

Transportation Policy Memo

Prepared for: Transportation Policy Committee
Prepared by: Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition

A STRATEGY TO ADVANCE THE MOORE-MILLER PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION.

The [Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition](#) convened a group of stakeholders with deep expertise in transportation policy and connections to those most impacted by transit issues. They identified key strategies to submit to the Moore-Miller transition to aid the development of recommendations for the incoming administration with the goal of building the transportation infrastructure that will meet the transit needs of our communities and provide opportunity for economic growth while ensuring Maryland meets its emissions reduction goals, advances equity, and maximizes federal funding opportunities .

Topics of discussion included but were not limited to: reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, building Maryland's transit future, federal funding, meeting Maryland's electrification transportation goals, increasing transit ridership, land use, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. The strategies identified align with the [Moore-Miller administration's transportation priorities](#) of:

“EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY”

“TRANSPORTATION AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER”

“PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT”

“IMPROVING SAFETY, CONGESTION RELIEF, AND SYSTEM PRESERVATION”

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS MEMO

- MDOT should shift the primary focus away from the expansion of roads and towards the expansion and improvement of transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure, alongside funding for the maintenance and repair of existing roadway infrastructure.
- Expansion of transit should go in tandem with equitable transit oriented development, providing new connections for historically underserved communities without displacing existing residents and businesses.
- Federal funding is currently underutilized by MDOT and could help Maryland reduce vehicle miles traveled by building transit, pedestrian, and bicycling infrastructure and funding programs to support the state's goals of reducing climate pollution and race-based disparities.
- Disinvestment in MTA has resulted in a lack of reliable transit service, putting Baltimore City and the Greater Baltimore region at a competitive disadvantage with other major metropolitan areas.
- Electrifying our vehicles is a critical strategy to reduce climate and air pollution and must be accompanied by a strong public transit system which encourages smart growth.

STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Moore-Miller Administration Priority: “EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY”

- “Ensure that our efforts to improve mass transit focus on the people who rely on it the most.”
- “Address the connection between transportation and public health.”
- “Remove barriers to employment.”
- “Remove the politics from transportation.”
- “Implement procurement reform.”
- “Ensure holistic infrastructure planning.”

Why These Priorities are Important

Many Marylanders don't have reliable transportation to access affordable housing, jobs, food, healthcare, and amenities. The lack of adequate transportation investments has disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities, low-income communities, and people with disabilities. According to a large continuing [study](#) at Harvard University, a person's commuting time is the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty.

After eight years of underinvestment and neglect, the Maryland Transit Administration's service is badly hobbled. Frequent bus no-shows, light rail delays of an hour or more, increasing MARC train cancellations, and incomplete or no communications about service problems have created severe hardships for regular MTA riders while discouraging new riders who have other mobility options. Moreover, the lack of reliable transit service has put Baltimore City and the Greater Baltimore region at a competitive disadvantage with other major metropolitan areas that have comprehensive, reliable public transportation systems.

Key Strategies

- Reallocate funding for new road construction projects wherever possible to support MTA staffing, maintenance needs, transit projects, and road repair and maintenance projects.
- Utilize the [Chapter 30 law](#) to strengthen the existing transportation project scoring program that directs transportation spending to the projects that will best achieve Maryland's goals.
- Ensure transit operating budgets have sufficient funds [to close operator shortages and support more frequent service](#), which will improve reliability and ensure students and commuters are able to access jobs, school, and essential services.
- Work together with the General Assembly and local governments to provide more local control and more equitable representation in the governance of, and greater and more sustainable investment in, public transportation in the Greater Baltimore region.
- MTA should develop a service reliability improvement plan to improve service reliability to at least 80% for on-time buses along student routes.
- Direct MTA to conduct an immediate safety assessment of all bus stops that serve students, beginning with those with large student groups, and identify improvements needed to ensure each stop has proper lighting, weather proofing, and safe crossings to access the bus stop.
- MTA should conduct a feasibility study throughout the Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, and Western Maryland to understand where strategic investments should be made to create regional transit options and expand on existing bus systems.

- Collect more data on emissions throughout Maryland to better understand the impact on public health. Data needs include: methane emissions and coal dust in Curtis Bay and ground level data collection of ozone and other criteria pollutants at the neighborhood scale.
-

Moore-Miller Administration Priority: “DRIVE THE ECONOMY”

→ “Expand Transit-Oriented Communities.”

Why These Priorities are Important

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) should be utilized to build out transportation hubs and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Maryland is well positioned to apply for Federal Transit Administration [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning grants](#) to help organizations plan for transportation projects that connect communities and improve access to transit and affordable housing. As identified by the coalition in the [Transform Maryland Policy Agenda](#), more frequent and efficient MARC service would provide improved job access as well as economic development opportunities in the form of transit-oriented development (TOD).

Key Strategies

- Construct the transit-oriented development (TOD) plans for MARC stations with TOD potential as identified in the MARC Cornerstone Plan.
- MDOT, MDP, and DHCD should co-lead a study and evaluation of the use and effectiveness of Vision Zero, Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), and designated Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas. The study should review whether general plans, zoning, affordable housing funding, street design, and other factors are aligned with [Vision Zero](#), PFAs, and TOD designations.

The coalition did not discuss these topics:

- “Drive growth and expansion of BWI Marshall Airport.”
 - “Tap the economic and employment potential of Marshall Airport’s cargo operations and make sure it is accessible to everyone.”
 - “Better leverage the Port of Baltimore.”
-

Moore-Miller Administration Priority: “PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT”

- “Convert the state’s fleets to EV technology.”
- “Increase the number of electric vehicles on the road.”
- “Convert sprawl into 15-minute neighborhoods.”

Why These Priorities are Important

Transportation is the top source of climate pollution in Maryland. [Electrifying our vehicles](#) – passenger cars, transit and school buses, and trucks – is a critical strategy to reduce climate and air pollution and must be accompanied by a strong public transit system which encourages smart growth. In the transition from internal combustion engines to electric-powered, zero-emission vehicles, it will be critical to include complementary policies needed to ensure an equitable, cost-effective, and maximally beneficial transition. These investments should provide incentives for quality local jobs and incorporate

workforce development and job security programs. Maryland should enact policies to provide a just transition for workers and communities, and prioritize communities most impacted by transportation pollution. Transit and government agencies should update their procurement policies related to electric vehicles to provide incentives for local job creation. Businesses—particularly small companies—operating in impacted communities should receive support in the transition to zero-emission vehicles. These vehicles should not be fueled by hydrogen produced using dirty fossil fuels.

[As of July 31, 2022 Maryland has only 52,966 registered EVs](#) and is falling far behind the 2025 goal of 300,000 EVs registered. In addition, Maryland has not taken any significant steps to meet its goal of having 30 percent of all in-state sales of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles be zero emission vehicles by no later than 2030. This goal, which is outlined in the The Medium- and Heavy-Duty ZEV [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU), was [modeled](#) by the Maryland Department of Environment as a critical tool to meet 50% reductions by 2030.

Key Strategies

- MDOT should develop a Carbon Reduction Plan to be completed by or before the November 15, 2023 federal deadline and include recommendations for EV charging infrastructure.
 - The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provided [\\$6.4 billion](#) (BIL Sec. 11403) in formula funding to states and metropolitan areas over the next five years through the [Carbon Reduction Program](#) (CRP). This funding is designed to reduce transportation emissions through the development of state carbon reduction strategies and by funding projects that are designed to reduce transportation emissions.
 - The Governor should adopt the ACCII standard and enact complementary policies to the ACCII regulation that prioritize deploying zero-emission vehicles in low-income communities and communities disproportionately impacted by vehicle pollution and address impacts to workers.
 - Maryland should adopt the [Advanced Clean Truck Rule](#) which will require manufacturers to increase the sale of zero-emission trucks and school buses through 2035 and utilize federal funding, including but not limited to:
 - The [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program](#)
 - [Community Charging Infrastructure and Corridor Grants](#)
 - [Clean Heavy Duty Vehicles](#) from the Inflation Reduction Act
 - Expand the use of zero-emission buses for schools and transit service by:
 - requiring [the procurement of zero-emission buses for locally operated transit systems](#).
 - Fast-tracking WMATA's electric bus procurement schedule and only purchasing electric buses, which would enable Metro to electrify 45% of its fleet by 2030 and 100% of its fleet by 2039.
 - Creating a multi-agency and stakeholder working group (including utilities, parent-teacher-student organizations, worker organizations, and school districts) [to accelerate deployment of electric school buses](#) by providing technical assistance and support with applications for federal funding.
 - Allocate funding and work with the PSC to adequately support the rapid increase in EV adoption needed to meet Maryland's transportation commitments and regulations.
-

Moore-Miller Administration Priority: “IMPROVE SAFETY, CONGESTION RELIEF, AND SYSTEM PRESERVATION TO OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE”

- “Make our roads safer.”
- “Leverage the influx of federal funds to build generational infrastructure improvements.”
- “Develop true high-speed rail capacity.”

Why These Priorities are Important

Good transportation impacts business attraction and retention. To boost our business climate, reduce pollution, and support all Marylanders, the state must balance its existing reliance on highways with deeper investments in strengthening and expanding public transit, walking and bicycling, and electric transit infrastructure. Transit is key to job creation and has the ability to transform the state, in particular the Baltimore region, into a competitive and desirable business market, as well as provide Marylanders with more affordable, reliable transportation options. Safe and connected trails and active transportation networks can provide low-cost access to key job and education centers and connect commercial and residential areas in a way that promotes public health and sustainability.

Key Strategies

- Establish a new vision for the State Highway Administration, including: maximizing safety and efficient use of our roadways as part of a multimodal transportation system; developing a strategy for achieving Vision Zero and Complete Streets, including identifying high speed roads through communities for retrofitting; and bringing the system up to 100 percent State of Good Repair and Complete Streets for all state roads in Priority Funding Areas by 2030.
- Allocate 50% of federal [Surface Transportation Block Grant](#) and National Highway Performance Program funds to transit, bike, or pedestrian projects and 50% on [Fix It First](#) system preservation projects.
- Secure funding needed to implement the [2007 MARC Growth & Investment Plan](#) (no longer available on MDOT website), the [MARC Cornerstone Implementation Study and Investment Program](#), [I-270 Corridor Forward Plan](#), [Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Plan](#), and [MARC run through service to Virginia and Delaware](#).
- Ensure funding and completion of the Frederick Douglass Tunnel Project that will dramatically reduce bottlenecks and speed up MARC & Amtrak Service on the Northeast Corridor.

The Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition and its partners thank you for considering these recommendations. For more details related to these ideas please contact: info@tmtcoalition.org