



City Council Passes Complete Streets and Affordable Housing Legislation

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We applaud the City Council for passing [two important bills](#) that will make our City more livable and affordable.

The first bill is [comprehensive complete streets legislation](#). The idea behind complete streets is that planners should design roadways for everyone that uses them. This includes transit vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. The bill just passed, mandates that the City Department of Transportation adopt guidelines that take into consideration the needs of those mentioned above. Cities across the country have passed similar bills.

But what makes Baltimore's proposed Complete Streets policy truly unique is its [focus on racial equity](#). In a section of the bill titled "equity lens," the Department of Transportation, when writing its annual report on the law must include data by population area such as census tract and also conduct separate reporting by race, income, and vehicle access. Additionally, the Director of Transportation is required to submit a report within 60 days of the ordinance's passage that describes what methods of community engagement they will use to obtain public input. This must include ways of overcoming barriers to participation with regards to race, income, age, disability, English language proficiency, and vehicle ownership status.

The passage of the Complete Streets was supported by a broad and diverse [coalition of organizations](#) that included [AARP](#), [Transit Choices](#), [Central Maryland Transportation](#)

[Alliance](#), [No Boundaries Coalition](#), [Downtown Partnership of Baltimore](#), and many others. [Bikemore](#) and [Councilman Ryan Dorsey](#), in particular, are to be given credit for their leadership in developing the bill and ensuring its passage.

At the same session, the City Council passed legislation funding affordable housing. In 2016, City voters approved a charter amendment creating an [Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#) but did not include any money for it. The bill just passed provides a dedicated source of revenue for the fund through an increase in the City's transfer and recordation tax for properties assessed at over \$1 million. One way to use this funding could be through [Community Land Trusts](#).

This legislation does not include any improvements to the City's [failed inclusionary housing law](#) nor does it create a comprehensive plan for how to address the City massive affordable housing crisis.

Credit for this bill goes to the [United Workers](#), [Baltimore Housing Roundtable](#), and the [Public Justice Center](#).