

# INTERSECT

NEWSLETTER

July 10, 2002

OF THE

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WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities  
presents:

## Transportation for the Urban Village: Arlington County's Success

with **Jim Hamre** and **Charlie Denney**,  
Arlington County Department of Public Works.  
Introduction by **Chris Zimmerman**,  
Arlington County Board and WMATA chair.

**Monday, July 15, 2002**

6:30 pm Refreshments, 7 pm Program  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Building  
4301 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA  
(closest Metro station: Ballston)

Arlington County is often viewed as the pinnacle of transit-oriented development success. What can the other jurisdictions and neighborhoods in the region learn from its experience? Can new households, businesses, workers and visitors be accommodated in reborn urban villages without overwhelming neighborhoods with traffic congestion? Arlington County transportation planners present their strategies for giving people increased mobility, businesses more customers and neighborhoods less traffic. Learn about Arlington's transportation demand management (TDM) programs, the Ballston Pedestrian/Bicycle corridor, pedestrian greenway ("Walk Arlington"), and expanded community transit—linking residents to nearby Metro stations and business districts.

## Court Strikes Down Multi-Year Extension on Achieving Healthy Air Standards

A federal appeals court July 2 struck down an extension of the clean air deadline for the Washington, D.C. area, ruling that the delay violated federal law. On behalf of the Sierra Club, Earthjustice filed a lawsuit to overturn the EPA extension that allowed the region to continue violating federal health standards for ozone (smog) until 2005. Earthjustice Attorney David Baron argued that the delay was illegal and threatened the health of hundreds of thousands of area residents.

According to Laura Olsen of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the federal appeals court decision emphasizes the severity of continuing with the status quo of sprawling development that has brought us unhealthy air and terrible traffic.

"In a desperate attempt to avoid making changes to land use and transportation policy in favor of smart growth and transit, they've spent the past six months seeking to keep new highway projects in the plans," said Olsen.

Local officials will now have to take major steps to reduce air pollution in the region. The Washington area has already experienced two code purple days (twice the severity of code red) and several code red and orange days this summer, highlighting the unhealthy air in the region.

For more information see: <http://www.smartergrowth.net/media/07.02.02DCAirQuality.htm>

## D.C. Council Approves Takoma Central District Plan

On June 4, 2002, the D.C. Council voted unanimously to accept the D.C. Office of Planning's Takoma Central District Plan (Plan) which provides a framework for the development of the area immediately surrounding the Takoma Metro Station and is the first small area plan to be submitted to the Council in many years. The Plan's call for residential and retail development at and around the Takoma Metro station, enhancement of open space, and improvements to the pedestrian environment along significant corridors in the plan area is consistent with smart growth and transit-oriented development principles.

As one of the first groups to testify before the Council on May 12, 2002, WRN led the support for the DCOP's Takoma Central District Plan with board member Steve Jones' testimony. WRN supported the Plan's land use

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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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Aisling O'Connor, Managing Editor. Comments and articles welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of WRN. All articles by WRN board and staff unless otherwise mentioned.

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policies, urban design and recognition of the Takoma station's unmatched pedestrian-originated ridership. Specifically, WRN supported the Plan's recognition that the land around the Metro station currently used for a parking lot and passive public space would better serve the region and neighborhood if used to house new residents, provide more neighborhood retail opportunities and create an active public space that could serve as a focal point for the community.

WRN's testimony also called for improvements in DCOP's and WMATA's public engagement processes and inclusion of affordable housing in the Plan area and questioned the need for one-to-one parking replacement at a station that has such a high percentage of pedestrian-originated trips. Finally, WRN recognized that while many important issues and details remain to be addressed in future public processes, the Plan provided a sound framework for the redevelopment and revitalization of this historic community.

The Plan was also supported by many Takoma D.C. residents, the Sierra Club, the Maryland's Special Secretary for Smart Growth and others. There was also opposition to the Plan which focused almost exclusively on redevelopment of the WMATA site. Among the opponents key concerns were traffic, reduced open space and future needs for bus service expansion.

One of the next key steps in the implementation of the Takoma Central District Plan is a Planned Unit Development (PUD) review process that is likely to be required for redevelopment of the WMATA site.

### **“Access for All” Recommends Greater Attention to the Transportation Needs of Low Income, Minority and Disabled People**

On May 30, the "Access for All" (AFA) stakeholders committee convened by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) received a hearing with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on its recommendations to improve transit service for low-income and minority riders, and people with disabilities. The AFA committee report highlighted three priorities it would like to see for the region's jurisdictions and WMATA: transit information in different languages; funding for regional, local, and community-based bus services; and improved transportation services for low-income and minority communities and persons with disabilities. While WMATA staff presented its programs in response to the committee's recommendations, AFA members expressed concern that WMATA did not address a majority of its

concerns. According to Kim Propeack, committee member and an attorney with CASA of Maryland, "improved language access for transit information is a matter of complying with federal civil rights law."

For AFA's report, see: <http://www.mwcog.org/trans/afareportindex.html>

### **Capital Beltway Widening Hearings in Virginia Bring Out Opponents**

by Paul Hughes, President, Fairfax Coalition for Smarter Growth

Following three nights of public hearings on Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) 10-12 lane Beltway widening proposal in late May, it was clear to all observers that public sentiment was overwhelmingly opposed to the project. Approximately 1,000 citizens attended the hearings with over 90 percent opposing VDOT's plans in any form. Opponents cited a litany of reasons for their opposition including: project costs have escalated to \$3.3 billion (requiring \$660 million in state and local matching funds); the Beltway would still be in level of service "F" even after construction of the 12-lane alternative; approximately 300 homes would be demolished; VDOT failed to coordinate the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) with WMATA and the Commonwealth's transit studies in the Beltway Corridor; and VDOT's failure to explain how its widening approach squared with Maryland's decision not to widen its side of the Beltway beyond 8 lanes.

Substantial citizen opposition expressed at the hearings appears to be swaying County Supervisors whose districts

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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 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: Edson L. Tennyson, Webb L. Smedley, Richard E. Hoyer and the Henry George Foundation of America Thank you!

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are impacted by the widening proposals. Local press reports indicate that some Supervisors find VDOT's proposals too "invasive" and that they would not support them. Supervisor Kate Hanley (D-Chair) was quoted by the Fairfax Times, June 27:

"One of the problems with this study is that it is not a true study of the corridor. It does not include rail and pavement in the same study." Other Supervisors expressed misgivings: "Clearly the Board of Supervisors is not going to support that kind of dramatic impact" Supervisor Stuart Mendelsohn (R-Dranesville). Supervisor Dana Kauffman (D-Lee), also expressed support for rail alternatives: "The Beltway widening debate should include studies of rail alongside the Beltway, specifically rail from the Franconia-Springfield Transit Center to connect with the Orange Line.

For more information see: <http://www.smartergrowth.org/Beltwaywideningiss.htm>

## **D.C. Council Restores Funding for Housing Production Trust Fund**

On June 4, by unanimous vote, the D.C. Council restored full funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund. Funding was restored, for years subsequent to FY03, as a result of the combined efforts of Council member Adrian Fenty (D-Ward 4) and local organizations supporting affordable housing. The bill restores the portion of the city's real estate transfer tax and fees allocated to the trust fund to its original 15 percent. The portion had been reduced from 15 percent to 7.5 percent when the District's booming real estate market generated more tax revenue than anticipated. Seeking to use the unanticipated revenue for other programs, the Mayor's office proposed a budget for FY03 that reduced the percentage dedicated to affordable housing by half, while retaining the same projected dollar amount of \$12 million.

Affordable housing advocates opposed the reduction of the trust fund on principle and for the precedent it could create for future affordable housing funding cuts if the city is faced with a tight budget. WRN's Janet W. Brown criticized the Mayor's office for slackening its commitment to affordable housing, "You don't write in the principle of dedicated funding and then step back and say, 'Oh that's too much this year.'" Echoing this sentiment, 23 other organizations joined WRN in a letter to Council members the week before the Council's mark-up of the budget, requesting retention of the original 15 percent allocation. Later in the week, supporters gathered at the D.C. Council offices to lobby Councilmembers to restore funding. Representing every ward in the city, advocates included representation from such diverse groups as Washington

Innecity Self Help (WISH), the Grey Panthers and the National Coalition for the Homeless as well as church groups and members of effected communities. Supporters followed up the visit with emails and telephone calls to Council members in the days prior to the budget meeting.

Advocates credit Fenty's leadership and coalition building skills as key to restoring the fund as he first built a core of colleagues supporting the amendment and then introduced the proposal at the mark-up. Trust fund supporters are also pleased with the results of their lobbying efforts, noting a significant shift in support for the bill after their visit to Council members' offices. During the visits the group identified only five sure votes (Fenty, Graham, Mendelson, Evans and Chavous). In the following days, four Council members decided to support the restoration bill (Patterson, Allen, Ambrose and Orange). By the time of the vote, the support among Council members was unanimous.

With the funding restored, Council members, the Mayor's office and affordable housing advocates alike will be watching closely to ensure that the city effectively spends the money in the housing trust fund. In a letter thanking Council members for restoring the fund, Janet W. Brown recommends that the first step should be "[creation] of a strong, independent-minded advisory board for the Fund, [followed closely by identification of] clear criteria and an open process for choosing the projects for funding." Members of the affordable housing movement are already working on these steps and reaffirm their commitment to working with the Mayor's office and Council to realize the potential of the fund.

Housing issues in the District and the region have gained greater general attention recently with the publication of "Housing in the Nation's Capital 2002." The Urban Institute report, prepared for the Fannie Mae Foundation, contains data supporting the need for affordable housing in the region. The full report and companion tables are available at:

[http://www.knowledgeplex.org/kp/report/report/relfiles/fmf\\_0507\\_hnc.html](http://www.knowledgeplex.org/kp/report/report/relfiles/fmf_0507_hnc.html)

## **Metro Promotes Next Generation of Transit Solutions**

On Saturday June 15, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) convened public officials, transit agencies and the interested public to talk about state of the art technology in transit. The brainchild of Chris Zimmerman, WMATA board chair and Arlington County Board chair, this symposium brought together leaders in the transit business to help the region create a vision for the

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next generation of transit system investments. According to Zimmerman, while building a light rail or bus rapid transit system would encounter many obstacles, such a system is likely to be built more easily than widening the Beltway or other costly highway projects.

Citing the transformative power of good transit service coordinated with land use planning, Zimmerman said, "Twenty years ago, Arlington was a dying inner suburb. Now I can't find an excuse to leave the county for a restaurant – we have 400 great ones." In introducing the event, Zimmerman said that the region needs to think beyond Metrorail stations and provide transit that can serve other communities too.

Rights of way priority for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and light rail were stressed as keys to their success in delivering high quality service. Both options were also presented as adaptable to the urban environment. Discussion panel member and transportation consultant Dianna Mendes emphasized that any transit technology should serve a broader vision for what the means is used to achieve. She suggested that narrower objectives will have less success. Cynthia Niktin of Project for Public Spaces concurred asking participants to view transit as a means of serving our communities and creating great places for people.

For more information see: [http://www.wmata.com/about/MET\\_NEWS/200206/pr\\_miniexpo.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/about/MET_NEWS/200206/pr_miniexpo.cfm)

## **D.C. Hosts Transit-Oriented Development Workshop**

June 8, the D.C. Office of Planning hosted a transit-oriented development (TOD) community workshop to educate District residents on TOD's potential to enhance existing neighborhoods, accommodate new growth and make the most of the city's investments in bus and rail service. Approximately 100 community members, representing every ward of the city, and many ANC Commissioners, attended the session. This public workshop follows up the draft report by the Mayor's Task Force on TOD.

Visual presentations displaying alternatives in community design and planning throughout the country encouraged questions from the audience of ways to improve District neighborhoods while preserving the history and character of each. Although some attendees expressed skepticism that TOD design principles could be brought to or enhance their communities, a majority of attendees expressed enthusiasm for future development in the District following these guidelines.

The afternoon session asked attendees to apply TOD design principles to hypothetical redevelopment projects in one of four D.C. neighborhoods: Georgia Avenue Corridor, Congress Heights, Benning Road and Tenleytown. Underscoring the importance of equipping the public to create positive discussion between developers, the city and neighborhoods, Loretta Tate of the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization remarked in a recent article in the East of the River newspaper, "many community residents cannot picture how a transit-oriented development will actually look in their neighborhood and therefore anticipate the worst." Tate stressed that educational workshops such as the one DCOP hosted can have a tremendous impact on alleviating those fears and garnering community support for well-designed TOD projects.

## **Massachusetts Transportation Authorities Support Housing Loans for Low-Income Transit Users**

In May 2002, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, a state affordable housing agency, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) entered into an agreement to launch a transit-related mortgage program. The "Take the T Home Mortgage Program," will make low and median-income T-commuters eligible for zero-down, below-market 6.6 percent mortgages. Twenty-one area banks will administer the loans and MassHousing, the state's affordable housing bank, will insure them. Program details, such as limits on the number of qualified buyers and program deadlines, have yet to be identified. Authorities hope that in addition to facilitating home purchase by low-income families, participants will choose to purchase homes near public transit, eliminating the need for a car.

For more information search for "Mortgage Program Rewards" at: <http://www.knowledgeplex.org/fmfportal/>

## **Live Near Work Comes to Arlington**

April 30, 2002, Governor Mark Warner signed into law a bill allowing Arlington County to provide grants to County and school employees for the purpose of purchasing or renting a principal residence in Arlington County. The bill, effective July 1 2002, is aimed at improving the low rate of Arlington County employees who are also County residents. Currently fewer than thirty percent of employees live in Arlington, with the remainder commuting from outside the County.

For more information see: <http://www.co.arlington.va.us/newsreleases/scripts/ViewDetail.asp?Index=791>

## Washington Post Highlights Impacts of Regional Transportation and Development Policies

In a recent series of articles, the Washington Post has called attention to the transportation and development issues facing the Washington region. Post writers describe pedestrian travel as an alternative to vehicles, the impacts of development in low-income D.C. neighborhoods and the impact of federal parking subsidies on traffic volume. To view the complete articles follow the links below:

"Happy to Pound the Pavement"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33769-2002Jul6.html>

"Even Poor Back Revival"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A5571-2002Jun30.html>

"Area Parking Perks Keeps More Drivers On the Road"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A36672-2002Jul7.html>

## Cheryl Cort to Lead WRN as First Executive Director

WRN is pleased to announce that Cheryl Cort will serve as its first Executive Director. Cheryl has served as President of the Board for the past three years. She is leaving her position at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to lead WRN in a new phase of its development as of July. WRN also welcomes part-time Program Assistant Aisling O'Connor. After graduating from Stanford University, Aisling worked in financial services for a year before seeking out the non-profit world. With our big changes, WRN is seeking donations of office furniture and equipment.

Also, we are pleased to announce two new board members: David Levy and Andrew Fellows. David is an architect, long time transit-oriented development supporter, and current transportation planner at the National Capital Planning Commission. Andy Fellows is a first term City of College Park council member in Prince George's County, and a long time supporter of the Inner Purple Line and transit-oriented development. Andy has years of organizing experience and currently heads up the Chesapeake Region's program for Clean Water Action

WRN wishes to thank the Fannie Mae Foundation and Prince Charitable Trusts for their continued and generous support.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 11-13. **"Reclaiming Economic Development" conference.** 250-300 smart growth activists representing - environmental, labor, religious, community and business organizations- will gather near Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport to make state and local economic development subsidies accountable. Details about the agenda and how to register are available at <http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/flyer.htm>

July 12-18. **Columbia Pike Charrette.** Arlington County invites residents to participate in the planning process for development along Columbia Pike. The process includes four sessions, July 12, 13, 14 and 18. More detailed information is available at: <http://www.columbiapikepartnership.com/> or call 703-892-2776.

Monday, July 15. **Scholarship application deadline for Rail-Volution 2000,** October 3-6 in Washington D.C. Scholarship preference given to activists working on transportation and land use issues. Please call 800.788.7077 or visit <http://www.railvolution.com> for an application.

## JOB LISTINGS

The DCOP seeks **Neighborhood Planning Coordinators** (3 positions available) with its Neighborhood Planning Division. Must have: minimum five years experience directly managing community-planning programs in diverse urban areas. Demonstrated experience writing plans and conducting multi-sector planning analysis. Substantial experience designing and implementing community participation processes and conducting community workshops in diverse urban areas with multi-ethnic and multi-racial populations. Must also have experience coordinating interdisciplinary teams and possess strong facilitation skills. Master in City Planning or related field is mandatory. Interested applicants should submit cover letter and resume to: Andrea Anderson, Human Resource Manager, DC Office of Planning, 801 North Capitol St., NE Washington DC 20002.