

INTERSECT

NEWSLETTER

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OF THE

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WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities and Brookings Institution
Greater Washington Research Program present:

**Transit-Oriented Development in the District:
The Mayor's Taskforce with Andrew Altman
Director, D.C. Office of Planning**

Introduction by **Dr. Alice M. Rivlin**
Co-Director of the Brookings
Institution Greater Washington Research Program

Tuesday, April 2, 2002

6:30pm Refreshments, 7pm Program
Falk Auditorium, Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

(closest Metro station: Dupont Circle)

How can we use our regional Metro and bus systems to make the District of Columbia a better place to live, work, shop and recreate?

This event will also feature *Metro In Your Neighborhood* (MIYN), WRN's new PowerPoint presentation on transit-oriented development.

Investing in the Future of Metro

by Cassie Seiple, WRN Coordinator

How can the region improve the area's transit system and make the most of the land around Metro stations? This question was addressed at the February WRN forum, "The Future of Metro." Officials from around the region highlighted both the need to invest in public transportation and to strategically use land around Metro stations to maintain the livability of a growing Washington region.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is the fastest growing rapid transit system in the nation – yet the only major transit system with no dedicated funding source, according to Dr. Peter Benjamin, the WMATA Assistant General Manager for Finance and Program Development. Much of Benjamin's presentation focused on strategies to meet funding challenges and to maintain reliable service with a growing demand. His outline of possible expansions ranged from increasing trains from six to eight cars along with the necessary system upgrades to accommodate longer trains. Dr. Benjamin also addressed the importance of providing flexibility with interconnecting lines and pocket tracks for emergency trains.

Chris Zimmerman brought the perspective of both chairman of the Arlington County Board and WMATA Boards – he seconded Benjamin's analysis that to serve projected regional growth, "you have to do it with transit...otherwise we'll have serious problems in the region, including meeting air quality standards." Zimmerman presented five steps to meet future demand including reinvesting in the existing system and devising financially feasible extensions. He stressed the importance of improving bus service by making stops more dignified with an obvious way to get there by *walking*, providing electronic displays that tell riders when the next bus is coming, giving buses signal priority at intersections, and continuing the success of low floor and compressed natural gas (clean emission) buses. Zimmerman announced his commitment to adding a third mode to the transit system, something faster than buses and cheaper than heavy rail. He cited successful transit systems in Berlin, Germany and Lyon, France – cities of comparable size – with three well integrated transit

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WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK

FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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

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modes.

Maryland Secretary of Planning Roy Kienitz explained the importance of dedicating state funding for transit, as Maryland Governor Glendening is committed to, and creating *places* around Metro stations. Zimmerman concurred, asking, “how do we use the value we’ve created – the value of the land around these stations?” “Places that are least subject to crammed peak periods are places that are most attractive to visit on all hours,” said Kienitz. He contrasted Dupont Circle, a station that has consistent levels of ridership all day, with suburban stations that feature large parking areas and see only a few hours of travel a day during rush hour. In response to audience questions, Kienitz encouraged people to get involved in local planning and land use strategies.

Kienitz expressed hope that this conversation will continue as Governor Glendening initiates plans for a transit summit with representatives from D.C., Virginia, Maryland, and the Federal Government.

For a complete copy of Chairman Zimmerman’s recent statement to the WMATA Board, visit http://www.wmata.com/about/board_gm/zimmerman.pdf.

Pedestrian Safety Sought in Vienna Metro Development

by Benjamin Wiles, WRN Intern

Clark Realty Capital proposes to redevelop Fairlee, a single-family residential neighborhood into a mixed-use community within walking distance of the Vienna Metro station in Virginia. The development is an attempt by Clark to meet the demand for transit-oriented development in the area. It is five minutes walking distance from the Vienna Metro station and would have about 500 multi-family units, 400 townhomes and some retail. Although the Fairfax County Planning Commission denied the developer application, Clark will have a second opportunity to get this project considered as an out of turn plan amendment.

Affordable housing will be provided in conformance with Fairfax County’s Affordable Dwelling Units (ADU) ordinance which requires that twelve percent of the units be affordable for households whose

income is seventy percent or less of the Area Median Income. Sixty of the sixty-nine bungalows, built in the 1950s, were purchased by Clark to be razed for this development. Project Manager Jay Sotos hopes ground breaking will take place in two and-a-half half years.

Opponents, including some residents of adjacent neighborhoods and some Fairlee homeowners who chose not to sell to Clark, fear that the area will not support the increase of people and that the retail will bring crime and noise into the community. Brenda Smoskey, a resident of the Fairlee neighborhood, said that some homeowners fear that the remaining homes will turn into rentals and that the four lane road proposed by the county to connect Route 29 and Hunter Mill will make the neighborhood a short-cut for traffic.

The project has received endorsements from other local residents and from advocacy groups, including the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). “The conceptual design seems new urbanist, with the parking in back and pedestrian friendly-streets. We’re pleased with the placement of the largest buildings closest to the Metro, but are concerned with the proposed four-lane road through the development.

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Support *Intersect*, Join WRN

This newsletter is a *free* service. Please help WRN continue to report on these issues important to livable communities; join WRN and support *Intersect*. WRN welcomes all donations but a basic membership is \$35 for individuals and \$200 for organizations. Contribution forms are available on our website: <http://www.washingtonregion.net/html/contributionform.html>.

WRN thanks the following individual and organizational donors for their support of WRN’s programs advocating for livable communities in the National Capital Region: Cheryl Cort, The Piedmont Environmental Council, Bill Cowart, Barbara McCann, Kathleen Pritchard, Virginia Stanard, Cynthia Rubenstein, Paul H. Meijer, Environmental Defense, Thomas B. Whitley, Ed Tennyson, Kathryn Stratos, Loretta Neumann, Rachel R. Hecht, and Bob Stanley. Thank you!

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We believe this will severely degrade pedestrian safety and encourage driving,” said Stewart Schwartz, Director of CSG. “The four lane road cuts the neighborhood in half”, added Roger Diedrich, Chair of the Great Falls group of the Sierra Club, who is concerned that people will be afraid to walk across four lanes of traffic. The county has not settled on details of the road but the Fairfax Department of Planning and Zoning, along with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) have recommended that it be four lanes.

Smart growth groups, including the Coalition for Smarter Growth and the Sierra Club endorse a connected network of 2-lane roads to minimize traffic. They propose a grid of streets with bike lanes and well-designed sidewalks to disperse traffic and encourage biking and walking to the Vienna Metro station.

New Joint Development Policy Moves Metro in Right Direction but Falls Short

Opinion by Cheryl Cort, WRN President & Manager of Urban & Regional Projects, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Adopting the new goal – transit-oriented development – and allowing for flexibility in parking replacement requirements, are the main advances in Metro’s new joint development policies, adopted by the Metro board on February 21. Lacking from the new policies were adequate procedures for better station area planning with public involvement or any kind of preference for affordable housing in joint development proposals.

The Metro board (the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority or “WMATA”) adopted new joint development policies and guidelines that establish a goal of the transit agency’s land development program to give “priority to joint development proposals which contain the following smart growth principles: reduce automobile dependency; increase pedestrian/bicycle originated transit trips; foster safe station areas; enhance surrounding area connections to transit stations. . . .” This is a positive step, but board chair Chris Zimmerman (Arlington County) pointed out it is unclear that WMATA has the capacity to truly implement this goal. WMATA has no plans to

conduct station area planning in preparation for joint development projects, nor will it acquire new staff with expertise to assist in public outreach and coordination with local planners.

The new parking replacement policy offers flexibility, departing from a strict 1:1 replacement formula. It does not mention the need to reassess the appropriateness of investing in replacement auto parking at each station versus other means of access that might be more cost-effective and community-friendly, such as pedestrian or bicycle facilities. The change, however, opens the door for such innovations.

The WMATA board simply refused to entertain the possibility that it should use the redevelopment of its land to encourage the production of affordable housing at Metrorail stations. While the press reported that board members expressed their support for affordable housing at Metro stations, the policies clarify – WMATA will take no position on the desirability of affordable housing on its land. The policy states that housing development will plainly be “in compliance with local regulations.”

Despite disappointing positions on several key issues, the new policies and guidelines offer important steps forward in framing smart growth goals for use of some of the region’s most valuable land.

D.C. Renovation Plans Overlook Homegrown Efforts

The Washington Post recently ran a critique of D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams’ vacant and abandoned properties initiative by Neil Seldman, President and Jane Kaddouri, Director of the D.C. Office of the Institute for Local Self Reliance (www.ilsr.org).

They argue that the Mayor’s initiative targets private developers and overlooks many community development organizations who incorporate worker training and job placement in their projects already have plans to increase the affordable housing stock in D.C.

“When D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams announced his plan to restore more than 4,000 vacant housing units for productive use, we were optimistic. But that was

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before we heard the details of the plan...” For the entire article, ...*And rooms at the inn*, visit: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19014-2002Feb15.html>.

Metro Study Recommends Improved Bus Service

Metro officials announced the first results of a three-part release of Metro’s two-year "Regional Bus Study" begun in 2000. The study, which includes both Metrobus and bus services operated by local jurisdictions, explores the efficiency and effectiveness of the region's bus service and the report outlines approaches to double ridership by 2025 (today over 600,000 weekday trips are made on Metrobus). Several recommendations resulted: more frequent buses, more evening and weekend service, alleviate crowding on buses and Metrorail, improve feeder buses to transit centers, and apply bus service technologies region-wide to improve reliability – including bus signal priority at intersections.

Prince George's Looks at Land Use and Transportation Linkages

On Tuesday, February 26 the Prince George's County Black Chamber of Commerce and the Citizen's Advisory Committee of the National Capitol Region Transportation Planning Board jointly hosted a public meeting entitled “Land Use and Transportation: How Should they Be Linked in Prince George’s Future?”

This is one of the discussions preceding the creation and adoption of Prince George’s County General Plan amendment – the community’s primary guide to long term growth and development. “This is a unique opportunity to encourage growth how we want it and where we want it” stated Councilman Peter Shapiro.

The next meeting will be a Joint Public Hearing on the Preliminary General Plan for Prince George's County, scheduled for Tuesday, March 26th at 7:00pm in the County Administration Building, Council Hearing Room. Copies of the draft plan are available at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), call (301) 952-3208. For more information, visit: www.princegeorgesfuture.com.

EPA Administrator Whitman Endorses Smart Growth – 100 Policies for Implementation

For the first time as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Governor Christine Todd Whitman endorsed Smart Growth. In her remarks at the National Partners for Smart Growth conference she emphasized that Smart Growth is “critical to economic growth, the development of healthy communities, and the protection of our environment...[so] we can live and work in healthy and convenient neighborhoods.”

Whitman highlighted several tools to help localities enact the principles of smarter growth including the EPA Smart Growth Network’s *Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation*, a “road map” to help communities turn smart growth ideas into action. The policies in the report are organized under ten smart growth principles, including: promote compact designs, provide a range of housing and transportation choices, create walkable neighborhoods, direct development toward existing communities (including the split-rate property tax to encourage development on blighted or vacant land), and encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions. By offering our communities choices and providing proper tools to local planners “we can...save open space, save money on roads and sewers, keep homes affordable, and make our cities and town centers thrive,” concluded Whitman. For a copy of *Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation* visit, www.smartgrowth.org.

Greenspace Atlas Provides Region-Wide Perspective on Growth and Resource Lands

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) just released a Washington Region Greenspace Atlas on its website: <http://www.savethebay.org/land/>. The Washington Metropolitan region is the largest urbanized land area in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and this atlas serves to quantify, map, and visualize the future of growth in this region. The Atlas depicts the region’s natural resource lands, watersheds, protected lands, urban greenspace, and urbanization, and discusses the effects of different land uses on the Bay and the region’s quality of life.

March 14 – 24, **10th Annual Environmental Film Festival in D.C.** featuring over 100 films. Most films include discussions and are free. See <http://members.bellatlantic.net/%7Evze2nwb/OpeningFrameset.htm> for a complete schedule.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, March 15, 5:30 - 9pm. **Washington Area Bicyclists Association Annual Meeting** at 1313 New York Ave, NW Presbyterian Church, D.C. (Metro Center) Elissa Margolin, Executive Director of the League of American Cyclists, will bring everyone up to date on the national issues confronting cycling. Awards will be presented to leaders in bicycle-friendliness in the region and volunteers will be recognized for their contribution to the cause. Food, fellowship and door prizes will round out the evening's agenda. For more information, email waba@waba.org or call the office 202-628-2500.

Friday, March 15, Noon. **Maryland Downtown Development Association (MDDA) Split-Rate Tax Forum** with Josh Vincent, the Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Economics, from Philadelphia. He will describe the healthy effect on communities this shift in taxing has had elsewhere. Location: Frederick City Hall, Main Room, 101 North Court Street. RSVP to CenterForTheStudyOfEconomics@msn.com.

March 16-17, Sat-Sun. **Virginia Bicycling Federation Annual Retreat**, at Sophia House, Louisa VA. This Retreat emphasizes strategic thinking and cycling fellowship and features an afternoon ride (weather permitting). Contact Ron Enders renders@cfw.com to reserve space or visit <http://vabike.org> the retreat is \$15 a day per person.

Wednesday, March 20, 8:30 - 4:00pm. **D.C. Watershed Protection Division, Low Impact Development Workshop - The Promise and the Challenge of Low Impact Development.** This workshop will provide participants with practical information on overcoming impediments to low impact development (LID) and how to put theory into practice. Location: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Training Center 777 N. Capitol St. NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC (Union Station metro). Attendance is free, register by March 15 with Alexi Boado (202) 535-1798 or alexi.boado@dc.gov.

Tuesday, March 26, 6:30 - 8:00pm. **D.C. Builds: Building the D.C. Public Library** The District of Columbia may build a new central library and hopes to utilize its branch libraries as community centers. Library planning consultant Richard L. Waters will survey several new American libraries and how they have helped revitalize their cities. The following panel discussion will include Molly Raphael, director of the D.C. Public Library; Sam Morrison, director of Ft. Lauderdale's Broward County Library; and Toni Griffin, deputy director of the D.C. Office of Planning. \$10 Museum and DC Public Library members; \$15 nonmembers. Registration required, call 202 272-2448 x3555.

Monday, April 1, 6:30 – 8:30pm. **New Rail Transit Corridors in D.C. – Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Public Meeting** Location: National Building Museum, 401 F St, NW, Washington, DC WMATA is studying new rail transit corridors. This is a chance for the community to learn about new corridors and how they could benefit communities. Free to those who sign up in advance, contact: (202)962-2502 or dctransitstudy@wmata.com.

Saturday, April 6, 9am - Noon. **Potomac Watershed Clean-up.** The Potomac Conservancy seeks volunteers, especially those with canoes and boats, to help clean up the Potomac at dozens of locations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Visit www.potomac.org or www.potomaccleanup.org to register for a site.

JOB LISTINGS

The Shaw EcoVillage Project seeks full-time **Program Director** and part-time **Bike Mechanics Teacher** for Chain Reaction, a grassroots recycle-a-bicycle program (www.shawecovillage.com). The Director must have 2-3 years program management experience, and ability to teach youth ages 11-19 about basic bicycle transportation issues. Teacher must have minimum 2-3 years professional bicycle mechanics experience. Contact shawecovillage@shawdc.com or (202)265-8899 for full job descriptions.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation seeks a **Baltimore Regional Coordinator** who will be responsible for coordinating overall CBF effort to promote smart growth and transportation in the Baltimore region. Successful candidate should possess a degree (Bachelors minimum, Masters preferred) and three years experience in state or local government, or in a business dealing with public policy; knowledge of Maryland land use and transportation policy desirable. To apply, please send resume, cover letter and salary history by 03/15/02 to: Human Resources/MLUPBRC, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403.

The GCA Casey Trees Endowment Fund is looking for **volunteers** to join the DC Trees Inventory field teams this summer to locate, identify and evaluate the health and condition of all the street trees in DC. The inventory will provide the baseline for a comprehensive DC Tree Strategy. Community volunteer training to help with the inventory is scheduled for April and May in several locations across the city. The curriculum will include tree biology, tree identification, planting location analysis, tree health and conditions, and maintenance needs. This training is the first of several modules in DC's new Certified Citizen Forester Program. To participate, contact Casey Trees at friends@caseytrees.org, or call (202) 833-4010.