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**PLAN TO BRING TROLLEY SYSTEM TO
CHARLES STREET CORRIDOR ADVANCES**

***A Localized Transit System, Whether Fixed-Rail or Rubber Tire Trolleys,
Being Considered "To Further Economic Development by Facilitating Movement of
Tourists, Shoppers, Workers and Residents Along Charles Street
From the Inner Harbor to Hopkins Campus"***

BALTIMORE, MD – Charles Street Development Corporation (CSDC), the non-profit group established to stimulate economic development of downtown Baltimore's Charles Street corridor, has decided to further pursue the possibility, recommended by consultants, of bringing back trolleys as a way to enhance redevelopment along the famed avenue. For more than 100 years until the end of the 1950s, trolleys serviced much of Baltimore's transportation needs.

A decision by CSDC on whether to recommend to the City the use of fixed-rail or rubber tire trolleys and to operate it along a route that would run from Federal Hill to Johns Hopkins University will be made in the next several months. This will be done after CSDC invites City officials to see a trolley system in operation in another city and has discussions with community leaders and organizations.

The purpose of implementing a trolley system is "to further stimulate economic development, support the growing retail presence and enhance the residential quality of life by providing pleasurable and predictable means to move residents, visitors and students along this famed street," said Henry Hagan, CSDC chairman and chairman, president and CEO of Monumental Life Insurance Co., which is headquartered on Charles Street.

Hagan said that CSDC has decided to move into Phase II in its consideration of a localized circulator transportation system in response to recommendations by transportation and traffic consultants after a year-long study to determine how best to facilitate the movement of tourists, shoppers, workers and residents in the area.

In assessing which of two types of transportation modes is to be used, CSDC officials noted that the fixed-rail trolley being considered utilizes individual and smaller cars than the multi-car Metro Light Rail system (60 ft. long versus 200 ft.), is lower to the ground and is operated in regular traffic because, unlike light rail, it does not require its

own right-of-way. Also the system is seen as “very tourist friendly,” serving as an enjoyable and dependable means to visit the many restaurants, cultural attractions, shops and other local sites, versus light rail which is geared to moving commuters and large numbers of people.

“Economic activity along the Charles Street corridor and the area’s unique market appeal suggests that the time is right to bring in transit specifically designed to serve local trips and encourage redevelopment consistent with the goals of the Charles Street Development Corporation,” said the report prepared by Kittelson & Associates, Inc., a Portland, Ore.-based transportation planning and traffic engineering firm, which has an office on Charles Street.

Utilizing a \$50,000 Dept. of Business and Economic Development grant and matching funds from the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Greater Baltimore Committee, Goldseker Foundation, and Midtown Community Benefits District, CSDC in February 2004 retained the nationally-recognized consultants who have counseled other cities considering similar localized transportation systems to conduct a Phase I feasibility study of the Charles Street corridor. The purpose was to investigate the best way to link the Inner Harbor with the many dining, shopping and cultural destinations along the Charles Street corridor, all the way from ‘The Harbor to Hopkins.’

Noting that Hopkins is “an important part of the life, character and economic vigor of the City,” Johns Hopkins University President William R. Brody stated, “The proposed circulator will connect Hopkins students and employees to the downtown and, equally, downtown visitors to Hopkins and to the cultural institutions along the proposed circulator corridor. Having a people-friendly means of transport on the Charles Street corridor will be a welcome and refreshing addition and will serve Baltimore well.”

Since 1999, along a 3.5 mile stretch of Charles Street from downtown to Johns Hopkins University, more than \$900 million of new or planned investment is being made. This includes \$250 million being invested by Johns Hopkins University in its Charles Street campus including the Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse project in the nearby 3200 block of St. Paul Street. Also making substantial investments in upgrading, expanding or renovating their facilities are The Baltimore Basilica, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore School for the Arts, Center Stage, Enoch Pratt Library, Maryland Institute College of Art, Peabody Library and Institute, University of Baltimore and Walters Art Museum. Today, along with these cultural and educational facilities, more than 50 restaurants featuring a diversity of ethnic fare and a variety of shops, galleries and upscale clothing stores line a street that, by 2006, will be newly landscaped north of Centre Street.

“With traffic, parking and the present public transportation in downtown often cited as impediments to our redevelopment efforts, we looked at how best to address these issues so that we could build greater activity along Charles Street while strengthening the city,” said David Funk, chairman of CSDC’s Circulator Committee and partner in the law firm Funk & Bolton, PA, which is located on Charles Street.

“Based upon this careful and comprehensive study and extensive internal discussions by our Circulator Committee as well as the full CSDC board, we have concluded that trolleys offer Baltimore – as they have in other cities we looked at – the best way to fully energize not only Charles Street but all of downtown,” Funk said.

CSDC chairman Hagan noted that DBED has approved an additional \$100,000 grant to conduct a Phase II study to determine from an economic and engineering standpoint which system (fixed rail versus rubber tire) provides the greater benefits for Baltimore. This will involve developing an animation to show trolleys in operation on Charles Street, refining the project’s economic model and studying more closely the recent experiences of other cities that have installed either of these two systems.

As part of Phase I, the consultants assessed Baltimore’s present transit situation in the downtown area, surveyed how other cities similar to Baltimore were addressing their circulation needs for economic development and analyzed such transportation modes and their costs as light rail, buses, rubber tire trolley and fixed-rail trolley.

In its 59-page report, the consulting team strongly recommended a localized transit system and supported fixed-rail, although rubber tire was also considered favorably. The consultants outlined a route that would run northward from the Inner Harbor, beginning at the Visitor’s Center, to Johns Hopkins University along Charles Street, then loop southward beginning on St. Paul Street to Mt. Royal Avenue and continuing on Maryland Avenue, Cathedral Street and Hopkins Place to Conway Street.

The recommended route was designed in coordination with the Dept. of Transportation’s plans for enhancing MTA service in the Charles Street corridor, and the GBC’s Baltimore Transit Alliance initiative to create commuter service along the ‘Yellow Line’ route, which includes the corridor, Greenmount and York Roads to Towson.

Among reasons cited for the selection of fixed-rail trolleys:

- Trolleys attract passengers, both tourists and locals, because the vehicles are considered a novel attraction that adds to the ambience of an area, thereby aiding in marketing
- This mode of transportation offers a more comfortable ride than buses and rubber tire trolleys that have to operate on the pavement versus rails
- Trolleys provide visible and easy-to-understand routing, which attracts new users
- The permanence of fixed-rail attracts investment along its route at a higher rate; the experience in other cities has shown that fixed-rail generally leads development, while rubber tire transit generally follows development
- Trolleys have been found to contribute significantly to an area’s overall economic development and are neighbor-friendly due to less noise and pollution

- Costs for fixed rail construction and operation, while significantly more than the rubber tire option, would be significantly less than light rail, and often attracts private financing
- The possibility for significant federal funding is greater with fixed-rail than rubber tire

“In reviewing these reasons,” said Circulator Committee Chairman Funk, “it is clear that fixed-rail would accomplish the many goals we have set for a circulator system for the corridor.”

Cost estimates for constructing the system, which would cover 7.5 miles (single lane), range from \$40 million for rubber tire to \$150 million for fixed-rail, with annual operating expenses ranging from \$3.1- \$3.5 million for rubber tire to \$4.1- \$4.6 million for fixed-rail.

The study cited numerous potential funding sources, including private funds, federal, state and city grants, fare box revenues and marketing opportunities such as the sale of naming rights. Private developers, institutions, foundations and other sponsors are also possible sources.

The early economic analysis noted that the establishment and operation of the system would stimulate much-needed development and redevelopment throughout the corridor, which might otherwise not occur or be decades away from occurring. The economic value of the development and redevelopment initiatives have been estimated at over \$2 billion. Encouraging this to occur sooner would create jobs, improve the quality of life in the corridor, and produce additional tax revenues for the city.

Fixed-rail trolleys are now in operation in such U.S. cities as Charlotte, NC; Dallas, TX; Kenosha, WI; Memphis, TN; New Orleans, LA; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA; and Tampa, FL.

Philadelphia, PA has a fixed-rail system under construction and Portland is building an extension to theirs. Atlanta, GA; Richmond, VA; San Diego, CA, and Seattle, WA, are among a number of other cities with systems in various stages of development.

Portland’s fixed-rail trolley is credited with spurring the redevelopment of that city’s Pearl District, connecting it with the downtown, Portland State University and the Nob Hill neighborhood. “Trolleys have allowed us to create a vibrant, walkable and mixed-use community in a previously underutilized area just north of the downtown and its second phase is opening up a new area along the waterfront,” said Homer Williams, a real estate developer in Portland.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) has been a leading advocate for urban circulators. “Trolleys nationally are providing ‘development-oriented transit,’ helping communities revitalize themselves and connecting key destinations,” said Blumenauer.

According to CSDC's executive director Rebecca Gagalis, as part of the Phase II study, plans are now being made with officials in Portland to host a group of Baltimore officials wishing to assess Portland's successful trolley operations.

"The operation of trolley systems in other cities has proven highly beneficial for economic development," said Gagalis, who was previously executive director for Tampa's historic and entertainment district, Ybor City. "We believe trolleys can be a boon to Baltimore's Charles Street, too."