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MAYOR

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HB 1236

March 5, 2020

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1236 - Transit - Maryland Area Regional Commuter Train - Expansion of Service

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports with amendment** House Bill (HB) 1236.

HB 1236, if enacted, mandates that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) negotiate in good faith, as specified, with the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the appropriate railroad companies to reach a written agreement on a pilot program to establish Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train service between Union Station in the District of Columbia and Alexandria Station in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It also requires MTA to consult with regional private entities, as specified, to determine the most effective means to establish such service, including train service scheduling and funding. Finally, by December 1 of each year, MTA must submit a related report to specified committees of the General Assembly.

The BCA agrees 100% with the intent of HB 1236 to study ways to expand MARC service. However, the BCA notes that two separate MARC service lines run through the entirety of the City of Baltimore, with stops at Camden Yards on the Camden Line and at West Baltimore and Penn Station on the Penn Line. Additionally, there has long been a desire to study the feasibility and value of offering a service stop on the east side of the City in the Greektown/Johns Hopkins Bayview area. Moreover, the current northern terminus of the Penn line is currently Perryville in Cecil County and there has been a desire to extend this to Newark, Delaware with the exciting potentiality that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) service might also be extended to Newark, Delaware, which would connect MARC to Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey on a series of regional rail lines.

The BCA recognizes that more transit options bring opportunities for the economic and social well-being of residents of the City of Baltimore. While HB 1236 is a good bill as written, the BCA believes it will be made better by taking a holistic, statewide approach to the study and incorporating a similar feasibility study to negotiate in good faith at the northern terminus (as well as whether another station would be worthwhile in East Baltimore). The BCA is committed to working with all partners so that the reports MTA submits to the General Assembly upon enactment of HB 1236 are as thorough and fact-filled as possible.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable with amendment** report on HB 1236.