

# CARL STOKES

## Streets and Transportation Questionnaire

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?

### **Vision**

*My vision is of a city where the hundreds of thousands of people who depend on public transportation are able to get around reliably, easily, and safely. And a city where all the different modes of transportation are well-linked through transit hubs and connections.*

*1) Work with the state on the efficiency of the MTA bus system. The current BaltimoreLINK proposal has started the discussion but their method is not the answer. One answer lies in routes within routes. (see expanded response below)*

*2) Build a modern day streetcar on North Avenue from Milton-to-Hilton to move large numbers of people along North Avenue day and night, shopping, visiting, participating in city services and programs (health, education, libraries, recreational), which will help grow businesses and jobs.*

*3) Create three foot buffers between bike lanes and vehicles, and support the usage of flex posts to border the bike lane from the vehicle traffic. I will also highly consider for the safety of both bicyclists and pedestrians the elimination of "left on red" and the removal of "right on red" in specific high traffic bike and pedestrian areas.*

*4) Move towards a self-sustaining water taxi and circulator. One way is to identify who is using these modes of transportation to identify corporate partners – businesses whose employees use the circulator at a significant rate, retail businesses whose customers ride the circulator, hotels whose clients have access to the circulator, and anchor institutions that asked us to come to their sites and work out a service fee to alleviate the strains on the current budget.*

### **MTA transit**

*We need to work with the state on the efficiency of the MTA bus system. The current BaltimoreLINK proposal has started the discussion but their method is not the answer. One answer lies in routes within routes. A bus that runs from White Marsh to UMBC will never run on time. Some buses on that route should run the entire way with fewer stops in order to keep it moving and then a few of buses on the same line should loop shorter routes– from White Marsh to Hopkins, from Hopkins to University Center, and from University Center to UMBC.*

*I would want the state to consider making stops farther apart for several reasons. 1) in some areas of low ridership there is not a need for three stops in three blocks; 2) it is inefficient both financially and environmentally to start and stop a bus as many times as they currently do with most routes having stops every block; and 3) with less stops the buses will bunch less with the goal to run more efficiently. Unfortunately, eliminating stops never bodes well with riders, but I know that late buses, bunched buses, and inefficiencies in the system don't make MTA riders happy either. I would recommend that the state work with our local transit nonprofits to do the research to find out stop ridership on the busier lines. I recall at one time, CPHA wanted to have a volunteer advocate ride certain buses and keep a head count of who got on and who got off to use for this purpose. Will eliminating or moving around stops make a difference? I will ask the state to work with a willing nonprofit to find out.*

*Any changes and improvements to mass transit must focus on taking citizens from their homes to where the jobs are located. Amazon, which has 3,000 employees, needed to set up a shuttle from downtown so employees don't have to take several buses over two hours to get to work. Then the city subsidized it. The MTA should run the shuttle or subsidize it, not the city.*

### **City Government Priorities**

*I agree that positions within the transportation department should not be left empty over an unreasonable amount of time, in any division. And I strongly believe that we can identify internal applicants who are most qualified for the position. I do need to bring together community liaisons, planners, transportation, DPW staff and other departments that work in similar fields on a regular basis to discuss combined efforts to address community transit needs. Currently, the Green, Healthy Sustainable Homes division of Housing brings together a group of individuals from nonprofits, private sector and other government agencies to address the cases of particular clients in need of assistance outside the purview of the Housing Department. Something similar could be put in place for the transportation work being done in the city.*

#### 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

- A failed speed / signal camera contract terminated and not replaced. (An is almost no enforcement in local neighborhoods. 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.