



Councilmember Charles Allen

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize February 4, 2025, as “Transit Equity Day” in the District of Columbia and to reaffirm the Council’s commitment to providing residents and visitors with an equitable, accessible, and reliable transit system.

WHEREAS, Transit Equity Day is observed annually on February 4, the birthday of Rosa Parks, to honor her life and legacy;

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks, hailed as the “mother of the civil rights movement,” is perhaps best known for her courageous refusal to give up her seat on a segregated public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, resulting in her arrest in 1955 and the subsequent Montgomery Bus Boycott, a foundational moment in the Civil Rights Movement that focused on the need for justice and equity in public transportation systems;

WHEREAS, on March 2, 1955, Claudette Colvin—just 15 years of age—refused a white woman’s request to relinquish her seat and was subsequently arrested;

WHEREAS, that same year, on October 21, 18-year-old Mary Louise Smith was similarly arrested for her refusal to give up her seat to a white bus rider;

WHEREAS, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louise Smith, and two other Black women who experienced harassment by bus drivers were the four main plaintiffs in the landmark federal bus desegregation case of *Browder v. Gayle*, 142 F. Supp. 707 (1956), in which the United States

33 District Court for the Middle District of Alabama held that racially segregated public transportation
34 systems violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment;

35 WHEREAS, despite ending legal segregation on public transit, unequal access to public
36 transit based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, income, age,
37 or disability has persisted in many transit systems across the country;

38 WHEREAS, public transit is a crucial transportation option for low-income travelers, but
39 reduced funding for transit, and the resulting loss of service or fare increases, have exacerbated
40 existing economic barriers;

41 WHEREAS, public transit is essential urban infrastructure that—just like roads, bridges,
42 tunnels, and utilities—is crucial to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the
43 District and the metropolitan region;

44 WHEREAS, a robust and accessible public transportation network connects people to
45 home, work, school, and places of worship, as well as to opportunities for dining, entertainment,
46 and recreation;

47 WHEREAS, in addition to providing critical transportation services to the public, transit
48 agencies also provide stable careers through which thousands of people support their families,
49 contributing to the economic strength of the region;

50 WHEREAS, paratransit services are necessary to ensure seniors and people with
51 disabilities maintain access to public transit, and the paratransit system should be enhanced so that
52 it, at a minimum, provides the same standards of reliability, timeliness, and convenience as other
53 parts of the system;

54 WHEREAS, safety is a critical component of accessibility, and the Council remains
55 committed to achieving Vision Zero, eliminating all traffic fatalities in the District, and ensuring
56 everyone can safely move throughout the District—including to and from public transit facilities;

57 WHEREAS, emissions from the transportation sector account for 21% of the District’s
58 total greenhouse gas emissions (“GHG”), with passenger vehicle emissions comprising the single
59 largest source of transportation-related emissions;

60 WHEREAS, these GHG emissions and other vehicle-related pollutants have the greatest
61 impact on communities closest to highways and other major roads, which are disproportionately
62 communities of color or economically disadvantaged communities;

63 WHEREAS, public transit is a sustainable alternative to personal vehicle travel and
64 increasing ridership on public transit can help reduce the District’s GHG and mitigate our impact
65 on the environment and climate;

66 WHEREAS, reducing disparities in transit access, shifting to more sustainable
67 transportation modes, and increasing “green” career opportunities are key components of a “Just
68 Transition” from a carbon-intensive, fossil-fuel based, highly unequal extractive economy to a
69 more just, pollution-free, and resilient renewable energy-based economy;

70 WHEREAS, the Council is committed to working with regional partners, including the
71 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Metropolitan Washington Council of
72 Governments, to build a modern public transit system;

73 WHEREAS, all District residents deserve access to an equitable, accessible, and reliable
74 public transportation system; and

75 WHEREAS, achieving transit equity requires that we strengthen our public transportation
76 system, expand low-cost transportation options, improve safety for all roadway users, and

77 eliminate physical, economic, and social barriers that prevent equitable access to all modes of
78 transportation.

79 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this
80 resolution may be cited as the “District of Columbia Transit Equity Day Recognition Resolution
81 of 2025”.

82 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and hereby proclaims February
83 4, 2025, as Transit Equity Day.

84 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.