



CITY OF ATLANTA

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MAYOR

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November 17, 2014

Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
230 Peachtree Street, N.W.
Suite 800
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Atlanta Streetcar Project Follow-up

Dear Dr. Taylor:

The City of Atlanta (City) takes seriously the letter received November 7th regarding the Federal Transit Administration's follow-up on safety issues related to the testing and commissioning of the Atlanta Streetcar project. I speak for the entire Project team, consisting of the City, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) (collectively, the "Project Partners"), in emphasizing that the Atlanta Streetcar has and will operate with highest attention to safety and security.

Over the past months the Project Partners have worked collaboratively to deliver a system and the personnel necessary to successfully and safely operate it. We believe the Atlanta Streetcar is, today, prepared for safe, efficient passenger service. We believe the Project Partners have addressed regulatory requirements and responded to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) requests for additional information supportive of the system's opening, acknowledging that FTA and GDOT reviews are still in process and follow-up by the City of Atlanta is needed before documentation reviews reach completion.

The November 7th letter generally references various safety issues identified through preliminary and operating hazard analyses. As the City has communicated, safety hazards are actively being mitigated in preparation for the system's opening and in coordination with the Safety Certification and Security Committee, and many of the conditions noted in the reviews upon which the November 7th letter are based have been rectified. In addition, it should be noted that some of the hazards referenced by FTA are applicable to a subway or heavy rail system rather than to modern streetcars; others are addressed by means of explanation, for example: 'How do you evacuate a streetcar stop platform,' when the rectangular platform is open-air and free of railing on three of its four sides. A number of potential hazards listed do not exist in the system because they have been engineered out through the system's design.

The Project notes FTA's characterization that the Project's commissioning efforts have proceeded on a "compressed" schedule. The projected durations FTA recites in the November 7th letter appear to have been drawn from generalized descriptions at an early planning phase that were based on the schedules used for much larger systems and which left a highly conservative degree of float in the anticipated

testing and commissioning schedule. The Project has been able to comprehensively complete its work on the schedule reflected in the actual durations and has included every testing, commissioning and certification activity necessary. Several factors have contributed to the success of the Project's testing and commissioning:

- The integrated testing schedule was optimized successfully as a result of strong project management and coordination of test activities among the Project Partners.
- Very little re-testing has been required. The system was well constructed and equipment was carefully installed, proving itself in the smooth prosecution of the testing regime.
- The Project has hired experienced staff, including operators and maintenance personnel, who have previously been qualified on larger streetcar systems in the U.S. Training of Atlanta Streetcar personnel did not have to begin from scratch, which has allowed the Project to focus on acquainting our already-skilled operators with Atlanta's operating environment.
 - One of our permanent staff was hired directly from Siemens, the manufacturer of our vehicles.
 - For the first twelve months of operation, a Siemens employee is on site on a full time basis to continuously monitor and correct any vehicle warranty items that emerge.
- Approximately 50% of the live-testing "burn-in" of the cars occurred on Siemens' test track in Sacramento, CA, prior to the vehicles' delivery. This allowed for expedited burn-in once the cars arrived.

Integrated testing activities are complete; proper operational and maintenance (O&M) policies and procedures have been established; and a qualified O&M team has been trained and certified to support streetcar service and the system's opening. This hard work has been conducted with a keen level of review provided by the Atlanta Streetcar Safety Certification and Security Committee, in accordance with the established intergovernmental agreement of the Project Partners – a framework completed with considerable FTA involvement. Although integrated testing involved approximately 80 individual tests, many of these tests were for individual elements, which are easily conducted simultaneous with others. In fact, we are pleased to report that system testing and training has been completed responsibly and efficiently with *zero* safety incidences – a notable achievement considering streetcars have not operated in Atlanta since 1949.

Safety and security are our number one priority. Simply put, we will not move forward until the project meets the necessary FTA and GDOT requirements for safety certification, technical capacity and readiness before opening the system to our public. Great attention has been given to the provision of required and requested information to you and to GDOT. The status of documentation and review stands as follows:

- a) **System Safety Oversight:** The Project Partners have provided to GDOT the initial submission and plan requirements for safety and security oversight, consisting of six primary documents. Work is still occurring to deliver *all* requested secondary documents, but the safety critical documents are in your hands. As of November 11th, GDOT has provided written feedback to the Project Partners on *one* of the six core documents required (the System Safety Program Plan). Revisions and a response to the November 11th comments are in process, notably through a work session scheduled for November 13 among the Project Partners, GDOT and FTA. We eagerly await GDOT comments on the other five documents.
- b) **FTA / PMOC Oversight Procedures Reviews (OP-21 and OP-54):** The Project Partners have provided all documentation requested by FTA for these reviews of the system's technical capacity /

capability and readiness for revenue operations. The Partners await FTA's reports of its evaluation of the Project.

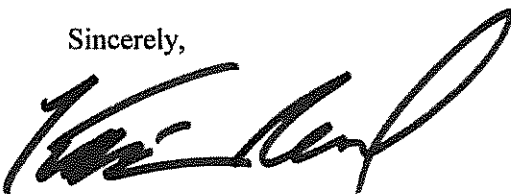
- c) Safety and Security Readiness Review (SSRR): On Wednesday, November 12th, the Project Partners received the SSRR Part 2 report. With the SSRR Part 2 report now in hand, the Project Partners have begun addressing its findings and recommendations. We believe it would be most efficient to sit down immediately with your team to discuss the findings and recommendations as a number of issues identified have been resolved.

Acknowledging this status, I will reiterate that we believe the Project Partners have fully prepared the Atlanta Streetcar system for passenger service. With great excitement, the system began pre-revenue service yesterday, and it is now appropriate to identify a 2014 opening date for all of us to plan for. With recognition that some time is necessary to finalize the GDOT and FTA oversight processes, the Project Partners propose a soft opening for passenger service between November 28th and December 1st with plans for an official, public opening ceremony Saturday, December 6th. Throughout our discussions with you, you have stated that FTA will not *approve* or *provide* an opening date for the Project. With that in mind, we suggest December 6th, and I personally commit to the resolution of activities remaining to achieve that date. I also emphatically and enthusiastically commit to opening a system that meets the highest standards for safety and security.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this timeline with you in greater detail so that Atlanta Streetcar opening events can best showcase the Project and the entire team that has made it possible. We believe the system's opening during this time is opportune in its coordination with other commercial activities, promoting ridership and system and safety awareness that will benefit the entire Atlanta community. The timeline also provides for additional weeks of review and preparation, beneficial to certification requirements and opening-day preparations.

The City and its partners at MARTA and ADID are in agreement with you that safety and the public welfare are of utmost priority for the Atlanta Streetcar. We believe the Atlanta Streetcar is prepared for its opening to the public, and we look forward to working with you to address final requirements and certifications required for passenger service. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this response and look forward to further collaboration with you for a successful and above-all safe, opening of the system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kasim Reed', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kasim Reed

CC: Michael Geisler, City of Atlanta
Keith Parker, MARTA
A.J. Robinson, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, Inc.
Keith Golden, GDOT