Open, accessible spaces for passive recreation, nature connections, and community gatherings are essential to the viability of our urban neighborhoods. Nonetheless, many Maryland communities were developed without any available greenspaces. Add to that, acquisition and conservation of lands in areas with greater population density is often much more expensive, due to competing values for land and you have a scenario in which urban green spaces are hard to find.

The “Greenspace Equity Program” would provide annual state funding to land trusts, local governments and other community partners working in Maryland's underserved and overburdened communities where the public need for greenspace is often the greatest. This program seeks to support the creation of new greenspaces in urban settings as well as the care and maintenance of them.

“Community greenspace” includes a variety of uses including: community gardens, community gathering open space areas, community woodlands, green networks, parks, trails, and urban farms.

Eligible grant recipients include land trusts, other nongovernmental organizations, counties and municipalities.

Funds would come from the state share of Program Open Space. $5 million would be appropriated in year 1, $7 million in year 2, and $10 million in year 3 and subsequent years.