

Transportation Association of Maryland 2026 Legislative Agenda

4 PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Dedicated Funding for Local Transit

While TAM's efforts have guaranteed current funding levels thanks to the passage of HB 950 in 2024, and the locally supported transit system is finally enshrined in Maryland's code – there is still no dedicated stream of funding for local transit in our state. Any increase in funding level remains at the discretion of the Secretary's office, and there has not been any indication from the state that this is part of their agenda. Indeed, prior to our efforts to protect that funding, local transit was targeted disproportionately with proposed funding cuts, especially in 2024. It is TAM's intention to introduce legislation that not only proposes an increase in overall funding for local transit but ties it to a dedicated revenue stream – ensuring that there is a source for funding local transit.

2. Increase Funding to Senior Rides

This program, which relies on volunteer drivers to transport over 26,000 low and moderate-income seniors per year, was funded at a flat level (\$187,000) since FY 2014 until TAM secured a \$50,000 increase for the FY 24-25 years. Regrettably, this funding was returned to its previous (insufficient) funding levels for FY 26. TAM will be making a major effort to correct this, and will further request that this funding be set at a level sufficient to fully fund all current grantees, \$500,000. The cost-per-trip of this program is far lower than any other form of publicly supported transportation, including public transportation, taxi vouchers, Senior Rides fills the gaps and provides services to under-served communities that cannot rely on traditional public transit.

3. Driver Assault Legislation

Assaults on public transit operators has increased significantly, especially during the pandemic. The Federal Transit Administration data shows that operator assaults per trip have increased fourfold from 2009 to 2020. We support steps to protect operators and their passengers.

4. Unrealistic Transition Plans

TAM recognizes the importance of sustainable and efficient public transportation systems. While we share the goal of reducing emissions, we oppose state mandates that require local transit agencies to purchase zero-emission vehicles as a one-size-fits-all solution on a strict deadline. The transition to zero-emission vehicles is a commendable long-term objective, but it must be carried out with careful consideration for the unique circumstances and challenges faced by agencies across our state. Mandates will place an undue financial burden on already cash strapped agencies and compromise the quality and accessibility of public transportation services for communities. We advocate for a more flexible and realistic approach, allowing transit agencies to flexibly transition to zero emission vehicles as part of a well-thought-out, adequately resourced, and locally tailored strategy.



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The Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM) is a statewide nonprofit organization with over 120 community transportation, human service, and vendor members. We represent community transportation in every county and jurisdiction in the State of Maryland. As a whole, we are dedicated to improving mobility for all of Maryland's citizens.

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