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March 14, 2024

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: FY 2025-2030 Consolidated Transportation Program - Carroll County, Maryland

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

We wish to express our gratitude for the progress being made on two of our top priorities, funding for the design of the geometric improvements on MD 32 between 2nd and Main Streets, and the feasibility study for the MD 97 corridor. We are also pleased that progress is being made on the drainage improvements on Springfield Avenue in Sykesville, which is an important step in the ultimate completion of this Urban Reconstruction "Streetscape" project. Finally, thank you for the design funding for the improvements at MD140 and Tyrone Road, and construction of the safety improvements at MD140 and Mayberry Road. These projects, through the dedication and coordination of County, state, and municipal resources, exemplify the type of interjurisdictional cooperation necessary to move our priorities forward.

In this year's letter, as in previous years, we continue to target our focus on those critical projects that will provide the greatest enhancement to economic development and redevelopment opportunities for the County, as well as safety enhancements. We expect that by pursuing a strategy of joint cooperation of resources for our top priority projects, we can then leverage the State's commitment for transportation infrastructure into the largest improvements for economic vitality.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer Carroll County's transportation project priorities for consideration and possible inclusion in the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY2025-2030 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

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Highway Capacity Enhancement Projects

MD 97 (Bachmans Valley Road to MD 140 in Westminster):

One of the highest priorities for Project Planning, the project scope is to widen the roadway from 3 to 5 lanes, with a full intersection at Meadow Branch Road and pedestrian facilities, providing a necessary connection for nearby residences and the nearby business park. This portion of MD 97 is strained by a significant amount of commuter traffic from the northern part of the County and Pennsylvania. It also provides direct access to the Carroll County Regional Airport, and numerous industrial parks (including the Westminster Air Business Center, Meadow Branch Industrial Park, Carroll County Commerce Center, Westminster Technology Park and West Branch Trade Center), linking them to the MD 140 corridor and the Baltimore Region. The Carroll County Industrial Development Authority and the City of Westminster dedicated 2.1 million dollars for improvements to this segment of roadway, resulting in the construction of the Phase 1 Breakout Project, which is now complete. A Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study is underway, and we look forward to implementation of its recommendations. This project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also prioritized in the *2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan*, the *2009 City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan*, the *2014 Carroll County Master Plan as Amended 2019*, and the *2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan*.

MD 32 (MD 26 south to Carroll County line):

This project is also a high priority. The project scope is to widen the roadway from two to four lanes, including pedestrian facilities and other amenities at appropriate locations within the corridor. MD 32 is a heavily traveled commuter route, linking Carroll County with I-70 and the Baltimore-Washington region, including job centers in Columbia and Fort Meade. MD 32 also provides access to current and future employment centers within Carroll County for commuters coming into the County from elsewhere. Improvements within this corridor are needed to ease commuter congestion, enhance access to employment areas, and address safety concerns throughout the corridor. In conjunction with the recently completed widening and improvements to MD 32 in Howard County, improvements in Carroll County will enhance the efficiency and safety of the entire corridor. Moreover, this project is essential for advancing economic development opportunities already being created in the southeastern portion of Carroll County. This includes the mixed-use project, "Warfield at Historic Sykesville", which recently was the first recipient of Maryland's Catalytic Revitalization Tax Credit, designed to help fund rehabilitation of formerly government-owned properties for economic and community development purposes. Considerable funds have already been spent towards localized improvements within this corridor, which includes contributions from the state, County, and Town of Sykesville. In 2018, MDOT completed a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for the 7.2 miles of MD 32 from I-70 to MD 26. While the PEL Study concluded that the entire corridor is not expected to exceed its capacity until beyond 2040 and will not require complete dualization to four lanes until beyond that year, it identified a number of potential improvement concepts to address identified needs at specific locations. We are encouraging a plan of action that breaks this priority project into phases to facilitate overall advancement of the project while preserving further expansion of the corridor.

and remaining open to new connections as the area develops. The MD 32 priority project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory and the approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan*, the *2021 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*, and the *2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan*.

Breakout Project for improvements between 2nd Street and Main Street: This project, which is compatible with the four-lane corridor concept, includes five operational and safety improvements that were included in the PEL Study for this half-mile segment of MD 32. They will improve intersection geometry, extend turn lanes, modify access, and evaluate signal warrant at Main Street. Design is underway for this project, and we request the reinstatement of construction funds.

MD 26 (MD 32 east to Liberty Reservoir):

This segment of MD 26 is a heavily traveled commuter route, linking Carroll County with the Baltimore region, including job centers in and around Baltimore City. It also provides access to current and future employment centers along the corridor and elsewhere within Carroll County for out-of-county commuters. Transportation improvements within this corridor are needed to ease commuter congestion, enhance access to employment areas, improve function and aesthetics, and enhance safety throughout the corridor.

In July 2020, SHA completed the Maryland 26 Corridor Study – Traffic Analysis and Targeted Improvement Recommendations. The purpose of this study was to find ways to revise the 30 percent design to a new “practical” design approach. Rather than complete widening to six lanes, improvements will consist of more limited breakout projects that focus primarily on enhancing the safety of the corridor. This may be achieved through the extension of auxiliary lanes, increased signalization, and a center median in certain segments of the road which have been identified as critical to the safe and efficient functioning of the entire corridor. The MD 26 priority project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory*, the *approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*, the *2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan*, and the *2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan*.

Breakout Project to Convert Eastbound MD 26 Right-Turn-Only Lane at Georgetown Boulevard: This breakout project will increase safety and operations at this intersection. The project is to extend the lane back to Eldersburg Crossing and west to Homeland Drive. The scope of this project is almost entirely within existing right-of-way and will allow conversion of right-turn-only lane at Eldersburg Crossing to a thru-lane. The project includes sidewalk from Carroll Bank to Georgetown Boulevard. The initial cost estimate for this project is \$6.0M.

MD 140 Corridor Improvements (Carroll County line to Kays Mill Road):

This approximately two-mile portion of MD 140 is a gateway to Carroll County and one of the most heavily travelled roadways in the County. Many of the County residents who travel to work in other areas of the region commute through this corridor, and it is the location of a high concentration of commercial and industrial uses that provide valuable economic

development assets to the community. Improvements to this major arterial, including a four-lane divided roadway, a full interchange at MD 91 with an additional auxiliary lane east of MD 91, and access management improvements, are necessary to maintain the functionality of this corridor. The MD 140 Corridor Improvements project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory*, the *approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*, the *2013 Finksburg Plan*, and the *2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan*.

Breakout Project (MD 140 at MD 91): We appreciate your attention to the concerns of the residents and business owners in the Finksburg area regarding the proposed improvements to this intersection, and we look forward to the design and construction of potential solutions following completion of a new traffic study.

MD 27 Corridor Improvements (Carroll County line to Leishear Road):

MD 27 (Ridge Road) is a major north-south corridor in Carroll County. This approximately two-mile stretch of roadway consists of eight intersections located within the corporate boundaries of the Town of Mount Airy or immediately outside the municipal limits. There are several large undeveloped parcels within and abutting the town that are targeted for significant employment and residential uses. Improvements to this road are necessary to support the planned growth in the corridor as well as to serve the region for freight travel and as a commuter route between residents in northern Carroll County and employment centers south of the Town. A number of improvements to this corridor are called for, including widening of the roadway to a consistent four lanes, dedicated turn lanes, signalized traffic control, boulevard separation of lanes, and controlled intersections to allow pedestrian crossings. Through further analysis and collaboration with SHA staff, breakout projects will be identified and prioritized. The MD 27 priority project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory*, the *approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*, the *2014 Carroll County Master Plan as Amended 2019*, the *Town of Mount Airy's 2013 Master Plan*, and the *2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan*.

Breakout Project (Pedestrian Crossing at Center Street): The Town of Mount Airy is in the process of reviewing a major mixed-use development that is located on both the east and west sides of MD 27 in the vicinity of Center Street. In conjunction with this development, Center Street will be extended to provide access from the MD 27 corridor directly into the heart of the downtown area. It is imperative that there be a safe means for pedestrians to cross MD 27 in this vicinity, and recent discussions have focused on the preference for an underground, or tunnel, crossing. Initial discussions between the Town, County, and SHA have taken place, and continued participation and facilitation to make this connection a reality is appreciated.

Urban Reconstruction ("Streetscape") Projects

MD 851 - Sykesville Main Street/Springfield Avenue (Cooper Drive to South Branch of the Patapsco River):

This Urban Reconstruction project is a high priority for Construction. MD 32 handles most of the through traffic in the vicinity of Sykesville, bypassing the downtown area. This project will

help to restore the Town's historic Main Street to an attractive and pedestrian-friendly urban local roadway. The Urban Reconstruction project along Springfield Avenue and Main Street would involve roadway reconstruction and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as inclusion of streetscape amenities. Concept has been completed for this project. The County has completed water and sewer upgrades, and the stormwater project being conducted by SHA is underway. This would be an opportune time to advance this project to include the full engineering of the streetscape. The next highest priority of these phased improvements is the existing bridge over the South Branch Patapsco River to allow for safe pedestrian connection to South Branch Park recently improved with an investment of over \$.75 million by the Howard County government. This area was also awarded a \$2.0 million capital grant in the 2022 legislative session which will help further advance the Town of Sykesville's ongoing efforts for several other adjacent projects to build off of the planned Urban Reconstruction of MD 851. These efforts include parking upgrades, expanded sidewalk and pedestrian facilities, and improved multi-modal connectivity through the area. The streetscape project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory, the approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan, the 2021 Town of Sykesville Master Plan, and the 2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan.*

MD 31 - New Windsor Main Street/High Street (Main Street from Church Street to High Street and High Street from Main Street to Coe Drive):

This Urban Reconstruction project is a high priority for Construction. Well over a decade ago, the Town of New Windsor worked with the State Highway Administration to develop a streetscape plan for MD 31, which includes Main Street and High Street. This effort was meant to coordinate with the relocation of High Street, which would redirect heavy truck traffic away from the intersection of MD 31 and MD 75. The streetscape project was halted in 2002 as a result of a reduction in program funding, but the relocation of High Street was completed. In 2013, the state allocated \$1.882 million to fully fund Preliminary Engineering for this Urban Reconstruction project, and Preliminary Engineering is underway. The project will include improvements to sidewalks, enhancements to bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, as well as roadway improvements. This project will be coordinated with the replacement of water lines within the limits of the SHA Urban Reconstruction and would have a positive economic impact on businesses in the Town. New Windsor has awarded a contract for the Water Main Improvement Project. Construction began in August 2023 and is expected to be completed within 18 months. With the MD 31 Water Main Project proceeding, and the Town looks forward to discussing next steps for the Streetscape Project. The MD 31 streetscape project is listed in the *Highway Needs Inventory, the approved Resilience 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan, the 2007 New Windsor Community Comprehensive Plan, and the 2023 Carroll County Transportation Master Plan.*

Transit Projects

Carroll County is requesting in our ATP for FY2025 operating funding, four replacement buses, security related transit facility improvements, and preventive maintenance funding. The replacement vehicles are requested to replace vehicles that meet or exceed their useful life of seven years of age and 200,000 miles. Maintenance funding is imperative to maintain

our aging rolling stock. Each year, funding is used for preventive maintenance and major repairs. Outside of the ATP, Carroll County is also in the early planning stages of preparing for alternate fueled vehicles along with the supporting infrastructure, including the use of solar panels for power as well as bus coverage.

Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Projects

Carroll County continues to support state funding of bikeways projects that will create local, and in the future, regional connections to area destinations and recreational resources. The project below, which is underway, is the County's top priority for construction of non-motorized transportation alternatives that will contribute to larger multi-modal transportation networks. This project will provide an alternative mode of travel by accommodating bicyclists, as well as pedestrians, skaters, and other non-motorists.

Westminster Community Trail:

This project will link parks, residential development, local employers, and downtown Westminster. It is a multi-phase project that has been underway since 2010. The existing Bennett Cerf trail links Hahn Road near MD 27 to Sunshine Way, passing through the Bennett Cerf Park to an adjacent residential community known as Eden Farms. In 2017, two additional sections of this trail were completed, one that connects the Westminster Community Pond trail to the adjacent Commerce Center, and the Commerce Center to the adjacent Autumn Ridge community. These two new trail sections, along with the sidewalk in Autumn Ridge and Eden Farms, allow pedestrians and cyclists to transit from the Westminster Community Pond all the way to Hahn Road at MD27. The only remaining section of this trail, which is currently underway, is to connect from Hahn Road (near the railroad tracks) at Random House and utilize SHA ROW to connect to Railroad Avenue, just past the MD Route 140 bridge.

Additional Projects

We want to emphasize the fact that there are additional highway projects that are very important to the County, to which we are committed. These projects are critical to maintaining traffic safety and flow and will contribute to a high quality of life and economic development opportunities in Carroll County. These projects are:

MD26/Johnsville Road:

A study of the safety concerns at this intersection and potential mitigation efforts.

MD140 at turn-around for Northern Landfill:

The county's Northern Landfill is located on MD140 in Westminster and is utilized by both residents and commercial entities. The current turnarounds on MD140 are not adequate for safe movements of multi-axel vehicles in a heavily traveled corridor. Northern Landfill is currently in a feasibility study that will include looking into a change to the entrance location, but the cross-over traffic will need to be addressed to provide safe crossings of multi-axel vehicles. A reconfigured landfill at the turnaround location is under design, and pre-application meetings are being held with SHA. Safety enhancements should include widening of MD140 at the turnarounds

immediately east and west of the Northern Landfill, development of jughandles, and/or the addition of signaling.

Taneytown Bypass:

We are requesting that MDOT re-evaluate the inclusion of the Taneytown Bypass in the state's Highway Needs inventory. The City of Taneytown has been experiencing heavy truck traffic on the two major state highways (MD 194 and MD 140) that intersect in the City's downtown for many years. This heavy truck traffic creates congestion in the City, adversely affecting pedestrian and vehicular access and mobility, safety, business activity, and historic character. These negative effects subsequently diminish the area's economic vitality by making it less desirable for business attraction and retention, and adversely impact the quality of life for Taneytown residents.

Regional Cooperation

As a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, we are very invested in cost effective, systematic, and regionally integrated approaches to addressing multimodal congestion, mobility, and safety in the Baltimore region. This year, with even greater funding constraints statewide, this is even more important. Our regional priorities continue to support these principles, focusing on operational efficiency, multi-modal mobility, and cross-agency and cross-border coordination.

Therefore, we have identified several regional priorities:

- 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.
- Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies offer cost effective and considered approaches that leverage our investments in the existing transportation system. We strongly support funding and implementing TSMO strategies, particularly in MDOT SHA TSMO System corridors 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 13, and are particularly interested in how these strategies can address the region's freight bottlenecks.
- We strongly support funding and implementing bike and pedestrian projects, particularly cross border projects, to enhance safety and provide expanded multi-modal options.
- To facilitate this interjurisdictional coordination, we would prioritize the following multi-jurisdiction corridors/projects that fall within our jurisdiction:
 - MD140 through Westminster
 - MD 32 to MD 26 in the Sykesville area

As always, thank you for your positive consideration of Carroll's state transportation projects and priorities. We look forward to our continued partnership with MDOT.

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY



Kenneth A. Kiler
President



Joseph A. Vigliotti
Vice President



Thomas S. Gordon III



Michael R. Guerin



Edward C. Rothstein (COL, Ret.)

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