

May 8, 2009

The Honorable Ulysses Currie  
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Norman H. Conway  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
12 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Currie and Chairman Conway:

We appreciate your work during the 2009 legislative session to ensure that we have a fiscally sound budget, taking into account the needs and interests of voting citizens throughout the State of Maryland. We write regarding the State Center Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project slated for Baltimore City. As major unions, civil rights, civic, and faith-based organizations representing thousands of residents in the State of Maryland, we believe it is critical that the Board of Public Works approve in June, 2009, the Master Development Agreement for the project as currently envisioned.

We appreciate the State Center briefings provided by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), but both the February and March 2009 documents issued by DLS do not take into account the major economic and social benefits that a state-of-the art TOD in the form of the proposed State Center project will have on Baltimore City and the State of Maryland.

The proposed State Center project will renew an under-utilized area of Baltimore City, and bring in thousands of new jobs, an enormous injection in city and state tax revenue, and hundreds of millions in Minority Business Enterprise opportunities. It also includes a top quality mixed-income development that will provide the home health aide, the school bus driver, the teacher, and the firefighter an opportunity to live in a thriving community with easy access to jobs, a high-quality grocery store, and clean parks.

The current team of developers has gone above and beyond to gain insights and buy-in from neighborhood groups, community leaders and active citizens to ensure that the State Center development contributes to the long-term success and competitiveness of Baltimore City, and maximizes the State of Maryland's transportation investment at the site. Struever Bros., Eccles & Rouse is credited with helping to revitalize and redefine Baltimore, and McCormack Baron & Salazar is regarded as one of the most prestigious mixed-income developers in the nation. We are fortunate to have these two developers leading the way on this development.

In addition, given current economic conditions, it is our understanding that the State is taking important steps to strengthen the development

team further. We understand that the State also reserves the right in the draft Master Development Agreement to change the development team at any point in the process if deemed unavoidable and necessary.

The alternatives proposed by DLS offer only a basic approach to development that misses an opportunity to increase ridership and fare revenue for Maryland's transportation lines and create a bustling center of commerce, culture, and community. This will not only have an effect on Baltimore, but first-rate TOD developments like these are known to help foster innovation and fuel economic growth for surrounding counties- in this case Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard, Hartford and Carroll Counties-, in addition to generating new resources for the state.

We understand that legislative oversight of public private partnerships is important, and will be glad to weigh-in on future legislation to that effect. We are also confident that the State and Legislature can come to an important agreement about how oversight should be conducted on the State Center project moving forward.

On behalf of thousands of residents across the State of Maryland, we express our full support for the current State Center TOD plan and ask you to work with the State Treasurer, Governor, Comptroller, and development team to arrive at an agreement that embraces the value and economic benefits of a state-of-the-art, mixed-income development that will have immeasurable benefits for Baltimore and Maryland.

Regards,

Glenard S. Middleton, Executive Director, AFSCME Council 67

Marvin L. "Doc" Cheatham, Sr., President, NAACP Baltimore City Branch

Ricarra Jones, Project Coordinator, 1199 SEIU

Bibi Hidalgo, Managing Director, Baltimore City Inclusive Housing Coalition

Elizabeth Alex, Lead Organizer, CASA de Maryland

Joshua Civin, Vice-President, Citizens Planning & Housing Association

Stuart Katzenberg, Head Organizer, ACORN of Maryland

Raine Mullan, Program Manager, Beyond the Boundaries, Archdiocese of Baltimore

J. Howard Henderson, President & CEO, Greater Baltimore Urban League

CC:

Members of the Maryland Board of Public Works

Nancy K. Kopp, Treasure

Martin O'Malley, Governor

Peter Franchot, Comptroller  
Baltimore City Senate Delegation

Nathaniel J. McFadden, Chair  
Joan Carter Conway  
George W. Della  
Lisa A. Gladden  
Verna L. Jones  
Catherine E. Pugh

Baltimore City Delegation

Curt S. Anderson, Chair  
Talmadge Branch  
Jill P. Carter  
Frank Conaway  
Ann Marie Doory  
Cheryl Glenn  
Keith E. Haynes  
Hattie N. Harrison  
Peter A. Hammen  
Ruth M. Kirk  
Carolyn J. Krysiak  
Brian K. McHale  
Maggie McIntosh  
Nathaniel T. Oaks  
Samuel Rosenberg  
Barbara Robinson  
Melvin L. Stukes  
Shawn Z. Tarrant