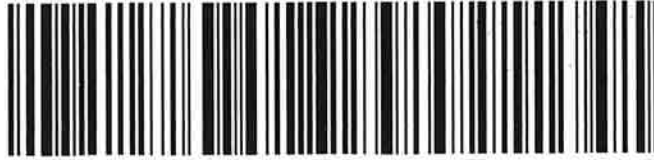


Baltimore City - Department of Transportation (DOT) **USPS CERTIFIED MAIL**
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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

Shaylah Bond



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*100 Holliday Street, Room 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202*

April 28, 2023

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary
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). State investments in Baltimore City's infrastructure, specifically Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) implementation of the Regional Transit Plan, East-West Priority Transit Corridor RAISE Grant project, and other transit-related improvements have helped develop transit in the region. This support is critical in executing our goals to improve multimodal accessibility, transportation equity, and Complete Streets in Baltimore. We commend the Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) for its support towards economic advancements in the Port of Baltimore and its efforts to protect the local ecosystem amidst the Port's development. 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.

The priorities contained in this letter are consistent with my Administration's commitment to equitable and optimal access to public transportation, advance the implementation of the Complete Streets ordinance, support safe and reliable freight movement, and connect City residents with economic opportunities 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.

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. It serves as a link to travel to job centers in the Baltimore Peninsula, 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.

With a federal grant, Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) conducted a 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. 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 allows this project to become eligible for new Federal discretionary grant funding opportunities that can help fund final design and construction. The City requests active State participation in the planning processes for the bridge repair or replacement.

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 these new federal funding opportunities available in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) 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 right-of-way, 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 - ensuring free transit service is more accessible to historically disadvantaged communities. The capital improvements needed to improve service, as outlined in our Transit Development Plan (TDP), 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. BCDOT's Transit Services Bureau completed a Transit Development Plan in Summer 2022. The plan will guide the Charm City Circulator 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.

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 efforts and designation of TOD areas at Penn Station, Westport, and 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

The City of Baltimore 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 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.

Cecil Elementary School Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

In the spring of 2021, BCDOT and the Central Baltimore Partnership (CBP) submitted a SRTS grant application for \$400,000 (\$300,000 in State grant funds and \$100,000 local match). This grant will improve crosswalks and ADA infrastructure near Cecil Elementary School in East Baltimore Midway, a high equity score neighborhood. These proposed improvements would build upon BCDOT's planned comprehensive traffic calming and other large infrastructure projects in close proximity. These projects include North Ave Rising, bike lane infrastructure, new community park, and housing development through the School-Centered Housing Response model. CBP and the Neighborhood Design Center previously conducted a surface level traffic calming analysis and combined with traffic audit at Cecil Elementary School. The local community association and the school supported the grant application.

In October 2022, State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) awarded BCDOT the grant. However, BCDOT determined that as a standalone project, there would be difficulty securing a contractor because of the project's relatively small size. BCDOT requested permission from MDOT SHA to combine this grant project with a nearby streetscaping project on the 25th St corridor. This was denied as it was not feasible to combine the projects given that the 25th St project is nearing completion. As an alternative, MDOT SHA increased the size of the grant by an additional \$125,000 to include painted bump outs and flex posts at all intersections in the application. BCDOT is seeking an additional \$125,000 to complete this project.

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 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.

Programmed Citywide Initiatives with Insufficient Funding

Roadway Resurfacing

The City of Baltimore 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. 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. 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 Improvements

BCDOT has recently prepared a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) to identify, expand, and prioritize safety measures for the traveling public in Baltimore City. BCDOT has initiated a "quick build" program to address high crash intersections, and this program has become very popular with a long waitlist of projects originating from the analysis of high-crash locations, as well as through community requests. However, in order to achieve the City's goal of zero traffic-related injuries and fatalities, MDOT's support is a critical element to funding projects. This includes additional funding to implement safety projects to protect the most vulnerable users of the transportation network. Increased funding to improve roadways would provide opportunities to implement traffic calming, increase accessibility of our pedestrian infrastructure and deliver on Complete Streets as outlined in the City's new Complete Streets Manual.

BCDOT is requesting funding to implement roadway safety engineering interventions on high-risk roadway segments. The segments selected were identified as the highest risk segments in the City, per 2019-2021 crash data. These 30 segments have proportionally high rates of total crashes, severe injury crashes, fatal crashes, and pedestrian and bicycle crashes. BCDOT will use funds to implement quick-build solutions, such as road diets, bike lanes, bus-only lanes, painted bump-outs, high visibility crosswalks, and painted geometric alignments. The estimated cost of addressing these segments through quick-build improvements is approximately \$4,950,000. All quick-build designs will aim to slow vehicle speeds, improve the safety of vehicle turning movements, and increase multi-modal accessibility.

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 2023. 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.

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.

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 TDP. Additionally, the Harbor Connector was awarded a \$5.1 million grant through the Federal Transit Administration 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 of Baltimore 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.

Operations Facility Feasibility Analysis

The current Charm City Circulator operations and maintenance facility is located at 1700 Cherry Hill Road in South Baltimore, Maryland. While the site configuration and layout are useable, they are not optimal for the activities involved in administering the program and maintaining the fleet. Additionally, the site is currently leased, which limits the type of infrastructure investments and other projects that the City can undertake to support the service. For example, if the City of Baltimore were to transition its fleet to zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) or battery-electric buses (BEBs), as the U.S. government is aiming to do with all transit systems by 2050, considerable infrastructure would be required to make the site compatible with EV charging and associated requirements for ZEV and BEB vehicles. A space that is owned by the City or under a long-term lease could allow for such investments to be made. BCDOT requests \$50,000 for an operations

facility feasibility analysis, which would allow BCDOT to evaluate alternative sites to improve efficiency and create possibilities for future program expansion.

Transit Technical Assistance

BCDOT requests \$200,000 in order to fund the existing transit technical assistance contract through the end of the FY24 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 four 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. This will allow for 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

The City of Baltimore consistently applies for Chapter 30 project scoring, but our urban nature excludes BCDOT’s projects 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 the City’s sole control. The specifications for the number of lane miles of transit are often difficult to meet yet, MTA bus service is reliant on these roads. By expanding the requirements to make urban projects eligible, the City of Baltimore 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 you 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 2022 CTP meeting, federal dollars to support the rehabilitation 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 IIJA establishes new funding opportunities for transportation projects. Many of these are available as discretionary grants, which will be competitive and require a minimum 20 percent match. The City of Baltimore 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 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 differential of available funding to meet the ongoing transportation investment, operations, and maintenance needs, the City of Baltimore is interested in exploring innovative finance opportunities. 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. The majority of 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 Interim 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 City deserve.

In service,



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore

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