

Dear members of the Transportation Committee,

As you are well aware Mayor Pantelides' fiscal 2015 budget targets transportation, eliminating \$1.12 million from the transportation fund including \$836,825 in transportation employee salaries. The routes that have been proposed to be cut are critical to the lives of many Annapolitans, and good public transit is critical to the future of our city. The Gold route serves Anne Arundel Community College, Sojourner-Douglass's Annapolis campus, the Annapolis Mall, and the numerous residential developments and business along Bestgate Road. The Gold Route serves Riva Road including the MVA, the high school, and Truman Park and Ride, as well as major shopping areas such as Gateway Village and the Annapolis Mall. Congestion and parking problems within the Spa Circle-Downtown-Navy Stadium triangle are eased for visitors, workers, and residents by the existence of high-visibility, frequent Circulator service from outlying parking areas to the downtown, especially during the summer tourist season. A well-staffed transportation office keeps the system running smoothly and on-time, so that one person calling out sick or arriving late won't bring the system to a halt, as happened before the transit system was reorganized several years ago.

As the Capital reported on May 6th ridership on all three routes is up significantly, the highest being the Gold route at 24% from March 2013 to March 2014. Curtailing service or reducing the number of staff available to keep the system running reliably will have the immediate effect of making it significantly more difficult for hard-working Annapolitans and their families to reach their jobs and schools, as well as long term negative effects on the city's development. For transit-dependent seniors, disabled citizens, and Annapolis workers and parents infrequent or non-existent service means spending more time and money to get to work or school, run errands, make doctor's appointments, and complete regular life tasks. Purchasing a car, arranging for rides, or calling a taxi further stretches the resources of those with little room in their budgets. Reduced access is yet another roadblock in the path towards financial stability and economic success.

Poverty Amidst Plenty IV: Surviving the Economic Downtown, written by the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County Maryland, covered the necessity of public transit in the Annapolis area: "One community college student reported: 'It is impossible to get to the community college if you don't have a car.' [And speaking for parents who need specialized medical help for their child on a regular basis, one of our participants had this to say: 'If you need to get a child to Kennedy [Krieger] there is no transportation to get across counties. You would have to get the bus from Annapolis (you have to get down to where Social Services is) then on the light rail then transfer to the subway. How many hours is that? What if your child needs to go once or twice or week?'" In the long term reliable and frequent public transit is necessary to keeping Annapolis an attractive and competitive place to live and work in the DC Metro area. Young professionals are increasingly likely to forgo car ownership in favor of public transit, cycling, and walking communities, and as gas prices rise good public transit will bolster our economy and improve our city for people of all ages and incomes.

Remaining committed to public transit will make Annapolis an attractive, green place for businesses and investors. And of course, the effects of car-dependency on our environment and

the Chesapeake Bay hardly need to be mentioned. We are all young professionals in Annapolis and regular bus riders in one car or no car households. Reliable transit is a critical part of our budgets, our housing choices, and why we've decided to settle in Annapolis. We encourage the transportation committee to stand firm against budget cuts targeting public transit. If Annapolis is truly interested in serving Annapolis's most vulnerable and hard-working citizens as well as the long term economic success of our city it should refrain from making cuts to the transportation budget.

Sincerely,

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