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MAYOR

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April 30, 2024

Secretary Paul J. Wiedefeld
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld,

I am pleased to provide this letter reflecting the City of Baltimore's transportation priorities for inclusion in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). We are grateful for our continued partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). We are especially thankful for the quick action and collaboration with all MDOT modals on the Francis Scott Key Bridge response and look forward to continued partnership in the recovery efforts. State investments in Baltimore City's infrastructure and transit-related improvements is critical in executing our goals to improve multimodal accessibility, transportation equity, and Complete Streets in Baltimore. It is for this reason that retaining Baltimore City's higher allocation of Highway User Revenue dollars beyond fiscal year 2027 is a priority. We must continue to work in partnership to ensure our mutual goals can be met by supporting the safety, reliability, accessibility, and sustainability of the multimodal transportation network. For this reason, the Redline is a critical priority for the City and serves as a means to achieve economic mobility and provide modal connectivity for Baltimore residents.

The priorities contained in this letter are consistent with my Administration's commitment to increase access to public transportation, advance the implementation of the Complete Streets ordinance, support safe and reliable movement of freight, and connect City residents with major employers across the region. These requests also represent the funding we need to maintain our transportation network in a state of good repair to meet the mobility and safety needs of the traveling public. These requests are in line with the goals outlined in the Maryland Transportation Plan, and we look forward to implementation with the State's support.

Shovel-Worthy Projects

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and Hanover Street Multimodal Corridor Improvements

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and Hanover Street corridor in south Baltimore are in critical need of investments to rehabilitate or replace the structure and improve multimodal transportation infrastructure. This corridor is part of the arterial roadway network in Baltimore City serving as a freight connection between MDOT MPA's Port of Baltimore and I-95 and several of MDOT MTA CityLink bus routes. Furthermore, this corridor serves as an important connection for the historically disadvantaged, low-income, and minority communities, such as Cherry Hill, Curtis Bay, and Brooklyn, to travel to job centers in Port Covington, Downtown Baltimore, and points past our borders into Anne Arundel County. The

bridge cannot safely accommodate bicycles, the sidewalks are not ADA compliant, and the bascule draw bridge section routinely requires long closure periods for inspection and maintenance.

In 2018, BCDOT conducted a federally-funded planning study to identify safety, multimodal accessibility, and state of good repair improvements for the bridge and the Hanover Street corridor in the surrounding communities. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) is currently funding a structural assessment of the bridge to assess the feasibility of repair versus replacement. State and federal support is needed to advance improvements for this bridge and the Hanover Street Corridor. The next step is to conduct a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Study to engage with stakeholders, identify environmental constraints and select a preferred alternative. BCDOT has committed \$2.5 million local funds and \$5 million federal funds towards NEPA. Completing a NEPA study will allow this project to become eligible for new Federal discretionary grant funding opportunities that can help fund final design and construction. BCDOT, with the support of MDOT, recently applied for a \$15.5 million USDOT RAISE grant to conduct the NEPA study and 30% design on the bridge repair or replacement and safety and multimodal improvements to the Maryland Route 2 corridor between I-95 and the Anne Arundel County line. The City requests active State participation in this process, regardless of whether the grant application is successful.

US 40 Franklin and Mulberry Highway Redevelopment and Ramp Removal

In the 1970s, the State Roads Commission built the US 40 expressway decimating 16 continuous city blocks that used to be homes and businesses in Black communities of West Baltimore. The intent to connect with I-70 never happened, and today this massive scar across the City has become known as the Highway to Nowhere. Building this expressway has caused irreparable damage to community cohesion and economic stability in West Baltimore. BCDOT has made progress in the past to reestablish part of the grid and reconnect Payson Street. BCDOT is partnering with MDOT MTA to design and implement multimodal Complete Street elements along this corridor for the East West Transitway RAISE Grant. BCDOT has been awarded \$2 million through USDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program for a Planning Study, with MDOT/SHA serving as the primary grant recipient and fiscal agent. With these new federal funding opportunities available in the IJA for Reconnecting Communities, BCDOT is seeking State support to leverage federal dollars for a planning study to assess new alternatives and redevelopment opportunities to support community cohesion and economic growth. BCDOT is anticipating future local matches and seeks funding in preparation for the next phases of this long-term project.

Implementation of the Greenway Trails

The City of Baltimore is developing a 35-mile world-class urban trail network that would link neighborhoods, anchor institutions, parks, schools, commercial districts, waterfronts, transit hubs, and more. There are ten miles remaining to realize a completed Greenway Trail network. The City is currently advancing planning and design work on several remaining gaps in the public ROW, including 6.3 miles of trail to connect Leakin Park, Druid Hill Park, Lake Montebello, and Herring Run Park. The City is working towards connecting the Inner Harbor to Middle Branch Park, as well as the two-mile gap along Norfolk Southern and BGE corridors, which needs to be acquired. If this project were to receive state funding support, it would allow the City to leverage already identified private and federal dollars.

Locally-Operated Transit Services

The Charm City Circulator and Harbor Connector are free and locally operated transit services in Baltimore City. These services connect residents, tourists, and commuters to job centers and important destinations, and support the MDOT MTA's transit operations. Capital improvements for these complimentary transit services would support improvements needed to connect new destinations and leverage equity improvements to ensure free transit service is more accessible to historically disadvantaged communities.

The capital improvements needed to improve service, as outlined in our Transit Development Plan, include bus stop enhancements, pier, and docking infrastructure expansion and repairs, and purchasing boats to replace vessels at the end of their service life.

Bus Stop Relocation Construction

BCDOT requests \$300,000 to relocate existing and construct new bus stops. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation's Transit Services Bureau completed a Transit Development Plan in Summer 2022. The plan will guide the Charm City Circulator (CCC) for the next five years and includes recommendations related to new or adjusted route patterns and hours of operation, among other things. One of the items identified within the TDP was the need for construction of new bus stops in some locations and relocation of bus stops in others. In total, BCDOT has identified 30 bus stops in need of relocation in the short-term and 10 new bus stops that should be constructed within the same timeframe. This project will improve the efficiency of the CCC's operations and provide better connections across the transit system.

Transit Oriented Development

Infill and redevelopment with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near Transit Hubs in Baltimore City supports our City goals to promote equitable development, economic growth, and multimodal transportation. The City of Baltimore supports MDOT initiatives to create TOD areas in Baltimore City linking land use and transportation with new mixed-use development and Complete Street transportation enhancements. The City of Baltimore supports MDOT's designation of TOD areas at Penn Station, Westport, and Reisterstown Plaza, and has been working closely with MDOT on its current TOD and redevelopment plan for Reisterstown Plaza. BCDOT can further support MDOT's TOD program with supplemental State funding to provide multimodal transportation improvements to the roadway network in and around these TOD areas. Additionally, we ask that MDOT revisit previous iterations of the MARC Growth and Investment Plans (2007 and 2013), increase capital investment in MARC stations, and identify new TOD opportunities adjacent to MARC and Metro stations in the City of Baltimore.

Electric Vehicle Charging

Baltimore City has made strides introducing publicly accessible electric vehicle charging supply equipment (EVSE) on city-owned property and right of way. Much of this work has been accomplished with funding from the Maryland Public Service Commission's Order No. 88997 (EV Charging Pilot) and local company Electric Vehicle institute (EVI). As the transition to electric vehicles intensifies, it is necessary for Baltimore City to be prepared for the increased demand for EVSE. Moreover, the equitable introduction of publicly accessible EVSE in all Baltimore neighborhoods aligns with the Moore Administration's and the Greenhouse Reduction Plan Act's transportation goals of protecting the environment, increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road, and providing equity and opportunity. These efforts can be accelerated with increased State support.

Pennington Avenue/Curtis Ave Two-Way Conversion

Residents around Pennington Avenue and Curtis Avenue have been requesting two-way conversions of the roads for many years due to the large volume of commercial vehicles traveling through the middle of the community. Converting these roads to two-way would reduce the volume of large truck traffic travelling through the center of the community, provide more direct access for commercial vehicles, and provide a main street corridor for the community. In 2015, BCDOT completed a two-way conversion study that provided a recommended build alternative and cost estimate for project implementation. In 2019, BCDOT completed Phase I of the Environmental Assessment task. The project now requires the Phase II Environmental Assessment and a feasibility study. Additionally, BCDOT is working with Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP) to create better access and safer connections to the Curtis Bay Recreation Center through a Master Plan for the area surrounding the Bay Brook Park. BCDOT requests funding

support for completing the feasibility study and Phase II of the Environmental Assessment for the Pennington Avenue Two-Way Conversion. BCDOT requests \$800,000 to conduct a topographic survey, a Type B utility designation, a refined concept and a better assessment of impacts for this project. With this stage of the project, we aim to reduce environmental impacts while working towards better transportation connections in the area for all users of the roads.

Wolfe and Washington Separated Bike Lane

Baltimore City DOT aims to design and construct a 2.2 mile separated bike lane on Washington Street and traffic calming on Wolfe Street. Wolfe and Washington Streets directly connect East Baltimore neighborhoods to parks, a hospital, schools, restaurants, retail, grocery, and essential services. Both roads bisect or are closely adjacent to neighborhoods that have many no-car households. Additionally, both roads have noted safety concerns. Separated bike lanes can improve safety and connectivity for residents of all ages and needs. This project has completed 30% design. It requires \$900,000 to complete 100% designs and \$4.5 million for construction.

Programmed Citywide Initiatives with Insufficient Funding

Roadway Resurfacing

Baltimore City is in a unique position among Maryland jurisdictions—the City is responsible for maintaining all roadways within City limits, including State routes and critical freight routes supporting the MDOT MPA Port of Baltimore. Impacts from heavy freight traffic generated by the Port of Baltimore have significantly degraded Baltimore City’s roadway network. With the closure of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, this degradation is expected to be even greater. There are over 2,000 miles of roadway in Baltimore City, and BCDOT manages hundreds of street improvement projects each year. BCDOT’s goal is to keep all roads in a good condition—however, heavy truck traffic, winter weather, and ongoing wear and tear creates an extensive and persistent backlog of maintenance needs. Supplemental funding and support for BCDOT’s roadway resurfacing program helps ensure our streets, State routes, and freight corridors remain in good condition. This also helps us to improve road safety, network reliability, and reduce ongoing maintenance needs for infrastructure and vehicles.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Baltimore is one of the oldest cities on the East Coast and this area is the largest employment center in the state. Constructing and remediating pedestrian infrastructure to meet current ADA standards is a priority for the City of Baltimore. BCDOT has included funding for ADA as a top priority to ensure that all residents and visitors can use the pedestrian facility to get to health care, services, work, schools, and recreation. BCDOT has prioritized transit corridor upgrades of ADA infrastructure to increase safe and accessible routes to public transit options. Prioritizing ADA infrastructure upgrades through an equity lens is key to bringing the City into full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our efforts can be significantly accelerated with increased State and Federal funding support. BCDOT appreciates the MDOT \$10 million grant provided in 2022 to remediate pedestrian infrastructure for ADA compliance; continued partnership with MDOT and additional funding will continue to accelerate the efforts to bring Baltimore City into full compliance. Constructing ADA compliant curb ramps, crosswalks, sidewalks, and pedestrian signal infrastructure will enable everyone, regardless of physical abilities, to safely navigate the public thoroughfare.

Traffic Safety Initiatives

BCDOT also operates several additional programs that equitably target traffic safety throughout Baltimore, including the Toward Zero “Quick Build program,” the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, and traffic calming improvements and studies in the City’s “Impact Investment Areas.” These programs address high

crash intersections and address safety from a community roadway network standpoint. To achieve the City's goal of zero traffic-related injuries and fatalities, MDOT's support is a critical to funding projects. This includes funding to implement safety projects which include traffic calming and accessibility improvements, to protect the most vulnerable users of the transportation network. These programs have an annual funding need of \$4M.

Signal Upgrades and Master Plan

Between 2016 and 2018, the BCDOT Traffic Division commissioned an assessment of the City's roughly 1,400 traffic signals to identify those signals that were in significant need of rehabilitation or reconstruction. At that time 124 traffic signals were identified as the highest priority intersections. Over the past five years, the Traffic Division has pursued the reconstruction of these traffic signals, with approximately 28 traffic signals planned for reconstruction by the Traffic Division within a three to four-year timeframe. These 28 locations are nearing the completion of the design process and slated for advertisement in 2024. Despite this progress, the reconstruction of these 28 traffic signals represents only a quarter of our priority list (and merely 2% of our total existing traffic signals) totaling approximately \$12 million in construction costs. BCDOT is being strategic and working to include reconstruction of additional traffic signals in other roadway projects. The cost to reconstruct the remaining "high priority" traffic signals in the foreseeable future would be approximately \$43 million (\$8 million for design and construction management services and \$35 million for construction).

Given the gradual degradation of the City's traffic signal infrastructure, an aggressive strategic plan is necessary for not only reconstruction, but also the construction of new traffic signals as the City continues to see growth and development. This plan encompasses the reconstruction of eight signals per calendar year over a 10-year period amounting to a total of 80 traffic signals and an approximate construction cost of \$30 million. This is a critical need for the City's transportation infrastructure to ensure that our traffic signals are structurally sound, in compliance with current standards, and representative of the state-of-the-practice.

Water Transit Strategic Plan

The Harbor Connector is overdue for an evaluation of services provided, including routes, schedules and other operational activities similar to the Charm City Circulator's Transit Development Plan. Additionally, the Harbor Connector was awarded a \$5.1 million grant through the FTA in Winter 2023, which will be used to purchase new ferries and construct new docks. This study will help ensure those funds are spent in a way that improves safety, accessibility, and operations. Finally, the city is interested in considering how to open the Inner Harbor and Harbor Connector docks to recreational kayaking and docking. The study will consider how to implement potential recreational kayaking and docking in a way that avoids conflicts between ferries and kayakers. BCDOT requests \$100,000 for a Harbor Connector study and plan, which would consider potential areas where service can be optimized so that schedules can better align with the needs of passengers.

Transit Flow and Access Improvements

The Baltimore CityLink network includes dedicated bus lanes for improved safety, reliability, on-time performance, and efficiency. BCDOT and MDOT MTA are already working together proactively and dedicating resources to resurface or reconstruct the corridors to include roadway improvements, ADA compliant bus stops and sidewalks to increase access, and active transportation upgrades on the dedicated bus lane corridors. Ongoing support from the State to expand, reconstruct, and resurface roadways can improve transit system performance, reduce cost of vehicle maintenance, and increase roadway network life expectancy. Additional support is needed from the State to implement traffic control measures such as transit signal priority, queue jumps, transit bus movement exemptions, and bus stop enhancements for transit rider comfort and safety. Pedestrian infrastructure upgrades to meet ADA standards are a critical component at bus stops and along corridors, to provide accessible routes from neighborhoods. These

investments to our roadway, transit, and pedestrian infrastructure would improve MTA transit users' ridership experiences, improve transit system reliability, and maintain critical infrastructure for all users of the road.

Transit Technical Assistance

BCDOT requests \$262,000 to fund the existing transit technical assistance contract through the end of the FY25 fiscal year. This would support resources needed for execution of the transit development plan, including identifying work necessary to implement new routes to Cherry Hill and new areas to be served by existing routes, including Orleans Street and North Avenue.

Bridge Repair and Replacement Through New Finance Options and State Support

There are 296 City-owned and maintained bridges in Baltimore. Of those, 188 are in "Fair Condition" and 44 are in "Poor Condition." Due to funding gaps, only two bridges are currently under construction. Eight bridge projects are being closed out soon and another eight bridges are currently in the design stage. An additional 18 bridges have been submitted to the CIP without funding. To address these failing bridges, Baltimore City requires increased State support for developing innovative financing models to rehabilitate and replace failing bridges and greater flexibility in funding uses and sources. Baltimore would benefit from the use of toll credits for the required local match to draw down more federal funds. Also, State assistance with the use of Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEEs) bonds would allow Baltimore City to spread the financing over the life of the bridge rather than the construction period.

Necessary Modifications to Capital Programming

Chapter 30

Baltimore City consistently applies for Chapter 30 project scoring, but due to the nature of our jurisdiction, our projects have never been eligible for consideration. Chapter 30 is designated for major transportation capacity projects. Baltimore City is an urban environment where highway capacity projects are not appropriate, and expanding transit capacity requires commitment beyond our jurisdiction's sole control. The specifications for the number of lane miles of transit are often difficult to meet given the nature of the improvements that are needed to improve our roadways, which MTA bus service is reliant on. By expanding the requirements of the funding to make urban projects eligible, Baltimore City would be eligible for meaningful investments and no longer be excluded from this funding opportunity.

Allocation of Federal Highway Dollars

Historically, the City of Baltimore has received 5.5 percent of federal formula highway dollars appropriated to the SHA to support the fully City maintained State highway network within the City limits. It is our understanding that SHA has chosen to treat federal stimulus dollars differently and has not appropriated a percentage to the City. We respectfully request that MDOT reconsider this position and allocate 5.5 percent of federal stimulus dollars to the City to support BCDOT's efforts to maintain a safe, resilient, reliable, and equitable transportation network in a state of good repair. As discussed in the Baltimore City CTP meeting in 2022, federal dollars to support the rehabilitation and repair of concrete roads that support the Port of Baltimore would be a mutually beneficial use of these funds.

Partnership in pursuing Federal discretionary funding opportunities

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) establishes new funding opportunities for transportation projects. Many of these new funding opportunities are available as discretionary grants, which will be competitive and require a minimum 20 percent match. The City is seeking State support to further leverage our investments and present attractive grant applications when competing for limited funds at the national

level. We request your strategic and proactive partnership in coordination and leveraging matching funds to pursue discretionary opportunities that will significantly impact the transportation network in Baltimore and beyond.

Innovative Financing

Given the ongoing discrepancy of available funding to meet the ongoing transportation investment, operations, and maintenance needs, the City of Baltimore is interested in exploring innovative finance opportunities to better leverage our capital program. We are interested in exploring Public-Private Partnerships (P3s), bonds, and other innovative financing opportunities in coordination with the State to advance major infrastructure projects that are otherwise beyond our ability to finance with current revenue levels. Additionally, we reiterate our request to receive dedicated toll credits from the State to assist with matching federal dollars. Most the state's toll revenues are generated in the Baltimore region, and we strongly believe that a dedicated annual allocation of toll credits is a reasonable request.

Thank you, again, for your favorable consideration of these requests. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact BCDOT's Director Corren Johnson at (410) 396-6802 or Corren.Johnson@baltimorecity.gov. Working together, we can provide the safe, reliable transportation network that the people of Baltimore deserve.

In service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brandon M. Scott".

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore