

Neighborhood Questionnaire on Streets and Transportation
c/o Jackie.macmillan2@gmail.com

March 28, 2016

Elizabeth Embry
P.O. Box 7283
BALTIMORE, MD 21218
Subject: Transportation Questions for Mayoral Candidates

Dear Ms. Embry:

Thriving cities and neighborhoods have good public transit and “Complete Streets”— streets that are safe and comfortable for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Baltimore has adopted a Complete Streets resolution, piloted alternative traffic-calming approaches, adopted a bicycle master plan, and implemented the popular circulator buses. While progress has been made, much remains to be done.

We would appreciate your responses to the following questions that relate to the problems listed below.

As Mayor, what will you do to address the problems listed below? For instance: How will you address problems related to a service provided by a State agency, such as MTA’s bus service, that significantly affect Baltimore residents? How will you provide for coordination among different City agencies to address transportation problems? And how will you prioritize City resources for transportation?

Problems:

1. A public transportation system consisting mainly of a State-operated local bus service, which • is unreliable (buses late or no-show) • lacks real-time (next-bus) service information • is not welcoming, not customer-oriented • is currently subject to potential route changes that would eliminate or reduce service to corridors with particularly heavy ridership
2. Streets and traffic operations designed to move automobiles rapidly through local neighborhoods without regard to the effect on residents.
3. Aggressive and inattentive driving—speeding, failure to yield, texting while driving, etc. Year after year, Baltimore ranks nearly last for safe driving among the 200 largest US cities (AllState abd-report-2014).
4. An almost-complete lack of traffic enforcement: • Limited resources used for enforcement on interstate highways, when there is almost no enforcement in local neighborhoods. • A failed speed / signal camera contract terminated and not replaced. (An RFP was recently issued for a

new contract for a service that is to be significantly reduced in scale (from >160 cameras to 30 cameras per Baltimore Sun, 1/22/2016.)

5. The failure of Baltimore DOT to fill critical positions, such as Chief of Traffic Engineering.

Please respond via email by April 5. Responses will be forwarded to the respective neighborhood associations for distribution to their members.

The issues you identify, and the questions you ask are critical to the future of the city. The solutions will need to be thoughtful and considered and will demand effective and forceful leadership. This is an area where 22 percent of workers spend 45 minutes or more commuting to work, a figure more than double that of some of Baltimore's peer cities. This is a city where 36 percent of millennials say the single greatest problem is its transportation system. And this is a region that was given a total grade of D in a recent report for its transportation infrastructure.

Last month, I released my Blueprint for Transportation Reform, a 12 page, 21 part plan that seeks to address precisely the set of concerns you have raised: a public transit system that is stuck in the past, a transportation system that is unsafe and fails to connect people to jobs, streets that are unsafe and poorly organized, and a Department of Transportation in need of reform.

Various points of my plan are targeted at the concerns you have raised – I present them together in summary form here because forging a comprehensive transportation system is an interwoven challenge, one that requires a comprehensive solution. Some of the reforms I propose below the mayor can implement on his or her own. Others, as you note, are ones that will require collaboration with – and where needed, forceful advocacy -- at the State level. But together, they would put us on a path to a comprehensive and effective transportation system, one that would connect our great city.

To **build a comprehensive public transit system**, I will:

- Develop an East-West public transit connection.
- Ensure that BaltimoreLink meets the needs of the city.
- Work towards a multi-modal, easily transferrable transportation system.
- Address 'last mile' transit needs.
- Employ modern technology on city buses.
- Make the circulator efficient and sustainable.
- Advocate for state level reforms.
- Fully integrate the water taxi system.

To create a **diversity of transportation options**, I will:

- Launch a transportation voucher program.
- Complete and implement plans for car and bike sharing programs.
- Develop a pedestrian master plan.
- Implement the Baltimore bike master plan.

To **connect transportation policy with economic development**, I will:

- Enact into law zoning reforms for a modern city, and protect key transportation provisions in the package, including
 - *Transit-oriented development zoning,*
 - *Optional in-lieu parking fees to support local transit, and*
 - *Neighborhood commercial zoning.*
- Create a Vision Zero pedestrian safety program.
- Explore the use of demand-based pricing for downtown parking.
- Encourage the use of car-sharing spaces in large lots.

To **reform the Baltimore Department of Transportation**, I will:

- Implement the audit recommendations.
- Put in place better procedures to oversee transportation contracts.
- Harness technology to improve services.
- Improve community outreach and transparency.
- Replicate Washington D.C.'s potholepalooza campaign.

The details for each of these proposals can be found at my website at www.embryforbaltimore.org.