

HEPMPO SB 20 - Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Eshleman

Position: FAV



Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization

33 W. Washington St., 4th Floor, Suite 402, Hagerstown, MD 21740

Phone: 240-313-2080, Fax: 240-313-2084

www.hepmo.net

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 the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO) in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our State. The proposed increase in funding is consistent with the goals and objectives of HEPMPO's 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan and can easily be incorporated into our FY2025-FY2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

Washington County Transit (WCT) provides approximately 500,000 trips per year. Their 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 WCT has not been able to utilize all the federal grant funding available, limiting the services that they are able to provide to our citizens.

WCT makes mobility a reality for our customers. Unfortunately, funding for these programs has already been cut in the aftermath of COVID-19. As WCT recovers from the pandemic, they 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 WCT's goals of quality service, environmental protection, and equity are reached. As State funding has stagnated or decreased, local matches for State and Federal funding have taken on a greater and greater proportion of funding. Inflation has particularly hit the transit 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 transit customers in our communities.

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

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Mullenax
Executive Director

SB 20 Washington County Public Works Letter of sup

Uploaded by: Andrew Eshleman

Position: FAV



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

Senate Bill 20 - WCT Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Eshleman

Position: FAV



DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS
TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATION | OPERATIONS | FLEET MANAGEMENT

January 27, 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 Transit in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state

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 of providing 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,

Shawn Harbaugh.

Director, Transit

SB0020_Local_Transit_Sustainability_Act_MLC_FAV.pd

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0020

Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding -Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator McCray

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0020 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill provides a new formula to calculate the amount to fund local transit systems in the state. In previous years, a flat amount was required to be included in the annual state budget to fund local transit systems. The new formula would adjust for inflation by using the lower of the percentage of growth in the Consumer Price Index or 5%, rather than specifying a flat amount.

Our members believe that this is a more equitable way to provide funding for future years. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

CSG MD SB20 Locally Operated Transit Systems testi

Uploaded by: Cheryl Cort

Position: FAV

**Testimony on SB 20
Local Transit Sustainability Act
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

Date: January 27, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition for Smarter Growth supports **SB 20**. Our organization advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

The Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding - Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act) will provide greater reliability to services on which many Maryland workers and residents depend.

Maryland is one of the top states in per capita transit ridership. In the area where our organization works, locally operated transit systems are essential:

- Montgomery County Ride On served 18.5 million passenger trips last year. This was a 20% ridership increase from the previous year, and the second highest growth among mid-sized transit systems nationwide.
- Prince George's County The Bus serves 10,000 miles of routes in the county and 10,000 riders per day.

Despite recovering ridership and fare revenue since the pandemic, Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems – and their many riders – depend on regular state support.

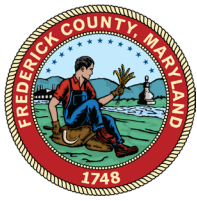
SB 20 would provide **predictability for local agencies and communities** with needed adjustments for inflation.

We ask for a **favorable report for SB 20** by the committee. Thank you.

Transit Services_SB20_SUPPORT 2025.01.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaime McKay

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRANSIT SERVICES DIVISION

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Roman Steichen, Director

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

DATE: January 24, 2025
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation Committee
POSITION: SUPPORT
FROM: Roman Steichen, Director, Transit, Frederick County Government

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

I write on behalf of Transit Services of Frederick County in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state.

Transit Services of Frederick County operates fixed route and paratransit services in Maryland's largest land mass county, as well as coordination of commuter benefits and employer outreach. Our team has overseen the innovative expansion of our services to a fast-growing area, without any significant additional state funding.. During COVID, Transit moved 370,000 trips in FY21, supporting residents, visitors, employees, and essential personnel. Transit is now bursting at the seams, transporting more than 840,000 trips in FY24 and projecting 950,000 trips in FY25. The quantitative data and the anecdotal evidence show that Transit is driving the future of Frederick County and residents expect reliable and efficient service throughout our community. However, the need is especially significant in our areas of persistent poverty, which span communities rural and urban. Additionally, our population is growing and graying; we are the fastest growing county in Maryland and our 55 years and older population is our fastest growing cohort. Statewide Specialized Transportation Program (paratransit) funding has not kept up with rising costs, and inflation and population shifts present us challenges beyond the budget.

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 beginning 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 small buses increasing from approximately \$80,000 in FY22 to over \$125,000 in FY25, and the need for increased driver salaries to remain regionally competitive. We need predictability in state funding streams to plan how to best serve the customers in our communities.

We fully support Senate Bill 20's efforts to increase support for all Frederick County residents.

Sincerely,

Roman Steichen
Director, Transit Services of Frederick County

Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

1040 Rocky Springs Road, Frederick, MD 21702 • 301-600-2065 • Fax 301-600-3471
www.FrederickCountyMD.gov



SB0020 LOS LOTS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jed Weeks

Position: FAV



January 27, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

SUPPORT: SB0020 Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding - Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)

Bikemore, Baltimore City's livable streets advocacy organization representing more than 8,000 advocates and the 30% of Baltimoreans who lack access to a car, is writing in support of SB0020.

Residents in Baltimore City and across Maryland rely on our Locally Operated Transit Systems to move throughout their communities and reliably access jobs, childcare, groceries, entertainment, and other needs in life. In Baltimore, ridership on just the Purple Line of the Charm City Circulator exceeded the ridership of Washington, DC, Cleveland, Dallas, Milwaukee, Memphis, and Atlanta streetcar systems.

Indexing funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems against the consumer price index will help insulate these systems from inflation and fund critical needs like state of good repair.

We are grateful for Senator McCray's introduction of this bill and his dedication to improving the lives of Baltimoreans who rely on transit.

We urge the committee to vote favorably on SB0020.

Sincerely,

Jed Weeks
Executive Director

TAM SB 20 One Page Fact Sheet.pdf

Uploaded by: John Duklewski

Position: FAV

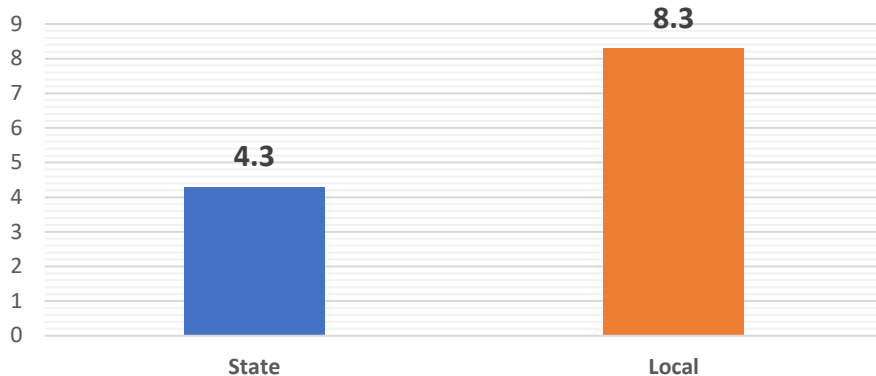


The Transportation Association of Maryland Presents:

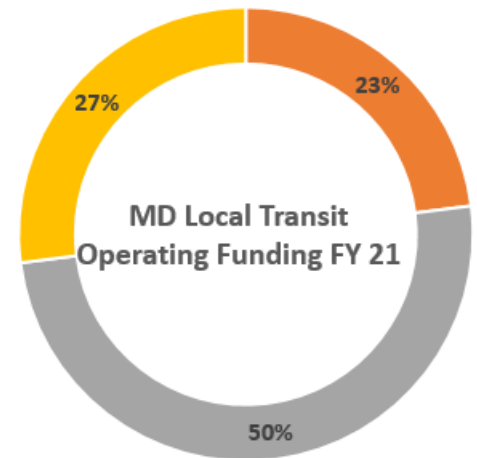
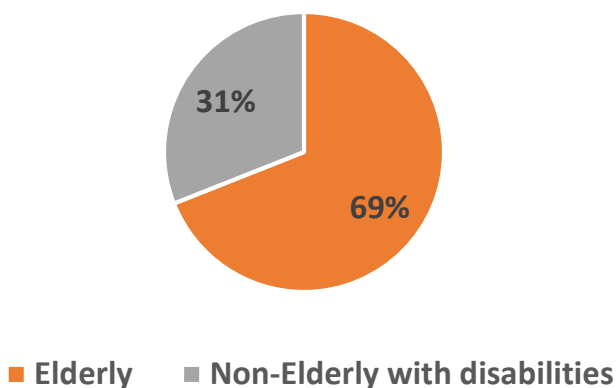
How Local Transit is Funded

Compared to federal and local contributions, the state contributes the smallest amount to local transit budget, which includes Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP), ADA, Large Urban, and 5307 and 5311 formula funds. **Transportation Trust Fund appropriations for statewide program operations declined from \$107,150,702 in FY 15 to \$71,396,142 in FY 25**

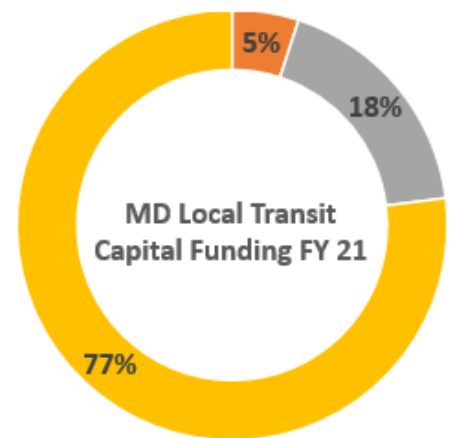
SSTAP Awards - State v. Local (In \$ millions)
(FY 21)



SSTAP Rider Demographics, Montgomery County



State Local Federal



State Local Federal

TAM_SB20_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: John Duklewski

Position: FAV



Transportation Association of Maryland

tam@taminc.org • 410-533-4245 • www.taminc.org

Bill: Senate Bill 20: Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding - Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)

Position: SUPPORT

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

The Locally Operated Transit Systems, or as we call it, “LOTS”, operate in the local jurisdictions you represent and have existed in some form for over 40 years. They operate in every jurisdiction in our state, and provide nearly 64,000 trips every single day. However, these transit operations have been flat funded or reduced in funding for almost the past decade, despite increased cost of vehicles, salaries, gas, etc.

Since January 2020, the price index for Truck and Bus bodies has risen by over 34%, according to the Federal Reserve). According to the same source, diesel fuel is more than 36% more expensive. During the same five year period, the state of Maryland has actually decreased its support to LOTS by cutting its state match for operating funding by 20%.

Maintaining this transit is critical for our communities and are not just for route-based bus service. It also goes towards curb –to–curb service for:

- Elderly low-to-moderate income seniors;
- Non-elderly persons with disabilities; and
- Dialysis and cancer patients needing to access treatment.

MTA surveys of Local Transit indicate that in many parts of Maryland, the LOTS are either unable to provide all the medical trips requested, are turning away other types of trips to do so, and/or are spending considerable local funding to address the needs for medical and other transportation services in our communities.

MDOT has concluded in a 2021 study that LOTS service levels are constrained by current funding levels and that LOTS has been unable to fund all the current needs in our communities. The General Assembly passed a bill last year to sustain the funding for LOTS after it was originally proposed to be cut by about 40% this time last year but this amount was the same insufficient amount that has been provided to LOTS for about a decade.

Across local transit, the study is the same. The proportion of operating budget support provided by the state government has declined. In many agencies, the relative proportion of state funding is less than half of what it was 10 years ago. This shows that our local and federal partners have indeed worked to pick up the slack left by state efforts – but those efforts and resources are finite.



Transportation Association of Maryland

tam@taminc.org • 410-533-4245 • www.taminc.org

At its most basic, tying state support to local transit to observed increased in the rate of cost inflation allows for the maintenance of service. However, those additional resources, often bolstered by local and federal spending, can mean:

- Implementing Sunday service
- Decreasing headways (time between bus arrivals) to 30 or 15 minutes in certain routes)
- Improving bus stop amenities and accessibility
- Expanding service to underserved areas of the community

By supporting this bill, you affirm our commitment to enhancing mobility, promoting equity, and fostering economic prosperity in communities across the state. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

John Duklewski
Executive Director, Transportation Association of Maryland

BRTC Testimony - Senate BandT - SB 20 - January 29

Uploaded by: Jon Laria

Position: FAV



Written Testimony Presented to the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Hearing Date - January 29, 2025

Senate Bill 20: Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment

Position: Support

Chair Guzzone and members of the Committee, I am Jon Laria, testifying today in my role as Chair of the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC).

The BRTC was created by the Maryland General Assembly to provide oversight and advocacy for the Baltimore regional transit system, which is operated by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and to ensure that diverse stakeholder perspectives are represented in agency decisions. The BRTC includes representatives from local government, transportation, industry, business, transit riders, transit advocates, labor, and the Moore-Miller Administration.

I am very encouraged that this chamber continues to prioritize transit, and this bill is further evidence of that support. Senate Bill 20 proposes changes to the existing law regarding the Locally Operated Transit System Grant Program. These changes aim to provide financial stability and predictability for the program by tying appropriations to inflation.

The bill requires the Governor to adjust the appropriation for the Locally Operated Transit System Grant Program based on the growth in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). This ensures that the funding for the program keeps pace with the cost of living and inflation, preventing budget shortfalls. The bill also includes a cap on the increase (5%), providing a safeguard against excessive budget increases.

The Commission regards the LOTS as vitally important to serve the needs of our citizens and businesses in the Baltimore region. These changes will promote their success, encourage ongoing sustainable development, improve public transportation access, and support economic growth across Maryland. I urge you to support Senate Bill 20 and help us achieve these important goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB0020-BT_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

Senate Bill 20

Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget & Taxation Committee

Date: January 29, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 20. This bill stabilizes funding to the Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS) grant program. LOTS partially funds county and municipal local transit systems, a critical component of infrastructure necessary to meet the state's ambitious growth, housing, and environmental goals.

Marylanders in every region of the state rely on public transportation systems, supported by the LOTS program, to commute both to and from work as well as within their communities. The vast majority of these systems are developed, operated, and maintained by county governments. Following the pandemic, previously predictable revenue streams and ridership rates declined dramatically and have yet to fully stabilize. This, in turn, adds challenges for these local systems, leaving them unable to make multi-year service plans and commitments. SB 20 seeks to provide predictability for LOTS: starting in FY27, future funding increases would be tied to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers up to five percent.

Counties support SB 20 as a commonsense bill. If Maryland is to meet the growth, housing, and environmental goals set by the General Assembly and the Governor, robust and local transit systems are the cornerstone needed to bring these ambitions into fruition. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 20.

MOS SB0055 Appropriations Mag-Lev.pdf

Uploaded by: Kurt Schwarz

Position: FAV



MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

January 27, 2025

Bill: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/bills/sb/sb0055F.pdf>

Committees: Budget and Taxation and Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0055—State Finance—Prohibited Appropriations—Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

Position: Support SB0055

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly supports SB0055 and urges the Committees to issue a favorable report. This bill would forbid the State and any of its units or instrumentalities from using any appropriation for a magnetic levitation transportation system (MAG-LEV), aside from salaries for personnel to assigned to review permits or other forms of approval for a MAG-LEV system.

MOS opposes the proposed Mag-Lev line between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, because it would destroy several hundreds of acres of forest on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center or Patuxent Research Refuge, part of last large undeveloped green spaces between the two cities.

The proposed Mag-Lev line would do little to reduce road traffic between the cities, as the fares would be prohibitively expensive, and there would be only three stops. Funds will be better spent on improving existing rail corridors, which will benefit commuters, while preserving habitat.

We urge a favorable Committee Report from the Committee. North America has lost almost 30% of its birds since 1970.¹ Loss of habitat is one on the major causes of these declines. Mag-Lev will destroy acres of habitat, slice up the largest green space in Central Maryland, and do little to reduce traffic and associated air pollution. MOS asks the Committees to issue a favorable report on HB0055.

Sincerely,

¹ Rosenberg, Kenneth V. et al, Decline of the North American avifauna, Science, VOL 366, NO. 6451, 19 September 2019, https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kurt R. Schwarz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair Emeritus
Maryland Ornithological Society
www.mdbirds.org

SB 20.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Weinstein

Position: FAV



The Harford Center, Inc.

"Serving the needs of Harford County adults with developmental disabilities since 1961."

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 The Harford Center, Inc in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state.

The Harford Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization that has been providing day and employment services to adults with developmental disabilities in Harford County since 1961. We currently serve 100 adults with varying needs and abilities. A central tenant of our services is community integration. Everyone needs and deserves to be connected to their community. Additionally, we are mandated by governing regulations to provide every participant with the opportunity to be a part of the community every day. We maintain a fleet of 22 buses and vans to support the transportation needs of our program. Each day, we transport participants from their homes to our building, and out into the community. Our transportation program is one of our largest expenses each year, and the cost continues to rise with the cost of fuel, maintenance and repairs.

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 and the need for increased driver salaries to remain competitive. We need predictability in state funding streams 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,

Laura Weinstein
Chief Development Officer
The Harford Center, Inc.

4 N. Earlton Road, Havre de Grace, MD 21078. Phone: 410-939-1420. Fax: 410-939-4426

SB 20 Local Transit Sustainability Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Marvin "DOC" Cheatham

Position: FAV

CORY V. MCCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Health and Human Services

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Executive Nominations Committee

Legislative Policy Committee

Joint Committee on Gaming Oversight



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3165 · 301-858-3165
800-492-7122 Ext. 3165
Cory.McCray@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote YES on Senate Bill 20

Bill Title: Local Transit Sustainability Act

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Hearing Date: January 29, 2025

Dear Chair and members of the committee:

I am writing to you today in support of **Senate Bill 20**. This bill aims to establish mandatory funding, with an inflation adjustment, for the Locally Operated Transit System. By doing so, it ensures that transit systems can maintain their service levels even as costs rise over time. Currently, transit funding does not adjust for inflation. This leaves local systems with difficult choices: cutting services or increasing fares when faced with rising costs.

Senate Bill 20 addresses this by establishing a baseline funding of at least \$80.5 million from the Transportation Trust Fund to local transit systems, providing a stable funding foundation. Annual funding increases will reflect inflation with a reasonable cap of 5-percent to ensure sustainability. The bill protects transit funding during tough times. Under SB 20, if the economy hits a period where costs aren't rising or are actually falling, the funding won't drop - it'll stay steady until costs start rising again.

Senate Bill 20 isn't just about expanding transit - it's about preserving the service we have. When fuel costs rise, when parts get more expensive, and when labor costs increase, this bill ensures our funding keeps pace within reasonable limits.

For the thousands of Marylanders who rely on buses and transit to get to work, medical appointments, and essential services, Senate Bill 20 provides stability and predictability in their daily transportation needs.

I respectfully urge the committee to support **Senate Bill 20** to protect and sustain Maryland's vital transit systems.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cory V. McCray
45th District

MGA 2025 Testimony Bill SB0020 (Local Transit Sust

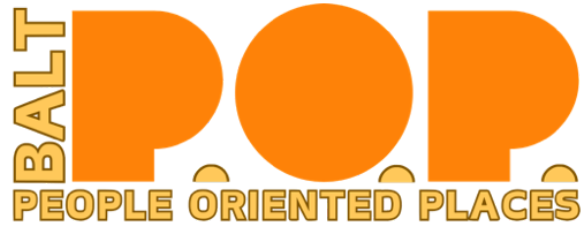
Uploaded by: Michael Scepaniak

Position: FAV

Bill: SB0020

Bill Title: Locally Operated Transit Systems -
Mandatory Funding - Inflation Adjustment (Local
Transit Sustainability Act)

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

As a group which views public transit as being a preferred mode of transportation for maximizing the appeal and productivity of Baltimore and its closest-in suburbs, we feel that SB0020 is a very necessary bill whose time has come.

During the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session, the Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act was passed. That act mandated minimum funding levels in MTA's six year capital budget to begin to close the (at the time) \$2 billion gap in the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA's) maintenance backlog. SB0020 would appear to be the corollary of that 2021 bill, but for Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS).

It only makes sense that Baltimore City's Charm City Circulator, Baltimore County's Towson Loop, Howard County's RTA, and many other Maryland LOTS need the same level of commitment to funding a state of good repair as the state-wide MTA. While we don't know if the baseline funding amount (\$80,533,314) called for in this bill is adequate to achieve that state of good repair, we do believe that increasing it to keep up with inflation is the right way to go.

While this bill seeks to index the funding level for LOTS against the consumer price index (CPI), it does allow for financial flexibility - in the form of an escape hatch should the CPI run abnormally hot. (Funding increases must equal the **lesser** of the percentage increase in the CPI or 5%.)

A convenient and well-functioning public transit system is core to the appeal and economic success of any metropolitan region. In order for the residents of Maryland to be happy and productive members of their communities, they need to be able to move about predictably, affordably, and safely.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of SB0020**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

2025-01-27 Senate Bill 20 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Shearman Jr

Position: FAV



TOWN OF OCEAN CITY

The White Marlin Capital of the World

Monday, January 27, 2025

Maryland General Assembly
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 3-West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill:	SB20 – Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)
Position:	SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and the Honorable Committee:

Last year I appeared before this body representing Ocean City Transportation supporting sustained funding for Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS). Governor Moore signed that into law last May. I am here again to support Senate Bill 20, to protect that funding in the face of inflation.

I spoke last year about the important mission that many of my colleagues across the state serve, in terms of providing equitable access to food, healthcare, jobs, and other vital resources to people who, for whatever reason, are not able to drive themselves. We serve that mission in Ocean City as well. And I reminded you about Ocean City's additional commitment to provide a safe and convenient alternative to impaired driving. Both of these are equally important, equally life-sustaining missions.

While we applaud the legislature's action last year providing mandated sustained funding for Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems, we remain concerned that in the face of inflation we may still be forced to cut services year-over-year. In my own agency, we recently saw a 14% one-year jump in the cost of wages, fuel, parts, and labor while deploying essentially equivalent service levels. The cost of procuring a new 60-foot articulating transit bus, the cornerstone of our fleet, increased 18% from last year to this year. If funding does not grow to match these rising costs, the effect hits our constituents directly -- either in terms of fare increases, or service cuts, or both.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough how vital your support is in keeping our services sustainable. For all the reasons I mentioned at the outset, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, this truly is a life-or-death decision. We implore you to report favorably on Senate Bill 20. We like to say that Ocean City is "Somewhere to Smile About" and we ask you to do your part to help us keep it that way.

Thank you once again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Shearman, Jr., CCTM
Transportation Manager
Town of Ocean City, Maryland

MAYOR

Richard W. Meehan

CITY COUNCIL

Matthew M. James
President

Anthony J. DeLuca
Secretary

John F. Gehrig, Jr.
Jacob H. Mitrecic
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Will Savage
Larry R. Yates

CITY MANAGER

Terence J. McGean, PE

CITY CLERK

Diana L. Chavis, MMC

P.O. Box 158, Ocean City, Maryland 21843-0158 | oceancitymd.gov | City Hall: (410) 289-8221 | Fax: (410) 289-8703

SB20.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephen Palmer

Position: FAV

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



*Queen
Anne's
County*

County Commissioners:

James J. Moran, At Large
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1
J. Patrick McLaughlin, District 2
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

Area Agency on Aging

104 Powell St
Centreville, MD 21617

Telephone: (410) 758-0848

Fax: (410) 758-4489

TDD: (410) 758-2126

E-mail: agingadmin@qac.org

Catherine Riggs Willis, LMSW, Director

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 Queen Anne's County in support of Senate Bill 20, which would increase funding for Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) throughout our state.

Queen Anne's County – County Ride is public transportation that offers both deviated fixed route and door to door service. We service all of Queen Anne's County along with routes that go to Chestertown in Kent County, Easton in Talbot County and Annapolis in Anne Arundel County. Our ridership is made up of 30% work force rides, 40% medical rides and we have 60% senior ridership.

We make mobility a reality for our customers. Unfortunately, funding for these program 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 beginning 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 30-35% 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,

Steve Palmer
Transit Administrator
Queen Anne's County, County Ride

Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB20.pdf

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV



January 29, 2024

Senate Bill 20

**Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding - Inflation
Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 20 – Locally Operated Transit Systems - Mandatory Funding - Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act).

Senate Bill 20 would add an annual inflation adjustment to Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS) Grant Program funding in order to align funding closer with annual costs. LOTS is critical mandatory funding for locally operated transit systems across the state, and benefits the millions of Marylanders who rely on transit for their daily commutes and provide for their families.

SB20 builds off of progress made in 2023, when the General Assembly passed House Bill 1125, codifying the LOTS Grant Program within the Department of Transportation. This legislation expanded Maryland's access to state and federal resources and provided an additional funding stream for local jurisdictions.

Anne Arundel County is the fourth largest county in the state, and transit plays a major role in how we address our local economy and economic growth. Effective routes give residents and out-of-county Marylanders access to county jobs, quality healthcare, and our robust tourism industry. Mandating an \$80 million appropriation in the annual budget allows the County to maintain fare free transit line operations such as the Gold Line Extension and Crofton Connector, and ensure these systems have the resources to progress in the future.

Marylanders deserve efficient transit systems that keep communities connected and provide economic opportunity. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 20.

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

SB0020 - TSO - LOI - LOTS - Mandatory Funding - In

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

January 29, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – SB 20 – Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 20 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

SB 20 mandates an annual increase in funding for the Maryland Transit Administration's locally operated transit systems (LOTS) grant program. The amount of the annual increase is indexed to inflation, with a minimum change of 0% and a maximum change of 5%.

Though in existence for many years prior, Chapter 508 of 2023 established the LOTS program in law. A year later, Chapter 652 of 2024 established a mandated funding level of \$80.5 million annually beginning in FY 2026. SB 20 indexes the mandated funding level to inflation beginning in FY 2027. Each of these changes progressively reduces the flexibility of the Transportation Trust Fund to respond to statewide transportation needs.

Most of the Transportation Trust Fund's revenues are not inflation-sensitive and grow at a rate slower than inflation. Thus, as expenses grow faster than revenues, a structural deficit is created. The inflation component in SB 20 increases expenditures from the Transportation Trust Fund by an estimated \$19 million in FY 2026 through FY 2030.

In the absence of new revenues, MDOT made significant reductions to its operating and capital programs over the last several years to maintain affordability of the six-year program. Additional revenues established by the General Assembly during the 2024 legislative session and those revenue actions proposed by Governor Moore this session allowed the Department to restore some reductions. However, continued fiscal constraint is required until the investments being made in Maryland's economic growth jumpstart the economy. A mandated annual increase in LOTS funding will require offsetting reductions across the Department to maintain the affordability of MDOT's six-year operating and capital program.

Further, it is important to note the differential impact the proposed legislation will have on the types of funds that contribute to LOTS. The LOTS grant program includes several federal and State grant programs. Since the federal grants are not subject to an inflationary increase, an

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Page Two

increasing amount of State funding will be required to fund the additional program costs. Some of these programs are already subject to mandated funding levels. The Bus Rapid Transit Grant is established at \$27 million annually. Funding for elderly and handicapped transit service was mandated at \$4.3 million beginning in FY 2024 and is indexed to inflation thereafter. The inflation formula utilized for the elderly and handicapped service grants is different than the one proposed in SB 20 for the larger LOTS program, which will result in different growth rates and may create confusion over required funding levels.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberation of Senate Bill 20.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaclyn D. Hartman
Assistant Secretary of Transportation Investments
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1005

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090