

BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
Mayor
250 City Hall, 100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Gregory Slater
Office of the Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Slater:

I am pleased to provide this letter reflecting the City of Baltimore's transportation priorities for inclusion in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The priorities contained in this letter are consistent with my administration's commitment to accessible public transportation; advancing the implementation of our innovative, comprehensive complete streets ordinance; and it reflects the need to connect City residents with major employers across the region.

The projects requested should largely be familiar to you, as the ongoing dialogue between you, your staff, and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) helped to form our assessment of the City's needs and goals. I thank you for your favorable consideration of the requests made in this letter as you work to develop the next iteration of Maryland's Consolidated Transportation Program.

PROJECT REQUESTS

East/West Premium Bus Service and Supporting Infrastructure

BCDOT, in collaboration with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), aims to create a nine-mile east to west Premium Bus Service. The MTA would operate the buses along this route as part

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of their BaltimoreLink system and it would create greater transit efficiency in east-west transit across Baltimore City. Enhancing bus service along this corridor would include Transit Signal Prioritization (TSP), a Transit Layover Facility, dedicated bus lanes, and efficiency and safety infrastructure such as bus bulb-outs. Other investments to support this project would include sign modifications, bus stop right-sizing, and intersection daylighting. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$20 million and would span the length of the City nearly from the east to west borders. The City of Baltimore has committed resources to improve infrastructure along this corridor, and our local investment would be significantly leveraged by a corresponding state investment in Premium Bus Service.

Transit Signal Prioritization, dedicated bus lanes, and stop amenities such as bus bulbs reduce the impact of traffic on bus service. Enhancing transit reliability improves the experience of the rider by diminishing wait and ride times, meeting the travel demand by taking people to their designated locations in a timely fashion. This reliable form of transportation allows for rider choice and flexibility when there is a consistent and timely service.

This project would improve accessibility and transit reliability in Baltimore City's highest-needed locations, such as East and West Baltimore. These locations have some of the highest concentration of citizens without access to a personal vehicle in the City. This would improve transit services for those most reliant on MTA service, and would help to eliminate Baltimore's spatial mismatch of where jobs are located and where those in need of employment reside. Additionally, creating a transit corridor is a proven method for creating economic vitality by generating foot traffic near the businesses along the corridor.

Improving transit service makes transit an option for many more people who would otherwise drive single-occupancy vehicles. Reducing the number of cars on the road improves public health by limiting emissions and creating greater safety for pedestrians, drivers and bicyclists as single-occupancy vehicles are the most likely to cause dangerous crashes.

Residents of Baltimore City deserve and require an efficient and reliable form of public transportation with minimal travel times moving to and from eastern and western Baltimore. This service would provide an imperative connection to needed amenities, rider choice, and foster improved economic and physical health for the residents of Baltimore City.

Hanover Street Bridge and Multi-modal Corridor

Replacement of the iconic but deteriorated Hanover Street Bridge is critically needed. The structure, which is one of two drawbridges in Baltimore City, has a bridge sufficiency rating of 51.2 and is the largest source of claims against the City for pothole-related damage of any Baltimore City location. Additionally, the existing draw span materials, steel grates and sometimes steel plates, do not provide a safe surface for bicycles.

North of the bridge is downtown and the bulk of the land mass of Baltimore City, Interstate 95, and Port Covington – the largest development site on the East Coast which will contain the headquarters of Under Armour. South of the bridge are a major hospital, residences, and areas of

heavy industry that also contain port facilities. Connecting truck traffic generated from the industries and port to I-95 guarantees quick access and prevents the noxious emissions from trucks out of residential areas. Port Covington is projected to be a major economic and employment center for Baltimore City, so creating safe access and connectivity is necessary for the project to benefit residents.

In 2014, Baltimore City was awarded a TIGER grant that funded a study of replacement and rehabilitation options for the venerable structure, complete with multi-modal, economic and development considerations. Ongoing work assisted by \$3 million in state funds previously provided for re-decking, included structural repairs, concrete deck repairs and an asphalt overlay. These improvements are designed to add years to the life of the bridge while funds for the major replacement or rehabilitation are being sought. In 2018, Baltimore City submitted an unsuccessful BUILD Grant application for \$2.4 million to fund work on the NEPA process including a preliminary design, which could lead directly to design and construction within 4 years. If allocated \$150 million BCDOT could proceed with design and construction. Design features of the bridge would not only address structural concerns, but would create a bike-friendly, multi-modal crossing.

Transit Flow and Access Improvements- Dedicated Bus Lanes and Complete Streets Improvements

The BaltimoreLink bus service that officially launched in 2017 included planning, design, and installation of dedicated bus lanes to provide efficient bus movement through downtown Baltimore. These dedicated bus lanes offer improved safety, reliability, on-time performance and efficiency. Planning and design for the dedicated lanes is being done as a partnership between the MTA and BCDOT. BCDOT proposes a cost-sharing plan between the City and MDOT to resurface or reconstruct the corridors as needed to include road, ADA, and active transportation upgrades on the 7-lane miles of dedicated bus lane corridors. The cost for this effort is estimated to be \$60 million.

Many of the City's streets are already in poor condition, and the additional wear due to concentrated bus traffic results in a quicker deterioration of the roadway. These upgrades will provide a high-quality transit experience and create a multi-modal roadway network. It will also reduce congestion and promote safe and quick movement of people and goods, as fewer single-occupancy vehicles will be on the road with increased ridership. A program that phases these improvements over the life of the capital budget, or \$60 million, would ensure continuous progress.

Support to reconstruct and resurface these roadways would provide an improved transit system performance, reduced cost and maintenance of vehicles, and an increased roadway network life expectancy.

Planning of Bayview MARC Station

Just as the MTA transit service plays a critical role in moving people within the City of Baltimore and around the region, the MARC service connects Baltimore residents by rail to tremendous economic opportunities throughout our state, the District of Columbia, and beyond. An expansion of the MARC service would drive economic activity and connectivity. As you well know, a multi-modal transportation hub in Bayview has long been contemplated. My administration stands ready to work alongside our state partners to restart planning efforts and bring this project to fruition.

Bayview is an ideal location for transportation investment. It is in close proximity to Interstates 95 and 85, it is anchored by Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, and not only is it accessible to thriving City neighborhoods; but it is also a short drive or transit ride from a number of populous eastern Baltimore County communities.

State TOD Designation for Penn Station Redevelopment

In our effort to promote a multi-modal transportation system, and to support MDOT/MTA in the redevelopment of Baltimore's Penn Station, Baltimore City is seeking the State Transit Oriented Development (TOD) designation for the project. A TOD designation would allow the project to qualify for additional sources of funding. Again, BC DOT stands ready to work with MDOT to achieve this designation.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Adequate Funding for MTA Transit – Operating and Capital

Ensuring that the MTA receives adequate funding is important to the economy of Baltimore City, the region, and the State of Maryland as a whole. This has always been true, but as we imagine the outlook of the economic recovery once the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, it will be critical. MTA's weekday ridership often exceeds 300,000 trips per day. These riders include people traveling to school, work, visiting family, and running essential errands. The recently published Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) report identified a \$2 billion capital funding deficit split nearly equally between state of good repair and system enhancement needs. Ensuring MTA is able to provide safe, affordable, and reliable transportation is critically important to the residents and businesses of Baltimore City.

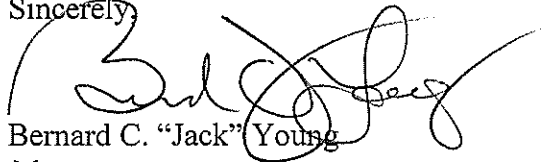
Restoration of Highway User Revenue Allocation

The City is appreciative of recent mandated increases in Highway User Revenue (HUR) allocation, yet we continue to be challenged by the fact that these revenues have not returned to pre-2007 levels. In fiscal year 2007, Baltimore City received 12.3% of the \$1.8 billion that was distributed to local jurisdictions. By contrast, in fiscal year 2020 Baltimore City received 8.3% of the HUR

share. Legislatively, mandated increases have helped, but fall short of meeting our deferred maintenance needs. As you are aware, Baltimore City is unique among Maryland's jurisdictions in that we bear the cost of maintaining state roadways within our boundaries. Further restoration of Baltimore's HUR allocation will significantly impact our ability to address the major backlog of transportation infrastructure improvements currently pending

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Steve Sharkey, Director of Transportation at (410) 396-6802 or via email at steve.sharkey@baltimorecity.gov. Again, I thank you in advance for your favorable consideration of our requests. Working together, we can provide a safe, reliable transportation network that the people of Baltimore City need and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard C. Young", written over a large, stylized, and somewhat illegible scribble.

Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor
City of Baltimore