

February 21, 2023

Statement on House Bill 341

Transportation - Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs and Transportation
Improvement Programs - Equity Impacts
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: Support

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1300 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We strongly urge you to support House Bill 341 to further the cause of equity in access to transportation for all Marylanders.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancelation of the Red Line route. Our transportation priorities must focus on urgently needed access to jobs for residents in low-income, redlined communities such as in Baltimore City, and regional economy-transforming transit development.

Transportation equity is also important for people with disabilities, and families with limited or moderate income, particularly in suburban or rural areas not served directly by existing mass transit.

Many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, they continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and safety.

Without convenient accessible transit service, seniors and those without access to adequate personal vehicles, are likely to be denied access to opportunities for work, education, routine health care, and other services. Local transit agencies usually do not cross county lines – even within the major metropolitan areas.

Ultimately, there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and community input. Equity should not be an afterthought or a box to check. Real people's lives are impacted by transportation. All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, zip code, or disability, should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system.

We urge you to give House Bill 341 a favorable report.