



CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Department of Community Services
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2550, Elkton, MD 21921

February 7, 2025

Bill: House Bill 432: Maryland Transit Administration - Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Cecil Transit, a division of Cecil County, Maryland's Department of Community Services, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 432, which would provide annual inflationary increases to funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) across the state. Public transportation is a lifeline for many Maryland residents, providing essential connections to employment, medical care, and vital services. Ensuring adequate state funding is critical to sustaining and improving these services, particularly as operational costs continue to rise.

As a result of Cecil County's location in the northeastern corner of Maryland, Cecil Transit provides an important link in regional transportation offering connections to all regional services including neighboring Harford County, Maryland, bordering New Castle County, Delaware, as well as Commuter Bus Service, MARC, and Greyhound. These connections ensure that our residents have access to opportunities beyond our immediate county, helping to support economic mobility and workforce development while reducing congestion. However, maintaining and expanding transit services has become increasingly challenging.

Over the past decade, our operating costs have nearly doubled—primarily due to necessary wage increases to remain competitive amid a nationwide driver shortage—while state transit funding has decreased by 5%. This growing financial gap threatens the sustainability of essential services. Despite these challenges, Cecil County has doubled its annual investment in transit over the last ten years, demonstrating a strong commitment to public transportation.

We have also aggressively pursued alternative funding sources, such as the Federal Transit Administration's Innovative Mobility Initiative (IMI) grant, which funded the pilot of our COMPASS micro transit program. This initiative provides critical transportation for individuals in active substance misuse recovery, enabling them to access employment, healthcare, and essential services. Participants report significant benefits, including quicker employment access, more reliable healthcare, and greater independence. This service model can be replicated and transferred to successfully address other gaps in service such as creating better access to

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healthcare, expanding service into areas of the County where population density may not support fixed route services, and provide multi modal connectivity by providing greater access to existing fixed route services that may be too far or unsafe to access by walking or biking. Expanding programs like COMPASS requires stable and predictable state funding that reflects inflationary increases, allowing Cecil County to continue exploring innovative, cost-effective transit solutions.

Additionally, demand for medical transportation services beyond Cecil County continues to rise, yet declining volunteerism has forced us to deny 34% of trip requests in 2025 alone. Without increased state funding, we risk further reducing access to life-sustaining services for some of our most vulnerable residents.

We urge you to support HB 432 to ensure that transit systems across Maryland receive the necessary funding to sustain and expand critical services. Investing in public transportation strengthens our workforce, improves healthcare access, and enhances the quality of life for residents across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Kalmbacher", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Suzanne D. Kalmbacher
Transit Chief
Cecil Transit
Cecil County, Maryland