



DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS

AIRPORT | BUILDINGS, GROUNDS & FACILITIES | HIGHWAYS | PARKS & RECREATION | TRANSIT

January 24, 2025

Bill: Senate Bill 20: Maryland Transit Administration - Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of Washington County Division of Public Works in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state

The Washington County Division of Public Works oversees Washington County Transit services. Washington County Transit provides approximately 500,000 trips per year. Our customers are transit dependent with 6% having the option to drive and over 75% having household income less than \$40,000 per year. State funding is essential to provide these services. Unfortunately, state operating funding has remained flat, and capital funding decreased while the cost to provide services has increased year after year. The state's inability to provide its traditional 25% operating match means that Washington County Transit hasn't been able to utilize all the federal grant funding available limiting the services that we are able to provide to our citizens.

We make mobility a reality for our customers. Unfortunately, funding for these programs have already been cut in the aftermath of COVID-19. As we recover from the pandemic we are being called upon to provide more responsive service to more people while also needing to plan for the transition to low and zero emissions technology.

State support for local transit is critical to ensure our goals of quality service, environmental protection, and equity are reached. As state funding has stagnated or decreased, our local matches for state and federal funding have taken on a greater and greater proportion of funding. Inflation has particularly hit our industry hard, with prices for vehicles increasing nearly 50% since 2020 and the need for increased driver salaries to remain competitive. We need predictability in state funding streams in order to plan how to best serve the customers in our communities.

We fully support Senate Bill 20's efforts to increase support for the mobility of the citizens and communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Andrew Eshleman, P.E.
Director, Public Works