



March 13, 2023

Mayor Levar Stoney
900 E. Broad Street, Suite 201
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Mayor's Budget Proposal

Dear Mayor Stoney,

We strongly believe that addressing the need for affordable housing, better transit, and safe streets in Richmond is critically important. The upcoming budget is a terrific opportunity to address these needs, and while some positive steps are included in your budget, there are a number of questions and additional opportunities for progress.

Affordable Housing: We are encouraged by the proposed increases in funding for affordable housing but have a number of questions about the proposed budget:

- The introduction to both the Annual Fiscal Plan and the Capital Improvements Plan state that the total proposed \$50 million for affordable housing for FY24-FY28 will go to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). However, in the Housing and Community Development Funding Details no funding is shown to go to the AHTF in FY24, and is instead being allocated to "Affordable Housing Development." Will the total \$50 million (\$10 million for FY24) in funding be directed to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund?
 - If the proposed \$50 million is not going to the AHTF what kinds of affordable housing development or projects will the funding go towards and which organization or departments and public bodies will be overseeing these projects?
- When will the \$2.4 million in funding that was legally set aside for the AHTF and first budgeted in FY22 be allocated to the AHTF?
- When will the \$300,000 in funding that was budgeted in FY23 for mobile home repairs and replacement be allocated?

Transportation: We are encouraged by the \$21 million to be allocated to complete streets projects and strongly urge focusing these and state and federal funds on

physical infrastructure – protected bicycle lanes, corner bumps outs for safer crossings, conversion of one way streets to two way, and other design solutions that slow vehicle speeds and make walking, biking, and rolling safer.

Regarding transit, we note that \$240,014 will be allocated toward continuing zero fares for transit riders. However, we have the following questions:

- The City cut its funding for GRTC by 50% upon establishment of the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA), and we would like to see those funds restored. Will the city restore those funds and add more funds so that the GRTC will be able hire and retain bus drivers and maintenance personnel, expand the network, and increase service frequency?
- Will the City be budgeting sufficient funds to match state DRPT funding and maintain zero fares beyond FY24?

We look forward to receiving clarification on these questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stewart Schwartz
President

CC: City Council
Chief Administrative Officer Saunders