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Private Giving—Public Good

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January 5, 2021

Robbie Makinen, CEO

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

1200 E. 18th Street

Kansas City, MO 64108

Dear Robbie:

I am writing in support of your Zero Fare Initiative believing that it will have a very positive impacts in our community. While moving to Zero Fare during the pandemic was initiated as a safety measure, the experience has proven that it is an impactful strategy for the long term. My understanding of the ridership numbers during the pandemic are that while ridership as expected is down, our local numbers indicate we have retained significantly more ridership than many communities. Zero Fare was certainly a major factor. It provided a vital lifeline during a critical time.

I also want to advocate for the Zero Fare Initiative metro wide, including the transit system in Independence. We know that transit is crucial for access to jobs, health care, and food particularly for those in lower wage jobs. Its also crucial for our older adults in or community when they no longer wish to drive so they can access services and remain independent.

I want to make you aware of a new group that is forming in our area, the Eastern Jackson County Transit Alliance. This new alliance is chaired by the City Administrator of Grain Valley, Ken Murphy. This group is born out of my Foundation's work with our Community for All Ages Coalition, with a focus on older adult transportation. The alliance members value transit and understand the complexities of systems crossing jurisdictional lines and have discussed the need for regional funding solutions. I know this group would be interested in learning how they might support this work in Eastern Jackson County.

Thank you for leading the charge on the Zero Fare Initiative. When successful it will have a very positive impact on our metropolitan community.

Best regards,

Phillip J. Hanson

President and CEO

