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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MEDIA CONTACT: Heather Ilgenfritz, Communications Manager**  
**717.713.1443**

## ***Cumberland County Offers Transportation Alternatives to Carlisle Circulator Riders***

**Cumberland County, PA** – The Cumberland County Commissioners have expressed their disappointment in the failure of the Carlisle Circulator to meet ridership expectations and had hoped more residents would have taken advantage of the service. Commissioners announced today the Central Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (CPTA) will attend the March 30, 2017 Capital Area Transit Board (CAT) public hearing on cancellation of the Carlisle Circulator to assist riders in finding new transportation options. The CAT Board will conduct the public hearing in Carlisle prior to approving termination of the pilot project effective April 28, 2017. CAT officials have not yet determined the time and location of the public hearing; however, the information will be publicized once those details are confirmed.

CPTA is the shared ride transportation provider for a 10-county area in Southcentral Pennsylvania including Cumberland, Perry, Franklin, Adams, and York Counties. Former Carlisle Circulator customers are eligible to use CPTA's shared ride service. Senior citizens, persons with disabilities, medical assistance trips, and clients of supporting mental health / intellectual developmental disabilities programs are eligible to use shared ride transportation at reduced or no cost. CPTA staff will attend the March 30th public hearing to review customers' mobility needs, recommend transportation alternatives, and assist in the application process as necessary.

The Carlisle Circulator began in 2014 as a 3-year pilot project to serve the transit needs of the greater Carlisle area. A group of local funding partners including Cumberland County, Carlisle Borough, Middlesex Township, Dickinson College, South Middleton Township, the Partnership for Better Health, the Carlisle Regional Medical Center and Carlisle Events provided the annual \$28,000 local match that was needed to support the annual \$364,000 operating cost of the project. Federal and state funding sources provided the remaining share of the project's annual operating costs.

The local funding partners, CAT, and PennDOT established four performance measures in accordance with Act 44 that focused on the service's revenue generation, operating cost and ridership during the pilot period. The service needed to meet or exceed these performance measures by the end of the 3-year pilot in order to be continued. The Carlisle Circulator failed to meet three of the four performance measures during a review of the service this past January. The Commonwealth prohibits using state public transit

operating funds to continue funding for pilot projects that fail to meet performance measures during the pilot period.

Ridership in year 3 of the pilot peaked at around 4 riders per revenue vehicle hour, less than half of the 8 riders per revenue vehicle hour included in the performance measures. Operating cost per passenger climbed to \$16, nearly double the 3-year goal of just over \$8 per passenger. Similarly, low ridership resulted in operating revenue per vehicle hour of only \$2.40, well short of the \$3.41 operating revenue per operating vehicle hour goal.

The only performance measure met by the Carlisle Circulator was operating cost revenue per vehicle mile. The Carlisle Circulator's \$60.48 operating cost per vehicle hour met the performance goal of \$69.79 per hour due to CAT's bus drivers agreeing to a reduced hourly rate of \$14.55 during the pilot period. Normal CAT bus driver rates start at \$28 per hour, or nearly double the pilot rate. The higher rate would have taken effect after the pilot and challenged the Carlisle Circulator's ability to meet to this performance measure as well.

The local funding partners unanimously agreed to cancel Carlisle Circulator given its inability to meet the established performance standards. If the service was continued despite not meeting the established performance measures, CAT would be required to secure additional funding from local sources to pay for 100% of the Carlisle Circulator, estimated to be over \$450,000 annually. Alternatively, if the Carlisle Circulator met established performance objectives, local funding partners would have been required to pay only 15% of the operational costs while state sources would cover the remaining 85%.

“From a public health perspective, we invested in the Carlisle Circulator because we understood its potential value in helping residents who don't have cars get to essential health services at the hospital, grocery stores, jobs and public agencies, like CareerLINK,” said Becca Raley, with the Partnership for Better Health. “We're grateful to the many partners who joined together to strengthen our public transit system and we foresee the lessons from this pilot shaping future efforts,” Raley added. Bill Miller from Carlisle Events noted, “With our unusual schedule for the car shows the bus did not get much ridership from us. During the concept of the bus plan we thought it would get more use but learned otherwise as it rolled out.”

Because of the failure to meet ridership goals, the commissioners added, the service will no longer qualify to receive federal or state funding support. That would mean that continuation of the service beyond April 28th would cost county and local taxpayers an additional \$400,000 annually – an entirely unrealistic added expense. For more information on public transit services in Cumberland County visit online at [www.ccpa.net/transportation](http://www.ccpa.net/transportation).

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