

INTERSECT

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WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Maryland's 2002 Elections and the Future of Smart Growth

Opinion by Andrew Fellows, Chesapeake Program Director of Clean Water Action and WRN Board member

Although Robert Ehrlich's victory in the Governor's race will result in a change of direction from the executive branch of Maryland government, the legacy of smart growth is likely here to stay. Funding of transit alternatives is immediately threatened, however, as tough times and a campaign of highway promises indicate that the new governor will have little interest in spending money on the Purple Line or other rail projects.

The good news is that with an inherited budget shortfall and an even greater deficit looming, it will be difficult for Ehrlich and other Inter-County Connector highway (ICC) proponents to support spending on a road project for the state's wealthiest county while the rest of the state suffers. It's hard to imagine any enthusiasm from Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, Baltimore area or Prince George's delegations for shoveling money towards an ICC project which, as Intersect readers know, would not reduce congestion if built and is destined for years of litigation.

The same is true of other sprawl projects, such as the Techway, the Waldorf bypass and other segments of the developer community's Outer Washington Beltway fantasy. Transit and other sustainable growth proponents should prepare to oppose any Maryland highway project in the coming session, and build coalition with proponents of education, water infrastructure upgrades and repair, community legacy, open space protection, crime prevention, and other local needs. Coalition-building to oppose wasteful spending in tight economic times will build trust for alliances to advocate for transit and smart growth funding that facilitates wise, planned spending that makes Maryland communities more livable.

Revitalizing existing communities creates economic wealth that funds unmet needs. That was the philosophy that developed the policy legacy of smart growth, and national

recognition of the benefits of this policy is as accepted as the scientific consensus on global warming.

Like global warming, or the cancer-causing properties of tobacco, there is still a vocal minority who deny that a problem exists. A larger group cannot deny or ignore the connection between global warming, the region's poor air quality, and transportation and land use choices. It remains the challenge for sustainable growth proponents to build a critical mass that shifts spending from wasteful subsidies for sprawl to efficient spending for our communities. Difficult economic times make the smart growth choice that much easier to make.

Virginia Sales Tax Opponents Offer a "Blueprint for a Better Region"

Opinion by Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth

When voters rejected the sales tax increase in Northern Virginia by a strong 10-point margin, they voted against the status quo approach to transportation and development. They opposed subsidizing another round of sprawl development and they expressed support for smarter growth.

Smart growth includes transit-oriented development at our 114 Metro, VRE and MARC stations. The next 20 years of office and residential development could easily fit on 10 acres at each of the Metro stations — land that is currently underutilized as surface parking at many stations.

This does not necessarily mean that all future development should be focused in these areas. It illustrates the possibility of doing a much better job of focusing development near transit than we have been doing. The District of Columbia seeks a population of 100,000 more residents within 10 years and has identified room for 35,000 housing units and more than 50 million square feet of commercial development within a 10-minute walk of transit. Similar opportunities exist at Metro and VRE stations in Fairfax, Prince William, Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

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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 Washington D.C. region.

1777 CHURCH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036

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

EMAIL: STAFF@WASHINGTONREGION.NET

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

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Changing comprehensive plans and other policies to adjust the location of jobs and housing can be done faster, at less cost, and with equal effectiveness in reducing traffic than building or widening highways. Prince George's commuters have some of the longest commutes in the region, mostly along the Beltway.

Encouraging investment at the 13 Metro stations in Prince George's that have little to no development would increase reverse commutes on now empty Metro trains and shorten commutes for Prince George's residents, while reducing traffic on the Beltway.

More investment and jobs in Virginia's Route 1 corridor and at VRE stations like Woodbridge and Innovation would provide similar benefits.

Providing more affordable housing in the job-rich Dulles and I-270 corridors would help reduce commutes; and all communities, whether near transit or not, must have the right mix of uses and be designed to encourage walking, biking and shorter car trips. Montgomery County's Balanced Land Use study showed these measures reduce vehicle miles traveled and congestion as well as, or better than, road heavy alternatives.

We must also stop subsidizing waves of sprawl development with another round of bypass highways. A technical analysis by Environmental Defense showed that these highways would reduce traffic on the American Legion bridge by just 2 percent, increase development and traffic in outer areas and shift population and jobs from core areas.

Further, we must manage the existing system better. This includes faster incident response with pre-positioned towing services, signal timing and congestion pricing of some road corridors. Implement state telecommuting and transit tax credits, hold the line on transit fares, and approve parking cash-out policies that allow employees to take cash in lieu of parking to reduce demand on our roadways.

With implementation of smarter growth and demand management we can then design and fund a transportation system to match. This system should meet performance goals such as reduction in per capita vehicle miles traveled and per capita daily vehicle trips, improved air quality, and increased mode share for transit, pedestrians, bicycles and carpools.

Virginia, Maryland and the region cannot afford to continue a pattern of sprawl development. We cannot afford the infrastructure costs, the loss of open space and historic landscapes, the air and water pollution, and the unequal pattern of economic development.

It is time we brought everyone to the table and got this right.

The "Blueprint for a Better Region" can be viewed at www.smartergrowth.net.

Silver Spring Transit Station Reemerging into Public View

by Dale Tibbitts

Over the past year, Montgomery County and Metro have provided little opportunity for Silver Spring civic activists of all stripes -- Inner Purple Line, bicycle, trails, and transit-oriented development supporters -- to track planning of the ambitious, multifaceted Silver Spring Transit Center. The status of the region's first state-of-the-art Bike Station at a Metro station is uncertain.

On Nov. 14, the local volunteer Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee received a briefing from Kassa Seyoum, project coordinator at the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, about the status of the Silver Spring Transit Center.

Committee members expressed concern that the project has had little public scrutiny for the last year and that important public components might be compromised. Seyoum assured the group that all the functions of the public transit center as previously designed would be retained. Of particular concern to the Advisory Committee were the Commuter Store, transit-oriented retail space and the Bike Station. Space had been committed for the Commuter Store in the previous design, but space for the Bike Station had not.

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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 Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Tom Metcalf, Gerald M. Procanick, Cheryl Cort, Bill Janssen, Kevin Mills, Richard Reis, Harry Sanders, Merrill Boone, Marilyn W. Klein, Don V. Harris, John and Gail Harmon, Mary Kay Santore, Allen Greenburg and Zipcar for their support of WRN's programs advocating for livable communities in the Washington DC Region.

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Silver Spring is the busiest Metrorail/Metrobus station in Maryland. Approximately 60,000 commuters pass through the station every day and that number is expected to rise to nearly 100,000 in the next five years. The initial plan in 1996 was to just add bus bays to the station, but residents and local planners believed that the station could be made into a landmark multi-modal transportation hub by combining Metrobus, Metrorail, local light rail, urban trails, bicycles, taxis, cars, intercity buses and pedestrians. With \$40 million of public monies allocated and after substantial public input, the transit center was nearing construction in 2001.

Metro stopped the project and decided to proceed with a public-private joint development proposal from developer Foulger-Pratt in June 2001. The transit center planning has been out of sight while the interested parties negotiated. Seyoum said that the negotiations are ongoing but nearing completion. He said that progress has been slow because of all the parties involved and because of design difficulties.

According to Seyoum, the Foulger-Pratt-led project will consist of the transit center surrounded by a 200,000 square feet office building along Colesville Road, a 150-unit residency hotel facing Wayne Avenue, a 250-unit multi-family building and a 500-space parking garage. He said that designing the project to accommodate the Inner Purple Line with new track separation requirements was difficult.

For more on Bike Stations see:

<http://www.bikestation.org/index.html>

Tax Increment Financing: Is D.C. Getting the Benefits it Should?

by Meghan Clarke and Cheryl Cort

According to a new study by Good Jobs First, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in the District of Columbia is a costly program that has strayed far from its intended purpose. TIFs are supposed to foster government-sponsored economic development in depressed neighborhoods and commercial areas that have trouble attracting private investments. TIF projects also are expected to generate additional tax revenues. The study, "Economic Development In Washington, D.C.: High Costs, Unclear Benefits, Missing Safeguards," analyzes 13 major economic development deals subsidized by the District of Columbia through TIFs or Revenue Bonds, and points out that despite very high costs, these deals lack clear public benefits and fail to employ common taxpayer safeguards to ensure their effectiveness.

Tax Increment Financing works in the following way. A small area is designated for redevelopment. As a result of that redevelopment, property values will rise and, therefore, the assessed value and property taxes will rise. These tax revenues are split into two streams, the first one, set at the old property value continues to go where it went before, typically designated to school districts and the city's general fund for local services. The second revenue stream, stemming from the incremental increase in property value, is diverted back into the redevelopment area. In D.C., TIF revenues are typically used to back bonds that are issued up front to private investors to generate a large sum for investment in facilities to support redevelopment.

The need for effective location-based revitalization tools is apparent given that high-poverty areas in D.C. have increased over the past decade, according to recent findings by D.C. Agenda. However, the Good Jobs First study points out that Tax Increment Financing, D.C.'s newest and most expensive economic development program, is not targeted to needy areas and is not alleviating the area's affordable housing crisis. The current TIF law only requires developers to build housing as a condition of their subsidy award when TIF projects are located in the "Downtown Area" of the District. It does not however, require the construction of low-income housing. Although housing is included in the two TIF projects that are located in a Downtown Area – Gallery Place and the Spy Museum – the rent is at market rate. Three TIFs have been approved to date: Gallery Place, \$75 million; Mandarin Hotel, \$46 million; and \$6.9 million for the Spy Museum.

The District is currently considering providing a several million dollar TIF for a parking garage at the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station to build a parking garage, half of which would be used for new development and the other half for 380 replacement parking spaces for Metro commuters. If a TIF is approved, D.C. taxpayers will subsidize a majority of out-of-state drivers, but will receive no funds to improve poor pedestrian access to the station.

"The city needs to be accountable to citizens for these investments by producing family-wage jobs, job training, and affordable housing," said Jocelyn Breeland, co-chair of the Washington Interfaith Network in D.C. "Programs such as Tax Increment Financing should be used to revitalize blighted neighborhoods, not just not areas like downtown that are already booming and where housing costs are sky high."

For more information see:

www.goodjobsfirst.org/gjfpubs.htm

New River Crossings Will Exacerbate Traffic and Pollution Problems, Study Finds

by Meghan Clarke

A new report, "More Sprawl, More Traffic, No Relief: An Analysis of Proposed Potomac River Crossings," prepared by Smart Mobility Inc. and Anita Kramer Associates Inc., indicates that sprawl, traffic and pollution growth are likely to result from the proposed Potomac River crossings and expressways connecting Northern Virginia with Montgomery or Frederick County, Maryland. The Techway and Western Transportation Corridor (WTC) proposals were shown to significantly increase traffic and worsen congestion across large parts of Montgomery, Frederick, and Northern Virginia counties while only reducing traffic on the American Legion Bridge by less than 2 percent.

The consultants determined the land use and transportation effects of the two proposed crossing by utilizing sophisticated real estate market data and a refined version of the latest Council of Governments regional traffic model. They found that the Techway bridge would provide no noticeable traffic relief to motorists now stuck in traffic. Traffic on roads near the new bridges would be significantly higher than it would be without the bridges. For example, with the Techway, traffic on Route 7 in Virginia adjacent to a new interchange would almost double compared to the no-build scenario. Traffic on Maryland Route 28 would nearly triple compared to the no-build scenario.

A new bridge and associated highways will shift land use and traffic and spark increased congestion in many parts of the region. The scattered new development for up to 85,000 new households and 252,000 jobs in the six counties, spurred by the new bridge and highway comes at the expense of communities with good transit services and shorter average trip lengths, increasing the number of vehicle trips and trip lengths, and exacerbating existing environmental problems, such as air and water pollution. Construction of these roads would likely shift population and employment from core areas of D.C., Alexandria and Prince George's County.

The report was commissioned by Audubon Naturalist Society, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Environmental Defense, Piedmont Environmental Council and Solutions Not Sprawl.

To view the report see:

http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/2383_ExecSum.pdf

Parking Forum Focuses on Solutions for Community Goals

by Cheryl Cort

The key to solving parking problems is making sure the we are managing parking in line with broader goals, according to Nov. 7 WRN forum speaker Adam Millard-Ball of Nelson\Nygaard Consulting. Millard-Ball explained that effective parking management is of vital importance to creating better communities because parking consumes large amounts of land, and is expensive – making up a significant proportion of development costs. A suburban view of parking assumes everyone drives, each use should have separate parking, parking should be free, and the streetscape is oriented to the automobile. In an urban context, parking functions very differently: parking is shared between different uses, parking does not dominate the streetscape, drivers may have to walk a short distance to the final destination, and the needs of drivers are balanced with transit users and pedestrians.

According to Millard-Ball, defining what is a parking problem is essential to constructing lasting and feasible solutions. Millard-Ball posed questions about what constitutes the parking "problem:" can't find a space at all? Can't find a space within 5 minutes, on the same block? Can't find a space without charges? Parking solutions are different for different users in different communities. The second major question in parking is: how much is enough? Millard-Ball explained that there is no right answer and there is no such thing as a set "demand" for parking. Demand for parking depends on its price, availability and other travel choices. Supply is a value judgment based on wider community goals. He also noted that supply shouldn't be confused with availability. Plenty of supply might exist, but not be available to a particular user at a particular time and price.

A set principles for managing parking and a neighborhood parking tool kit were presented by Millard-Ball. He asked what the goals of parking are. Are the goals to help manage traffic congestion, transit ridership, pedestrian friendliness, employee retention, local business development, housing supply and affordability, social equity, Millard-Ball posed? He recommended devising strategies aimed at clear community goals. Based on those goals, different users can be prioritized and alternatives can be consistently evaluated. For example, investment in more parking or better transit can be evaluated based on which will best achieve community goals. With clarified goals, maximum use can be made of existing resources. Millard-Ball suggested a toolkit consisting of pricing, permits, transportation demand management, shared

parking, car-sharing (like ZipCar and FlexCar), design solutions to mitigate the impact of parking and increased supply. For more on of Millard-Ball's work, see: http://www.nelsonnygaard.com/articles/cur_article_parking.htm

WRN wishes to thank FlexCar and ZipCar for co-sponsoring the catering for the event.

Arlington Nationally Recognized for Success of Its Metro Stations

On Nov. 17, EPA Administrator Christine Whitman announced the winners of the National Awards for Smart Growth Achievement at the National Building Museum. Arlington County won for overall excellence in smart growth for the success of the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor. The county was specifically commended for adopting a land use plan that concentrates compact, mixed-use development at the stations, while also developing smaller plans for each station to maintain a distinct sense of community. The success of the Metro line is well-documented and celebrated by transit officials around the country: between 1999 and 2002, 2,500 apartments and condos, 1.5 million square feet of office space, 379,000 square feet of retail space, and five miles of bike lanes were created. Also, Metro ridership doubled in the corridor between 1991 and 2002, with nearly 50 percent of corridor residents using transit to commute. In her remarks, Whitman mentioned that creating this type of development at typical suburban densities could consume 14 square miles of open space compared to the roughly two square mile Rosslyn-Ballston corridor.

Other winners included a mixed-income neighborhood built on a former mine in Colorado, a transit-oriented development incentive program in California, and a state of Massachusetts community outreach program utilizing visualization technologies to better inform citizens about growth. For more information on the awards and the winners, see: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm>

Region Fails to Clean Up Air and Comply with Federal Laws, Again

On Nov. 13, Earthjustice on behalf of the Sierra Club filed suit challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's continued failure to enforce federal clean air requirements in metropolitan D.C. The suit seeks to require EPA to reclassify metropolitan Washington from "serious" to "severe" for ozone (smog) levels, which would trigger stronger pollution controls for industries and motor vehicles. The suit also seeks to compel EPA rejection of the region's inadequate clean air plans, a move that would require state and local governments to adopt new plans to meet clean air standards.

This action was followed by the Transportation Planning Board announcement that the region's transportation plans fall dramatically short of federal healthy air standards – by 30 percent or 50 tons per day of the pollutant nitrogen oxide (NOx). Over the last year, the region's governments have struggled to agree on a strategy to make up for a three-ton NOx shortfall.

"There's no way in the world the region is going to build any more major road projects in light of these results," said Loudoun County Supervisor James G. Burton (I-Mercer), a slow-growth proponent. "You can't solve this problem with the marginal solutions that have been put on the table for the last three or four years," Burton told the Washington Post. For additional information see: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A61332-2002Nov15.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 7pm - 9pm. **Maglev and High Speed Rail Forum.** What are the options for high speed ground transportation between Baltimore and Washington DC? Panelists: Suhair Alkhatib, Project Manager, Maryland Transit Administration; Donald Rote, Retired Scientist, Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago; Vukan Vuchic, Professor of Transportation Engineering, University of Pennsylvania; Sponsored by: American Planning Association, Maryland Chapter; Citizens Planning and Housing Association; National Transportation Center, Morgan State University. St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 4711 Edmondson Avenue. For further information contact Brent Flickinger, (410) 539-1369, x 212, brentf@cphabaltimore.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 4 and Dec. 10. **Purple Line "East" Meetings.** WMATA and MTA are hosting these meetings so that residents can have a chance to provide early input as part of the Purple Line "East" Project. Dec. 4, 5pm-8pm: Langley Park Community Center, 1500 Merrimac Drive Langley Park, MD 20783; Dec. 10, 5pm-8pm, MNCPPC Parks & Recreation Administrative Building, 6600 Kenilworth Avenue, Riverdale, MD 20737. For additional information: Contact (202) 962-1357, or visit: www.mdpurpleline.com (currently under construction).

Thursday, Dec. 5, 5:30-7:30pm. **New National Urban Parks Promotional Campaign – discussion led by Dick Dadey of City Parks Alliance.** Josephine Butler Parks Center, 2437 15th St, NW. For more information, contact Steve Coleman, Washington Parks & People, (202) 462-7275, e-mail: washingtonparks@aol.com, <http://www.washingtonparks.net>

Thursday, Dec. 5, 12pm - 1:30pm. **DC's Environmental Agenda** with Ellen Jones, Larry Bohlen, Keith Pritchford, Jim Schulman, Paul Schwartz. Discussion will focus on future a DC agenda and review of accomplishments. Friends of the Earth, 1025 Vermont Ave., NW 3rd Floor, McPherson Square Metro. For more information contact Chris Weiss at (202) 783-7400 x120 or cweiss@foe.org.

Dec. 3, 4, and 5. **Tri-County Parkway Location Study citizen meetings** to review and discuss several preliminary alternatives which address the transportation needs to connect the City of Manassas with I-66 and the Loudoun County Parkway in the Dulles area. The study area extends from Route 234 (Sudley Road) in Prince William County, north through Fairfax County to Route 50 (John Mosby Highway) in Loudoun County. Dec. 3 5pm to 8pm-6 p.m. Loudoun County, Arcola Elementary School, 24328 Goshen Road, Arcola; Dec. 4-5pm to 8:00 p.m. -6 p.m. Prince William County, Stonewall Jackson High School, 8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas; Dec. 5 5pm to 8pm-6pm, Fairfax County, Westfields High School, 4700 Stonecroft Road, Chantilly. For more info, see <http://virginiadot.org/projects/publicinvolvement.asp>

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9am to 2pm. **Environment 2003: How Can We Be More Effective?** Members of Virginia’s environmental organizations are invited to a strategy session to plan for 2003 Virginia General Assembly Session. The Virginia Conservation Network Legislative Workshop will be held Saturday, December 7 from 9am-2pm at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 815 East Grace Street, Richmond, VA. For information or to register contact Ellen Shepard at (540) 362-3538 or ellenshepard@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 9am. **“Comprehensive Housing Strategy Bill of 2002,”** Hearing, Bill 14-672, before Chairperson Harold Brazil, D.C. Council Committee on Economic Development, Room 120, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Call David Goldblatt, (202) 724-8078, to get on the witness list.
For a copy of the bill, see: <http://dccouncil.dc.gov/images/00001/20020510094756.pdf>.

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 6:30 to 10pm. **Charrette: Shady Grove Sector Plan.** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is holding a design charrette that will address land use, vacant properties, transportation, recreation, and streetscape improvements from the Shady Grove Road Corridor. 16641 Crabbs Branch Way. Contact Karen Kumm-Morris for more info (301) 495-4554 or e-mail karen.kumm@mncppc-mc.org.

Friday, Jan. 10, 3:30-5:30pm, 9th Annual James McKay Presentation – **The Bike Station Process - Experiences in Denver, Colorado.** Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Training Center (Ground Floor), 777 N. Capitol Street, NE. Contact WABA for more info (202) 628-2500 or e-mail waba@waba.org.

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