



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 25, 2023

SB 151

Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: Support

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 151 establishes the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund and its purpose, funding sources, and authorized uses. For each fiscal year, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation sufficient to ensure a fund balance of at least \$10.0 million at the start of the fiscal year. The bill also requires the Secretary of Transportation to annually submit a report to the General Assembly on efforts to increase TOD throughout the State.

The Conference supports legislation that recognizes the dignity of the human person in pursuit of the common good. Transit-oriented plans that help create a sustainable and economically viable region while assisting the transportation needs of the community, especially the vulnerable and marginalized, can be beneficial. Public transportation plays a key role by providing health and education solutions for families while realizing cost savings that, at times, can be significant. As stated in *Economic Justice for All: A Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* "Government should assume a positive role in generating employment and establishing fair labor practices, in guaranteeing the provision and maintenance of the economy's infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, harbors, public means of communication, and transport." Senate Bill 151 seeks to identify the need for more equitable public transportation in Maryland by analyzing the needs of our most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 151.

