

Dear Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County to testify **in support of House Bill HB1204** Transportation Equity Analysis and Assurances Act.

This bill establishes a state-wide transportation equity analysis development, maintenance, review, and enforcement framework to ensure access to transportation is statutorily guaranteed for individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, English proficiency, ability status, and gender orientation.

Racial inequity has had a long tradition in Maryland transportation planning. The initial plan was for the light rail in Anne Arundel County to extend to Annapolis. But that was dismissed in 1992. The NIMBY principle prevailed. So our state capital remains inaccessible to many residents despite Annapolis being located between two important population centers.

Racial animus, however, has continued into the present time attempting to further disadvantage people of color. There has been an asserted effort to close some of the rail stations in the northern part of Anne Arundel County. Electioneering in 2018 had such obvious dog-whistles that even the foreign press heard them ([‘Addicts, crooks, and thieves’: The campaign to kill Baltimore’s light rail. The Guardian 8/22/2018](#)).

Black residents in Baltimore City rely heavily on public transportation. The cancellation of the Red Line in 2015 dashed hopes of being better able to access jobs and to arrive on time at those jobs compared to the bus system. For funds to then go to building such things as traffic circles in sparsely populated white areas of Western Maryland added insult to injury. In addition support was given to the Purple Line that primarily will benefit white suburbanites of DC.

The racial inequity continues even during the pandemic. In response to record low ridership in recent months, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) recently aimed to eliminate 25 Baltimore bus lines that would affect mostly Black neighborhoods. Even though the MTA backed off of its plans, they should never have been able to make those budget cut decisions without an analysis for how much it would disproportionately impact Black workers in Baltimore, and across the state of Maryland trying to get to their jobs. As Mayor Brandon Scott said: "Historically, transit and equity has always been linked back to racial injustice, in Baltimore and beyond."

If this bill does not become law, the pattern of racial inequity will continue. This is not who we want to be as Marylanders. This is your chance to show up for racial equity. We, members of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, strongly encourage you to vote **in SUPPORT of HB1204**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Linda Girdner
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