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HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Resolution of Annapolis Human Relations Commission on Annapolis Transit

Passed unanimously on October 6, 2014

The Annapolis Human Relations Commission expresses its objection to any elimination or reduction in service on the City's "rainbow" bus routes (Brown, Gold, Orange, Yellow, Red, Green or Purple) to meet cuts in the Department of Transportation contained in the recently passed City budget before alternatives are considered.

Most of the passengers that use Annapolis Transit are African American or Latino. Many, probably most, are low-income. Some are physically handicapped. These individuals depend on the buses for their transportation to work, to school, for shopping, and for important trips like medical and other appointments. They have no other alternative. Discontinuing routes or reducing services will disrupt their lives. It would be more than an inconvenience. It would pose a serious hardship for these Annapolis residents and would, in the judgment of the Commission, constitute an act of discrimination.

The Commission recognizes the budgetary situation faced by the Department of Transportation. However, other solutions need to be pursued first. The agency has acknowledged that it loses a considerable amount of money each year for *free* services to City employees, the hospitality industry and other downtown businesses, and Annapolis residents. Then there is the *free* Circulator bus. Anyone who has spent any time downtown knows that these trolleys run empty or nearly empty most of the time.

In implementing any budgetary cuts, the Department of Transportation needs to eliminate first all *free* services and shuttles which are costing money. The brunt of the Department's financial challenges should not be borne first by ordinary riders who are paying for the services they are receiving. The bus passengers – Annapolis Transit's chief customers – deserve priority and not those who are benefitting from "freebies". The Commission urges City Council to adopt solutions that make sense and respect the needs of residents who rely on Annapolis Transit for their transportation needs.