

**HB 1204: The Transportation Equity Analyses And Assurances Act Of 2021**  
(Transportation Equity Act)

**POSITION: Favorable**

I strongly support House Bill 1204, sponsored by Delegate Sheila Ruth, and I urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.

I am a Baltimore City resident, and I share a vehicle with my spouse. Because of the flexibility of my job in contrast to his, my spouse has priority access to our vehicle. As a result, I often rely on public transportation to run errands, attend meetings, and simply get around. In the 4 years that I've lived in Baltimore City, I've been confounded by the lack of access and equity in our transportation system. Too often I find myself wondering why our routes are drawn and why our stops are spaced in non-intuitive ways that do not support the real lives of Baltimore City residents (ie. there is a bus stop literally outside my back door that is used but once a day).

The answer is simple: a lack of thoughtful, community-informed, and equity-based planning in regional transportation and development, especially in low-income and Black neighborhoods.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancellation of the Red Line. Today, there is an urgent need for access to jobs especially during a pandemic-induced economic crisis, and for creative solutions to tackle the long-term effects of racist redlining.

The Transportation Equity Act requires:

- Equity as a primary goal in the Maryland Transportation Plan;
- MDOT to collect and analyze data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities in the annual Attainment Report;
- Adding a representative from the Maryland State Conference NAACP to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creation of a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent transit monitor and evaluator;
- MDOT MTA to conduct transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- MDOT MTA to perform cross-modal equity analysis and planning;
- Increased transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting.

The Transportation Equity Act ensures greater transparency, accountability and community input when it comes to transportation planning in our region, all through an equity lens. Equity is not simply a box to check, but rather the recognition that *real people's lives are impacted by transportation* and the firm belief that ALL Marylanders deserve the benefits of a well-planned, community-informed, strategic regional transportation system.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB 1204 and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Valerie Hsu  
Baltimore City (District 45)