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July 19, 2006

Elizabeth Kreider
Deputy Director
Maryland Transit Authority
6 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202-1614

Dear Ms. Kreider:

Re: Greater Baltimore Bus Initiative, proposed #11 Route through Canton

The **Canton Community Association (CCA)**, along with our **Parking & Transportation** sub-committee, believes that it would not be in the best interest of the community to add an additional (fourth) bus route to the neighborhood.

By reducing the #7 bus to *once every sixty minutes* the MTA would severely cause over-crowding of the #10 bus that runs along Eastern Avenue. The #10 bus has not reached its potential in large part due to over crowding as well as irregular service. A *sixty-minute* gap in between service on the #7 bus would only serve the purpose to later justify eliminating the route due to its lack of use. In the meantime not one *but two bus lines* and their customers would suffer.

Adding an additional bus route to Canton would require the MTA to increase the number of bus stops and that in turn would eliminate a significant number of parking spots in the neighborhood. Canton already suffers from an acute lack of parking opportunities. At the very least Canton needs appropriate signage allowing street parking in bus stop lanes during the overnight hours when bus service has stopped for the evening. **Adding an additional bus route without eliminating one at the same time will hurt us, not help us.** To amplify on the last point, adding a fourth bus route will add to the noise and the air pollution in the neighborhood. Adding routes is commendable but not the appropriate solution. As concerned citizens realizing that every tax dollar is vitally important, we would like to see better, more efficient bus service.

Solution

The present situation calls for strengthening three existing bus routes (#'s 10, 11 and 13), not adding a fourth. Back in April the CCA advocated strongly for the new #11 bus:

We believe the new #11 is a better route through the neighborhood than the current #7, and our hope is that more residents of Canton will be able to take advantage of the public transportation opportunities that are available with the minor changes the new #11 would bring.

The CCA's Parking & Transportation sub-committee, headed by long-time southeast Baltimore residents George Hofferbert, Darryl Jurkiewicz, and Denise Aversa, has spent countless hours looking over all of the possible routes a new bus line through the neighborhood might take and what the impact of changing the route would be on our community. Their goal throughout has been simple:

- What route would provide the most access to the most folks in the neighborhood?
- Are our seniors taken into consideration?
- What route "flows" the best both in and out of the neighborhood?

By our calculation, no one in Canton would be more than two blocks away from any point on the new #11 route. The new #11 would be very close to the seniors (and the senior centers) in our community. The new #11 would follow some of the larger, wider, and more bus-friendly streets in the community, allowing for minimal traffic tie-ups and congestion for automobiles following the bus. We also believe that **the new bus route will go where the people want it to go** (along Boston Street and the waterfront; up S. Conkling and then west through the middle of the residential portion of Canton; and then south along Lakewood by the American Can Company site where Safeway and other local shopping amenities are located before linking back up to Boston Street going west).

One additional recommendation that we have is to move the layover for the new #11 away from its current location (around Senator Joseph S. Bonvegna Field; between S. Clinton and S. East Streets) and move it south across Boston Street. When the layover was established for the #7 route, many of the homes that now ring Senator Bonvegna Field didn't exist, and moving the new layover south to a non-residential parking lot or street south of Boston Street would make everyone *very* happy. Also, by moving the new layover close to S. Clinton and Boston Streets, the bus could take advantage of the traffic light that is already in place at that intersection and make right-hand turns going to the layover and back out again as it heads towards S. Conkling Street.

In summary, **the new #11 is a better bus route** than the current #7 and it will allow the citizens in Canton who want to take advantage of the public transportation opportunities that are currently available (i.e. standard bus service) to do so.

The best solution is combine the best aspects of the #7 bus and the #11 bus, therefore achieving three very strong and user-friendly routes (#'s 10, 7/11 and 13). We urge you to take the combination of the #7/11 route into consideration.

Finally, Canton and Southeast Baltimore is long overdue for a Park & Ride solution. Given our participation in the Volpe Study and our involvement with the Greater Baltimore Bus Initiative and Red Line discussions, we feel that we have a pretty good understanding of the traffic and transportation challenges that lie ahead. We believe that Canton is the keystone piece of the traffic and transportation puzzle in Southeast Baltimore.

With I-95 just a minute away and with the repurposing of the former GM site bringing 3,000 plus jobs to Southeast Baltimore in the near future (in addition to the other significant developments that are currently underway in the neighborhood), it is clear to us that the City and State should work together to bring a Park & Ride solution. Currently, we know we have a lot of people coming into the community from Baltimore and Harford Counties each day. They park in the community and either car pool or take the bus into downtown to avoid paying for parking and the necessary tolls. We see this trend increasing in the years to come. A Park & Ride

opportunity with rapid bus service into downtown and back during rush hour would be ideal. Also, given the current and future retail opportunities in Highlandtown and Canton, along with the other wonderful amenities such as the waterfront and the new Southeast Anchor Library, we believe Southeast Baltimore will take off like never before. However, this can only happen if the City and the State work together to make this happen and address the traffic and transportation issues we now face in a real and meaningful way. It calls for real cooperation and a shared vision. Simply adding a bus route and starving another is not the solution. That is not leadership. That does not address the real issue in a cost-effective, positive manner.

Thank you for your tireless hard work on our behalf and for your leadership on this important issue. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Stephen Strohl
President
Canton Community Association