



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

June 4, 2024

Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: MDOT FY 2025-FY 2030 Consolidated Transportation Program
Baltimore County Requests

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

On behalf of the residents of Baltimore County, we wish to acknowledge the leadership and staff from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) for their continued consideration of our transportation priorities.

We appreciate MDOT's long-standing commitment to transparency in budgeting through its annual fall CTP tour. Historically, MDOT publishes a fully-balanced draft CTP in early September, and visits each of Maryland's twenty-four (24) jurisdictions prior to finalizing the CTP in late December. This process provides an opportunity for residents across the State to meaningfully engage on budget decisions that are under consideration before a final CTP is submitted to the State legislature. Our Administration adopted a similar approach, becoming the first Administration in County history to conduct budget town halls in each of our County's seven (7) Council districts prior to submitting our proposed budget to the County Council.

Last year's CTP deviated from this approach by publishing a balanced CTP just one day prior to submission of the final budget to the State legislature. This deviation constrained our engagement to a draft budget that was unbalanced by over \$1 billion, and denied our local leaders, staff and residents the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback on cuts and enhancements under consideration during the annual fall CTP tour. While we are cognizant of the difficult fiscal circumstances that complicated last year's CTP, we request that MDOT publish a balanced draft budget prior to the annual fall CTP tour this year and restore the long-standing commitment to transparency that has made MDOT's budgeting process a model across the State.

Our Administration has made great efforts to expand transit access by investing in our own Locally Operated Transit Services (LOTS) programs. These investments support our County Ride program, which serves our elderly, disabled and rural residents, have

helped establish the Towson Loop, which has supported over 160,000 riders since its inception just over two years ago, and have allowed us to advance studies to establish similar last-mile connectors in Owings Mills and Catonsville.

Despite our local commitment to LOTS programs and our position as the largest jurisdiction in the Baltimore region, Baltimore County continues to receive under \$1 million annually in State operating funding for our LOTS programs. This level of funding places Baltimore County significantly behind similarly sized jurisdictions like Montgomery County (over \$41 million) and Prince George's County (nearly \$12 million), but also behind rural counties like Alleghany, St. Mary's and Washington.

Expansion of our LOTS program could provide a shared opportunity to increase transit ridership by connecting our workers and residents to major MTA transit hubs. During last year's CTP fall tour meeting in Baltimore County, MDOT committed to adjust its LOTS operating funding formula to account for factors like population and potential ridership growth prior to the FY2025-2030 CTP. Additionally, MDOT committed during the CTP process to make one-time federal funding sources like Carbon Reduction Program funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) available to support needed LOTS capital investments. We appreciate MDOT providing an updated draft LOTS formula to begin discussions, and look forward to discussing these opportunities to grow our LOTS programs as soon as possible.

Our longstanding top priority project is the I-795 Dolfield Boulevard interchange project. This project holds immense significance for our community, promising to deliver much-needed infrastructure improvements and opportunities for growth. The initial funding commitments received in the FY2023-2028 CTP was met with great enthusiasm and optimism, as they signified a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

Unfortunately, last year's final CTP reduced committed funding for the Dolfield Boulevard interchange from over \$140 million to just over \$20 million total, including a cut of nearly \$90 million outside of the six-year CTP period. Further, these cuts weren't published in the initial unbalanced draft CTP, preventing impacted residents and communities from engaging with MDOT in an informed way during Baltimore County CTP tour meeting last fall.

The timing and scope of the cuts made to this project in last year's CTP leave deep concerns regarding the future delivery of this project. We cannot overstate the importance of fully realizing the Dolfield Boulevard interchange project's potential. We urge you to reconsider and restore full funding for the Dolfield project. Your continued support is essential in ensuring that this endeavor reaches its full fruition and positively impacts the lives of countless individuals in our community.

Multi-modal access that accommodates our bikers and walkers continues to be a top

County priority. On April 1, 2024, our County Council approved our updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This plan encompasses the entire County and expands the scope offered in previous plans which only included land within our urban area. The updated master plan focuses on connectivity within the County. This plan identifies new policies that will help to deliver on our larger goal of active transportation and ultimately the prioritization of new bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the county.

We recently kicked-off our first official complete street initiative in October, with concept development for Old Court Road, spanning from Liberty Road (MD 26) to Reisterstown Road (MD 140). This concept covers approximately 3.3 miles. The project is divided into two phases: the current phase focuses on Analysis and a Concept Study, while the future phase will address Preliminary and Final Design Services. We are optimistic this complete street project marks the beginning of a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing multi-modal accessibility throughout our county. Our hope is that this endeavor sets a precedent for future projects, fostering a more inclusive and interconnected community for all residents and visitors alike.

Our Administration continues to support the development of the Red Line project, which would begin to address the absence of reliable east-west transit that has plagued our region for decades. We are encouraged by the recent development of six (6) preliminary alternatives, and would like to go on the record to state that Baltimore County prefer light rail as the mode of travel. We are also appreciative of MDOT's efforts to advance the Eastern Baltimore County Access Study, and are hopeful that the results of this study will build off of the future Red Line project by providing direct and efficient access to the biggest job growth center in the region at Tradepoint Atlantic and population centers like Essex, Dundalk and Turner's Station.

Last, our local community, regional infrastructure, and our global economy were dealt an unthinkable blow when the Key Bridge collapsed on March 26th. We are appreciative and grateful for the level of coordination between all levels of government to manage this disaster, and are thankful for the projected re-opening of the Port of Baltimore in the coming weeks.

In response to the Key Bridge collapse, we request that MDOT engage its local partners regularly and throughout the bridge reconstruction process, and emphasize local workforce opportunities through the many jobs that will be needed to support a length rebuild of the Key Bridge. We further request the continuation of collaborative efforts to manage the impacts of traffic on our residents, which may be exacerbated by the upcoming re-opening of the Port of Baltimore and resumption of heavy truck traffic volumes.

Additionally, we encourage MDOT to fully support expansion efforts at Tradepoint Atlantic that will create a more resilient and redundant Port of Baltimore in the aftermath of the Key Bridge collapse. This support should extend to efforts to expedite the Sparrows

Point Container Terminal, which could potentially provide our Port with a second container terminal prior to the full reconstruction of the Key Bridge.

In light of our progress and the needs we have identified, I request the following transportation priorities be included as part of your FY 2025 - FY 2030 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

Transit Initiatives

Red Line Project and Eastern Baltimore County Access Study

Our Administration continues to support the development of the Red Line project, which would begin to address the absence of reliable east-west transit that has plagued our region for decades. We are encouraged by the recent development of six (6) preliminary alternatives, and prefer light rail as the mode of travel.

We also appreciate the ongoing efforts to evaluate access to eastern Baltimore County through the Eastern Baltimore County Access Study. This study represents an opportunity to build transit corridors off of the eastern terminus of the future Red Line project, and support growing regional job centers like Tradepoint Atlantic and population centers like Essex, Dundalk and Turner's Station. We request that this study yield both short-term and long-term recommendations, so that expanded access to our eastern County job and population centers is not solely depended on the completion of the Red Line project, which may be a decade or more away. We also request and are open to collaborate on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements along designated future transit corridors that could facilitate easy access to transit when available.

Additional Transit Service to Tradepoint Atlantic

We continue to support implementation of additional transit to and from Tradepoint Atlantic (TPA), which is the largest job growth center in the region, currently supporting over 12,000 employees and projected to add thousands more through the construction and eventual completion of the Sparrows Point Container Terminal project. This expansion would include additional East-West Service from western Baltimore County and through the City of Baltimore, service from the eastern portions of the County to the Tradepoint site, and could build from the future eastern terminus of the Red Line project at Bayview as contemplated in the Eastern Baltimore County Access Study. We request an increase in service in Baltimore County to TPA, specifically from the Middle River, Essex, Dundalk and Sparrows Point communities.

Circulators & Microtransit

We request continued supplemental capital and operational funding as part of our

Annual Transportation Plan (ATP) to incubate the growth of our LOTS system, including but not limited to, expansion of services into fixed route lines and on-demand microtransit within Baltimore County. We continue to include County funding in our budget for critical transit services supporting our disabled populations and last-mile connectivity to MTA's fixed route service.

In the last year, the County has advanced funding to study circulator services in Owings Mills and Catonsville that would support increased ridership on MTA's Metro and fixed-route bus service. We appreciate MDOT's commitment to adjust its LOTS funding formula in the FY2025-2030 CTP to account for factors like population and potential ridership growth, and to support our LOTS programs with one-time Carbon Reduction Program funding to address the capital costs associated with potential system expansion.

Local Link 35

If this proposed new service is put into operation, it would be more adaptive to the needs of TPA and other activity corridors, such as new development on MD-43 in White Marsh. This line would support economic growth and improve connectivity to job centers on the east side of the County.

LOTS Facilities

We request supplemental capital funding and land for a bus operations facility and bus equipment for the expansion of Baltimore County's transit operations to accommodate fixed route service and to expand our human services capabilities. This support would allow optimization of the hours and days when this service is available for communities with limited mobility. We ask for assistance identifying a property that is proximate to our existing LOTS programming, and consideration of the transfer or sale of a viable property for a possible hub for transportation and public safety uses.

Electric Buses & Charging Infrastructure for Transit

We request that MDOT-MTA provide an electric bus purchase option and partner to provide funding which will enable us to purchase electric buses and other electric transit vehicles through their contracting and grant process. We also request funding for new and replacement electric bus vehicles in order to further enhance transit service and reduce emissions in our county.

Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan

We encourage continued work to advance detailed and specific corridor studies on the priority corridors identified in the final Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (CMRTP). Regular and continuous engagement with county staff and elected officials to implement the

RTP and strategic actions identified in the Plan is vital. Corridors were identified defining specific routes, service patterns, alignments, levels of service, potential stations or transit mode of travel.

We strongly support funding and implementing the regional transit corridors in the State's Regional Transit Plan and request MDOT advance planning, design, and operational funding, in coordination with our local and regional transit systems, to meet the goals and priorities in the Regional Transit Plan. MDOT should ensure public transit can provide equitable and high-quality service to all public transit riders, particularly our transit dependent community members, regardless of whether they are served by the State or local system or need to travel between two systems for essential services. We are especially interested in the inter-jurisdictional east-west corridors and north-south corridors.

Multimodal Planning Initiatives

Bicycle & Pedestrian Initiatives

We request State support for the County's bicycle and pedestrian project initiatives. Baltimore County committed \$4.2 million dollars for bicycle and pedestrian projects in our multi-year CIP.

We have initiated several studies targeting walkability, safety and connectivity in response to challenges raised by older neighborhoods. Through collaborative efforts and targeted interventions, our studies aim to lay the foundation for creating safer, more accessible, and connected environments where walking and cycling are preferred modes of transportation for all. With additional supportive funding, we will be able to explore strategies such as traffic calming devices, speed limit reductions, and road diets to mitigate traffic hazards and create more pedestrian-friendly streets.

We are nearing the design completion of several trails: Bloomsbury Crossing, Six Bridges Trail, West-East Trail, Northeast Trail. We strongly support construction funding with implementing these bike and pedestrian projects to enhance safety and provide expanded multi-modal options.

We also ask for assistance in funding streetscape projects on local and State roads. Streetscapes can help increase environmental sustainability by decreasing automobile dependency, minimizing traffic congestion, and reducing carbon emissions. Upgraded streets attract more people, thus strengthening both communities and the businesses that serve them.

Economic Development Related Improvements

(Owings Mills) Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard Interchange

Since 2007, the top County priority for State funding has been for improvements to the Northwest Expressway. It remains a top County priority due to the continuous growth and economic development in the area. This project will alleviate traffic congestion due to increased economic development in the area associated with the Metro Center Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), which still has the capacity to add significant residential density, and Foundry Row retail and office center.

Last year's final CTP reduced committed funding for the Dolfield Boulevard interchange from over \$140 million to just over \$20 million total, including a cut of nearly \$90 million outside of the six-year CTP period. We urge reconsideration of the substantial cuts to this project in last year's budget, and the restoration of funding for the long-planned interchange on Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard.

Response, Recovery and Reconstruction of the Key Bridge

We are appreciative and grateful for the level of coordination between all levels of government to manage the response and recovery associated with the collapse of the Key Bridge. While much has been done to mitigate the initial impacts of the collapse, our recovery from the loss of this critical piece of infrastructure will be felt through the reconstruction of the Key Bridge. We appreciate MDOT's collaboration throughout this effort, and ask that our staff be engaged in the design, engineering and reconstruction process for the Key Bridge given that the bridge connects the southeast portion of our County to the western shore of Maryland.

With the re-opening of the Port of Baltimore anticipated in the coming weeks, we can reasonably anticipate a spike in truck traffic on local and residential roadways given the absence of the Key Bridge. We appreciate MDOT's efforts to collaborate across jurisdictions to manage truck traffic in the wake of the collapse, but believe additional efforts will be needed to accommodate truck traffic upon the re-open of the Port of Baltimore. We request that MDOT identify and designate adjusted truck routes throughout the region, and make improvements like resurfacing Broening Highway to accommodate increased local truck volumes while the Key Bridge is being rebuilt.

Additionally, we encourage MDOT to fully support expansion efforts at Tradepoint Atlantic that will create a more resilient and redundant Port of Baltimore in the aftermath of the Key Bridge collapse. This support should extend to efforts to expedite the Sparrows Point Container Terminal, which could potentially provide our Port with a second container terminal prior to the full reconstruction of the Key Bridge. Our Administration supported legislation this past session that allowed for limited placement of dredged material at Hart-Miller Island upon establishment of a Community Benefits Agreement to expedite this project, and request MDOT and State partnership in ensuring that this project is delivered ahead of schedule to ensure a more resilient Port of Baltimore emerges in the aftermath of the Key Bridge collapse.

(Sparrows Point) Full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway)

Baltimore County is excited that its vision for the future of Sparrows Point is being embraced by Tradepoint Atlantic. The plan incorporates the highest and best use of this unique asset: 3,100 acres of industrial zoned land, with access to deep water port channels, two interstate highways and two rail lines. The redevelopment of Sparrows Point by Tradepoint Atlantic represents the largest job growth center in the region, supporting over 12,000 jobs, and is expected to add thousands of jobs and increase the resiliency of the Port of Baltimore in the wake of the Key Bridge collapse with the anticipated completion of the Sparrows Point Container Terminal project. We urge the State to invest in infrastructure improvements that will allow Tradepoint Atlantic to fully support the jobs and cargo capacity associated with its growth and a stronger port economy for the Baltimore region.

The construction of a full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway) would maximize the potential redevelopment activities at Tradepoint Atlantic, would allow for truck avoidance of the toll plaza, and would reduce truck traffic impacting residential communities on Dundalk Avenue and Holabird Avenue. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) has completed a point-to-point study for this project location, and \$1 million was provided through a federal earmark last year to support the initial planning of a full interchange near Tradepoint Atlantic and I-695 to assist in the increasing industrial expansion and related traffic.

(Catonsville) Wilkens Ave MD-372 and Kenwood Ave at I-695 Interchange Exit 12 (Inner Circulator)

We request intersection improvements at MD-372 and Kenwood Avenue and along Kenwood Avenue to the NB beltway on-ramp. These improvements would improve safety and road capacity, and would have a significant impact on traffic at this location. This area has seen a significant increase in background traffic over the past 5 years from UMBC and business growth and development/redevelopment activities in the area. These road improvements would spur ongoing growth in the area and provide positive economic impact.

(White Marsh/Middle River) Philadelphia Road (MD-7) Improvements and MD-7 at MD-43 Interchange ramp addition

We request funding for roadway improvements on Philadelphia Road (MD-7) including, widening and raising of the road from Mohrs Lane to Campbell Boulevard and an on-ramp from Philadelphia Road (MD-7) to eastbound White Marsh Boulevard (MD-43). This roadway improvement will increase traffic capacity and roadway safety for the future Campbell Boulevard (Mohrs Lane) extension which is being advertised this year. This future connection would, not only provide another important link between MD-43 corridor and White Marsh Town Center in the White Marsh Growth area, but it would also enhance Pulaski Highway as a location for new employment-related development

In addition, the intersection of Old Philadelphia Road and Cowenton Avenue is in need of evaluation to address the increased congestion due to the extensive development occurring in the area. The intersection is a combination of County and State roads. We request added support to the growing community concerns with traffic flow to increase volume on the roadway.

Road/ Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Capacity Improvements

(Randallstown) Liberty Road MD-26 Corridor Improvements

Liberty Road is a critical artery serving the west side of the County. Liberty Road has been the most crash ridden road in Baltimore County since 2018, and had the most pedestrian fatalities in the County in 2022. The County has renewed interest in promoting economic development and investment in this corridor and is requesting additional SHA and MTA review for roadway improvements (traffic congestion study), sidewalk including crosswalk lights and additional transit stop amenities to assist with safer pedestrian movements crossing the roadway.. We are pursuing assistance from MDOT based on the completion of outreach and an action plan for the Liberty Road corridor.

(Middle River) Pulaski Highway US-40 Corridor Improvements

Pulaski Highway is a critical artery serving the east side of the County. The County is deeply invested to work with the State to address the pedestrian and vehicular safety concerns that plague our four-lane arterial roadways. Pulaski Highway had the most pedestrian fatalities in Baltimore County in 2020 and 2021. Decreasing the number of pedestrian and motor vehicles fatalities is of utmost importance to the County and we support the MDOT SHA with any initiatives put forth to the heighten safety along the Pulaski Highway corridor.

(Overlea) Belair Road US-1 Corridor Safety Improvement Project

The segment of US 1 (Belair Road) through Overlea is an important and historic main street corridor connecting many Baltimore-area communities, including historically disadvantaged communities in the project area, to economic opportunities, parks, churches, a community center, and crucial social services. Transit along this corridor connects the Overlea community, including students and staff at the nearby Maryland School for the Blind, to downtown essential services, schools and jobs in Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, White Marsh, and other job centers and community focal points.

Unfortunately, the project segment presents barriers and challenges to the community, limiting access and mobility for pedestrians and vehicles in a very tight right-of-way (ROW). The project corridor experiences a high pedestrian crash rate, which is two times higher than the statewide average. Within the project area, there is a half-mile segment of US 1 that experiences a pedestrian crash rate four times higher than the statewide average for similar routes.

Two years ago, MDOT, in partnership with Baltimore County, unsuccessfully sought a \$15.34 million RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant from USDOT to address critical safety risks and community concerns, reduce congestion delays, and provide more reliable travel times in order to support equitable access to opportunity and economic growth in this corridor. The issues identified above and in the jointly filed RAISE grant application are still present, and need to be addressed to ensure the safety and mobility of our residents in this area. We are requesting that MDOT fund the \$9.65 million in pre-construction costs associated with this \$47.59 million project.

(Hunt Valley) MD-45 York Road realignment - Shawan to Phoenix

There have been long standing safety concerns with the two-lane curved section of York Road between Shawan Road and Phoenix Road. The State should consider a feasibility study of the realignment and widening of the road in this area for increased capacity and safety, pedestrian sidewalks, and evaluate possible developer participation in the study.

(Pikesville) Reisterstown Road (MD-140) roadway improvements (Old Court Road to Sudbrook)

The State portion of Reisterstown Road requires additional study and re-design. Baltimore County completed a planning study of the area but a corridor segment analysis and redesign of this road segment is required. Community groups and businesses have advocated for many years for improvements to this roadway and invested private funds to develop potential solutions.

(Windsor Mill) Windsor Mill Road Project

The Windsor Mill Road project from Featherbed Lane to Woodlawn Drive is fully designed. The project is currently in the land acquisition phase. We would appreciate your support and additional funding as we embark on this vital community safety improvement project.

Pikesville Intersection Improvements and Sidewalk

We request funding for intersection and sidewalk improvements in the Pikesville community. The existing Old Court Road, Park Heights/Stevenson Road intersection poses concerns for drivers navigating from the southern Old Court at Park Heights intersection. Alternative geometric design at this location will aid in the reduction of accidents and their severity. This modification will provide optimum efficiency in traffic operation and maximum safety.

Additional sidewalk improvements on Old Court Road are needed to provide connectivity within the community. The County is taking strides to install new sidewalk such as the Seven Mile Lane project as well as other pedestrian facilities in Pikesville as a result of a recent walkability study. Our continued efforts along with State support will contribute to the goal of more walkable, bike friendly neighborhoods.

Patapsco Regional Greenway

We are partnering with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to conduct preliminary design on the Baltimore Highlands section of the Patapsco Regional Greenway, which is a 5.5 mile multi-use path that will go from Guinness to Baltimore County's Southwest Area Park and the MDOT MTA Patapsco Light Rail Station. This segment is an impactful investment and will provide new pedestrian and bicycle access. We ask for continued financial support of non-motorized connections to enhance mobility and reduce congestion for this multi-jurisdictional project.

Bridge Infrastructure

Given the recent collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, we would like to emphasize the importance of updating our bridge infrastructure. We recognize the need for improvement and push for continual aid to assist in the systematic approach for bridge preservation like that embraced by many states, whereby existing deterioration is prioritized and the focus is on preventive maintenance.

Eastern Blvd (MD 150) from MD 43 to Bowleys's Quarters Road

There have been numerous safety concerns along Eastern Avenue for both drivers and pedestrians. Separate studies were conducted by Baltimore County and MDOT SHA. As part of the studies, several safety concerns were identified including speeding, inadequate pedestrian facilities and high crash rates. Proposed recommendations and alternatives to improve safety were provided. Alternatives included installation of medians to restrict turning movements, the installation of a center turn lane, signal upgrades and pedestrian improvements. To implement these safety measures, we ask for funding support to make Eastern Avenue a safer and more accessible route for all.

MD 588 Kenwood Avenue Sidewalks

The community around Overlea Highschool has been very active in requesting safety improvements along MD588 Kenwood Ave. There is very limited existing sidewalk on this road which requires high school students to walk in the road. SHA District 4 completed a feasibility study and has requested this as a priority project through the State Sidewalk Retrofit Program and also as a safety improvement project through the District Office. District 4 has been provided

with some funding to begin design the segment from Wilenoak to Kern Ave. We request that the remainder of the project be funded to enhance safety.

In conclusion thank you for this opportunity to present Baltimore County's transportation priorities in the FY 2025 - FY 2030 CTP. We look forward to increased opportunities for partnership and collaboration as we work together to solve our collective transportation challenges.

Sincerely,



John A. Olszewski, Jr.
Baltimore County Executive

CC: Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House
Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore County Senate and House Delegations
Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore County Council
D'Andrea Walker, County Administrative Officer
Dori Henry, Chief of Staff
Sameer Sidh, Deputy Administrative Officer
Elisabeth Sachs, Deputy Administrative Officer
Kimberly Routson, Director, Government Affairs
Lauren Buckler, Acting Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Anthony Russell, Deputy Director of Transportation, DPW&T
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