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# 2024 Baltimore City Mayoral Transportation Forum

April 11, 2024

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Presented by:



Supporting partners include:



To participate in this candidates' forum, the event organizers requested that candidates submit a brief bio and answer to this question: "It's a critical moment for transportation in Baltimore City. The Red Line is returning. The city has been awarded millions in Federal Safe Streets for All funding because of its Complete Streets ordinance. A conversation around transit governance has begun. What is your plan to ensure Baltimore is positioned to maximize access to federal and state dollars, prioritize active transportation and transit first, and deliver a healthy, safe, and equitable transportation system for Baltimore City?"

Scan the QR code to submit your own question for tonight's forum or vote for the questions you would like the moderator to ask:



Moderator: Jaisal Noor

Jaisal Noor is a Baltimore-based journalist whose work has appeared in The Real News Network, Baltimore Beat, and YES! Magazine for the past decade. He is the Democracy Cohort Manager for Solutions Journalism Network, where he helps newsrooms adopt a community-centered and solutions-focused approach to covering elections and democracy. He's also the program manager for The Baltimore News Collaborative, which aims to report on promising solutions to the challenges facing young people in Baltimore.

## Sheila Dixon

For three decades in public service, Sheila Dixon has been a champion of Baltimore neighborhoods and a pioneer for women and minorities. A former educator, Sheila began serving on the City Council in 1987 before being elected City Council President in 1999 and becoming the 48th Mayor of Baltimore in 2007.



At this critical juncture for Baltimore City's transportation landscape, the return of the Red Line, the city's reception of millions in Federal Safe Streets for All funding, and the burgeoning dialogue around how we can provide adequate transportation options in light of the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge all underscore the urgency for a comprehensive, forward-looking transportation strategy.

Recognizing the inadequacies of Baltimore's current transportation system is the first step. We know that adequate transportation is a critical piece of lifting communities out of poverty, but for too long, our residents have contended with a transportation network that falls short of providing reliable, equitable access across the city. Gov. Moore's plan to revive the Red Line is encouraging, but I am keenly aware that its success will hinge on diligent leadership from City Hall to ensure Baltimore plays its role effectively.

I believe that developing alternative modes of transportation is a crucial part of building livable communities. My own passion for biking and advocacy for alternative modes of transportation led to me earning the moniker "the Biking Mayor," and it informs my approach to creating a greener, cleaner, and healthier Baltimore. Through my efforts to introduce median enhancements and crosswalk upgrades, my administration laid the groundwork for a more bike-friendly city. As Mayor, I will go even further to expand and improve bike lanes, enhance bike share partnerships, and promote bike safety education.

In addition to enhancing our biking infrastructure, my administration will prioritize building on successful alternative transit options like the Circulator, which I introduced during my tenure. These services are crucial for creating a more accessible and inclusive transit system and it will be a priority for me to expand them. Finally, to maximize access to federal and state dollars, my administration will work closely with our state partners, ensuring that Baltimore not only secures the necessary funding but also implements these funds effectively to bring about tangible improvements in our transportation system.

Ultimately, community engagement is at the heart of my approach. By incorporating feedback and insights from residents, advocacy groups, and local businesses, we can ensure that the city's plans are not only aligned with the community's needs but also effectively implemented. By addressing our transportation inadequacies head-on, prioritizing public transit, and ensuring our transportation projects are community-led, we can achieve a transportation system that is efficient, equitable, and sustainable.

## Brandon Scott

Mayor Brandon M. Scott is a Park Heights native and proud Mervo graduate. He represents a new generation of leadership that is reversing the decades of neglect to our neighborhoods and youth and leading Baltimore's renaissance, which includes moving our city forward, away from the broken methods of the past.



My administration has been centered on bringing equity to the forefront of our city while moving forward from the broken practices of the past. I inherited a City Hall wrought with decades of corruption, and have worked tirelessly to restore the broken relationships with federal and state partners.

I stood with the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to deliver \$22 million in funding towards major investments in bus lanes, signaling to prioritize transit, and enhancements to pedestrian and bike safety. This was a major step to connect our East-West Priority Corridor project with a route that goes through Bayview, Library Square, downtown Baltimore, Harlem Park and Edmondson Village.

The success in rebuilding our city's standing to the rest of the country has contributed to my administration's success in the subsequent securing and delivering historic amounts of federal dollars to Baltimore, and the subsequent equitable investments across the city, to which we have received national recognition and served as a model to other cities. It is critical that we continue this work.

- I oversaw our city's adoption of the Baltimore Complete Streets Manual in my first year in office, to help create high-quality pedestrian and transit-oriented neighborhoods.

- I have aggressively pursued more sustainable practices for our city through innovative advances in transportation, including passing legislation requiring

procurement of 100% zero emissions vehicles by 2030 for Baltimore's administrative fleet.

- I have set targets for the city to achieve 100% carbon neutrality by 2045, and MTA has announced their first all-electric buses down on Kirk Ave.

- I have directed the Department of Transportation (DOT) to review the Charm City Circulator system through an equity analysis, with more to come on this in the future.

- Baltimore has received a leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification in 2023, a grading of various categories that include transportation, regional priority, innovation, and quality of life.

My administration will continue to put forth the best infrastructure that will promote road safety and allow the city to thrive and grow, not just for drivers, but for pedestrians and commuters alike.

No other Mayor in recent history has started their term managing their city through a global pandemic, and at the same time, gone on to successfully direct these critical historic investments that has made Baltimore safer, cleaner, and more accessible at the same time.

Despite the significant progress we have made, the work is not done, and it is imperative to continue to move our city forward without regressing back to the broken ways of the past.

In line with my administration's historic advancements in data transparency, you can find our annual progress reports at: <https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/completestreets>

## Thiru Vignarajah

Thiru Vignarajah is managing partner at one of the nation's largest civil rights firms. He served as Maryland's deputy attorney general, a federal prosecutor, and law clerk to Justice Breyer. The son of school teachers, Thiru attended Yale and Harvard Law, where he was president of the Harvard Law Review.



In order to attract meaningful state and federal funds to support transit in Baltimore, we have to commit to a bold vision of the future of transit. At the same time, we have to build a transportation system that works for everyone and accounts for staggering, generational inequities.

Those twin commitments are why I have pledged to, for example, expand free buses to major east-west corridors, complete a citywide bike network, and build high-speed rail between Baltimore and DC.

We already have free buses that service our most affluent neighborhoods. That's not right. In my first 60 days, I will establish two new free circulator routes, one from Edmondson Avenue to Franklin Street to Orleans to Pulaski Highway and another from Park Heights Avenue to North Avenue to Harford Road. This will reduce pollution as ridership increases, reduce commute times, make the City more accessible, and facilitate economic development by providing realistic transportation to job centers and employers.

But that is just a start, and as Mayor I will lead a much overdue infrastructure overhaul to include significant investment in the design and construction of a green transit network and equitable transit grid. As part of this investment, I will lobby to start construction of the proposed 14-mile East-West transit line between Baltimore County and downtown, connecting the Light Rail, Metro Subway, and MARC train. I will also lead



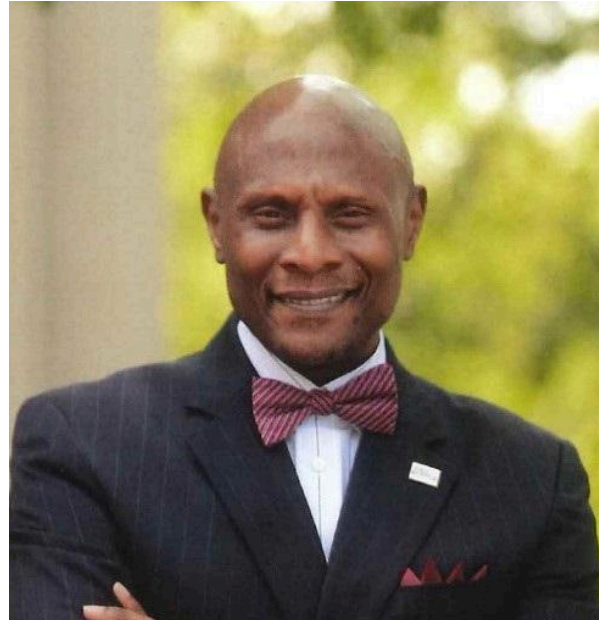
the fight to break ground on high-speed rail connecting DC and Baltimore with a 15-minute bullet train. Passengers will have access to substantially discounted commuter fares based on income, and we will induce competitive, international bidding to reduce overall project costs. How fitting that the city that built the first leg of the American railroad would be pioneers in laying down the first leg of the railroads of tomorrow.

We must also look at the inequities of our current system and make necessary adjustments. To do so, I will execute a Complete Streets redesign that considers the racial and socioeconomic equity of our roads and bridges, taking account of everything from potholes to commute times to pedestrian fatalities. This will include establishing East-West thoroughfares reserved exclusively for green and active transit: pedestrians, bikes, scooters, and buses. In addition to planning designated bike lanes and green transit avenues based upon community input, I will ensure that we build the 77 miles of bike lanes that were promised over five years ago and integrate transit and nature by connecting 80% of neighborhoods to greenspace and recreational trails.

For too long, too many of our neighbors have been failed by an unreliable, inefficient, costly, and inequitable transit system. Creating the Baltimore of tomorrow requires us to rebuild a transit system that is bold, innovative, and fair — a system that sets up Baltimore once more as pioneers of transit for the world.

## Robert Wallace

Robert L. Wallace, Baltimore's entrepreneurial son and bestselling author transforms communities with over 40 years of leadership. His initiatives remodel the city, fostering economic growth and neighborhood empowerment. Wallace's mentorship cultivates local talent, propelling Baltimore's socio-economic resurgence. His legacy: a thriving, diverse, and empowered community.



Under the Wallace Administration, my commitment to transforming Baltimore into a city with a leading-edge transportation system will be unwavering. As a child growing up in Cherry Hill, I learned at an early age how my mom depended on the public transportation system. Her experience illustrated to me the critical role that transportation plays in the lives of our citizens, especially for those who rely on public transit to access employment, education, and essential services. My plan is centered around leveraging government funds as a pivotal tool to revolutionize our city's transportation infrastructure, ensuring it delivers equitable and effective solutions for all residents.

Having navigated the complexities of both the business world and community engagement, I bring a unique perspective to city governance. My approach is grounded in strategic investment, collaboration, and a steadfast focus on outcomes that enhance the quality of life for every Baltimorean. Recognizing the current fiscal challenges, including a projected deficit, my administration will prioritize fiscal responsibility while aggressively pursuing federal and state dollars dedicated to transportation enhancement.

Central to my strategy is the belief that Baltimore's transportation system can be a model of innovation and efficiency. By maximizing access to government funding, we

will invest in comprehensive infrastructure improvements, from roads and bridges to public transit networks. This includes expanding access to high-quality, reliable public transportation options for underserved communities, thereby fostering greater connectivity across the city.

My plan emphasizes active transportation and transit-first policies, reflecting a commitment to sustainability and health. We will enhance pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, making it safer and more appealing for people to choose environmentally friendly modes of transportation. This approach not only addresses traffic congestion and reduces carbon emissions but also supports the well-being of our community members.

Collaboration with local, regional, and national partners will be a cornerstone of my administration. By building strategic partnerships with other governments, private sector entities, and community organizations, we will ensure that our transportation initiatives benefit from a broad spectrum of expertise and resources. This includes engaging with technology companies and innovators to explore smart transportation solutions that can improve efficiency and service quality.

A key element of my vision is transparency and accountability in how transportation projects are prioritized and implemented. My administration will ensure that community voices are heard, and that projects align with the actual needs and preferences of Baltimore's residents, especially those most reliant on public transportation. We will implement a data-driven approach to monitor progress and desirable outcomes.

Education and workforce development are also critical components of my plan. My company, Bithenergy, Inc. has prepared residents for careers in emerging transportation fields, such as electric vehicle maintenance, EV charging systems and smart infrastructure management. Our technology deployment will intentionally create economic opportunities for all Baltimoreans.

In conclusion, my vision for Baltimore is one where government dollars serve as a catalyst for creating the most advanced and equitable transportation system possible. Through strategic investments, innovative partnerships, and a commitment to community engagement, we will ensure that Baltimore's transportation network is safe, dependable, and accessible for all, particularly for those who depend on it the most.

# 2024 Voting Dates

To vote in person, you can vote during early voting or on election day:

Early voting will be available from Thursday, May 2, 2024 through Thursday, May 9, 2024 (including Saturday and Sunday) from 7 am to 8 pm. You can vote early at any early voting center in the City.

Primary Election day is May 14, 2024 from 7 am to 8 pm. To vote in person on election days, vote at your assigned polling place.

To vote by mail, you must request a mail-in ballot as follows:

- If you want to receive your ballot by mail or fax, your request must be received (not just mailed) by Tuesday, May 7, 2024.
- If you want to receive your ballot via the internet, your request must be received by 5 pm, Friday, May 10, 2024 for a request sent in the mail, or by 11:59 pm, Friday, May 10, 2024 for a request sent by fax or submitted online.
- If you hand deliver your request and the ballots are ready, you can pick up your mail-in ballot. You may take your mail-in ballot with you and return it by mail or you can vote it at the local board office and give it to an election official. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot in person is election day, May 14, 2024.

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked or placed in a designated ballot drop box by 8 pm on May 14, 2024 for the Primary Election.

# Thank you for coming!