


Council of the District of Columbia

MEMORANDUM

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

TO: Chairman Phil Mendelson
FROM: Councilmember Charles Allen 
RE: Notice of New Business for the October 29, 2024 Additional Legislative Meeting
DATE: October 24, 2024

Pursuant to Council Rules 416(a) and 429(5), I request that the following new business be agendaized for the October 29, 2024 Additional Legislative Meeting:

- **Motion to Override the Mayoral Veto of Bill 25-0978, the “DC Circulator Transition Emergency Amendment Act of 2024”**

The Mayor’s FY25 Proposed Budget completely terminated the DC Circulator, with an end to service by Spring 2025. While the Council was unable to restore funding for the Mayor’s budget cuts, it created several requirements for the Executive to develop and outline a transition plan for riders and bus operators. Following the Council’s final vote on the budget, and with only a few weeks’ advance notice, the Executive announced it would significantly accelerate the wind-down of the Circulator system – leaving riders without bus service and bus operators and staff without a job beginning as soon as October 1, 2024 and no later than December 31, 2024. This creates significant challenges for riders – students, seniors, and workers, and the workers who rely on the service for their livelihoods began experiencing the negative impacts resulting from the loss of employment much sooner than expected and with no transition in place.

In response, on October 1, 2024, the Council passed the DC Circulator Transition Emergency Amendment Act of 2024. The bill required that money from the sale, lease, or transfer of DC Circulator assets be deposited in the D.C. Circulator Fund and expended to support DC Circulator workers. The bill also would required that the Mayor submit all reprogramming requests related to the DC Circulator to the Council for prior approval. Finally, the bill directed the District Department of Transportation (“DDOT”) to coordinate with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) to determine the feasibility of assuming control of the DC Circulator, providing alternative or additional bus service, or hiring former DC Circulator workers at their current pay and seniority status.

Unfortunately, in a letter dated October 23, 2024, the Mayor stated that she was vetoing the bill. In her veto letter, the Mayor opens by describing the cuts to the DC Circulator as a “Council-enacted budget reduction.” This characterization obfuscates the fact that the service cuts at issue were proposed in her own FY25 Budget. Furthermore, restoring service would have either required redirecting funding from other Mayoral priorities as set out in her proposed budget back to the DC Circulator or would have required that the Council raise additional revenue—two options the Mayor would have almost certainly opposed.

More fundamentally, the Mayor’s veto letter describes the bill as an attempt to “create a new standard for contractor jobs.” The bill does not attempt to create a new standard applicable to all contract employees. Rather, the Council’s specific interest in supporting DC Circulator workers

during their transition to other employment is, in part, a recognition of the tremendous service that DC Circulator workers have provided to residents and visitors in the District. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, for example, DC Circulator workers continued to provide vital transit services to the public while many residents were able to work remotely. To hail these workers as essential workers during the pandemic, only to abandon them in the transition away from a local bus service, is inconsistent with District values and with our own statements regarding the value of their service.

Please contact Kevin Whitfield, Committee Director, at kwhitfield@dccouncil.gov with any questions.

cc: Members, Council of the District of Columbia
Office of the Budget Director
Office of the General Counsel
Office of the Secretary