

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRANSIT SERVICES DIVISION

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Roman Steichen, Director

House Bill 1344: Maryland Transit Administration – Locally Operated Transit Systems – Study

DATE: March 3, 2026
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: SUPPORT
FROM: Roman Steichen, Director, Transit, Frederick County Government

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of Transit Services of Frederick County in support of House Bill 1344.

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 and fast-graying area, with little additional funding to speak of. Transit is now bursting at the seams, transportation more than 928,000 trips in FY25. Our SSTAP program has not kept up with costs, and inflation continues to grow.

We make mobility a reality for our customers. Unfortunately, funding for these programs have already been cut in the aftermath of COVID-19. Since January 2020, the price index for Truck and Bus bodies has risen by over 34%, according to the Federal Reserve. Diesel fuel is more than 36% more expensive. During the same five year period, the state of Maryland has decreased its support to locally-operated transit systems by cutting its state match for operating funding by 20%.

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 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 in order to plan how to best serve our riders.

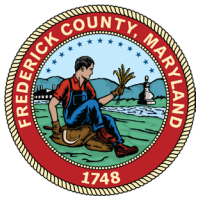
The trips we provide are critical for Frederick County's low-to-moderate income seniors; non-elderly people with disabilities; and dialysis and cancer patients needing to access treatment. Transit is often unable to provide all the medical trips requested, are turning away other types of trips to do so, as well as spending considerable local funding to address the needs for medical and other transportation services in our communities.

We believe that House Bill 1344 will provide essential data to help show the true statewide issues facing transit and are pleased this committee is taking a step to resolve this through collecting this critical information. Understanding the scope of the problem is a necessary step in fixing it. As HB 1344 helps to identify critical funding shortfalls, it will assist in future efforts to reform local transit funding, assure adequate state resources, and enable the ability to provide additional trip opportunities on our Transit-plus service. The bill language specifically says to consult with representatives from local jurisdictions; we urge you to do so.

Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

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





FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRANSIT SERVICES DIVISION

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Roman Steichen, Director

For these reasons, among many others, we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1344.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roman Steichen".

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

