the not for profit and for profit development communities, in state and local government and in the transit industry. This collaborative project is led by the Great American Station Foundation, along with the Center for Neighborhood Technology, ATR Institute, Strategic Economics, Congress for the New Urbanism, and Smart Growth America. The TOD Initiative is intended to bring transit-oriented development to scale nationally as an accepted form of development, while capturing the equity, environmental and quality of life benefits for families and mixed income communities. Visit: www.transittown.org.

To learn more about smart growth policies, funding sources, networking opportunities, technical tools and resources, visit <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth> - the new EPA website resource for smart growth and environmental protection. It is designed to facilitate and support smart growth development that serves the economy, community, and the environment.

Request for Photos

WRN is looking for photos of what you like and don't like about the intersections, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, building designs, parks, and development near Metro stations and bus stops for our "Metro In Your Neighborhood" slide show of how better development around Metrorail stations can enhance surrounding communities. Send your favorite or least favorite images to WRN - email, mail, or simply call us with your suggestions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, December 15, 9am – 3pm. **Forum on 14th Street Development in Columbia Heights**, sponsored by ANC 1A. Developers will present information about the 12 proposals for 3 vacant sites near the Columbia Heights metro and be available for audience questions. Location: Lincoln School Auditorium, 3101 16th Street, NW (Columbia Heights metro). Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 202/588-7278.

Monday, December 17, 5 – 8 pm. **VDOT Location and Design Public Hearing** on widening Minnieville Rd/Rte 640 into a 4-lane divided highway in the Dale City area of Prince William County, from Old Bridge Rd/Rte 641 to Caton Hill Rd/Rte 639. This project may also alter some adjacent streets. The meeting will be held at Chinn Park Regional Library, 13065 Chinn Park Dr, Prince William County. Written comments can be submitted up to 10 days after each meeting to: meeting_comments@VirginiaDOT.org, or call 703/383-2433 for more information.

Wednesday, December 19, Noon – 2pm. **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)** meeting at the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG), 777 N. Capitol St, NE (Union Station metro). For more information call 202/962-3311 or visit <http://www.mwco.org/trans/cmtes.html>.

JOB LISTINGS

DC Division of Transportation seeks a **Transportation Management Specialist** to serve 8 Wards. Duties include formulating plans and policies regarding the development of transportation systems for the District of Columbia. For more information visit: http://dcop.dc.gov/services/employment_opp/current_vacancies/index.shtm

The Sierra Club seeks a **Washington D.C. Representative** responsible for development of strategies and priorities for specific legislative programs or campaigns. The representative will produce educational materials and reports, research, lobby and serve as a technical resource. For more information visit: <http://www.sierraclub.org/jobs/wdcrep.htm>.