



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 1581

DATE: April 2, 2026

SPONSOR: Chair, Appropriations Committee (By Request – Departmental – Stadium Authority) and Delegate Beauchamp, *et al.*

ASSIGNED TO: Budget and Taxation

CONTACT PERSON: Melanie Wenger (melanie.wenger@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

Economic Development – Horse Racing Facilities, Prince George’s County Blue Line Corridor Facilities, and Bus Rapid Transit – Alterations

House Bill 1581 makes a number of changes that pertain to three major development initiatives around the State – the Pimlico Racetrack site in Baltimore City and other related racetrack infrastructure projects, the Blue Line Corridor in Prince George’s County, and the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) in Montgomery County. For Pimlico, the changes relate to project management, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations related to the redevelopment project and the surrounding community, and increased funding to support the initiative. For the Blue Line Corridor, the changes redefine the area to require designation as an Enterprise Zone, expand the list of eligible uses of the allocated funds, and increase funding to support the corridor development. For BRT in Montgomery County, the changes simplify confusing statutes, increase funding for the grant, and as the only local jurisdiction in the State with an operating BRT system, make Montgomery County the exclusive beneficiary of the BRT grant program.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation’s strong interest in this legislation relates to streamlining the process for securing BRT grants, particularly requiring a multi-year grant agreement between the County and the Maryland Department of Transportation instead of an annual agreement. The uncertainty of annual agreements raised underwriter concerns, which is among the reasons the County was not able to issue bonds as planned in February. Both of these changes, along with an increase in the annual grant beginning in Fiscal 2027 (from \$27 to \$29 million), will help support the continued build out of the County’s BRT system, which is necessary to help improve mobility in some of the most congested corridors in the State and in the Washington region.

Some information about the County’s BRT system:

- In the planning and design phase for many years, with a financing plan in place

- Envisioned as a system that will span 100 miles, with the first phase, US 29 BRT, open since 2020
- Construction has begun on a second line on Viers Mill Road, with three other major corridors in the planning or design phase
- Funding these projects will be accomplished through a combination of local and State dollars, plus \$160 million of federal dollars appropriated to date
- Bonds will be issued against the State and local revenue streams as early as this month, making a reliable revenue stream from the State integral to its ability to bond
- BRT systems are more and more common – like Montgomery County, the Northern Virginia suburbs are building them as connectors to hard and light rail as financially feasible alternatives that can move people in otherwise heavily congested areas more efficiently and effectively

The Department supports House Bill 1581 and, therefore, urges the Committee to advance this bill.