



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Tekesha Martinez
Mayor

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April 30, 2024

The Honorable Secretary Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076 - 0548

**RE: HAGERSTOWN MAYOR & COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES
2024 MDOT CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)**

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

The City wishes to thank you and the Department for being such a strong supporter of our community. The funding and support that the Department provides to the City is vital to the basic infrastructure that our residents rely upon.

As you prepare the Consolidated Transportation Plan, I am pleased to submit to you the Hagerstown Mayor & Council's list of priority transportation items based on the discussion at our April 30, 2023 Work Session:

1. **I-81 Widening.** This corridor, as a major freight route, is crucial to the economy of our area. The frequent accidents on I-81, and resulting spillover onto the City street network, have both physical and perceived negative impacts on Hagerstown. We were disappointed that the additional funding for Phase 2 design and construction was removed from the CTP. We will strongly advocate in every way possible to complete widening the entire length of I-81 in Maryland to the Pennsylvania state line.
2. **Highway User Revenue.** The City is grateful for continued Highway User Revenue (HUR) funding. Every penny of the HUR funds we receive is used to pave streets and alleys and is critical to maintaining our transportation infrastructure. We are concerned that a leveling-off or even a reduction in HUR funding was considered during the recent General Assembly session, and we strongly support the Department's efforts to restore the Highway User Revenue (HUR) funds to previous levels.



3. **BPPA Study Implementation.** In February of 2020, SHA funded and completed a *Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area* (BPPA) study of the downtown and Bester elementary walkshed to improve connectivity, increase safety and improve pedestrian and bicycle user comfort. The study included several recommendations for Route 40 including countdown pedestrian lights, improved crosswalk markings, and speed management on Washington Street east of Cannon Avenue. The City recognizes that implementation of these recommendations was delayed by the COVID pandemic, but we request these that SHA implement the recommendations when possible. We have requested a Safe Routes to School grant to reconstruct the traffic signal at Potomac Street and Baltimore Street as recommended by the BPPA study, and will be proceeding into detailed design in FY 24.
4. **Park Circle Railroad Crossing Upgrades.** We continue to work with the rail coordinators in the Office of Traffic and Safety to upgrade the three crossings (Virginia Avenue, Walnut Street, and Summit Avenue) that are badly in need of repair, especially Walnut Street. The State agreed to fund these improvements in December of 2015 but the improvements are still not complete, mainly due to difficulties in gaining approval from CSX Transportation.
5. **Eastern Boulevard Corridor Improvements.** We support this Washington County led, multi-phase project to improve the Eastern Boulevard transportation corridor connecting US Route 40, Maryland Route 64, and Maryland Route 60. Specifically, we support the capacity-enhancing improvements to Maryland Route 64/Eastern Boulevard intersection that the State and County will commence in the near future. We also support Phase 2 of the project that will complete Professional Boulevard between Eastern Boulevard and Yale Drive; this project, to which the City is providing financial support, is about to go to construction, and will provide needed relief to the Eastern Boulevard, Dual Highway, and Robinwood Drive corridors.
6. **US Route 40 (Dual Highway) Pedestrian Issues.** Our Engineering, Planning, and Police staff previously endorsed the "*Pedestrian Safety Study and Audit*" for US 40 between Cannon Avenue and Redwood Circle as prepared by HEPMPO in 2015. We are grateful for the excellent progress SHA has made in the implementation of sidewalks and crosswalk improvements that were recommended in that report, and we are excited by SHA's plans to construct/extend sidewalks along Dual Highway from Eastern Blvd. to All Star Court. Those improvements will (hopefully) go a long way toward addressing pedestrian safety and ADA accessibility. We also support SHA's planned implementation of adaptive traffic signal management along the Dual Highway corridor.
7. We strongly support and ask for continued funding from the "alternative" transportation funding programs including:
 - **Safe Routes to School Program:** We also appreciate that we have benefitted from nine grants that we were fortunate enough to obtain through this program and they have significantly improved accessibility around our many educational institutions;
 - **Bikeways Grants:** Following our 2016 *Bicycle Master Plan*, we obtained grants that allow us to create our award-winning bicycle infrastructure;

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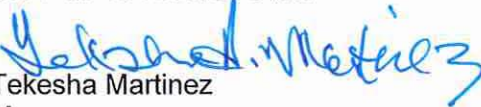
- *Transportation Alternatives Program*: We received a \$200,000 grant for the final design of the Marsh Run Trail. This project, if it comes to fruition, would provide a continuous bicycle/pedestrian corridor between City Park, the Hagerstown Cultural Trail, and the planned Hagerstown Fieldhouse indoor sports facility. Unfortunately, this is another project that has been impacted by difficulties in dealing with CSX Transportation. If we can make headway with CSX, we plan to request We plan to request TAP funds for the construction in 2023.

On behalf of the City Council and myself, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for your consideration of our priorities and for the work that MDOT is already doing to improve transportation in our community.

If you have any questions or need additional information before the tour meeting date, please do not hesitate to contact our Interim City Engineer, Jim Bender, at 301-739-8577 Extension 124, or jbender@hagerstownmd.org

Sincerely,

CITY OF HAGERSTOWN


Tekesha Martinez
Mayor

c: Senator Benjamin Cardin
Senator Christopher Van Hollen
Congressman David Trone
Washington County Delegation members
Hagerstown City Council
Scott Nicewarner, City of Hagerstown, City Administrator
Jim Bender, City of Hagerstown, City Engineer
Kathy Maher, City of Hagerstown, Director of Planning & Code Administration
Linda Puffenbarger, District Engineer, MDSHA District 6
Michelle Gordon, Washington County, County Administrator
Scott Hobbs, Washington County, Director of Engineering
Matt Mullenax, Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization
James F. Kercheval, Executive Director, The Greater Hagerstown Committee