

Transportation Equity Act of 2022

Promotes an approach to equity that recommends anticipation and prevention as the better strategies when compared to recovery and correction which have been the principal strategies in the past.

Why is it needed?

- Maryland has a long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through Black communities to the cancellation of the Red Line.
- Equitable transportation plays a key role in dismantling systemic racism:
 - Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
 - Providing incentive for economic development in distressed communities; and
 - Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities
- Equity is currently treated as an afterthought
- Only by being intentional about transportation equity can we begin to dismantle centuries of systemic racism.

What's wrong with the current approach?

- If the thresholds for requiring the Department to do an equity analysis aren't right, projects that should get them won't. Those thresholds should be evaluated by an independent body and by the public. In a state where all transportation is funded and managed through one agency, an analysis of all modes of transportation (including seaports, highways, airports, core bus service) is needed to better see and address systemic equity issues.
- Current transit equity analysis studies each mode of transit separately, which doesn't accurately capture disparities because of racial differences between modes. For example, the core bus is majority Black, while the commuter bus is majority white. If more cuts are made to core bus than commuter bus, that creates a disparity that won't show in separate analysis.
- Transit equity analysis is performed late in the process to check for disparate impact in decisions already made. Equity must be central to all planning and decisions throughout the process.
- Need for greater transparency, accountability and community input.

What does the TEA do?

- Requires equity as a primary goal in the Maryland Transportation Plan;
- Requires MDOT to annually report data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities;
- Creates a Commission on Transportation Equity;
- Requires transit equity analyses, cost benefit analysis, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- Requires cross-modal analysis;
- Increases transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting

Public transit and smart transportation planning are some of the most important tools that local and state governments have to fight climate change and reduce structural inequalities! Transportation decisions should improve local air quality rather than drive greenhouse gas emissions and reduce economic inequality instead of excluding working-class communities from the opportunities we need to thrive.

Historically, Maryland transportation decisions have worsened inequality instead of reducing it. Governor Larry Hogan's decision to cancel the Red Line in 2015, just weeks after the Baltimore Uprising, threw away years of community labor for the project in favor of suburban highway funding; and when the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC) challenged that decision in court under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act on the basis of its discriminatory impact, the Trump administration refused to consider the case. **We need to pass the Transportation Equity Act of 2022 to make sure that doesn't happen again.**

How? The Transportation Equity Act would effectively enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act in transportation planning in Maryland. Whenever the state is planning any major service change for public transit, the Maryland Department of Transportation would have to conduct transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings. Ensuring equity would become a primary goal of the Maryland Transportation Plan. Instead of inequitable decisions being made and then communities having to challenge them in court, this would bake equity in from the very beginning.

The Transportation Equity Act, sponsored by Delegate Sheila Ruth and Senator Jill Carter, is a critical tool for building a transportation system in Maryland that allows everyone to thrive. **Write a message to your representatives to support the Transportation Equity Act!**

Dear _____,

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to vote for the Transportation Equity Act.

We need to make sure that Maryland's transportation decisions are made with equity in the forefront, rather than as an afterthought. By making equity a primary goal of the Maryland Transportation Plan and requiring transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and community outreach before public hearings on any major service change, this bill would make Maryland proactive in developing equitable public transit.

We need to pass Delegate Ruth's and Senator Carter's Transportation Equity Act this year to reduce local air pollution, fight climate change, and build a Maryland where everyone has equal access to opportunity. I hope that this important legislation will have your support.

Sincerely,
