

March 7, 2023

House Bill 1125

Transit - Grant Funding for Local Service - Alterations

Appropriations Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1125 – Transit - Grant Funding for Local Service - Alterations. This Bill would establish the Locally Operated Transit System (“LOTS”) Grant Program, authorize funds to be sourced from federal and State public transportation programs, require that beginning in fiscal year 2025, the total grants for locally operated transit service to exceed the total for fiscal year 2019, adjusted for inflation, and require the Department of Transportation to make adjustments in a subsequent fiscal years to reflect inflation.

County Executive Steuart Pittman, in his letter on Anne Arundel County’s FY 23 list of priorities for the FY 2023-28 Consolidated Transportation Program (“CTP”) requested a dedicated funding stream for LOTS funding. We appreciate state coordination for both the Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland and the inclusion of county staff in ongoing efforts towards a Statewide Transit Plan, as well as state provided regional bus and rail service in the County. However, more resources are needed to provide adequate local bus services to link both county residents to the regional system, as well as out-of-county residents to county employers.

A dedicated LOTS funding stream could allow the County to partner with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) and MTA to extend local services into the County as well as provide expanded coverage, frequency, and span of service by both the county and City of Annapolis-operated transit systems. Anne Arundel is the second most populous county in the region and fourth most populous county in the state and while we have committed current CARES Act funding to our operations, which are currently fare-free, those funds will be exhausted before the end of FY 2024. We require an infusion of operations funds to add new services, increase frequency on our existing lines, and expand our successful microtransit call and ride services countywide. The LOTS Grant Program this Bill establishes would provide critical funding for Anne Arundel County to maintain and expand its Locally Operated Transit System.

For all of these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1125.