

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared For:
Moore-Miller Transportation Policy Committee
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BALTIMOREANS for EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



INTRODUCTION

A diverse workgroup of Maryland stakeholders with deep expertise in transportation policy and connections to those most impacted by transit issues, came together to discuss what transportation issues were most important to transit users, communities across Maryland, and transit advocates. The workgroup developed recommendations and action steps to help Governor-elect Moore to build 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. The group focused its recommendations on shifting the primary focus of the programs, investments, and activities of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to address the most urgent challenges facing the state and its residents. The workgroup sessions were hosted in partnership with the [Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition](#). Workgroup 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, how to increase ridership for bus and rail, staffing and funding, land use, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- MDOT should shift their vision away from the expansion of roads and towards the expansion and improvement of transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure, with funding for the maintenance and repair of existing roadway infrastructure.
- Federal funding is currently underutilized by MDOT, and could help Maryland reduce vehicle miles traveled by building transit, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure while meeting the state's goals of reducing climate pollution and race-based disparities.
- The state should pursue solutions in a regional manner, working with adjoining states with the goal of identifying a role for federal funding prior to the next federal transportation authorization.
- Create a tool like state stat to measure performance and track MDOTs goals
- 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 that have comprehensive, reliable public transportation systems
- Embrace local participation in planning, funding and prioritization of transportation decisions.
- The state must build the Red Line.
- Youth voices and the needs of students who rely on MTA for school transportation should be valued, and prioritized by MTA.
- 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.
- 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.

REPORT GUIDE

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[RECOMMENDATION #8:](#) Electrify light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles and expand electrification infrastructure

[RECOMMENDATION #9:](#) MDOT working with MDP and DHCD, should encourage transit-oriented development (TOD), especially transit-oriented affordable housing, to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

[RECOMMENDATION #10:](#) Increase transparency of MDOT spending

[RECOMMENDATION #11:](#) Increase investment in the Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Program and coordinate this state funding with investment from the federal Transportation Alternatives program and other federal programs, while prioritizing funding toward connected trails and active transportation networks around Maryland

[RECOMMENDATION #12:](#) Invest in bus transit on the Eastern Shore to expand existing capacity, increase frequency of existing routes, and establish new routes to communities in need

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Establish a new vision for the Department of Transportation that prioritizes expansion and improvement of transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure, with funding for the maintenance and repair of existing roadway infrastructure.

Context: For years, Maryland leaders have neglected transportation infrastructure. Gov. Hogan, in particular, has promoted investments in highway expansion at the expense of meaningful investments in public transit and active transportation, unlike neighboring Virginia, which invested in a historic \$3.7 billion project to expand passenger rail across the state. In contrast, the 2023 list of regional transportation projects planned for the Baltimore area for the next four years allocated zero dollars for transit capacity or commuter rail, but provided over \$900 million for expanding highway capacity.

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, and 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.

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. Transportation is also a critical factor in efforts to address environmental pollution and promote healthy air quality. Unfortunately, according to the 2020 Greenhouse Gas inventory released by the Maryland Department of Environment, the transportation sector produces approximately 35% of all climate damaging pollution in the state.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • Appoint a Secretary for the Department of Transportation who supports a transit and “fix it first” vision.

- Has professional qualifications and expertise in transportation policy, including:
 - ◆ Experience leading a large organization and demonstrated history of building effective, energetic teams within that organization
 - ◆ Demonstrated commitment to public transparency and accountability to goals
 - ◆ Experience leading a team to address racial disparities impacted by its work
 - ◆ Experience leading a team to address the climate crisis

- ◆ Experience working with both urban and rural communities
 - ◆ Demonstrated ability in mastering complex material and integrating new concepts into existing processes
 - ◆ Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate with different audiences, including elected officials and the public
- Who will lead Maryland's transit and active transportation future by:
- Prioritizing transit projects and building the Red line;
 - Investing in MTA and ensuring MTA and its employees are fully resourced;
 - Working with local government to connect communities by investing in trail and active transportation networks;
 - Maximizing federal funding opportunities;
 - Implementing vision zero;
 - Embracing climate and equity analyses for transportation; and
 - Utilizing 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.

First 100 Days • **Beginning with FY 2024, conduct an immediate review of the proposed MDOT budget with particular scrutiny on funding allocated for new road construction projects.** Wherever possible, funding should be reallocated to support MTA staffing, maintenance needs, and transit projects.

- Place a moratorium on new highway construction while reviewing funding for new road construction and future obligations for maintaining current road and bridge infrastructure to develop long term (30-50 year) costs.
 - ◆ A moratorium on all new highway capacity for two years will help Maryland catch up on maintenance projects, move overdue transit projects to shovel-ready status, and invest in Vision Zero, pedestrian safety projects, and retrofitting of overdesigned roads to better serve their communities.
 - ◆ Review and identify the State of Good Repair needs and ensure that highway spending goes to these needs first, and that any projects that involve widening are treated not as State of Good Repair projects, but rather as new capacity projects, and therefore held to a higher standard before receiving funding.
 - ◆ Revoke plans to expand I-495, including I-495 southside and I-270 with private toll lanes and work on a new plan to sustainably and equitably address congestion problems in these corridors.
- Provide an immediate increase to MTA's Capital Budget beginning in FY 2024.
 - ◆ MTA needs significant capital funding in order to reduce the \$1.8 billion State of Good Repair backlog and to implement the [2020 Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan, MARC Growth & Investment Plans, and other plans](#) to grow transit ridership.
- Utilize budget surplus funds to address state employee vacancies with a priority focus on MTA staff, in order to provide more frequent and reliable service, diminish reliance on contractual employees, and reduce turnover. Funding should also be provided to hire additional staff to meet Maryland's transit demands.
- Freeze Chesapeake Bay bridge expansion for further review.

- ◆ Funding for tolled bridge expansion should be shifted to priority transit and land use projects that will reduce congestion such as the Red line and the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project.
- ◆ MDOT should focus on comprehensive congestion management plans to reduce congestion at the bridge and on local roadways.

First 100 Days • 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 state roads in Priority Funding Areas by 2030.

- SHA should develop a strategy for making safety, especially of vulnerable users the top priority, while managing capacity on these roads, including use of intelligent transportation technologies, greater usage of lane-miles for dedicated transit lanes, higher-occupant vehicles, road pricing options, and other system efficiency measures. Maryland is criss-crossed by more than 31,000 roadway miles including ones owned wholly or in part by MDOT. The state-owned roads are disproportionately important to the state, carrying nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the state's VMT.
- SHA should develop a strategy for achieving [Vision Zero and Complete Streets by 2030](#).
 - ◆ Include a statewide initiative to redesign roads, since currently too many Marylanders lose their lives due to poorly designed facilities that prioritize fast traffic over safety and community.
 - ◆ SHA should revise its [Context Driven](#) guidelines to incorporate Vision Zero goals, and expand the areas designated in context zones for “access” priority (and added safety priority).
 - ◆ Amend the state long-range plan and [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program](#) (STIP) to prioritize redesigning and rebuilding of these perilous facilities accordingly.
 - ◆ SHA should create a State Complete Streets Engineer position similar to Massachusetts DOT with the authority to create and implement an Engineering Directive addressing [Controlling Criteria and Design Justification Process for MassDOT Highway Division Projects](#). Streets should specifically meet Complete Streets standards (currently the [vast majority of SHA road mileage](#) doesn't even have sidewalks, and most that do are not ADA-compliant).
- Given historic federal investments thanks to BIL, SHA should raise the preferred maintenance condition goal to 100 percent by 2030. For the past decade, the preferred maintenance condition of the SHA highway network has hovered around 85 percent, its current goal.

First 100 Days • Include the transportation vision in public statements such as announcement of MDOT leadership, state of the state address, FY 2024 budget announcement, and press releases.

- Public statements should include messaging about utilizing federal funding to support transit and infrastructure priorities.
- The new transportation vision begins by revolutionizing funding, infrastructure, and equity in Maryland.

First 100 Days • Support the adoption of climate and transit equity analyses for agency decision-making.

- This can be done administratively, and in conjunction with legislation ([Transit Equity Act](#) from 2022 sponsored by Delegate Ruth and Senator Carter) to require state agencies to meaningfully assess a proposed action's potential climate change impact and effect on overburdened and underserved communities, environmental justice communities, and workers and jobs in the state. These communities should be prioritized for any investments involving climate and environmental benefits.

First Term • **MDOT should make significant changes to the Maryland Commuter Choice program** with the goal of 1% (~1800 employers) of employers in the state participating in the program by the end of 2026, and a mid-term goal of 500 participating employers in 2024.

- According to the latest 2021 data, only 10 employers in the state are participating. The commuter choice program includes reimbursement of 50% of employers' costs (up to \$100 per employee) per month for offering employees qualified commuting benefits programs like transit, cash in lieu of parking, telework, and more.
- Maryland should pass a mandate, similar to Washington D.C., [Washington State](#), and New Jersey, that employers of a certain size must offer sustainable commuter benefit options. Washington State's program, for instance, "affects worksites with 100 or more full-time employees who begin their shift between 6 and 9 a.m. on weekdays in the nine most populous counties in the state."

First Term • **Legislative actions the Administration can advocate for:**

- MDOT should sponsor legislation in the 2024 legislative session with a departmental bill to modify Chapter 30 to better support the scoring program.
- Maryland [should set a goal for reducing vehicle miles traveled to 20% under 2019 levels by 2030](#).

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transportation Emerges As Crucial to Escaping Poverty](#) (NYT)
- [Chapter 30 Scoring Model](#) (MDOT)
- [10-Year Capital Needs Inventory & Prioritization](#) (MDOT, July 2022)
- Establishment of Vision Zero ([HB0885](#))
- MD Transit Equity Act ([HB0141](#))
- [Made You Look: Baltimore Underline- Case Study](#) (MICA)
- [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program](#) (Federal Transit Administration)
- [Roadway Miles with Sidewalks & Sidewalks with ADA Compliance, 2022](#) (MDOT)
- [Washington State Commuter Program](#)
- [Comments Regarding Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report Transportation Recommendations, 2022](#)

RECOMMENDATION #2: Federal Funding

Context: The [FHWA has issued guidance urging](#) states to spend Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds in ways that support goals like reducing climate pollution and reducing race-based disparities. They encourage [flexing funds](#) from formulas traditionally thought of as "highway" formulas to non-highway modes of transportation like transit, ferries, biking, and walking to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • **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.**

- **Transit, bike and pedestrian projects:** These are formula grants that Maryland automatically receives from the federal government each year for transportation programs. Maryland's apportionment in FY 2022 was \$203 million, plus \$418 million for the Surface Transportation Block Grant and National Highway Performance Program, respectively. Fifty percent of these federal funds should be transferred to other programs that address congestion and climate pollution.
- **System preservation projects:** Funding should go towards maintenance and system preservation only, and not for widening bridges, roads, or highways for single occupancy vehicles, or for new road or highway construction.
- Use executive authority for a line item veto if the legislature doesn't prioritize Fix It First in its budget decisions.

First Year **First Term** • **MDOT staff should provide education and technical assistance to local departments of transportation** to ensure Maryland is taking advantage of federal funding opportunities at every level. Assistance includes education on what federal funding opportunities exist, how to apply for earmarks, obtaining allocations in federal formula funds, and applying for competitive grants.

- [Community Charging](#) - The *Discretionary Grant Program for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure* (\$2.5 billion) competitive grant program will deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure and at least 50% of this funding must be used for a community grant program where priority is given to projects in rural areas, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and communities with a low ratio of private parking spaces.
- [Clean School Buses](#) - On October 27, 2022, EPA Clean School Bus Program announced the approval of nearly 400 applications totaling almost \$1 billion to support the purchase of over 2,400 school buses, 95% of which will be electric. EPA distributed awards to school districts in all 50 states, including a \$9.4 million award to the Baltimore School district. School districts in Cecil, Charles, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George and Queen Anne's Counties were placed on the waiting list for EV school buses. This was the first round of \$5 billion of funding awards that EPA will provide under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
- [EV Charging Infrastructure](#) - The *National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure* Formula Program (\$5 billion) provides funding to states to strategically deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected network to facilitate data collection, access, and reliability.

- [Transportation Alternatives](#) - The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allows states to use up to 5% of their allocated Transportation Alternatives set-aside funds for technical and application assistance for local communities. The administration should put these funds to use immediately to establish new capacity within MDOT to assist local communities with development and construction of connected trails and active transportation networks.

First Year • **Adopt a Carbon Reduction Program strategy before November 2023 with a focus on priority transit projects.**

- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding formula, but in order to receive funding states must create a CRP strategy before November 15, 2023. Projects must be listed in the state Carbon Reduction Plan if they are to be eligible for Carbon Reduction Program funding.
- The Carbon Reduction Plan should prioritize transit projects already in published transportation plans, such as MARC improvement plans and regional and county transit development plans, ongoing Purple Line construction, as well as improvements to high ridership corridors such as local bus routes. In addition to transit, equity and land use should be top priorities of the CRP.
- Ask MTA and local governments to identify projects that could be part of the plan.
- Invite the private sector to recommend projects.
- Before the CRP is finalized, provide opportunities for stakeholder input and public comment, including from low-income communities, communities of color, and representatives of worker organizations.
- The plan should also include recommendations for EV charging infrastructure to support older, low cost EVs.

First Year • **Ensure Maryland is maximizing grant funding via the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) and [Inflation Reduction Act](#).**

- There will be a new round of Low NoX and Bus Facilities competitive grants that can help transit systems convert their fleets to zero emissions vehicles (MTA applied in 2022 but did not win an award).
- There will be a new round of RAISE grants. In 2022 the USDOT awarded \$6M for Penn Station multimodal improvements and \$20M for transit-oriented development at New Carrollton Station.
- Direct the MD Energy Administration, MD Department of Transportation, MD Public Service Commission, and MD Department of the Environment to coordinate and take all reasonable steps to maximize the ability of Maryland entities to take advantage of federal funds, such as the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Grant and the Clean School Bus program, including by providing administrative support for public entities' grant applications.

First Term • **Pursue solutions in a regional manner**, working with adjoining states to achieve the goal of identifying a role for federal funding prior to the next federal transportation authorization.

First Term • **Improve and expand multi-use trail systems using all available federal resources**, including specific programs like Transportation Alternatives, as well as utilizing the flexibility of Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) and National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) formula funds.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Flexible Funding for Transit and Highway Improvements](#) (Federal Transit Administration)
 - [Transit Caucus letter, November 7, 2022](#)
 - [Federal Funding - EV Charging](#) (Federal Transit Administration)
 - [Clean School Bus Program](#) (EPA)
 - [Overview of EV Federal Funding and Financing Programs](#) (Federal Transit Administration)
 - [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Funding](#) (USDOT - FHA)
 - [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Transportation Alternatives](#) (USDOT - FHA)
 - [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides new funding opportunities for the region](#) (Metropolitan Council of Governments)
 - [Complete list](#) of BIL grant opportunities and deadlines
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RECOMMENDATION #3: Significantly invest in bus, light rail, and paratransit by fully funding MTA and increasing staffing levels so existing transit can become reliable and much more frequent to grow ridership

Context: Operations budgets for transit agencies in Maryland are insufficient to provide service that is frequent and reliable enough to grow ridership. MTA staffing shortages exist across the board: operators, supervisors, technical positions, and at disproportionate levels compared to the rest of MDOT. Two of the most frequent complaints of current, former, and prospective transit riders in Maryland are that bus, light Metro subway, rail, and paratransit services are unreliable and infrequent. MTA buses and light rail often do not conform to their published schedules. [It is essential](#) that MTA buses and light rail run on-time.

In 2007, Governor O'Malley's transition team identified low morale as a top issue in MTA, noting that "employees are the agency's most valuable asset." The 2007 [transition report](#) identified a series of recommendations beginning with the need for "strong leadership and managerial skills." In order for MTA to meet expectations for reliability and to provide more frequent service that transit users need, significant investment needs to be made in MTA personnel, particularly after years of underinvestment and direct staffing and operations cuts.

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, a growing number of 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. When proposing a suspension of the state's gas tax, Governor Hogan said he wanted to alleviate "pain at the pump" for Maryland drivers. New leadership in Maryland means alleviating the trauma on transit for MTA riders.

Funding & Staffing Recommendations

First 100 Days • Allocate \$250 million or 10% of Maryland's surplus budget to MTA to address staffing shortages, employee pay, maintenance concerns, and increased frequency service needs, and to initiate immediate improvements in light of its [severe decline over the past year](#).

First 100 Days • In conjunction with the announcement of new MDOT leadership, and opportunities to speak to MTA staff, the Governor can publicly acknowledge that MTA has not been given appropriate resources and MDOT has not had leadership who has prioritized MTA. The Administration can also identify how it will lead MTA into a new era with bold investment and a transit oriented focus.

- Staff morale was referenced as a top concern in Governor O'Malley's [2007 transportation transition report](#). Similar concerns about morale remain today, but recent morale problems are more closely tied to understaffing, and the lack of investment in MTA's success.
- Review the performance of current MDOT management, operations and communications staff to assure accountability for the state of MDOT service and performance.

First 100 Days • Fund transit operating budget increases [to close operator shortages and support more frequent service](#) as a strategy to grow ridership throughout the state in conjunction with increasing frequency of service, including weekend and evening service on transit service.

- MTA/WMATA increase evening/weekend service on the 18 high frequency lines to every 15 minutes and increase local link service frequency to 30 minutes or better.
- MTA must follow-through their commitment to "communicate percentage of missed trips" as outlined in the MDOT Plan 'Rebuilding Better: Committed to an Equitable Transit Future.' This will give more accurate on-time performance data, which will highlight problem areas to be addressed.
- MTA should initiate a pilot program that expands current commuter bus service to non-traditional commuting times, including mid-day, evenings & weekends.

First 100 Days • MTA should take immediate steps to improve the quality of real-time data provided on the TransitApp.

First 100 Days • In order to address the operator shortage, MTA, WMATA, and the Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) should actively recruit, hire, and train additional transit operators with necessary incentives including signing bonuses, and the state should help provide the funding for the transit agencies to do so.

First Term • Provide the funding necessary to improve rail service across the board.

- 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 legislature should strengthen WMATA's ability to provide rail and bus service, contingent on parallel action in DC and Virginia, by allowing WMATA to increase year-over-year operating expenditures by more than three percent.
- Working with DBM and the General Assembly:
 - ◆ Allocate the necessary funds for MTA to hire the additional personnel and purchase the additional equipment necessary to provide increased service.

- ◆ Increase appropriations for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) so that local systems across the state can improve service.

First Year • **Assess MTA fare structure and develop recommendations for reducing costs for riders, especially those dependent on transit.**

- Removing the 2013 inflationary metric for fare increases along with long-term funding strategies (including local government contributions) should be considered to ensure sustainable funding for transit operations.

First Term • **Reduce the use of contractors and use state funds to hire state employees.** MTA has many positions filled by private contractors through on-call contracts. The state should invest in long-term state employees who are invested in MTA and can build knowledge and skills that will benefit MTA for decades to come.

First Term • **Give MDOT or MTA permission to offer bonuses and flexibility to recruit more drivers and offer training.**

First Term • **MTA should work with the Department of Labor to create a workforce development program in partnership with at least one workforce development provider to address shortages identified in the *anticipated* compensation and staffing study.**

Reliability and Ridership Recommendations

First 100 Days • **Issue an Executive Order to update Governor Glendening's Executive Order to reform the State Coordinating Committee on Human Services Transportation.**

- This committee must be re-constituted to assure awareness and participation of stakeholders and elected representatives, transparency for the public, and allocation of appropriate resources to implement plans and solutions that are repeatedly identified in the ongoing planning process.
 - ◆ In October 1997, the Governor formed the State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation (Executive Order 01.01.1997.06). It was reconstituted in September 2007 and again in April 2010 (Executive Order 01.01.2007.09; Executive Order 01.01.2010.10). This Committee is charged with examining plans for the transportation needs of the elderly, the disabled, and those who need affordable, accessible transportation to get to work, job training, and education programs, and is supposed to coordinate the efforts and resources of federal, state and local agencies to ensure Marylanders' continued access to education, health care, jobs, senior citizen activities, and training.
 - ◆ For years, in the absence of any public or stakeholder representation, the Committee has avoided public meeting requirements, and played little or no part in the efforts of advocates or legislators grappling with the transportation access issues that it was charged with addressing. Its annual reports are no longer posted on its public website.
 - ◆ The Committee contracts for a consultant to conduct federally required regional and statewide needs assessments and planning processes, but plays no role in guiding or coordinating any efforts to develop actions or resources to resolve these needs. As a result, efforts by advocates or legislators to solve issues with paratransit, access to dialysis or other medical appointments, 'last mile' access to employment, and similar needs continue to

be sporadic and fragmented. Beyond MTA and WMATA, transit services in the state seldom provide access across county lines.

First Term • **Make underutilized stations bigger transit hubs to increase ridership, bus hubs to feed into MARC** - Ex. Martin State Airport could be expanded to a bigger hub.

First Term • **As consistent with the Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland, MTA should increase the on-time performance of paratransit service to at least 95% by 2025 and strive for 100%.**

- It should also develop an emergency response plan for riders in at-risk situations.
- MTA should pursue funding opportunities through the [All Stations Accessibility Program](#) (ASAP), a new discretionary grant program created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that will increase access to our transportation system and promote equity. Given that many inaccessible rail stations are concentrated in dense urban areas, millions of transit riders across the country are impacted by the lack of infrastructure that supports assisted devices, such as wheelchairs or crutches. ASAP is designed to help solve this problem.

First Term • **MTA should explore transit solutions to improve and provide access to the state government complex in Annapolis.** Currently there are limited to no options to access the state capitol by public transit.

- MTA should work with Baltimore City & County DOTs to implement transit signal priority for Light Rail and major bus corridors.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#)
- [MD Transition - Report of the Transportation Workgroup, 2007](#)
- [Transform Maryland - Letter to Governor Hogan](#)
- [Comments Regarding Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report Transportation Recommendations, 2022](#)
- [All Stations Accessibility Program](#) (Federal Transit Administration)
- [What can be done about Baltimore's unreliable transit?](#) (Baltimore Sun)

RECOMMENDATION #4: The Governor should support the creation of a Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority

Context: The [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#) notes: “Regional leaders in Greater Baltimore are seeking to reform the way our public transportation system is governed and financed. Despite certain advantages to the current centralized governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), other structural flaws make maintaining and improving transit performance more difficult. Of the 50 largest transit agencies in the United States, MTA is the only one that is part of a state department of transportation without a board of directors and where decision-making lies solely with a

governor. The lack of local participation in planning and funding decisions has been a contributing factor to the maintenance problems and lack of significant expansion or improvement in the last two decades.

Moreover, under the Maryland Transit Administration, the current system has disadvantaged many in our region, perpetuated racial discrimination against Black and Brown communities, and exacerbated many inequities. This has been made evident by cancellation of the Red Line in 2015 and the proposal to cut core bus service by 20% in September 2020.”

Recommended Actions

First Year • **The Administration and the General Assembly should work with 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.** The new governance model should include:

- A voting board that represents transit users and other stakeholders in the transit region
- Baltimore City
- Surrounding jurisdictions that are adjacent to Baltimore City and that the MTA currently serves with bus, light rail, or subway; potentially including areas that contain transit-important job centers, like Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard & Harford Counties
- Adequate annual funding from the local jurisdictions served by the RTA
- Protections for the collective bargaining rights of workers from predecessor systems and assurance that employees won't lose hard-fought wages and working conditions
- Consultation with all affected unions regarding decisions on labor-management relations for the future system
- Prohibitions on efforts to privatize public sector transit jobs and decisions made under the principle that public transit should be run for public benefit and not private profit
- A commitment to equity in transportation funding decisions and planning
- A commitment to transparency in use of public funds and performance

First Year • **The Department of Budget and Management should work with the BWC, local governments, and the General Assembly to help identify funding formulas and sources for permanent funding for the new governance model.**

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#)
- [Baltimore Metropolitan Council Workgroup on Regional Transit Governance](#)
- [Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Study of 2021](#)
- [Transit Reform for Maryland: New Models for Accountability, Stability, and Equity](#) (Eno Center for Transportation)

RECOMMENDATION #5: Build the Red Line to establish an East-West Connection in Baltimore City and Baltimore County

Context: After more than a decade of planning, the Red Line light rail project was canceled by Governor Hogan in 2015. With the federal infrastructure legislation passed by the U.S. Congress, Maryland's Senators inserted language related to the New Starts grant program that could reopen the door for the necessary federal funds. If approved by FTA, Maryland should immediately request the Red Line be put back in the program.

[The Red Line would bring an essential east-west transit corridor](#) to Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Fast, reliable, and frequent rail service is desperately needed. The only current east-west transit service is bus service, which is notoriously unreliable and too slow to reach many low-skill and mid-skill jobs in less than 45 minutes. Economic development follows rail lines (for a local example, see the DC Metro). The Red Line would also connect existing transit modes including the West Baltimore MARC station, Light Rail and Metro Subway, in addition to many bus lines, give residents of East and West Baltimore, as well as Eastern and Western Baltimore County, better access to jobs, schools, health care, and shopping as well as recreation and social activities.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) [provided additional funding](#) of nearly \$9.9 billion (BIL Sec. 21202) for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program (i.e. RAISE Discretionary Grant program), and provides a unique opportunity for the DOT to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants, RAISE could be used to fund projects such as the proposed Red Line.

BIL also 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. RAISE and Carbon Reduction Program funding could both be applied to programs supporting Red Line development.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • **Direct MDOT staff to immediately contact FTA to identify what remaining New Starts or other federal funding might still be available for Red Line construction.**

- Work with FTA for guidance on whether 2015 Red Line plans can still be used
- NEPA/EIS status check, find out how to restart so it doesn't cause additional delays

First 100 Days • **Governor's Office should direct MDOT & MTA to immediately:**

- Accelerate study timelines
- Assess and identify what actions to take, how to fund it, and the timeline for getting the project back on track through completion
 - ◆ Involve transit policy experts, advocates, and community members

- ◆ Recommendations should be ready by the end of 2023. MTA must carry out and complete this work within one year so that a new proposal can be submitted for federal funding in early 2024.
- ◆ Apply for all available federal funding:
 - [RAISE grant funding](#)
 - [Carbon Reduction Program](#)
 - Determine what interim transit connection plans can be put in place to provide an East-West connection while the Red Line is being built in order to give City residents immediate transit access
- ◆ Identify any remaining local funding available
- ◆ Increase frequency of MTA buses along the Red Line route
- ◆ Explore the potential for temporary bus rapid transit
- ◆ Tie in the planning for the [Reconnecting Communities Grant](#)

First 100 Days • **The Governor’s Office, in conjunction with Department of Management and Budget, should work with the Maryland General Assembly to:**

- Authorize and allocate funds for MTA to:
 - ◆ Update the current Red Line plan and adjust the route in light of development since 2015 - particularly in East Baltimore
 - ◆ Update the environmental impact statement
- Make changes to the state’s public-private partnership laws for major construction projects
- Pass the [Transportation Equity Act](#) to ensure that cross-modal equity analyses are conducted before changes can be made in public transportation policy. The bill would enforce provisions of federal Title VI legislation so that projects like the Red Line could no longer be dismissed without fair review.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) Funding Programs Calendar for Maryland Counties and Municipalities](#) (Center for Climate Strategies)
- [RAISE Discretionary Grants](#) (USDOT)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Carbon Reduction Programs](#) (USDOT - FHA)
- [Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program – Planning Grants and Capital Construction Grants](#) (USDOT)
- MD Transit Equity Act ([HB0141](#))
- [Federal Funding Opportunities to Support the Justice 40 Initiative and Rural Communities in Maryland](#)
- [West Baltimore United - A Reconnecting Communities Planning Study](#) (Baltimore DOT)

RECOMMENDATION #6: Increase safety and reliability for transit riders – especially youth and students

Context: Safety concerns and unreliability make the experience of riding transit stressful and anxiety-producing for students. These challenges are particularly concerning because students who rely on the MTA to get to and from school have no other transit options. Youth have expressed feeling unsafe waiting for buses early in the morning and after dark and some young women deal with sexual harrasment from other rides on a consistent basis. Unreliable service leads to lateness and absences for reasons outside of students’ control, which can and does impact their academic standing.

According to the report, [NOT IN SERVICE Why Public Transit Must Aim to Serve Students](#):

There are many ways Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) students travel to and from school—on Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) buses, light rail, and subways, by private car or rideshare vehicle, or on foot. Elementary students who live more than one mile from their zoned school and students with disabilities are eligible for yellow bus service. Approximately 29,000 students—the equivalent of almost three-quarters of the middle and high school student population—rely on MTA public transit to get to and from school every day. With school choice, middle and high school students can apply to any school in the city. If they live more than 1.5 miles from the school they are admitted to, they receive a OneCard from their school to use on MTA. OneCards are laminated reusable passes that students can use between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on school days only.

Baltimore City is the only school district in Maryland whose students depend on public transit to get to and from school. The MTA operates 65 local bus routes in the Baltimore region, in addition to one north-south subway line and one north-south light rail line, most of which are designed to get adult workers from outlying neighborhoods downtown to job centers in and around the harbor. The MTA’s development of regular bus routes and schedules does not adequately account for the needs of student riders the way it does for adult riders.

Recommended Actions – Reliability

First 100 Days • Direct MTA to develop a service reliability improvement plan to improve service reliability to at least 80% for on-time buses along student routes.

First 100 Days • The Governor’s Office should bring MTA and local school officials together to develop a plan for reporting late and no-show buses to school administrators and a process for students to seek excused latenesses and absences due to unreliable MTA services. Students should not be penalized for the failures of MTA.

First 100 Days • MTA should take immediate steps to measure the accuracy, report the accuracy, and improve the quality of real-time data provided on the TransitApp. It is a testament to the success of the TransitApp that many riders have come to depend on the real-time arrival information it provides. The MTA should monitor and report on the accuracy of the real-time information as part of its performance

measures.

First 100 Days **First Term** • **Ensure MDOT is taking advantage of federal funding opportunities to improve transit for students**, including Five-Year Surface Transportation Bill (US Congress), Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (\$25B to transit). ([See p.24](#))

First Year • **Develop and publish a youth engagement plan that provides opportunities for youth and outlines how MTA will actively seek youth participation.** Ensure youth are represented on commissions and advisory groups that have power to make or recommend actions. Publish annual reports, and make them available on the MTA website with information on youth participation.

First Year • **Have a working definition of equity in [MTA's strategic plan](#) and ensure students are represented and consulted in this plan.**

First Year • **Direct MDOT leadership to value and foster a strong partnership between City of Baltimore, MTA, and legislators**

Recommended Actions – Safety

First 100 Days • **Direct MTA to work with local governments to conduct an immediate safety assessment of all bus stops that serve students, beginning with those with large student groups, and identify what improvements need to be made to ensure each stop has proper lighting, weather proofing, and safe crossings to access the bus stop.**

- MTA should work with MDOT to ensure funding is allocated to make all safety improvements in a timely manner.
- Seek public input on plans to increase & expand lighting in public areas with public input on where these should be located.

First Term • **Double the current number of bus shelters by 2025 and** involve local community groups, neighborhood residents, and public safety advocates in decisions about where bus shelters are placed and safety needs at each location.

First Term • **Continue implementation of the [campaign to combat harassment](#).**

- In addition to public education, provide mechanisms for riders to report incidents of harassment and violence, and ensure MTA employees receive bystander intervention resources and training.
- Partner with Baltimore City leaders to guide implementation and ensure the public is able to provide feedback on how the campaign is working and is able to contribute to future phases of the campaign.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [NOT IN SERVICE: Why Public Transit Must Aim To Serve Students](#) (Fund for Educational Excellence)
- [MDOT MTA Launches Campaign To Address Sexual Harassment On Transit](#) (MDOT MTA)

- [MTA Strategic Plan](#)
 - [To close the opportunity gap in Baltimore schools, we must invest in transit | GUEST COMMENTARY](#) (Baltimore Sun)
 - [Baltimore City Council committee holds meeting to hear student experiences riding MTA buses to school](#) (WMAR2 Baltimore)
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RECOMMENDATION #7: Increase the reliability, reach, and public stewardship of MARC, Amtrak, and freight

Context: As noted in the [Transform Maryland Policy Agenda](#), the MARC Commuter Rail System serves the Baltimore/Washington corridor on existing rights-of-way that could benefit from increased service levels. 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). The success of weekend service introduced in 2014 on the Penn Line created a latent demand for MARC service beyond the typical peak hour weekday commuting periods.

The Governor's Office should not delay actions on MARC in order to study the system further. Careful consideration should be given to new study proposals to ensure they are necessary, not duplicative of previous studies, include an equity analysis, consider and address environmental justice impacts, and [take federal funding incentives into consideration](#).

Virginia offers an adaptable model and increased regional rail connectivity because the state recently purchased hundreds of miles of track from CSX for passenger rail. With federal funding, Virginia is also building a passenger rail bridge over the Northern Potomac River into D.C. — an effort that should be broadened to include a new rail bridge over the Potomac River in Southern Maryland for greatest regional impact. Cleaner communities and greater economic opportunities begin with purchasing clean-energy electric trains and upgrading tracks, as per California, Germany, The Netherlands, etc. Poor freight-by-rail stewardship has impacted Maryland for too long. Safely coordinated, state-owned rail tracks, run on clean electric trains, can potentially offer local freight shippers train use, without endangering and harming freight or passenger rail workers or communities anymore. Changing rail stewardship to pave the way to reliable, safe, local freight-by-rail means less truck traffic throughout the state — a win/win/win.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • Complete the cost and construction plan of extending MARC service into Western Maryland as required under the [Transit Safety & Investment Act of 2021](#). As of November 2022, no concrete action has been taken.

First Term • 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](#).

- In August 2022, MDOT was awarded a \$20M High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) grant for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and preliminary engineering phases of the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project.
- MARC projects would also be eligible for other federal grants such as RAISE.
- Rail transit that parallels a corridor in the National Highway System (e.g. 270, 95) is eligible for National Highway Performance Program formula funding.

First Term • Improvements to MARC

- Make underutilized stations bigger transit hubs to increase ridership, bus hubs to feed into MARC - Ex. Martin State Airport could be expanded to a bigger hub.
- Ensure all MARC stations are ADA compliant and accessible for people with disabilities.
- Add more express trains in addition to the single express run piloted in Fall 2021.

First Term • Expansion of MARC

- Enter into agreement with CSX Transportation for it to build tracks where needed so it can sell rail right-of-way for MARC to expand service that runs all day (including weekday/evening non-commuting time) 7 days a week, including on the Brunswick and Camden lines. Those MARC lines now have limited service on CSX tracks whose primary purpose is to move freight.
- Prevent CSX from further, future control over MARC train tracks, especially on Camden and Brunswick lines, and shared Amtrak tracks. This is particularly important now that the B&P tunnel will be enlarged for two layers of freight rail.
- The state should investigate whether it is possible to purchase and modernize tracks from CSX in strategic locations to ensure riders are prioritized, not just freight.
- Support construction of a new Frederick Douglass Tunnel on the MARC Penn Line and replace the West Baltimore MARC Station on the new realignment.
- Construct a fourth track between Odenton and Halethorpe on the MARC Penn Line.
- Construct the transit-oriented development (TOD) plans for MARC stations with TOD potential as identified in the MARC Cornerstone Plan.

First Term • Expansion and modernization of heavy rail.

- By 2024 the Maryland Department of Transportation should develop a plan to purchase the right of way and upgrade selected heavy rail tracks and infrastructure.
- By 2027, Maryland should initiate two pilot programs to deploy safe, clean-energy electric trains and acquire the right of way of heavy rail tracks for passengers, and local freight in Curtis Bay, Baltimore, and in the Southern Maryland region for a connection over the Potomac River through Virginia.
 - ◆ Curtis Bay experienced a coal silo explosion in 2021, indicating the current issues and troubled history related to private freight rail operations.
 - ◆ There should be a freight and passenger rail connection over the Potomac River between Morgantown in Southern Maryland and through Virginia to reduce heavy truck traffic at the

ports and regional traffic congestion.

First Term • Maryland should not approve any proposals for the SCMaglev private magnetic-levitation project from D.C. to Baltimore. This project would deepen racial and economic disparities and imperil much-needed repairs and upgrades for local public transit, and MARC and Amtrak trains, that currently serve the general public along the corridor.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#)
 - Transit & Safety Act of 2021 ([SB 0199](#))
 - [2007 MARC Growth & Investment Plan](#)
 - [MARC Cornerstone Implementation Study and Investment Program](#)
 - [I-270 Corridor Forward Plan](#)
 - [Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Study](#)
 - [Southern Maryland Rapid Transit plan](#)
 - [MARC run through service to Virginia and Delaware](#)
 - [MARC Brunswick Line Study](#)
 - [2022 Maryland State Rail Plan](#)
 - [Fix Maryland Rail: Two Pilot Projects](#) (Solutionary Rail)
 - [Caltrain Debuts its New Electric Trains](#) (Caltrain)
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RECOMMENDATION #8: Electrify light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles and expand electrification infrastructure

Context: 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.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • In March, MDOT should announce that it will be developing a Carbon Reduction Plan to be completed by or before the November 15, 2023 deadline. The Carbon Reduction Plan must be completed by the deadline in order to be eligible for funding from the Carbon Reduction Program. This program includes funding for bus facilities to help convert fleets to zero-emissions vehicles. See recommendation #2 for details.

First 100 Days • 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.

- This regulation requires large vehicle manufacturers to increase the sale of zero-emission trucks, delivery vans, school buses, and other large vehicles. The state should also coordinate with the other states in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions to conduct infrastructure planning and incentivize the purchase of qualifying vehicles.
- Maryland should join other states who have adopted the Advanced Clean Clean Truck Rule, including CA, MA, NJ, NY, OR, VT, and WA, and soon CT, ME, and CO.
- Utilize federal funding to support the [Advanced Clean Truck Rule](#):
 - ◆ The [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program](#)
 - ◆ [Community Charging Infrastructure and Corridor Grants](#)
 - ◆ [Clean Heavy Duty Vehicles](#) from the Inflation Reduction Act

First 100 Days • Maryland should adopt the Heavy-Duty Omnibus (low NO_x) Regulation that would limit toxic air pollution from diesel trucks and buses and require that new diesel trucks reduce their NO_x emissions 90% by 2027. This is necessary to ensure that diesel vehicles sold during the transition to zero-emission vehicles are as clean as possible.

First Term • Expand the use of zero-emission buses for schools and transit service.

- [Starting in 2025, require the procurement of zero-emission buses for locally operated transit systems \(LOTS\)*](#), and either provide grants to help fund this or provide the administrative support for LOTS to secure grants from other sources such as the federal IIJA and other programs. The same training and worker protections contained in the legislation governing the transition for new MTA buses should apply to the LOTS. Public procurement policy should include incentives for creating quality jobs, in Maryland and beyond. The US Employment Plan required in Los Angeles for the procurement of transit vehicles is a good model.

- WMATA must fast-track its electric bus procurement schedule. Going forward, WMATA should buy only electric buses, which would enable Metro to electrify 45% of its fleet by 2030 and 100% of its fleet by 2039. The transit agency should install electric bus charging infrastructure at bus garages in all three WMATA jurisdictions to accommodate the purchase of 100 electric buses annually and apply the same worker protections as MTA for its electric bus transition. WMATA should lead the way by creating a regional registered apprenticeship program open to smaller transit agencies looking to partner on workforce retraining.
- [The General Assembly should allocate funding over a multi-year period dedicated to school bus electrification](#), including charging infrastructure, and prioritize school districts in environmental justice communities.
- [The state should create 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.

First Term • The Administration should work with the General Assembly to identify strategies for incentivizing local governments to develop regulations requiring a minimum percentage of ADA accessible parking spaces in new and existing multi-family buildings that accommodate EV charging stations.

First Term • Support legislation to require new and existing multi-family buildings to install EV charging equipment and provide funding to help existing buildings meet the requirements. Installing EV charging infrastructure is considerably more cost-efficient and less disruptive at the time of new construction than as a later retrofit.

First Term • Allocate funding adequate to support the rapid increase in EV adoption needed to meet Maryland's transportation commitments and regulations or otherwise direct the Public Service Commission to authorize utility EVSE (electric vehicle supply equipment) programs to this effect. This money should be used to deploy charging stations in a way that recognizes the power levels and physical needs of light-medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, and identify public and private charging locations that will meet the needs of commercial drivers, while also ensuring strong workforce and equity provisions.

First Term • As required by law, Maryland must adopt the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII) standard.

- The ACCII standard will result in 100% of all passenger car sales being zero emission or plug-in hybrid in 2035.
- The Governor should adopt the ACCII regulation 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.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Transform Maryland 2022-2026 Policy Agenda](#)
- [Comments Regarding Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report Transportation Recommendations, 2022](#)

- [Multi-State Medium- and Heavy-Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding](#)
 - [Maryland PATHWAYS Presentation](#) (E3)
 - [EPA: It's Time to Act. We need Clean Trucks Now - Blog](#) (Natural Resources Defense Council)
 - [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program](#) (USDOT FHA)
 - [Discretionary Grant Program For Charging And Fueling Infrastructure \(Corridor Charging\)](#) (American Cities Climate Challenge)
 - [Inflation Reduction Act Environment and Public Works Committee Title](#)
 - [Low & No Emission Vehicle Program 5339\(c\)](#) (FTA)
 - [The Inflation Reduction Act Will Help Electrify Heavy-Duty Trucking](#) (RMI)
-

RECOMMENDATION #9: MDOT working with MDP and DHCD, should encourage transit-oriented development (TOD), especially transit-oriented affordable housing, to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

Context: [Electrification of vehicles alone](#) will not allow the state to meet the greenhouse gas reductions in the transportation sector that are needed. For example, the 2021 National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Climate Change Mitigation Study indicated that the Greater Washington region must reduce per capita driving (light duty VMT) 15-20% below the 2030 baseline forecast under the region's current transportation plan, ensure 50% of cars sold are EVs by 2030, and take additional actions to reduce emissions at least 50% by 2030.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) should also be utilized to build out transportation hubs and reduce VMT. A Federal Transit Administration [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning](#) (Section 20005(b)), funded under IIJA in 2022, allowed 20 projects in 12 states to support community efforts that improve access to public transportation. The grants helped organizations plan for transportation projects that connect communities and improve access to transit and affordable housing. Maryland should explore whether similar pilot projects could be funded in Maryland.

Recommended Actions

First Term • The Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of Planning, and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development **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.

First Term • **Create a mechanism to enforce the housing targets in counties' general plans and ensure alignment between the general plans' land use and PFAs.**

First Term • Encourage and allow accessory dwelling units and small, multi-family housing in areas near transit centers.

First Term • Incentivize local governments to eliminate parking minimums, particularly for multi-use buildings near transit, including offices and multi-family residential housing.

First Term • The Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC, the state’s “Green Bank”) should encourage the offering of low-interest, government-backed loans to promote the purchase of ZEVs by helping costs remain below internal combustion engine vehicles.

First Term • The Moore administration should engage with stakeholders to develop recommendations and standards for including and encouraging affordable and accessible units in new and existing TOD areas, such as through inclusionary zoning policies and social housing investments, to make TOD accessible to all.

Sources & Supporting Resources:

- [Recommendations to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change Mitigation Workgroup](#) (Sierra Club)
- [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning – Section 20005\(b\)](#) (FTA)
- [What is “Vision Zero”?](#) (Vision Zero Network)
- [Maryland Clean Energy Center](#)

RECOMMENDATION #10: Increase transparency of MDOT spending

Context: Departments of Transportation often add capacity while doing projects that would otherwise be system preservation projects. For example, while reconstructing a road bed or resurfacing a road, crews often extend a left turn lane, or widen a road. According to the Federal Highway Administration, resurfacing and reconstruction projects with some widening cost between 29% and 85% more than similar projects without widening. Adding capacity also increases driving. Increasing transparency of spending, particularly related to additional capacity, will help identify whether funding is being used in a way that decreases VMT.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • MDOT should adopt and publish a definition of system preservation that excludes projects that extend left-turn lanes, widen shoulders, widen lanes, add lanes, or otherwise expand the capacity of transportation facilities.

First Term • MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) should include a breakdown of what percentage of total spending goes toward transit, walking, and biking, broken down by project.

First Term • MDOT's CTP should include a breakdown of what percentage of total spending goes toward new capacity projects that increase the flow of vehicles and/or people versus system preservation projects that maintain the transportation assets we already have.

First Term • MDOT's future budgets should show sources of all income, including federal grants.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Increase investment in the Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Program and coordinate this state funding with investment from the federal Transportation Alternatives program and other federal programs, while prioritizing funding toward connected trails and active transportation networks around Maryland

Context: Cities and counties around Maryland have developed plans for connected active transportation networks and long-distance spine trails that, if constructed, could significantly increase the number and percentage of people walking and biking for a variety of purposes, including daily commutes, errands, shopping, and recreational trips. Investment in safe and connected trails and active transportation systems increases public health, decreases vehicle miles traveled, reduces fatalities, and improves quality of life.

The total cost of this infrastructure ranges in the billions of dollars, including the completion of the Capital Trails Network, which would cost over \$1 billion to complete, and the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network, which would cost over \$30 million.

Currently, the Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Program, administered through the Maryland Department of Transportation, receives approximately \$3 million annually. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Maryland receives an annual allocation from the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program of approximately \$19 million, administered through the State Highway Administration.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • MDOT should propose significant additional investment in the Kim Lamphier Maryland Bikeways Network Program and coordinate this funding with Transportation Alternatives and other federal grants available for active transportation infrastructure. MDOT should increase the staffing available to provide direct assistance to local communities to access these funds and manage the federal grant dollars, while ensuring that the state Bikeways funds are available to use as a local match.

- MDOT should examine the permitting processes and administration of federal legal requirements to reduce the time required from the granting of Transportation Alternatives and Bikeways funds to the time of construction.

- MDOT should use California’s Active Transportation Program (ATP), which coordinates granting of federal and state funds, as a model to increase the amount of funds that are available for active transportation projects through a single award process, and utilizes an Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) to focus technical assistance on disadvantaged communities.

First Term • MDOT should utilize the 5% of its Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside allocation available for technical assistance to assist communities in further developing and enhancing network plans and prioritizing active transportation projects based on connectivity and equity.

First Term • MDOT should restructure its staff to ensure better coordination between those who manage grants and those who provide technical assistance relating to active transportation. At a minimum, MDOT should eliminate the silo created by two different agencies managing active transportation infrastructure, depending on whether it is within the SHA right-of-way or not. MDOT should consider establishing an active, transportation-specific agency.

First 100 Days through **First Term** • Improve and expand bike trail systems, such as the Susquehanna River crossing connecting the Torrey Brown trail to Baltimore City; connect WB&A through Prince George’s to the District of Columbia; and complete a DC-Baltimore-Annapolis trail connection.

- Construct the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network

- ◆ **First Year** • Financially assist Baltimore City in acquiring Norfolk Southern ROW for Greenway and Red Line
- ◆ **First 100 Days** • Advance Federal Earmark requests for construction of the Northern Segments in the 33rd Street and Gwynns Falls Parkway Medians
- ◆ **First Year** • Accelerate Transportation Alternatives grant for construction of South Baltimore trail connections; Increase Project Open Space funding for Baltimore City and lockbox a portion of this increase to trail maintenance and development

- Advance Baltimore regional trail connectivity plans

- ◆ **First Term** • Use state funds to fund construction of the Patapsco Greenway
- ◆ **First Year** • Broker city-county relations to advance construction of the Baybrook Connector to BWI and the Jones Falls/Torrey C Brown Trail connection

- Increase funding for trail planning and construction in rural communities

- ◆ **First Year** • Issue funds for planning and feasibility studies through the Regional Councils who can then allocate funds to their respective counties
- ◆ **First Year** • Fund Eastern Shore trail projects that are shovel-ready including [Berlin Bikeway](#), [Snow Hill Bikeway Plan](#), [Route 611 Bikeway](#), Salisbury Rail Trail Phase 1 ([part of Vision Zero Program](#))

Sources & Supporting Resources

- [Salisbury Rails With Trails Master Plan](#)

RECOMMENDATION #12: Invest in bus transit on the Eastern Shore to expand existing capacity, increase frequency of existing routes, and establish new routes to communities in need

Context: Municipalities and counties on the Eastern Shore have limited access to bus transit. Existing systems are either private nonprofits (Delmarva Community Services, Inc) with limited frequency and few designated routes, or region-specific systems (Maryland Upper Shore Transit and Shore Transit) to the Upper and Lower Shore. Maryland Transit Administration has a commuter bus that connects Kent Island in Queen Anne’s County with Annapolis, Baltimore, Davidsonville, Severna Park, and Washington D.C. There is no passenger rail infrastructure throughout the region.

Residents on the Eastern Shore suffer from the financial burden of having to own a car in order to navigate their communities in the absence of a publicly invested bus transit system. This financial burden hurts lower-income families the hardest as they struggle under the weight of car insurance and fluctuating gas prices. Residents who cannot afford personal vehicles are limited in their access to education, employment, and housing.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • MTA should conduct a feasibility study throughout Eastern Shore to understand where strategic investments should be made to expand on existing bus systems.

- MDOT should take the results of the study to plan where it can fill in the missing gaps in a regional bus transit system.
- MDOT should work with municipalities on determining locations for bus stops as well as designs to make stops comfortable places to wait and within walking distance of neighborhoods more likely to use bus transit.

First Term • MDOT should invest in an Eastern Shore bus transit system that can augment and support existing bus systems. Investment should include electric buses that are accessible for families with strollers, cyclists, and commuters who need Wi-Fi access.

First Term • MDOT should track ridership to understand the value a publicly funded transportation system brings to rural lower income communities, and track how many cars are kept off the road to understand the decrease in carbon emissions, decreased traffic, and decreased wear on road networks. Tracking this data would put into perspective the true value of this public investment and how much of a benefit it would provide to residents, rural governments, and the local environment.

OTHER KEY TAKEAWAYS

Staffing

- MTA is understaffed generally with significant shortages in transit operators, supervisors, and technical positions.
- MTA relies on retainer style/"on call" contractors to fill staffing shortages. This approach is not cost effective, and it doesn't allow MTA to build intellectual capital.
- Despite shortages, MTA staff is well regarded, particularly the office of planning and capital programming.
- More technical support from MDOT/MTA to local governments would help local government staff to apply for and better utilize federal funding.
- SHA lacks transparency and is often perceived as hostile to community stakeholders.

State and Federal Funding

- The FHWA has issued guidance urging states to spend IIJA funds in ways that support goals like reducing climate pollution and reducing race-based disparities. They encourage flexing funds from formulas traditionally thought of as "highway" formulas to non-highway modes of transportation like transit, ferries, biking, and walking. They also encourage reallocating federal funds to urban road and highway systems. MDOT Secretary Jim Ports said on Sep. 16th that "highway formulas must be spent on highways," which is contrary to the guidance from FHWA.
- New Starts projects are underutilized by MTA, which didn't line up enough designed projects to use available ARPA funds.
- Federal funding is and will continue to be available for transportation and clean energy, and most important of all, environmental justice and restorative justice.
- The state should provide continuing support for [Baltimore City DOT's initiative](#) to apply for and use a Reconnecting Communities grant to mitigate the harm done by the Highway to Nowhere.

Data and Metrics

- **Data not currently collected or made available:**
 - ◆ MDOT does not currently provide the public with a meaningful breakdown of its spending toward transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure. It also needs to reveal all sources of income including federal grants and what spending requirements are associated with each source of funding.
 - ◆ MDOT should provide data on projected greenhouse gas emissions from proposed transportation projects.
 - ◆ Collect data on ground level ozone and other criteria pollutants at the neighborhood scale. Currently there are only ~12 monitoring stations in the greater Baltimore region - not enough to know whether pollution levels are higher in some neighborhoods than others. This masks race- and income-based disparities.

- ◆ Collect and report demographic data about victims of traffic violence. Not reporting this data masks race- and income-based disparities.
- ◆ DOT's "State of Good repair" data is incomplete across all their assets.
- ◆ Improve data collection in Curtis Bay, particularly coal dust related to CSX trains.
- ◆ Quantify the impacts of Class 1 railroad companies - across topics.
- ◆ MDE should monitor methane emissions in Curtis Bay due to coal facilities there. It is unknown if this data is being monitored currently; methane data needs to be publicly available.
- ◆ Report on how federal funds are programmed.
- ◆ Publish more detailed criteria scores used to derive the project scores in the Ch. 30 transportation project scoring.

→ **Data & Metrics - Improvements**

- ◆ Make the Consolidated Transportation Program sortable and searchable, rather than a pdf.
- ◆ Regularly update the MTA performance dashboard.
- ◆ SHA: Measuring the effectiveness of roadways to enable traffic to maintain speed is the wrong metric to focus on.
 - Instead, MTA should collect data to determine what roadway design and practices are causing more accidents (so the practices can be changed) and determine the best ways to enable people to get to their destination faster - including via rail, other public transit, biking, and walking.
- ◆ MDOT talks about the percentage of Marylanders who commute by driving versus who commute by transit. They use the figure to talk about what should be an ideal balance in how much we spend on roads and highways versus how much we spend on public transportation.