

**OFFICE of the MAYOR**

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600 East Fourth Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
charlottenc.gov

September 25, 2025

The Honorable Marc Molinaro  
Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Response to letter dated September 10, 2025

Dear Administrator Molinaro,

The murder of Iryna Zarutska on the evening of August 22, 2025, was a terrible tragedy for her friends and family as well as all of the Charlotte community, and exposed shortcomings in the systems that serve our residents.

The City of Charlotte is focused on safety for our residents by working with our partners, including federal, state, and local leaders, business leaders, members of the judiciary, healthcare providers and others to identify programs to further increase safety in our community, including more law enforcement in key areas of our city, many of which will be near transit facilities. Due to the structures of local governance in North Carolina, the City of Charlotte has no oversight over the courts or mental health facilities, which is why working together is critically important. Just this week, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation, which provided additional prosecutorial staffing resources; something we have been advocating for several years. This murder has also led to the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Area Transit System (which is a department of the City of Charlotte) to take immediate steps to increase rider and operator safety and security throughout our transit system.

CATS has been actively increasing its security resources, including increasing contracted security funding from \$5.8 million in 2022 to \$18.4 million in the current year; this spending increase has enabled CATS to double the number of dedicated contracted police and security from 110 personnel to 219 in the current contract.

Earlier this week the Charlotte City Council unanimously approved a resolution to allow for CATS professional security forces to expand its enforcement actions at the Charlotte

Transportation Center in Uptown, Rosa Parks Transit Center, Eastland all Transit Center, as well as all sidewalks adjacent to those properties as well as properties adjacent to the Blue Line.

The City of Charlotte including CATS are committed to continuing to increase resources needed to protect public transit users. In its response to the Mr. Joe Delorenzo, Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight and Chief Safety Officer, CATS has outlined activities taken over the last three years as well as the immediate changes made to CATS' security and the strategies that it will utilize moving forward to protect riders, employees, and vital transit assets (that letter is attached to this response as well).

In your letter to me, you directed the following immediate actions:

1. Transit Security Plan – Your administration must immediately release a transparent, measurable plan to secure Charlotte's buses, trains and stations. This plan must detail staffing increases, police coordination, surveillance upgrades, and response protocols.

This action is complete. CATS have provided the FTA with a copy of a transit security plan as part of this response as well as part of the response to Mr. DeLorenzo.

2. Visible Security Surge – CATS must immediately increase uniformed presence at stations and onboard vehicles, with priority given to evening service and high-risk corridors.

This action is complete and will continue indefinitely. CATS has worked with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) to engage CMPD officers to provide increased policing presence along the Blue Line light rail system. There is a total of 966 hours per week authorized for additional CMPD officer assignments.

The deployment of these hours is as follows:

- Shift 1: 6:30am-11:30am – 30 hours of additional staffing
- Shift 2: 11:30am-4:00pm – 27 hours of additional staffing
- Shift 3: 1:30pm-7:00pm – 12 hours of additional staffing
- Shift 4: 4:00pm-10:00pm – 48 hours of additional staffing
- Shift 5: 10:00pm-1:30am – 21 hours of additional staffing

These shifts are daily, seven days per week (138 hours daily x 7 days = 966 weekly) and will continue indefinitely, as CATS continues to develop and evaluate the total needed staffing levels and the staffing mix between contract security and local law enforcement agency personnel.

Next week, CATS will introduce new bike patrols and new urban terrain vehicle patrols to provide additional security personnel along key transit routes and a significant increase in visibility. The additional investment in these vehicles improves access and response time along the transit system.

In addition, as you may be aware, on November 4, 2025, Mecklenburg County voters will be considering for approval a sales tax referendum to increase available funding for transit and roads in the region. If this referendum passes, CATS will have funding necessary to improve transit services throughout Mecklenburg County, including funding for enhanced security. State law also requires that an independent transit authority (the Mecklenburg Public Transit Authority – MPTA) will be established and CATS will transition away from being a department of the City of Charlotte to an independent transit authority with an independent governing board as required in North Carolina Session Law 2025-39. If this occurs, I expect CATS (under the governance of the MPTA) to recommend to the MPTA Board the establishment of an independent Transit Police Department to serve the passengers and employees who use transit every day and I am in full support of that recommendation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Vi Lyles".

Vi Lyles  
Mayor of Charlotte