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Charlottesville, VA 22902-6200

Patricia Thomas  
JAUNT Board of Directors  
*President*  
August 14, 2019

Honorable Supervisor Diantha McKeel  
*Chairwoman, Jefferson Area Regional Transit Partnership*

Dear Chairwoman McKeel,

JAUNT's Board of Directors is requesting that the Jefferson Area Regional Transit Partnership (RTP) take up the outstanding issue of regional equitable driver compensation and appreciation.

During the FY2019 transit budget discussions, the RTP was asked by the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to develop guidance on the region's driver compensation approach. Because the RTP was still in its phase of formation, the issue was not able to be fully addressed. By evidence of recent challenges and changes with all of the passenger transport entities in the region, it is clear there is more work that should be done to develop comprehensive driver compensation guidance, and move on to establishing ways to bolster recognition and appreciation for the driver profession.

Recently, Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) demonstrated its struggles with recruitment when it had put almost all of its mechanics on the road to drive because it did not have sufficient drivers to start the 2018 school term. With the adoption of the FY2020 budget, the City of Charlottesville provided an approximate four percent increase to its public and pupil transport drivers. While intended to address its recruitment issues, it also further widened the compensation gap when compared to other entities. Finally, the University of Virginia announced it will pay its full-time employees a fifteen-dollar livable wage, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. All of this demonstrates how each entity is struggling with driver recruitment and retainment, and the lack of regional agreement on driver compensation continues to have adverse impacts on collaboration and coordination on a variety of other, just as important, regional transit opportunities.

While JAUNT believes the disparities of driver compensation create challenges for recruitment and retainment, it is just as important to focus is on how this region can move past the compensation equity concerns, and focus on how this region appreciates and recognizes its drivers. Attracting residents to the driving profession and attracting drivers from other areas benefits all entities needing drivers. Ways of building camaraderie and community appreciation should be the ultimate, on-going outcome of a regional assessment and agreement.

JAUNT requests this critical time-sensitive issue is taken-up by the RTP, with discussions commencing as soon as possible. And, a preliminary understanding established before October when FY2021 budgets are submitted to the City and County.

Regards,

Patricia Thomas  
*President*