



# **Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**December 2022**

# WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

	DRAFT RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMELINE
2023 Legislative Action	Create Baltimore Regional Transit Commission	Maryland General Assembly	2023
	Consider Regional Priorities in the CTP	Maryland General Assembly	2023
Executive Action	Restructure Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS) funding formula	Executive Branch	As soon as reasonably feasible
Further Study	Formal Study of Baltimore Regional Transit Authority	Executive Branch & Maryland General Assembly	2023-2024
	Study the reconstitution of the Maryland Transportation Commission	Maryland General Assembly	2023



# Recommendations For 2023 General Assembly

# Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC)

## Background

- The Baltimore region lacks a formal voice in how most transit services (via MTA) are operated and developed in their own region.
- The Baltimore region's transit system historically struggles with transparency, stability, reliability, local input and coordination with economic development.
- Baltimore transit services are under-funded and under-developed relative to peer systems. They also have performance issues and are not well aligned with regional needs.

## Recommendation

- **Create Baltimore Regional Transit Commission.**
- **Authority to approve MTA's annual budget requests for operating and capital improvements** for core services; and approve an annual Baltimore Regional Transit Plan.
- **Commission serves as fiscal agent** authorized to raise and bond revenue for transit in the region.
- **Housed at an independent agency** with transportation planning capacity and funded by the State.
- **For action in 2023 Legislative Session.**

## Key Steps

- MDOT will continue to fund and hold harmless MTA funding levels.
- BRTC would work in concert with MTA.
- BRTC's authority would be over MTA "Core" Transit Services, focused on bus, light rail, and Metro.
- BRTC's authority would also extend to regional elements of MTA's commuter bus routes and MARC rail service.
- BRTC would play coordinating and planning role with local LOTS.

## Detail

- Commissioners appointed by Governor local governments and legislature.
- Governor would have +1 majority or ability to cast tie-breaking vote.
- Commission membership and voting weighted by amount of service in each jurisdiction.
- Includes Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County and Howard County. Other counties could opt in as desired.
- Transit labor union could have non-voting role on commission

# Regional Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)

## Background

- The CTP is the primary document guiding TTF investments.
- State law requires MDOT to meet with local jurisdictions – but not regions - to discuss the CTP.
- Jurisdictions submit priority projects and MDOT uses CTP "tour" meetings to discuss priorities.
- Meeting are held individually with counties and do not consider regional concerns or perspectives.

## Recommendation

- **Expand CTP process to include regional stakeholders and public input on local priority letters.**
- **MDOT would be required to meet with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)** in the state who would annually submit priorities to CTP.
- Regional priority letters and meeting for consideration in Legislative Session 2023.

## Key Steps

- Encourages MPOs to identify regional priority projects.
- Regional projects could be coordinated with jurisdictional priorities.
- CTP tour would hold local and regional meetings. Adds about seven additional meetings.
- Regional meetings could be organized by MPO.

## Detail

- Regional priority letters and meetings could be coordinated through Maryland's MPOs



# **Recommendation for Executive Branch Consideration**

# Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS) Funding Formula

## Background

- Statewide LOTS funding is complicated combination of funding.
- There is no public process or formula that directs, justifies or explains state funding decisions.
- LOTS agencies struggle with funding transparency and predictability, as well as statewide concern regarding fairness in funding distribution.

## Recommendation

- **Restructure LOTS program** so that flexible funds can be used to support both existing and local transit service.
- **Adopt a clear, transparent and equitable funding formula to distribute funding to LOTS agencies in 2024.**
- Codify as necessary in future sessions.

## Key Steps

- Confirm LOTS program goals and values.
- Document existing funding distribution processes.
- Align funding distribution with program goals and values. Share draft formula for review and comment.

## Detail

- Consider creating a regional grant program to fund non-MTA transit in Baltimore Region.



# Recommendations for Further Study



# Study Formation of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority

## Background

- An independent, state funded regional transit authority provides the most autonomy to Baltimore core transit services.
- The Baltimore region is not currently well positioned to establish an independent authority without consideration of several key issues.
- This recommendation is the logical successor to the BRTB's 2021 study of Transit Governance and Funding and the efforts of this Workgroup.
- There are too many issues to resolve without a formal study of an Authority by the State.

## Recommendation

- **Study the opportunities and challenges associated with a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority.**
- **Develop an Implementation Plan and schedule that considers issues identified, considers impact to operations and comments from transit stakeholders and constituents.**
- Commission an independent two-year feasibility study in Legislative Session 2023.

## Key Steps

- Maryland General Assembly or Executive action to create a Blue Ribbon Commission to develop a formal study of actions necessary to create a regional transit authority in Baltimore.
- Report and recommendations complete in 2024 so appropriate action may be taken in Legislative Session 2025 to authorize an authority.

## Detail

- Key issues to be studied:
- Structure should maintain State funding.
  - Becoming a **designated recipient** of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding.
  - **Representation** – which state and local entities would participate in RTA.
  - **Funding** – willingness and capacity of region to raise funds for transit.
  - **Asset management** – ownership of local assets and current state of good repair
  - **Labor** – labor contracts and maintaining good public sector jobs and ensuring pension obligations are met.

# Reconstitute & Empower Maryland Transportation Commission

## Background

- Decisions about how Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund is allocated made solely by Secretary of Transportation & Governor
- The impacts of this allocation are felt at the local level throughout the State.
- The current system's lack of transparency fails to provide the public with adequate opportunity for input and satisfactory explanation of funding decisions.

## Recommendation

- **Reconstitute Maryland Transportation Commission with clear charter and authority.**
- **Authority to approve annual capital and operating budgets of MDOT Business Units** (except Maryland Transportation Authority)
- **Approve MDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan and individual modal plans**
- Commission detailed study in Legislative Session 2023 for consideration in Legislative Session 2024.

## Key Steps

- Legislative study authorized in the 2023 Legislative Session.
- Statewide membership of the study group with diverse and representative constituencies.
- Due consideration should be given to MDOT's priorities and considerations in this effort.

## Detail

- Number of commissioners to be determined, assuming:
- Governor will have a +1 majority or ability to cast tie-breaker vote
  - MTC seats and/or votes should be weighted by population density.