



January 18, 2021

## Testimony on SB 199 – Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act Budget & Taxation: Position Favorable

Bikemore supports SB 199, the Transit Safety & Investment Act.

In July 2019, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) to assess its ongoing, unconstrained capital needs. The CNI identified \$5.7 billion of capital needs over the next ten years, \$1.5 billion of which is an accumulated backlog of deferred maintenance.

Unfortunately, MDOT's FY 2021–2026 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) does not provide the MTA sufficient funding to address the annual maintenance and repairs identified in the CNI. In fact, at current funding levels the maintenance backlog will grow.

The result of the neglected maintenance is buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and commuter trains that break down more often than the MTA's peer agencies, and in some cases, more often than any transit agency in the nation. Paratransit service also continues to malfunction. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, which is known as a transit death spiral.

Public transit is the backbone of our economy, literally keeping us alive during the pandemic by getting the people employed in our hospitals, grocery stores, retirement homes, ports, and logistics centers to work every day.

And outside of the pandemic, City Schools students and even more workers rely on transit to get to school and work every day. Access to reliable transportation is the single greatest determinant in escaping poverty.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to address all of the needs identified and get the system back into a state of good repair so that it can operate safely and reliably.

There isn't a more important investment we could make at this time.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

**Jed Weeks**  
Policy Director