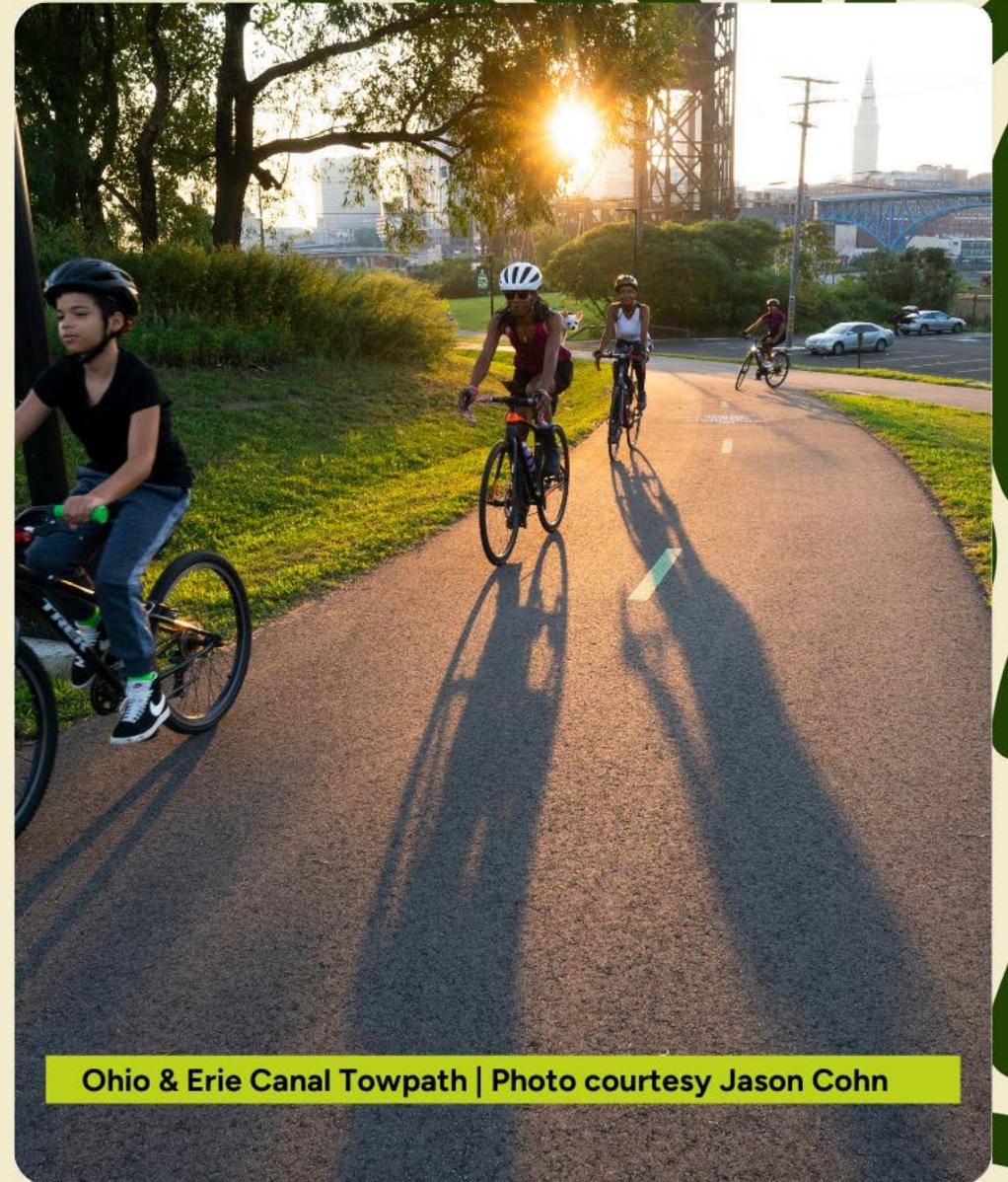


FEB 25, 2026

# Looking Ahead in 2026: Trails, Transportation and the Midterm Elections



Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath | Photo courtesy Jason Cohn

# Before we begin:

- Drop your questions in the Q&A box.
- Live transcription is enabled for this webinar.
- Recording and slides will be made available after the webinar.
- In the event you run into technical difficulties during the webinar, here's how to troubleshoot:
  - Log out and back into the webinar
  - Webinar ID: 836 5705 2359
  - Browse Zoom Customer Support topics & contact Customer Support: <https://support.zoom.us>

# Meet Our Panelists



Andrew N. Dupuy,  
Director of State-Level Policy  
Rails to Trails Conservancy



Wade Johnston,  
Executive Director,  
Tri-State Trails



Brian O'Malley,  
President and CEO,  
Central Maryland Transportation  
Alliance

# Trails Connect Everyone, Everywhere



At Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, we are building a nation connected by trails. We reimagine public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors.



*Washington D.C.'s Metropolitan Branch Trail*

# Overview: 2026 Elections

## Federal

- All of U.S. House
- 1/3 of U.S. Senate

## State

- 36 Governors (even if party likely to stay same, many are open which could mean new DOT Sec, etc.)
- Many of those states also electing other statewide (which are relevant?)
- State legislators: probably most of the lower House/about half of state Senate

## Local

- County executives & councilmembers/commissioners
- Mayors, city council

# Let's make moves.

**Rails to Trails Conservancy  
Trails, Transportation and the Midterm Elections Webinar  
February 25, 2026**



**TRI STATE  
TRAILS**



# What We Do



## EXPAND

advocate for connecting and expanding the regional trail and bikeway network



## LEARN

collect and maintain data on trails locally



## ASSIST

provide technical assistance to local governments and community groups



## CONNECT

convene trail planners, managers, advocates, and users to share best practices



## PROMOTE

promote and celebrate existing trails in the tri-state



# Advocacy & Lobbying

- Hosting community forums
- Proposing model ordinances
- Providing technical advice to a government body in response to a written request
- Non-partisan analysis or research
- Rule-making
- Policy platforms
- Letters of support
- Educating legislators and the electorate
- Endorsing ballot initiatives that clearly align with Tri-State Trails (board endorsement required)
- Providing letters of support to legislative bodies for inclusion of a specific budget line item that clearly aligns with the priorities of Tri-State Trails

# MEET THE CANDIDATES RIDE





# About the Ride

- Experiential learning bike ride for candidates running for elected office
- Nonpartisan campaign event open to all candidates running for City Council and Mayor
- Plan a comfortable distance for beginners
- Showcase infrastructure: trails, bike lanes, opportunities, and/or challenges
- Make it as easy as possible for candidates to say “yes” to attending
- Invite the public to show your constituency
- Give each candidate an opportunity to speak
- Take lots of photos!



# 2017 MEET THE CANDIDATES RIDE



**2021 MEET THE CANDIDATES RIDE**



# 2022 INAUGURATION RIDE



# 2023 MEET THE CANDIDATES RIDE

City of CINCINNATI

TOUCH SCREEN

Good evening.

What are you

SEARCH

GO

SEARCH

SEARCH

SEARCH

SEARCH

SEARCH

SEARCH



# 2024 INAUGURATION RIDE



# 2024 INAUGURATION RIDE

CITY HALL

801

2025 MEET THE CANDIDATES RIDE





**Thank you!**

**[tristatetrails.org](http://tristatetrails.org)**

**Wade Johnston, AICP  
Executive Director  
[wade@tristatetrails.org](mailto:wade@tristatetrails.org)**



# Transportation & Elections

Rails to Trails Conservancy Webinar  
February 25, 2026

Brian O'Malley  
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

# Overview

I. Candidate Forums

II. Agency Appointment

III. Other Actions

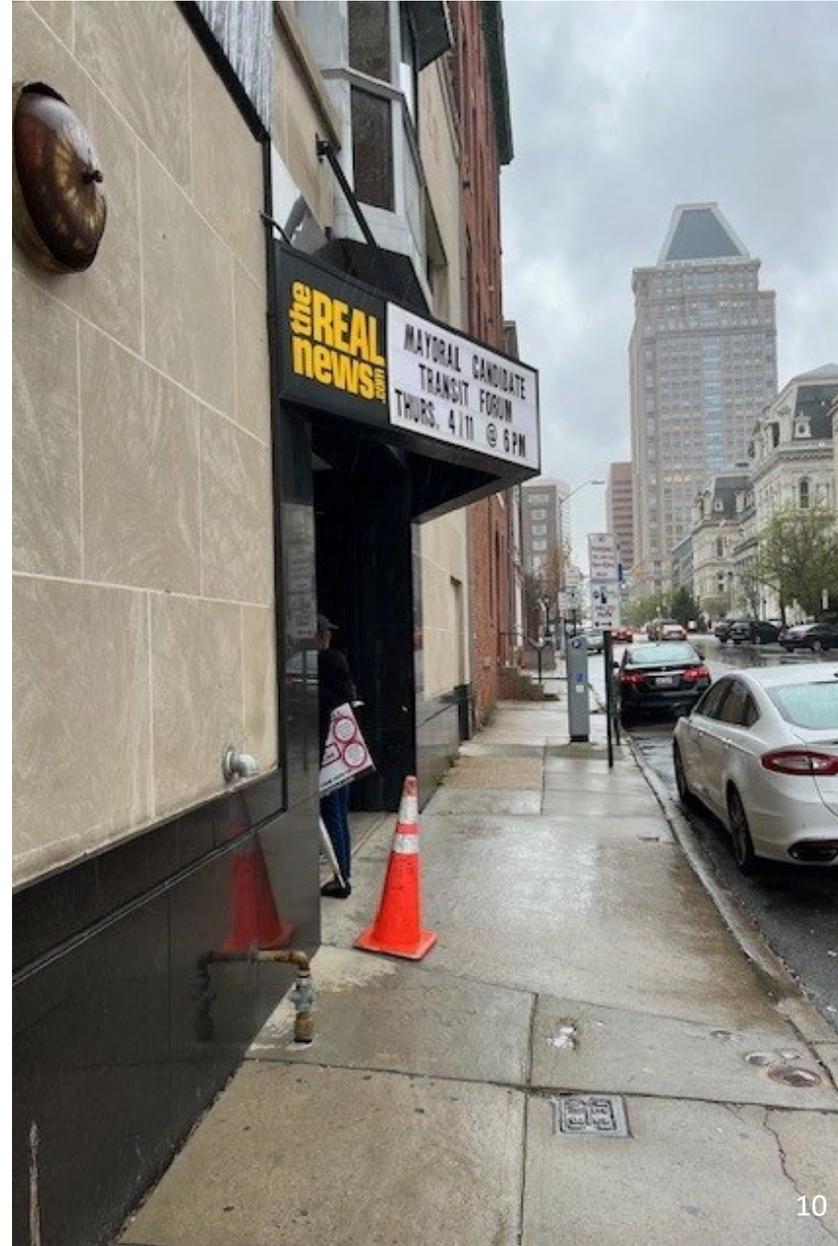
# Overview

**I. Candidate Forums**

II. Agency Appointment

III. Other Actions

# Venue



# Invite Candidates

Dear Mayoral Candidate **Name**,

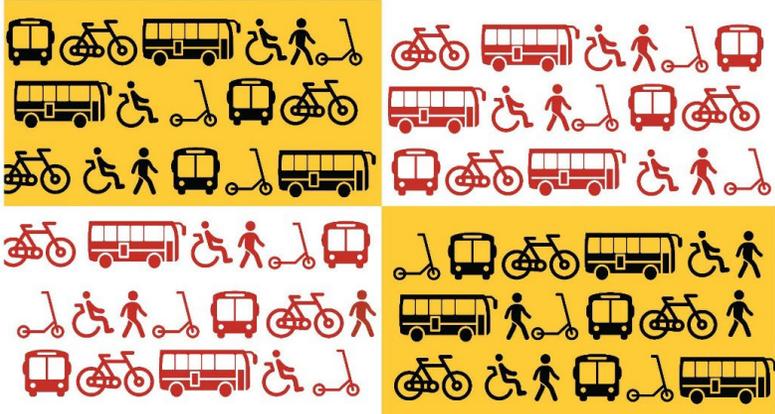
Bikemore In Action will host a **Mayoral Candidates Forum: "Leadership for Improving Transportation"** on Thursday, February 15, 2024.

Volunteers from the Transit Choices coalition and the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance are helping to organize and promote the event.

**To participate in the forum please complete the attached questionnaire. The completed questionnaire serves as your ticket to speak at the forum.**

At the forum, each candidate will be given a specific amount of time based on the number of participating candidates to respond to some additional questions that will be provided to you at least five days before the event. After all candidates have had the opportunity to speak, our moderator will lead a discussion and field questions from the audience.

# Do Questionnaires



## 2024 Senatorial Transportation Questionnaire

September 27, 2024

### Angela Alsobrooks



A lifelong Marylander, Angela was born and raised in Prince George's County. Angela began her life in public service as the first full-time Assistant State's Attorney handling domestic violence cases. She was elected as Prince George's County State's Attorney where she stood up for families, taking on some of Maryland's worst criminals while treating victims and the accused with dignity and respect. As Prince George's County Executive, she has focused on creating jobs, investing in education, expanding access to health care, mental health and addiction treatment, youth engagement, and having safe communities.

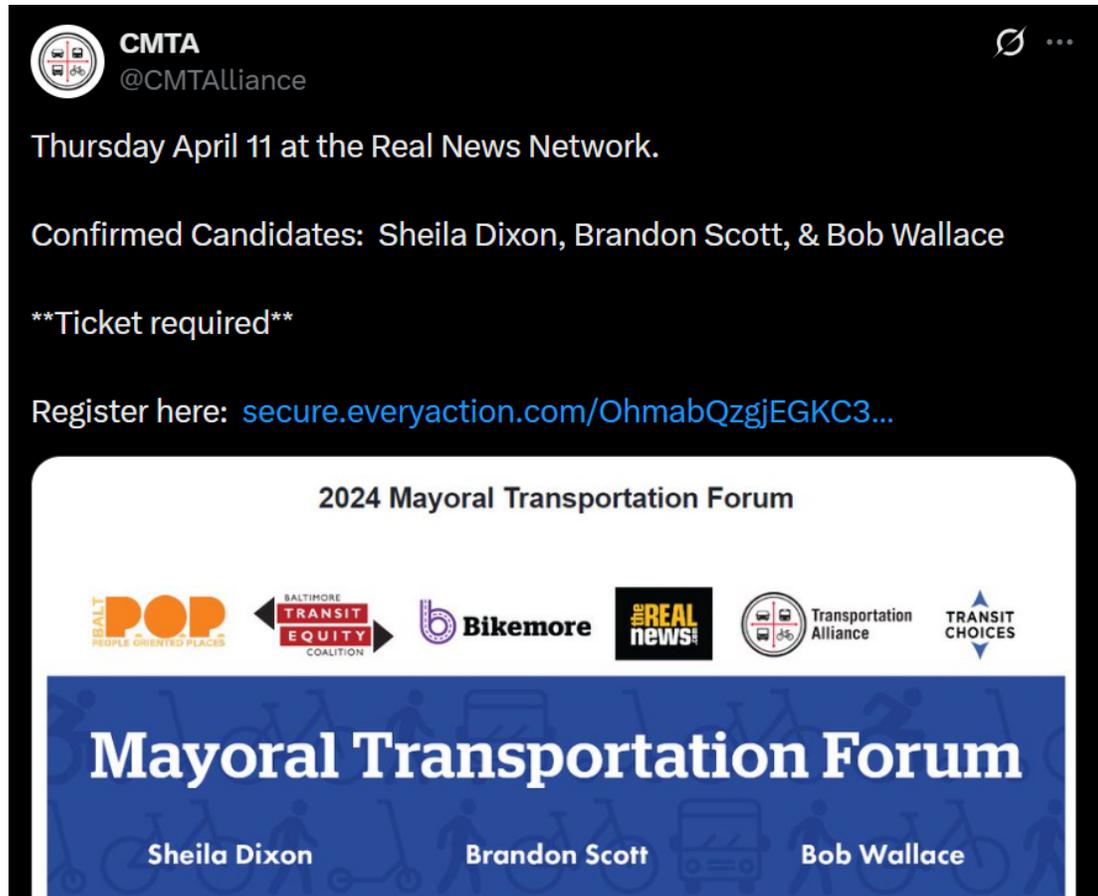
Angela was taught from a young age to care for her neighbors and give back to her community - urged on by the words of her great-grandmother not to sit on the sidelines but to "go farther and do better." In the Senate, she will fight to protect a woman's right to choose by ensuring *Roe v. Wade* is the law of the land, work to make sure that college is affordable, fight climate change, and will push to ensure that all can access economic opportunity.

1. *Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization*

*For transportation, perhaps the most consequential decision Congress will make during your 6-year term is the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program. The current program is part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which runs through 2026. What are the top transportation policy priorities that you would like included in the next reauthorization? What are your top transportation funding priorities?*

Federal transportation policy must prioritize equity, address the climate crisis and continue to modernize our infrastructure to keep us economically competitive. My policy priorities will include building on investments made in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to improve existing infrastructure including our bridges and transit systems, expand and incentivize multi-modal networks that connect communities and give people options for getting around, and ensuring we are funding cleaner, greener, forms of transportation that will get us closer to our emission reduction goals. I will also work in the Senate to ensure we secure the long term funding we need to rebuild the Key Bridge and fund long term priorities including the Red Line and SMRT.

# Invite the Audience



CMTA @CMTAlliance

Thursday April 11 at the Real News Network.

Confirmed Candidates: Sheila Dixon, Brandon Scott, & Bob Wallace

**\*\*Ticket required\*\***

Register here: [secure.everyaction.com/OhmabQzgjEGKC3...](https://secure.everyaction.com/OhmabQzgjEGKC3...)

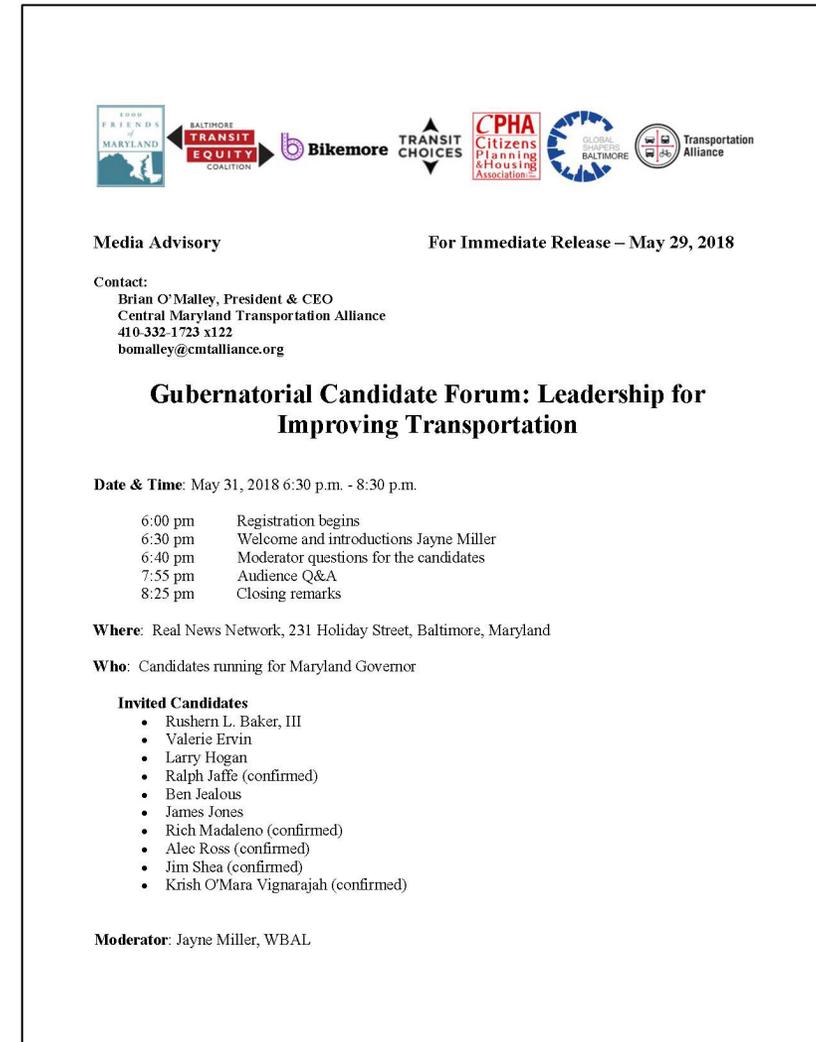
**2024 Mayoral Transportation Forum**

Logos: REAL POP (PEOPLE ORIENTED PLACES), BALTIMORE TRANSIT EQUITY COALITION, Bikemore, the REAL news!, Transportation Alliance, TRANSIT CHOICES

**Mayoral Transportation Forum**

Sheila Dixon      Brandon Scott      Bob Wallace

# Invite the Media



Logos: 1000 FRIENDS of MARYLAND, BALTIMORE TRANSIT EQUITY COALITION, Bikemore, TRANSIT CHOICES, CPHA Citizens Planning & Housing Association, GLOBAL PARTNERS BALTIMORE, Transportation Alliance

**Media Advisory** For Immediate Release – May 29, 2018

Contact:  
Brian O'Malley, President & CEO  
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance  
410-332-1723 x122  
bomalley@cmtalliance.org

**Gubernatorial Candidate Forum: Leadership for Improving Transportation**

**Date & Time:** May 31, 2018 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

6:00 pm	Registration begins
6:30 pm	Welcome and introductions Jayne Miller
6:40 pm	Moderator questions for the candidates
7:55 pm	Audience Q&A
8:25 pm	Closing remarks

**Where:** Real News Network, 231 Holiday Street, Baltimore, Maryland

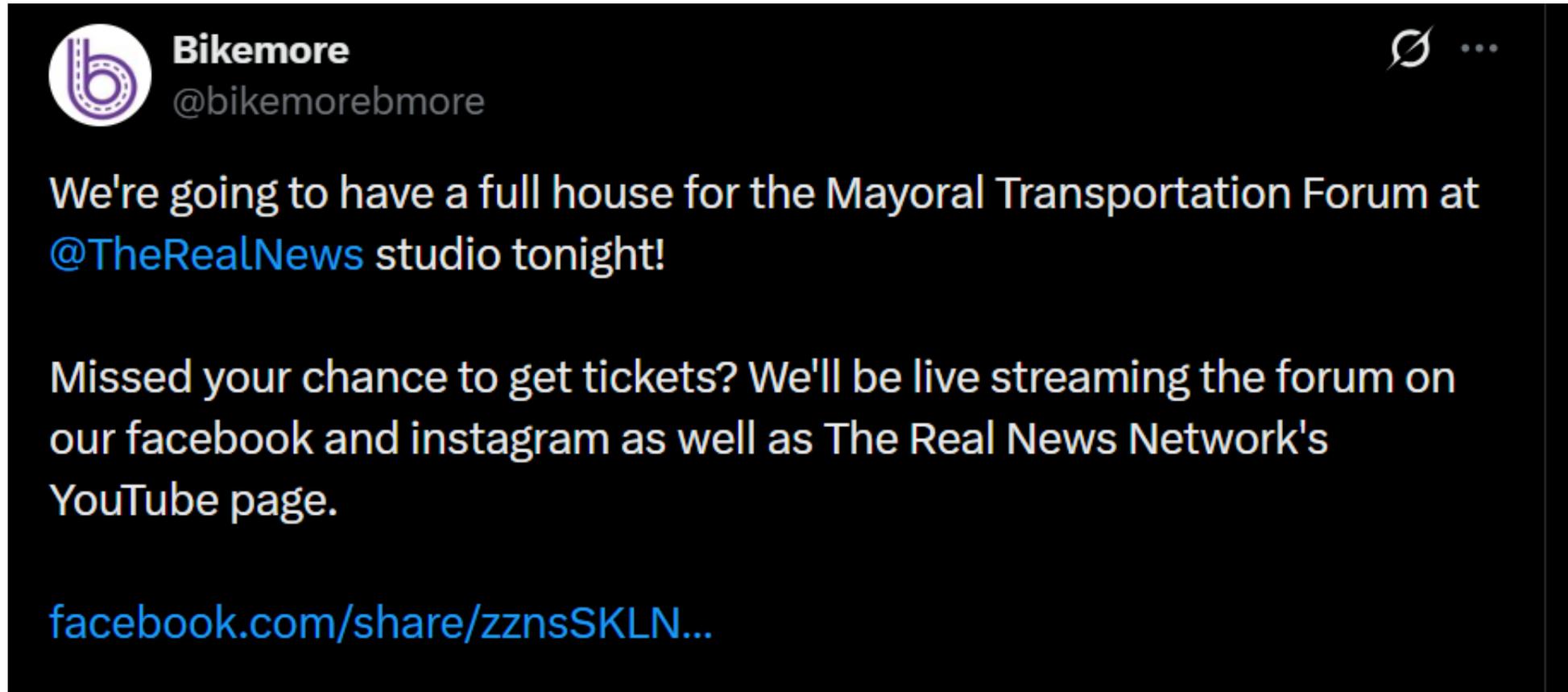
**Who:** Candidates running for Maryland Governor

**Invited Candidates**

- Rushern L. Baker, III
- Valerie Ervin
- Larry Hogan
- Ralph Jaffe (confirmed)
- Ben Jealous
- James Jones
- Rich Madaleno (confirmed)
- Alec Ross (confirmed)
- Jim Shea (confirmed)
- Krish O'Mara Vignarajah (confirmed)

**Moderator:** Jayne Miller, WBAL

# Provide a Livestream Option





# Share Media Coverage

THE BALTIMORE BANNER

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**Baltimore Region** ▼

[Newsletters](#)

**TRANSPORTATION**

## Here's what the mayoral candidates think about bike lanes, the Red Line and bus routes

Daniel Zawodny 4/12/2024 4:21 p.m. EDT



# Share the Recording



Search



**LIVE: Baltimore Mayoral Transportation Forum**



The Real News Network ✓  
1.11M subscribers

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# Overview

I. Candidate Forums

**II. Agency Appointment**

III. Other Actions

# Intro

September 24, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

Dear Governor Moore,

The appointment of Maryland's next Transportation Secretary will be one of the most consequential decisions of your administration. Transportation is the third-largest category of state spending, and unlike education or healthcare, it is an area where the Governor has broad discretion. Its impacts reach far beyond mobility—shaping air and water quality,

# Qualities

As you consider whether to nominate Acting Secretary Biddle or a candidate from the national search, we ask you to consider the qualities we want to see in the next head of MDOT. We ask you to nominate a candidate who is:

1. **Committed to carrying out your Executive Order on the climate crisis and achieving the goals of the Climate Solutions Now Act.** Under your administration,
2. **Committed to a fix-it-first approach.** As former MDOT Secretary Greg Slater said, “system preservation is either pay now or pay more later.” Unfortunately, too many MDOT Secretaries, Slater included, have funded new capacity while growing the backlog of state-of-good-repair needs. It is too costly. New leadership must prioritize fix-it-first.
3. **Clear about induced demand.** The growth in driving, due to highway and arterial road expansion, is well documented. Road expansion fails to address the root causes of congestion and wastes billions of dollars. Prioritizing housing and jobs in walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented locations, and providing the transit and local complete streets investments to support this, is the most effective way to reduce hours of delay in traffic.
4. **Clear about the link between land use and transportation.** Your Sustainable Growth agenda links housing, land use, economic development, and transportation. Transportation investments should be prioritized to address fix-it-first issues.

# Initiatives

As you name an MDOT Secretary, we also encourage you to direct the agency to continue to build on several important initiatives that are currently underway:

1. **Improve Conditions for Transportation Workers.** Improve safety. Eliminate fatalities. Prevent assaults. Provide competitive pay and benefits.
2. **Project prioritization reform.** Done well in other states, prioritization yields better projects and better outcomes per tax dollar spent. It has not been done well in Maryland, but we are optimistic about reforms initiated during your first term.
3. **Advance Transit Improvement Projects.** Maryland's planning principles call for a transportation system that expands access, strengthens communities, and reduces climate impacts. That means completing the Purple Line, fulfilling the pledge to build the Red Line, and fully implementing the Bmore Bus Plan and MARC Transformation Plan. Together, these projects form the backbone of a modern,

# Signatories

Sincerely,

Audubon Mid-Atlantic

BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places

Bike Maryland

Bikemore

Brandywine TB Southern Region Neighborhood Coalition

BWI Business Partnership

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Clayton Baker Trust

Climate Communications Coalition

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Congregation

Environmental Justice Ministry cedar lane congregation

Fix Maryland Rail

Frederick County progressives

Fund for Educational Excellence

Greater Greater Washington

Indivisible HoCoMD Environmental Action

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Maryland Sierra Club

Policy Foundation, INC

Rails to Trails Conservancy

Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition

Washington Area Bicyclist Association

Franklin Blatt

Richard Deutschmann

Anna Ellis

Ann Gordon

Jacqueline MacMillan

Jeanne McCann

Caroline Milam

Monica O'Connor

Klaus Philipsen

Nanci Wilkinson

# Overview

I. Candidate Forums

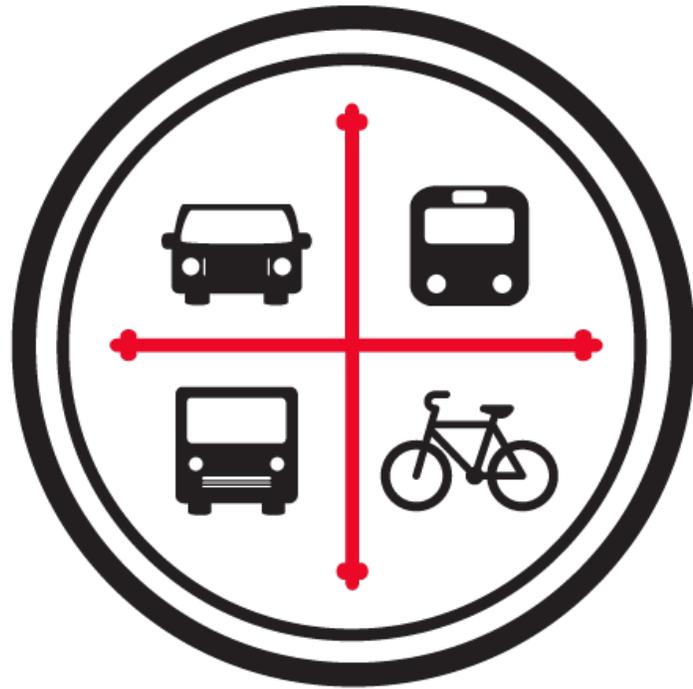
II. Agency Appointment

**III. Other Actions**

# Other Actions

I. Transition Team

II. White Paper



# Transportation Alliance

@cmtalliance

[www.cmtalliance.org](http://www.cmtalliance.org)

**Brian O'Malley**

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

[bomalley@cmtalliance.org](mailto:bomalley@cmtalliance.org)

# More Ideas for Electoral Involvement

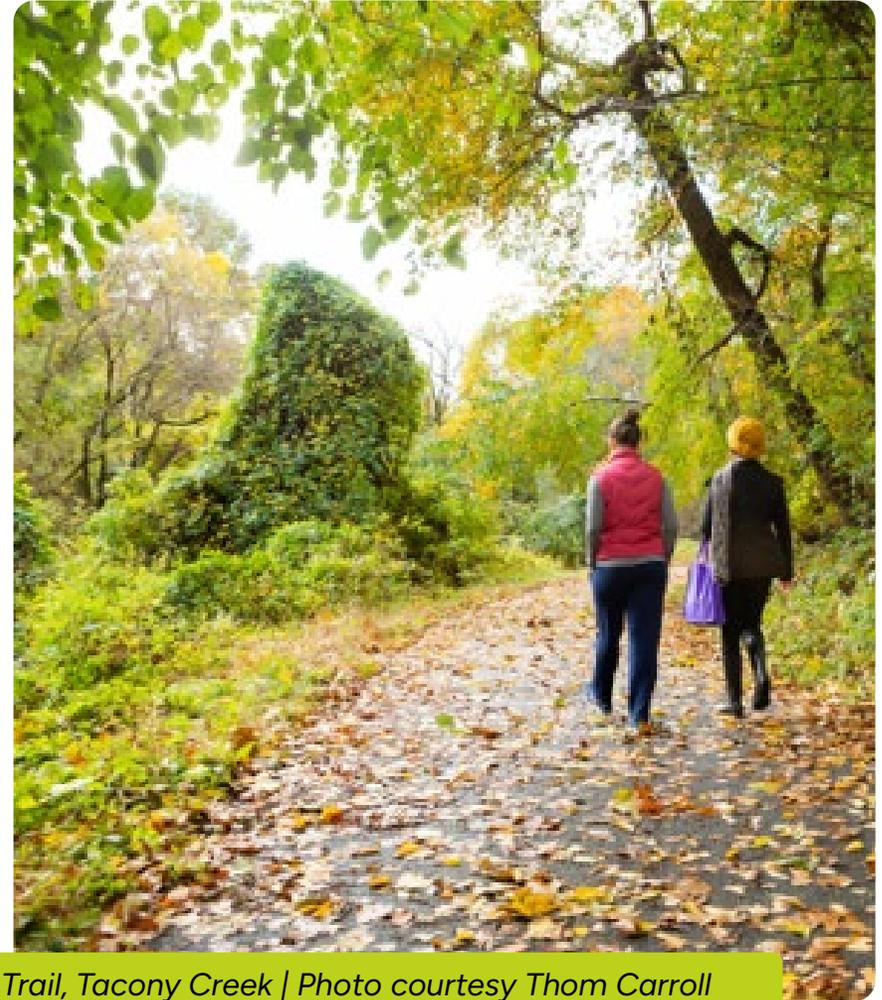
- Know the law
  - Alliance for Justice, Bolder Advocacy Resource Library (link in chat)
- Engage with campaigns, candidates, and the election period itself
- Engage your people
- Have your own election (ballot initiative)



# **Audience Q&A**

# Contacts

- Wade Johnston, Executive Director, Tri-State Trails
  - [wade@tristatetrails.org](mailto:wade@tristatetrails.org)
  - <https://tristatetrails.org/>
- Brian O'Malley, President and CEO, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
  - [bomalley@cmtalliance.org](mailto:bomalley@cmtalliance.org)
  - <https://cmtalliance.org/>
- Andrew N. Dupuy, Director of State-Level Policy, RTC
  - [drew@railstotrails.org](mailto:drew@railstotrails.org)



*Circuit Trail, Tacony Creek | Photo courtesy Thom Carroll*

# Resources and Upcoming Events

- Sign up for our newsletters
- Join the Trail Nation Collaborative
- State Legislative Salon - email [drew@railstotrails.org](mailto:drew@railstotrails.org) to join
- RTC Advocacy Resources
  - Changemakers for Trails Initiative
- Upcoming Webinars
  - **3/5** "Celebrating Trails for People with Intellectual Disabilities: Programming, Accessibility, and Sensory Guidance from Special Olympics Athletes and Programs"
  - **3/18** "Leveraging Unobligated Funding: How to Fund Your Trail with Unspent Federal Funding"



*Virginia's Washington & Old Dominion Trail*



**Thank you!**

