



Public Hearing Testimony
April 16, 2017

Council Resolution 48-2018: Central Maryland Transit Development Plan

Good evening. I am pleased to testify that ACS is supportive of the Central Maryland Transit Development Plan as stated in Council Resolution 48 “as a guide to future transit development” in the County and Region. As we all know, however, any Plan no matter how well conceived is only as good as its implementation. ACS, therefore, will be looking at the Executive’s FY 2019 Operating Budget proposal hoping it contains the \$1.3 million additional funding necessary to ensure that Phase 1-recommended service changes—including shorter routes, travel time reductions, half-hour headways on some routes and increases in weekend service—are indeed completed by this time next year. We also hope that funding priorities beyond 2019 are inclusive of the capital and operating funding that will be required to implement the Phase 2 recommendations. It is important to note that achieving important Phase 2 route expansions will be dependent upon Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County support, so proactively working with them will need to be an FY 2019 priority.

In July 2017 ACS offered testimony at one of the RTA’s public hearings to gather community input on the draft development plan. At that time, ACS commented on a few of the proposed route changes that would have a particular impact on county residents who must rely on bus service to get them to their jobs, medical appointments and day to day activities. A copy of that testimony is attached for your information.

There are two specific elements of the Transit Development Plan that ACS finds disappointing. One is that there are not yet specific strategies to improve mobility services. Finding less costly yet reliable mobility service improvements are critical to supporting seniors and persons with disabilities in our community. We trust, as the Plan states, that discussions with the affected communities will indeed begin this Spring and Summer and that perhaps by this time next year appropriate strategies will have been developed.

It is also disappointing to read in the TPA that development of the Downtown Columbia Transit Center may be eight-to-ten years in the future. A significant proportion of the new affordable housing units called for in the Downtown Columbia Development Plan are tied to a new Transit Center. Waiting ten years for this housing will only deepen the already immense affordable housing supply and demand gap.

Despite the disappointments and concerns about implementation, ACS applauds this important set of enhancements that will provide a strong foundation for further progress in ensuring all Howard County households have transit access to local and regional employment, human services, shopping and family activity opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Driessen

Joan Driessen, Executive Director

Attached: “Proposed RTA Service Enhancements,” ACS Public Hearing Testimony, July 25, 2017

