

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish a program to award grants to entities that provide transportation connectors from critically underserved communities to green spaces, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish a program to award grants to entities that provide transportation connectors from critically underserved communities to green spaces, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Transit to Trails Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. TRANSIT TO TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM.**

6 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 (1) COMMUNITY OF COLOR.—The term “com-
8 munity of color” means a geographically distinct

1 area in which the population of any of the following
2 categories of individuals is higher than the average
3 population of that category for the State in which
4 the community is located:

5 (A) Black.

6 (B) African American.

7 (C) Asian.

8 (D) Pacific Islander.

9 (E) Other non-White race.

10 (F) Hispanic.

11 (G) Latino.

12 (H) Linguistically isolated.

13 (I) Middle Eastern and North African.

14 (2) CRITICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—

15 The term “critically underserved community”
16 means—

17 (A) a community that can demonstrate to
18 the Secretary that the community has inad-
19 equate, insufficient, or no park space or recre-
20 ation facilities, including by demonstrating—

21 (i) quality concerns relating to the
22 available park space or recreation facilities;

23 (ii) the presence of recreational facili-
24 ties that do not serve the needs of the com-
25 munity; or

1 (iii) the inequitable distribution of
2 park space for high-need populations,
3 based on income, age, or other measures of
4 vulnerability and need;

5 (B) a community in which at least 50 per-
6 cent of the population is not located within $\frac{1}{2}$
7 mile of park space;

8 (C) a community that is designated as a
9 qualified opportunity zone under section
10 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
11 or

12 (D) any other community that the Sec-
13 retary determines to be appropriate.

14 (3) DESIGNATED SERVICE AREA.—The term
15 “designated service area” means a geographical area
16 recommended by a designated official planning agen-
17 cy that defines the community in which coordinated
18 transportation services are provided to the transpor-
19 tation disadvantaged.

20 (4) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
21 ty” means—

22 (A) a State;

23 (B) a political subdivision of a State (in-
24 cluding a city or a county) that represents or
25 otherwise serves an urban area or a rural area;

1 (C) a special purpose district (including a
2 park district);

3 (D) an Indian Tribe that represents or
4 otherwise serves an urban area or a rural area;
5 or

6 (E) a metropolitan planning organization
7 (as defined in section 134(b) of title 23, United
8 States Code).

9 (5) LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY.—The term “low-
10 income community” means any census block group
11 in which 30 percent or more of the population are
12 individuals with an annual household income equal
13 to, or less than, the greater of—

14 (A) an amount equal to 80 percent of the
15 median income of the area in which the house-
16 hold is located, as reported by the Department
17 of Housing and Urban Development; and

18 (B) 200 percent of the Federal poverty
19 line.

20 (6) PROGRAM.—The term “program” means
21 the Transit to Trails Grant Program established
22 under subsection (b)(1).

23 (7) RURAL AREA.—The term “rural area”
24 means a community that is not an urban area.

1 (8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Transportation.

3 (9) TRANSPORTATION CONNECTOR.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “transportation
5 connector” means a system that—

6 (i) connects 2 ZIP Codes or commu-
7 nities within a 175-mile radius of a des-
8 ignated service area; and

9 (ii) offers rides available to the public.

10 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “transportation
11 connector” includes microtransit, bus
12 lines, bus rails, light rail, rapid transit, and per-
13 sonal rapid transit.

14 (10) URBAN AREA.—The term “urban area”
15 means a community that—

16 (A) is densely developed;

17 (B) has residential, commercial, and other
18 nonresidential areas; and

19 (C)(i) is an urbanized area with a popu-
20 lation of 50,000 or more; or

21 (ii) is an urban cluster with a population
22 of—

23 (I) not less than 2,500; and

24 (II) not more than 50,000.

25 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

1 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall es-
2 tablish a grant program, to be known as the “Tran-
3 sit to Trails Grant Program”, under which the Sec-
4 retary shall award grants to eligible entities for—

5 (A) projects that develop transportation
6 connectors or routes in or serving, and related
7 culturally and linguistically appropriate edu-
8 cation materials for, critically underserved com-
9 munities to increase access and mobility to Fed-
10 eral or non-Federal public land, waters, park-
11 land, or monuments; or

12 (B) projects that facilitate transportation
13 improvements to enhance access to Federal or
14 non-Federal public land and recreational oppor-
15 tunities in critically underserved communities.

16 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ad-
18 minister the program to assist eligible entities
19 in the development of transportation connectors
20 or routes in or serving, and related culturally
21 and linguistically appropriate education mate-
22 rials for, critically underserved communities and
23 Federal or non-Federal public land, waters,
24 parkland, and monuments.

1 (B) JOINT PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary
2 shall encourage joint partnership projects under
3 the program, if available, among multiple agen-
4 cies, including school districts, nonprofit organi-
5 zations, metropolitan planning organizations,
6 regional transportation authorities, transit
7 agencies, and State and local governmental
8 agencies (including park and recreation agen-
9 cies and authorities) to enhance investment of
10 public sources.

11 (C) ANNUAL GRANT PROJECT PROPOSAL
12 SOLICITATION, REVIEW, AND APPROVAL.—

13 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
14 shall—

15 (I) annually solicit the submis-
16 sion of project proposals for grants
17 from eligible entities under the pro-
18 gram; and

19 (II) review each project proposal
20 submitted under subclause (I) on a
21 timeline established by the Secretary.

22 (ii) REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR
23 PROJECT PROPOSAL.—A project proposal
24 submitted under clause (i)(I) shall in-
25 clude—

1 (I) a statement of the purposes
2 of the project;

3 (II) the name of the entity or in-
4 dividual with overall responsibility for
5 the project;

6 (III) a description of the quali-
7 fications of the entity or individuals
8 identified under subclause (II);

9 (IV) a description of—

10 (aa) staffing and stake-
11 holder engagement for the
12 project;

13 (bb) the logistics of the
14 project; and

15 (cc) anticipated outcomes of
16 the project;

17 (V) a proposed budget for the
18 funds and time required to complete
19 the project;

20 (VI) information regarding the
21 source and amount of matching fund-
22 ing available for the project;

23 (VII) information that dem-
24 onstrates the clear potential of the
25 project to contribute to increased ac-

1 cess to parkland for critically under-
2 served communities; and

3 (VIII) any other information that
4 the Secretary considers to be nec-
5 essary for evaluating the eligibility of
6 the project for funding under the pro-
7 gram.

8 (D) PRIORITY.—To the extent practicable,
9 in determining whether to approve project pro-
10 posals under the program, the Secretary shall
11 prioritize projects that—

12 (i) are designed to increase access and
13 mobility to local or neighborhood Federal
14 or non-Federal public land, waters, park-
15 land, monuments, or recreational opportu-
16 nities;

17 (ii) use low- or no-emission vehicles;

18 (iii) provide free or discounted rates
19 for low-income riders;

20 (iv) provide opportunities for youth
21 engagement;

22 (v) provide employment preference to
23 individuals who reside in the community in
24 which the project is located;

1 (vi) are established in communities of
2 color, low-income communities, Tribal or
3 indigenous communities, or rural areas;

4 (vii) would capitalize on existing es-
5 tablished public-private partnerships; and

6 (viii) comply with applicable provi-
7 sions of the Americans with Disabilities
8 Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

9 (3) TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCE-
10 DURES.—

11 (A) PROCEDURES.—In consultation with
12 the head of each appropriate Federal land man-
13 agement agency, the Secretary shall develop, by
14 rule, transportation planning procedures for
15 projects conducted under the program that are
16 consistent with metropolitan and statewide
17 planning processes.

18 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the
19 program, the Secretary shall ensure the fol-
20 lowing:

21 (i) All projects carried out under the
22 program shall comply with sections 5303
23 and 5304 of title 49, United States Code.

24 (ii) All new transportation connectors
25 and routes established under a project car-

1 ried out under the program shall be acces-
2 sible in accordance with the accessibility
3 specifications for transportation vehicles
4 under the Americans with Disabilities Act
5 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

6 (iii) State department of transpor-
7 tation agencies shall engage with relevant
8 stakeholders consistent with subsections
9 (f)(3) and (g)(3) of section 5304 of title
10 49, United States Code, and metropolitan
11 planning organizations shall engage with
12 relevant stakeholders consistent with sub-
13 sections (g)(3)(B), (i)(5), and (i)(6) of sec-
14 tion 5303 of that title, in addition to faith-
15 based and community-based organizations.

16 (iv) Except as otherwise provided
17 under this section, a grant provided under
18 this section shall be subject to the require-
19 ments of section 5307 of title 49, United
20 States Code.

21 (4) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—As a condition of re-
23 ceiving a grant under the program, an eligible
24 entity shall provide funds for the project in the
25 form of cash or an in-kind contribution in an

1 amount equal to not less than 100 percent of
2 the amount of the grant.

3 (B) SOURCES.—The non-Federal contribu-
4 tion required under subparagraph (A) may in-
5 clude amounts made available from State, local,
6 nongovernmental, or private sources.

7 (5) ELIGIBLE USES.—Grant funds provided
8 under the program may be used—

9 (A) to develop transportation connectors or
10 routes in or serving, and related culturally and
11 linguistically appropriate education materials
12 for, critically underserved communities to in-
13 crease access and mobility to Federal and non-
14 Federal public land, waters, parkland, and
15 monuments; and

16 (B) to create or significantly enhance ac-
17 cess to Federal or non-Federal public land and
18 recreational opportunities in an urban area or
19 a rural area.

20 (6) GRANT AMOUNT.—A grant provided under
21 the program shall be in an amount that is—

22 (A) not less than \$25,000; and

23 (B) not more than \$500,000.

24 (7) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—It is the intent
25 of Congress that grants provided under the program

1 deliver project funds to areas of greatest need while
2 offering technical assistance to all applicants and po-
3 tential applicants for grant preparation to encourage
4 full participation in the program.

5 (8) PUBLIC INFORMATION.—The Secretary
6 shall ensure that current schedules and routes for
7 transportation systems developed with funds from a
8 grant under the program are available to the public,
9 including on a website maintained by the eligible en-
10 tity.

11 (c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

12 (1) REPORTS BY GRANT RECIPIENTS.—The
13 Secretary shall require an eligible entity that re-
14 ceives a grant under the program to submit to the
15 Secretary not less than 1 performance and financial
16 report that—

17 (A) includes—

18 (i) demographic data on communities
19 served by the project; and

20 (ii) a summary of project activities
21 conducted after receiving the grant; and

22 (B) describes the status of each project
23 funded by the grant as of the date of the re-
24 port.

1 (2) ADDITIONAL REPORTS.—In addition to the
2 report under paragraph (1), the Secretary may re-
3 quire additional reports from an eligible entity that
4 receives a grant under the program, as the Secretary
5 determines to be appropriate, including a final re-
6 port.

7 (3) DEADLINES.—The Secretary shall establish
8 deadlines for the submission of each report required
9 under paragraph (1) or (2).

10 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
12 tion—

13 (1) \$10,000,000 for each of the first and sec-
14 ond fiscal years that begin after the date of enact-
15 ment of this Act;

16 (2) \$20,000,000 for each of the third and
17 fourth fiscal years that begin after that date; and

18 (3) \$40,000,000 for the fifth fiscal year that
19 begins after that date.