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National Association of
City Transportation Officials

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October 1, 2020

Corinne Kisner
Executive Director

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The Honorable Nita Lowey
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The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader, United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing, and Urban
Development
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Chair Lowey, and Chair Price,

On behalf of our 86 member cities and transit agencies, **the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) greatly appreciates your inclusion of \$32 billion in aid for transit in the recently revised HEROES bill.** Transit ridership and revenues from fares and local taxes remain depressed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This has jeopardized agencies' ability to maintain current service levels, continue vital capital projects and engage in long-term planning. Additional federal funding will immediately ensure the availability of safe, reliable service for the workers and communities who currently need it most, preserve essential jobs, and help move capital projects forward. NACTO strongly supports this level of emergency funding for transit and stands ready to support this bill's passage.

Transit systems are central to cities' economies and will play a key role in pandemic recovery. Major transit agencies in New York City, Washington, DC, and Denver have already announced intentions to lay off thousands of workers and cut service by up to 40 percent before the end of the year. To stabilize and prevent additional losses, many agencies will have to cut into their capital budgets and cancel plans to improve service or expand their systems. While this may close short-term budget gaps, foregoing capital improvements will result in poorer service and fewer operations and construction positions important for recovery. The impact of these cuts will not be limited to transit riders and employees alone- the costs of congestion, pollution, and lost productivity from a surge in automobile trips will be borne by entire cities and regions. At a time when local economies are experiencing their own long-term fiscal crises, a collapsing transportation

system is not acceptable. For transit agencies, the cost of restoring lost bus and rail lines far exceeds maintaining them, even at lower frequencies. **Investing \$32 billion in this essential service now is the only way to guarantee high-quality transit will be available as a reliable alternative to driving alone when the pandemic is finally at an end.**

Sustaining support for transit is also critical for preventing massive inequities along racial and economic lines in cities. People of color make up 60 percent of transit riders in the U.S., many of whom do not own a personal vehicle. 2.8 million essential workers, 40 percent of whom are also people of color, rely on transit every day, and often lack other options to reach their workplaces. The cuts to transit service that will become inevitable without federal aid will directly harm the communities already most impacted by the pandemic in the form of lost access and mobility, longer travel and wait times, and unsafe travel conditions due to crowding. The House's commitment to providing transit systems with sufficient aid to run frequent, reliable service is a key step towards an equitable pandemic response and recovery.

As a coalition of major US cities and transit agencies, NACTO members are deeply aware of the importance of transit for local economies, accessing employment and essential services, and generating high-quality jobs. We appreciate the House's efforts to pass much-needed emergency relief measures and look forward to working with you to ensure the Senate and White House do the same.

Sincerely,
Corinne Kisner
Executive Director, NACTO