

INTERSECT

NEWSLETTER

June 21, 2004

OF THE

Volume 8 Number 3

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

FORUM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Recognizing Smart Growth: Can Developers and Environmentalists Agree?

with

Sam Black, Chair, Smart Growth Alliance Jury and Senior Counsel, Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., representing the Board of Trade; and

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director, *Coalition for Smarter Growth*

June 30, 2004

6:00 pm Refreshments; 6:30 pm Program

Can developers and environmentalists agree on what smart growth is? Smart growth advocates at the same table with the Board of Trade and the homebuilders? You can't miss this event!

Learn about the Smart Growth Alliance and how its jury of smart growth advocates, developers, architects, and environmentalists is recognizing development projects from around the Washington region. This is an opportunity to see what types of projects are being endorsed, to ask about the criteria being used, and to discuss the best ways to get to win-win development solutions in the region.

Mallalternatives: Transit-Oriented Retail

with

Seth Harry, retail planning consultant and New Urbanist architect; and

Randy Gross, economic development consultant

July 12, 2004

6:00 pm Refreshments; 6:30 pm Program

The stroll down a pleasant shopping street is at the heart of our vision for revitalized neighborhoods. But what does it take to realize that vision? How big is too big? How much parking is really necessary? How can less-affluent neighborhoods attract better retail with transit-oriented development?

Both events will be located at: **National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC), 401 9th Street NW, North Lobby, Suite 500.**

RSVP (attendance only): WRN, 202/667-5445 or e-mail staff@washingtonregion.net. This event is free of charge. For more see: www.washingtonregion.net

The WRN "Design Matters" Spring Forum Series is sponsored by CIG International LTD, New Legacy Partners, LLC, Stout and Teague, and Potomac Investment Properties, Inc.

Real Streets: Dan Burden Shares Insights on Creating Quality of Life

By Cheryl Cort

Americans have too much land and money, and not enough common sense, according to Dan Burden, speaking at WRN's May 18 forum. Burden said that Americans don't understand the difference between standard of living versus quality of life. Modern engineering has designed out many of the features that gave towns and cities, including D.C., a sense of place. Good places foster a sense of people watching over their neighborhood. Freeways and endless traffic have replaced collections of compact villages where most people walked, and where villages were linked by trolleys to form a city. Burden warned that the traffic dilemma will never be solved by building more highway lanes.

After serving 16 years as the State of Florida's Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, Burden has traveled the country advising communities on how to create good places and streets. Burden explained that cities are places of association – where people have chance encounters on the street. The purpose of cities is to maximize exchange, and to minimize travel. Burden cites Vancouver, British Columbia as a city that is built for walking, offering a good environment at the street level, and minimized travel. The keys to a good city, according to Burden are: villages spaced one half mile apart; low speed streets that distribute the volume of traffic; compactness; fine-grained streets with transit links, and quality public spaces. Burden also pointed out the emergent obesity epidemic in the United States demonstrates that the design of our communities and sedentary lifestyles is having a profound impact on our health and quality of life. In addition to the health impacts of driving rather than walking, "car time equals less time with family and community," Burden said.

Burden discussed specific principles for creating good places, "we need to convert suburbs into villages, and space into place." Burden believes that five principles can be applied to creating good places: (1) security: without a sense of safety, nothing else matters because no one will want to be there; (2) convenience: compact villages where

(Continued on page 2)

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK

FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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)

WRN advocates transportation investments, land use policies, and neighborhood designs that enhance existing communities and the environment of the Washington D.C. region.

Cheryl Cort, Editor; Peter Buryk and Elizabeth Cox contributing writers.

(Real Streets continued from page 1)

buildings frame the street and a variety of stores offer local products and services, (3) efficiency: safe and easy street crossings for pedestrians, many linkages to the neighborhood including walkways, trails and roadways give residents and visitors choices about how to travel; (4) comfort: streets, connections, public plazas encourage people to walk and rest; (5) welcoming public spaces: public spaces celebrate public life and foster a sense of safety and inclusion. Sufficient housing, where higher residential densities are designed to create these good places is also a critical ingredient, according to Burden.

Burden cited a number of examples from around the country where jurisdictions are retrofitting missing elements to create a sense of place, and a place where people will want to walk. He said that a fine-grained road system is the basis to supporting transit and walkability. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the city is creating a series of transit villages around its new light rail system and will build missing roads that create well-connected links for good walking routes. Traffic speeds should be slow in order to provide the sense of a true village, according to Burden.

Burden warned against off-street bus facilities that consume valuable space in compact village centers and increase travel time. He recommended keeping express buses on main line roads rather than adding travel time and consuming space to accommodate off-street facilities. Burden also offered more specifics on street design and suggested that engineers need to be retrained to understand the elements of good streets. According to Burden, modern road design standards were written for rural and suburban environments. No main street design guides for engineers are available except for the states of Oregon, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Burden advocated for narrower travel lanes of 10 to 10.5 feet, explaining that this slows vehicular traffic and increases safety. He also recommended adding parallel roads to give traffic more routes. Roundabouts have the potential to carry large traffic volumes, eliminate large intersections, while providing for safer pedestrian movements, he explained. Burden said that a "road diet" typically reduces the number of travel lanes from four to two while adding a center turn lane, and often adding on-street parking. This reconfiguration tends to reduce crashes by 60 percent, and enhances the walkability of the environment, according to Burden.

Travel lanes narrowed to 10 feet, added corner bulb-outs, improved pedestrian crossings are also elements of road diets. These improvements not only improve safety for everyone, they increase economic vitality of the community. Slower traffic and a desirable pedestrian environment attract more shoppers and help create a sense of place. Burden said that we should resist the urge to build fewer big

roads, and instead build many smaller roads. Many smaller roads have two or three times the capacity of a few big roads, Burden said. Along with this approach, transit should be added, and truly intermodal centers created that offer bicycle access, showers, daycare, flower shops, dry cleaners and other conveniences of a true village center.

For more about Dan Burden's work, see: www.walkable.org

Arlington Asks for 10 Percent of Affordable Housing in Metro Corridors

By Pete Buryk and Cheryl Cort

As housing costs continue to climb throughout the Washington metropolitan region, Arlington County took an important step in an effort to secure more affordable housing, especially in its Metro corridors. On April 27, at the urging of affordable housing and smart growth advocates, the County Board approved guidelines that will ask that 10 percent of gross floor area of new residential and mixed-use developments be set aside as affordable housing units in Metro corridors for projects which undergo an extensive negotiated "site plan" rather than by-right development review process. In addition, developers of new commercial buildings in the Metro corridors will be asked to contribute \$4 per square foot of above-ground building floor area to the county's affordable housing fund. For residential, mixed-use and commercial development outside the Metro corridors, builders would also be asked to pay \$4 per square foot of new construction.

Arlington's Rosslyn-Ballston Metro corridor is regarded nationwide as a model for smart urban growth. It is also one of the most desirable places to build in the region. Arlington, however, also tops the region in the highest housing costs with average monthly rents at over \$1,200. Charles Rinker, one of the leading proponents of the new policy, said in a statement following the Board's decision, "I believe that the action taken on last Tuesday is the biggest policy step to date that Arlington has taken in support of affordable housing." He explained that the 10 percent policy, "gives the County another important and powerful tool to preserve and enhance our cultural and economic diversity."

Developers have reacted by putting projects on hold to recalculate costs or renegotiate land prices after the Board's decision. Others have threatened to cancel housing construction, or might opt to build at lower density "by-right" rather than the higher density "site plan" level. On May 25, the Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA) and the Northern Virginia Apartment Association filed suit against the County claiming it does not have the authority to ask for these affordable housing contributions under Virginia law.

Metro Funds Fall Short, Customers Pay More Costs

By Peter Buryk

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or Metro, is suffering from a lack of dedicated funding that is standard among other transit agencies of its size, according to a new study by Brookings Institution scholar Robert Puentes. In his study, Puentes concludes that Metro's inability to collect revenue in the form of taxes leads to increased budget deficits and decreased service for its customers. Other large transit systems in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles receive 20 percent or more of their annual revenues from such sources as gas and sales taxes. Metro is different from these systems in that it relies on local subsidies from the three jurisdictions that it serves, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, for a large part of its revenues. In 2002, Metro received 14.6 percent of its operations funds and 20.6 percent of its capital funds from local subsidies. Other large transit systems average less than 5 percent and 8 percent respectively. Operating funds are used to run the system and consist primarily of employee salaries and benefits. Capital funds pay for infrastructure costs such as maintenance, system expansions, and the purchase of buses and trains. Each jurisdiction's subsidy contribution is determined by complex formulas for rail, bus, and other services. Such factors as population density, number of transit stations, and ridership are considered in local subsidy calculations.

Reliance on local subsidies and the absence of a dedicated funding source leaves Metro vulnerable to the budgetary pressures and transportation priorities of local jurisdictions. Continued increases in ridership and aging equipment and facilities have also driven up costs. For fiscal year 2005, Metro faces a \$25 million budget shortfall. Metro's board approved a round of fair increases for rail, buses, and parking that not only closed the gap, but as in last year's price hikes, will raise more money than the projected shortfall. This year, the fare and fee increases, effective June 27, will generate an additional \$29 million. Minimum rail fares will increase by 15 cents to \$1.35 and bus fares will increase by five cents from \$1.20 to \$1.25 per ride. Weekly bus passes, however, will remain at \$11. The budget committee added this provision recognizing the financial burden of fare increases for bus riders, who are typically less affluent than rail riders. The cost of parking at Metro stations will increase by 75 cents, and monthly parking fees will increase by \$10 to \$45. Metro's transportation service for the disabled, MetroAccess, will also increase its fare 10 cents to \$2.50. Weekday service will begin one half hour earlier at 5 am, and late night Metro service will continue, but riders will be charged peak hour fares for non-peak service between 2 and 3 am on Friday and Saturday nights.

WRN joined Metro board members Jim Graham (DC) and Chris Zimmerman (Arlington) in opposing fare increases, especially on bus riders. WRN argued that transit is an essential public service that benefits everyone, and that increased costs should be paid by the public as a whole, rather than transit riders. The smaller increase on bus fares of five cents versus a rail fare increase of 15 cents is viewed as an important precedent. Over the past two years, daily parking fees have risen by \$1.50. This is close to the \$2 WRN originally proposed in order to avoid fares increases last year. In both years, however, fares and fees have increased above what was needed to cover the budget gap. In this year's action, the Metro board again shifted increased costs onto its customers.

See "Washington's Metro: Deficits by Design," by Robert Puentes, June 2004 at: www.brook.edu/urban/publications/20040603_puentes.htm

Arlington Takes Carsharing to a New Level in Rosslyn-Ballston

Arlington County has partnered with Flexcar and Zipcar to more than double the number of carsharing vehicles in Arlington through a one-year pilot program in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor.

The county has designated 20 easy-to-find, on-street parking spaces for carsharing vehicles, all convenient to Metro-rail, Metrobus and ART-Arlington Transit bus service and marked with bright orange signposts. Similar to car rental, the program allows members to rent a car for as little as a half-hour. Vehicles are self-service and the price includes gas, insurance and maintenance with members only paying for the time they use.

"Carsharing fits perfectly with Arlington's integrated approach to transportation," said Barbara Favola, Chairman of the Arlington County Board. "We want to make it easier for folks to get around without owning a car. Adding more carsharing vehicles helps accomplish this goal."

By more than doubling the number of carsharing vehicles in the corridor, Arlington hopes to provide the "missing link" to the transportation mix of Metrorail, Metrobus, Arlington Transit, walking and biking. Now those who don't own a car or need the use of an extra car can use a carsharing vehicle.

Arlington anticipates the program will help to decrease the number of cars on local streets, reduce pollution levels and enhance residents' lifestyles. Research will be conducted to measure the effects of carsharing on Arlington's parking, trip reduction and transit use. Additional information about Arlington's carsharing program is available www.CommuterPage.com/carshare

D.C. Advocates Fight Off Mayor to Secure \$40.5 million for Housing Fund

On May 14, the D.C. Council unanimously passed the FY 2005 Budget, which included \$40.5 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). Although current law mandates that the HPTF is to be funded by 15 percent of deed recordation fees and transfer taxes, affordable housing advocates again had to fight for full funding. Advocates also defeated D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams' proposed changes to securitize the Trust Fund by limiting annual bond payments to \$20 million over the next twenty years and eliminate the current funding formula. The Mayor's plan would allow the District to support several major housing developments and to produce affordable housing in the near future. However, housing advocates argued that securitization does not make sense this year because there are no plans for large-magnitude housing investments, while many modest scale affordable housing projects can be supported without securitization. Most importantly, the Mayor's proposal would have cut funding for affordable housing by more than half.

The budget battle was made easier after the Chief Financial Officer certified an additional \$50 million in revenue based on new economic data that showed higher-than-expected economic growth. Along with full funding, two amendments, supported by affordable housing advocates, to the Budget Support Act were passed. One amendment allows the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development to draw down funds already appropriated to administer the Trust Fund at the beginning of the fiscal year. The other lengthens the time during which HPTF – funded projects must remain affordable, to 40 years for rental units and 15 years for for-sale units (previous control periods were 30 and 5 years, respectively.) Affordable housing advocates were also able to convince the D.C. Council Committee on Economic Development to unanimously amend the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Act to require that 30 percent of all residential development for families at 30 and 60 percent of area median income.

For more on the HPTF and the Mayor's securitization proposal, see: <http://www.dcfpi.org/4-19-04hou.htm>

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 organizational donors and individuals for their support for WRN's efforts to promote livable communities for the Washington region: Christopher Brown, Julia Koster, Matthew B. Miller, Dale Tibbitts, John Bailey, Dieter Thigpen and the Campaign to Reinvest in the Heart of Oxon Hill, Kathleen Courrier in the memory of Paul Brace, Edward Thomas and Tom Whitley.

Loudoun Delays Vote on Adding WTC highway

On June 1, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted to postpone putting the Western Transportation Corridor back into the Comprehensive Plan. After hours of testimony by developers and the public who raised questions about the need for such a road, the board voted 9-0 to send the item back to the county planning commission for further review. The corridor is a proposed highway that would function as an "Outer Beltway" on the western side of Washington, D.C., running along the southwest of Prince William into Fauquier and Loudoun north into Maryland. The planning commission will make a new recommendation to the board after completing a study of how the project would impact existing and approved communities.

Taxpayers Group Names ICC #1 Boondoggle

The Intercounty Connector (ICC) is the most wasteful highway project in the nation, according to a new report released by Taxpayers for Common Sense and Friends of the Earth. The report, "Road to Ruin: The 27 Most Wasteful Road Projects in America," calls for elimination of the nation's most wasteful and environmentally harmful highway projects. The 6 to 12 lane, 18-mile ICC running through Montgomery County, Maryland would cost at least \$1.7 billion, and as much as \$3.2 billion if a plan to fund the project by selling bonds is approved. The Western Transportation Corridor, the Virginia portion of the proposed outer beltway around Washington D.C., was ranked 10th most wasteful project in the nation.

The InterCounty Connector has been highly controversial for 40 years. Twice before, federal agencies have rejected the alignment sought by the road and developer lobbies because it would plow through parkland, generate development and traffic, pollute waterways, and worsen air quality. Studies have also found that the ICC would have minimal positive impact on regional congestion and would not reduce average auto commute times.

Maryland's State Highway Administration has already spent nearly \$20 million studying and restudying the ICC, and this is the third Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the ICC in less than 25 years. Yet Gov. Ehrlich has declared the ICC to be his top transportation priority. Current studies exclude non-highway alternatives even though smart growth advocates claim they offer the best opportunity to address traffic problems. For the ICC to move forward, especially with the current financial climate of tight budgets, the state would have to sacrifice funding for other important future transportation projects, such as the Purple line, the now stalled rail line from Bethesda to New Carrollton connecting inner Montgomery Counties and Prince George's.

The report and details on the projects are available on Taxpayers for Common Sense's website at: www.taxpayer.net/road2ruin.

READER SURVEY

Please help WRN by taking a 2-minute survey about Intersect. The purpose of Intersect is to bring state-of-the art knowledge to concerned residents, activists, decision-makers and business leaders around the region about important smart growth issues of land use, transportation, affordable housing and urban design.

1. Does Intersect provide informative coverage of these issues? Use a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = not informative, and 5 = very informative, DK = don't know. Also, mark the topics you would like to see covered more.

Not informative very informative

- 1 2 3 4 5 DK Transit [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Transit-oriented development [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Pedestrian/bicycle/streets [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Roads/highways [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Affordable housing [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Urban design [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Air quality [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Regional issues [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK District of Columbia [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Arlington County [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Alexandria [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Fairfax County [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Montgomery County [cover more]
 1 2 3 4 5 DK Prince George's County [cover more]

2. Intersect provides useful information about smart growth issues.

Agree Strongly Disagree
 1 2 3 4 5 DK

3. I forward Intersect to others.

Frequently Never
 1 2 3 4 5

4. What changes would you suggest to make Intersect more useful?

5. How can we let more people know about Intersect?

6. Who Are You? I consider myself to be a [mark all that apply]:

- smart growth supporter
 elected official
 government agency staff
 civic activist
 activist, other: _____
 developer
 urban designer/architect, other: _____
 development industry
 business, other: _____

7. Where do you live? (town/county/state)

8. Where do you work? (town/county/state)

Please return responses to: staff@washingtonregion.net,
 or fax to: 202-667-4491

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, June 23. 9:30am-3:30pm. **Two-Rate Taxation of Land and Buildings: Benefits and Challenges of Innovative Tax Reform.** Speakers address the economic impact of two-rate taxation, its history in Pennsylvania, and current issues in the assessment of land value. Sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Marriott Metro Center, Washington, DC. Free. To register, www.lincolninst.edu/education/education-coursedetail.asp?id=122

Thursday, June 24. 2:00pm-8:30pm. **Maryland – ICC Study Informational Updates.** These meetings, held by MD State Highway Administration, are an interim step prior to the distribution of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in the Fall 2004. American Legion Post 60, 2 Main St., Laurel, MD. See www.iccstudy.org or contact Sam Raker, MDOT, 301-469-6960 or sraker@mdot.state.md.us

Tuesday, June 22 and Thursday, June 24. 7-9pm. **Metro-politan Branch Trail Community Meetings.** Learn about trail design options for the MBT in your neighborhood. 6/22 Rhode Island Ave. Station Area, Beacon House, 601 Edgewood Terrace, NE. 6/24 Fort Totten Area, Lamond-Riggs Public Library 5401 South Dakota Ave, NE. Contact and RSVP: Chris Holben, DDOT 202-671-2638, chris.holben@dc.gov. See www.metbranchtrail.com/

Tuesday, June 29, 12:30 – 1:30 pm. **Smart Growth Is Smart Business: Boosting the Bottom Line & Community Prosperity.** Ken Brown, executive director of the National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, and Jessica Cogan, deputy director of the Smart Growth Leadership Institute, will profile the initiatives taken by business leaders who recognize that smart growth provides quality of life, market opportunities, and stable investments. Free National Building Museum. 401 F Street NW. http://www.nbm.org/Events/Calendar/Lectures_Symposia.html

Tuesday, June 29. 6-8pm. **Public Meeting, District of Columbia Comprehensive Housing Strategy.** Savoy Elementary School, 2400 Shannon Place, SE (Corner of Howard Rd and MLK Ave., SE). Contact Amy Tharpe, amy.tharpe@dc.gov, 202-724-7152.

Tuesday, June 29, 5:00 – 8:00 pm. **Design Public Hearing for Route 50 / Arlington Blvd.** (Fairfax County). Review and discuss preliminary plans for the proposed installation of a pedestrian bridge and fence on Route 50 from 0.45 miles east of the Route 7 Overpass to 0.12 miles west of Patrick Henry Drive (Route 2327). Pre-Hearing begins at 4:30 p.m. Willston Multi-Cultural Center, 16131 Willston Drive, Falls Church VA. See <http://virginiadot.org/projects/publicinvolvement.asp>

Tuesday and Wednesday, June 29-30. 5-8pm. **Virginia Citizen Information Meetings for Capital Beltway Study** improvements, including the operational aspects of the HOT lanes and associated environmental effects. Public comments will be presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. 6/29 Fairview Park Marriott, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church. 6/30 Tysons Westpark, Best Western, 8401 Westpark Drive, McLean, Virginia. See <http://virginiadot.org/projects/publicinvolvement.asp>

Wednesday, June 30, 6:00pm. **Recognizing Smart Growth: Can Developers and Environmentalists Agree?** Sam Black, Chair, Smart Growth Alliance Jury, representing the Board of Trade; and Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth will discuss the Smart Growth Alliance and how its jury of smart growth advocates, developers, architects, and environmentalists is recognizing development projects from around the Washington region. NCPG, 401 9th Street NW, North Lobby, Suite 500. RSVP staff@washingtonregion.net or 202-667-5445. see www.washingtonregion.net

Wednesday, July 7. **Smart Growth Land Conservation Recognition Program Applications Due.** Land trusts, public agencies, and private landowners are all encouraged to apply. Sponsored by Smart Growth Alliance. For more see <http://washington.uli.org/sga>.

Thursday, July 8, 12:30 – 1:30 pm. **Mount Joy, Pennsylvania: Small Town Main Street with a Smart Growth Future.** Terry Kauffman, Mount Joy’s borough manager and chairman of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, will describe how a small town can reach economic development and community goals through smart growth strategies. Free. National Building Museum. 401 F Street NW. see www.smartgrowth.org/calendar/evdetails.asp?evid=663

Monday, July 12, 6:00pm. **Mallalternatives: Transit-Oriented Retail.** Seth Harry, New Urbanist, architect & retail planning consultant; and Randy Gross, economic development consultant will discuss how retail can be designed to realize a vision and rebuild neighborhoods. NCPG, 401 9th Street NW, North Lobby, Suite 500. RSVP staff@washingtonregion.net or 202-667-5445. see www.washingtonregion.net

WRN Contribution Form

Individual Contributions:

- \$35 basic individual
- \$50 friend
- \$100 supporter
- \$150 sustainer
- other _____

Organizational Contributions:

- \$60 small
- \$200 basic
- \$500 sustaining

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Email:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Fax:

Send WRN Updates via:

___ email ___ regular mail ___ fax

Are you interested in volunteering with WRN?

Please add \$20/person for Intersect to be faxed long distance or mailed - to cover costs.

Please return this form with a check payable to WRN, 1777 Church St, NW, Washington, DC 20036. WRN is a 501c (3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you!