



Carole Keeton Strayhorn
Comptroller of Public Accounts

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AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767-0219

Mr. Shelton E. Padgett
Chairman, Board of Trustees
VIA Metropolitan Transit
Post Office Box 12489
San Antonio, Texas 78212-0489

Dear Mr. Padgett:

I appreciated receiving your letter regarding the Financial Management Review (FMR) of the City of Balcones Heights (City). First, let me say that when the City requested this review, they specifically asked my office to look at the City's revenues and administration, with an eye toward economic development. I can assure you that we were not intentionally calling the excellent services provided by VIA into question, but rather trying to look for possible ways for the City to fund its economic development initiatives. I am now and will remain committed to public mass transportation, both as a vital mode of transportation and as an important means of safeguarding our environment.

I am a staunch believer in local control, and a staunch believer in giving people enough information for them to make informed decisions at the local level. City officials asked us to provide a wide range of ideas they could consider to improve their financial situation, which is what we did. It is now up to the city council, and in this case the voters, to make a final decision about which of the options they choose. Given the services provided by VIA to Balcones Heights and your long-standing relationship, perhaps some compromise can be reached that can be beneficial to both parties. I urge you to work closely with them to find resolution. But, ultimately, it is up to communities such as Balcones Heights to make the decisions they consider best for their community as it is up to VIA to take whatever steps it thinks are necessary to serve its constituents.

Please know that I welcome your good advice at any time. Thanks for the fine work that you and your organization are doing for the people in and around San Antonio, and for all that you do for Texas.

Sincerely,

Carole Keeton Strayhorn
Texas Comptroller

c: The Honorable Jim Craven, Mayor, City of Balcones Heights
The Honorable Benjamin F. Cass, Council Member, City of Balcones Heights
The Honorable Melissa Castro, Council Member, City of Balcones Heights
The Honorable Stephen Walker, Council Member, City of Balcones Heights
The Honorable Lucille Wohlfarth, Council Member, City of Balcones Heights
The Honorable Charles A. Gonzalez, Congressman, 20th District of Texas
The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, R.Ph., State Senator, District 26
The Honorable Trey Martinez Fischer, State Representative, District 116