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Transportation Alliance

October 7, 2016

The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Office of the Mayor
250 City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: CCC Proposed Changes

Dear Mayor Rawlings-Blake:

As a steadfast proponent of improving transportation in the region, the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance has been a supporter of the Charm City Circulator since its inception and has cheered its undeniable success over the past six years. The Transportation Alliance offers the following comments in light of the proposed Circulator service changes announced in July 2016.

The City needs to clarify the mission of the Circulator, identify funding sources, operate it sustainably, and state clearly how it will handle requests to extend it.

First and foremost, the public needs a clear and transparent accounting of the Circulator's finances in order to make informed comments on proposed service cuts or changes. This is important for reassuring the public that tax dollars are being handled appropriately and also so residents know what kind of service the City can afford to pay for.

Regarding the mission, the Circulator is not a substitute for the local bus service provided by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). The Circulator should not attempt to and cannot sustainably do the job of the MTA. The MTA's job is to provide local and regional multi-modal transit service throughout the entire city. The mission of the Circulator is to complement those MTA services, to help people cover shorter trips in areas where jobs, services and attractions are concentrated and parking is limited.

The downtown core of the central business district has the densest concentration of jobs and services and is the most congested part of the city. Downtown also has most of the parking garages where the revenue for the Circulator is being generated. Other parts of the City that want Circulator service should recognize that land use, population and job densities, and parking policies and pricing are inextricably tied to the funding and successful performance of the service. We should not break that connection.

With 17 million riders over three years, free means something for everyone:

- Low-income residents can ride without spending money they may not have for convenient short hops around downtown;
- Visitors can ride without having to find change; and
- New and occasional users can ride to build a culture of transit.

To continue its effectiveness, the Circulator should be:

- **Frequent** enough that you don't need to consult a schedule;
- **Free** so anyone can hop on and hop off without paying a fare; and
- **Simple** enough that you don't have to be an experienced transit user to figure out where it will take you.

The Transportation Alliance appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on improving and sustaining this critical piece of the local transportation network. Please free to contact Brian O'Malley at 410-332-1723 ext. 122 or bomalley@cmtalliance.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Brian O'Malley
President & CEO