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## THE TRANSIT TIMES

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### Support Continues to Grow for the Bethesda - Silver Spring Trolley and Trail

Nine organizations have added their sponsorship to the Campaign for Better Mobility, the group formed by ACT, the Sierra Club, the Chambers of Commerce of Silver Spring and Bethesda-Chevy Chase, and the League of Women Voters to demonstrate support for the trolley and the trail. The nine include additional **environmental groups** (the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities), **business/design groups** (Washington Building Council, and the American Institute of Architects, Potomac Valley Chapter), **citizen/civic groups** (the Gray Panthers, the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, and the South Four Corners Citizens Association) and **labor groups** (United Food & Commercial Workers, Locals 400 and 1994).

Some of these groups joined at a late-January fundraiser held by the original sponsoring groups at Positano's Restaurant in Bethesda. Robert Brewer, immediate past president of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber expressed the Chamber's long-standing support for better cross-county transportation, saying that it was important to maintain the corridor as envisaged when the county bought it, to lessen dependence on the single occupant vehicle. Jim Clarke of the Sierra Club said that the trolley would be a huge economic benefit to our area while helping ease traffic congestion and improving our quality of life. And ACT's current president, Ben Ross, added that more highways and auto-oriented sprawl are not the answer to our area's continued growth. "The trolley will reinforce the best of our existing centers as real pedestrian

and transit-oriented communities," Ross said. The Campaign continues to seek sponsors.

As reported in the last issue of Transit Times, the Maryland DOT is finishing up studies that compare the ridership, costs, and benefits of the trolley and trail, and alternatives including buses on the alignment and making capacity improvements to East-West Highway. The date of publication has slipped by several months, with current plans being for release of the final study results in mid-April, and public hearings in May.

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#### Schedule of Meetings

Here is the schedule of ACT meetings April - July 1996. All meetings will be on the second Tuesday of the month at the Silver Spring Center, **8818 Georgia Avenue**, near the intersection with Spring Street. Meetings run from **7:45 pm to 9:30 pm**.

#### April 9 - General Meeting

Speaking will be Rob Klein of the Mont.Co. DOT with an update on Route 29 Study and the Silver Spring Intermodal Station.

#### May 14 - Committee Workshops

Service Committee to cover hearing on FDA Consolidated Campus proposal for White Oak, Mont.Co. operating budget testimony, bus service changes. Plans and Projects Committee to be announced.

#### June 11 - General Meeting

Speaker to be announced.

#### July 9 - Committee Workshops

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## **ACT Elects New Slate of Officers for 1996 - 97**

At the February meeting, ACT members approved the slate of new officers as proposed by the Nominating Committee. Congratulations to our new:

**President** - Ben Ross  
**Vice Presidents** - Phil Fraulino and Richard McArdle  
**Treasurer** - Neil Greene

and thanks to all of the outgoing officers for their time and effort!

## **ACT Member Authors Paper on Siting Federal Facilities Near Transit**

A paper submitted by Quon Y. Kwan to The Environmental Professional, a refereed journal, has been provisionally accepted for publication. Kwan's paper is entitled "Considerations Compelling the Siting of Federal Facilities Near Mass Transit: A Commentary." The article was a direct result of his participation in the ACT review of the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the consolidation of the Food and Drug Administration area activities in a single campus. It brings to light provisions in Presidential Executive Orders, Federal Property Management Regulations, and "round-about" provisions in the Pollution Prevention Act that compel Federal agencies to consider mass transit. These provisions could provide the basis for injunctions against agencies that ignore mass transit in their siting decisions.

Because the journal holds the copyright, and the article has not yet been published, the final paper cannot be reproduced. However, pre-editing, pre-publication single copies of the paper may be obtained by calling Kwan at work (301) 621-8432.

**It is with great sadness that we note the sudden passing at the end of March of ACT member, Robert Flack. He was publicity chairman for the Trolley Museum, a renowned photographer, and active in the Montgomery County Travel Council. His constant support will be missed.**

## **New Local Series "Perils for Pedestrians" Begins Filming This Summer**

ACT member John Wetmore has begun production of a new local cable television series that will look at hazards that pedestrians face, such as missing sidewalks, dangerous intersections, as well as at the success stories, where citizen efforts have led to improvements. Wetmore is asking for anyone who is aware of a particularly hazardous situation in their area to drop him a brief line at:

John Z Wetmore, Producer  
5305 Bradley Boulevard  
Bethesda MD 20814.

## **ACT Seeks Diversified Use of Trust Fund Built from D.C. Transit Overcharges from the 1950's and 60's**

Over \$10 million in cash and various pieces of land are being held in a trust fund for mass transit riders' use coming from lawsuits filed forty years ago against the then-owner of the D.C. Transit System, Roy Chalk. Metro (WMATA) and the D.C. government have been trying unsuccessfully to get the money turned over to WMATA to buy buses.

## **How to Best Use \$10 Million Plus for Transit Riders?** *(cont. from p. 2)*

Recently the D.C. Court of Appeals, to which the allocation of these funds has been referred, asked organizations representing riders for comments on how the money should be spent.

ACT proposed a five-way division of the funds and property assets as follows:

- i) \$4 million to finish the Georgetown Branch trolley/trail environmental work;
- ii) \$3.5 million to reduce Metro fares to off-peak rates between 5:30 and 6:30 am;
- iii) \$500,000 for studies of queue-jumper systems for buses at intersections, with more money for implementation;
- iv) 20% of the fund for an endowment, the interest from which would help organizations that represent transit riders such as ACT and Metrowatch;
- v) and the remainder to buy buses for Metro, but only if local jurisdictions do not reduce their contributions for this purpose.

The next step is up to the Court, whose decision will be final for all practical purposes.

### **Glenbrook Road Sidewalk -- Safety Held Up by NESTE Opponents**

Despite relatively heavy pedestrian use, and endorsements from four neighboring civic associations, Glenbrook Road in Edgemoor still has no sidewalk, which MontCoDOT in 1992 identified as "the most positive traffic safety improvement" that could be provided on that street.

Because Montgomery County DOT has so many requests for sidewalk construction and a limited budget, the slightest hint of opposition is often enough to move a project off of a priority list.

John Wetmore reports that in 1993 the Edgemoor Citizens Association (ECA) requested MC DOT to evaluate the construction of a sidewalk. And in 1995, after a request to construct the sidewalk from a handicapped individual, the County DOT began its consultation process only to find a group of sidewalk opponents from along the road called Neighbors for Safety and Trees in Edgemoor (NESTE). The opposition has created enough visibility to stall the project.

John reports that 512 signatures were collected over two recent weekends on a petition in favor of the sidewalk, and that the Edgemoor Citizens Association (ECA) will separately poll its households. John urges you to contact him to help convince the ECA that the project be done. He has a 4-minute video on the road as well that he would be happy to loan. (301) 654-5305.

### **Transportation Vision Planning for the Washington Area Moves Ahead -- Slowly**

This winter ACT members have been deeply involved in the Washington Council of Governments (COG) "Getting There" Transportation Vision Plan that will help design the region's future. The hundred plus participants have been divided into are three task forces -- one on Quality of Life, one on Access to Opportunities, and one on Economic Prosperity. Each group is developing its own plan, and the three of them will be publicized and distributed this summer to the public for reaction. From these reactions and plans the entire group will try and reach agreement on the final regional transportation plan. For more information, contact Harry Sanders at (301) 587-1323, Richard Hoyer, or Mike Lewyn.

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*The Action Committee for Transit is a Montgomery County based citizen's group supported entirely by the contributions of our individual members, most of us regular transit users. For more information about meetings, activities, or joining ACT, write us at P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring, MD 20907, or call Harry Sanders at (301) 587-1323.*



### **ACT Turns Ten This Summer; Birthday Parties Planned at Trolley Museum**

This summer, the Action Committee for Transit will celebrate the tenth anniversary of its founding in 1986, and at the same time, roughly, ACT co-founder Harry Sanders will turn 50. Festivities to mark these two "momentous" occasions have been scheduled at the National Capital Trolley Museum on Saturday, June 1st, beginning at 5 pm.

The party will feature Free Trolley Rides, Light Refreshments, a Silent Auction for Trolley/Railroad Memorabilia, and a Drawing for the Privilege of Serving as "Trolley MotorPerson". Harry asks that if you had it in mind to give him a card or a gift, make it a contribution to the "Campaign for Better Mobility" and he would appreciate it most of all!

Please call Harry or Barbara Sanders for more information at (301) 587-1323 evenings and (202) 226-6260 for Harry during the day.