



DATE: January 25, 2022

COMMITTEE: Budget and Transportation

BILL NO: Senate Bill 151

BILL TITLE: Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses

POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 151 - Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act

Bill Summary:

SB151 establishes the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund. The bill requires the Secretary of Transportation to annually submit a report to the General Assembly on efforts to increase TOD throughout the State.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

Rationale:

Prioritizing "transit-oriented development" will guarantee increased access to reliable and equitable transportation. This can have a profound impact on an individual with disabilities' ability to access their community and workplace. Transportation continues to be a barrier for individuals with disabilities when accessing their community and workplace due to inaccessible public transportation, limited cross-county transportation, financial implications of public transportation, and reliability of scheduled para-transit services. Developing transit proposals with intention would provide an opportunity to identify extant barriers and to develop innovative solutions to overcome those barriers, bringing economic benefit to Maryland and Maryland employers.

People with disabilities want the opportunity to join the workforce; accessing employment begins with accessible and reliable transportation. Transportation should not affect an employers' ability to build and maintain an inclusive workforce.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 151.