

City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way Bowie, Maryland 20716 RECEIVED

SEP 14 2023

SECRETARY'S OFFICE DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

August 28, 2023

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

RE: City of Bowie 2023-2024 Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

The Bowie City Council is pleased to present the City's Transportation Priority List for 2023-2024, which was the subject of a briefing at City Hall on August 14, 2023. The City's priorities for State transportation facilities are unchanged from last year; however, this year we wish to add some additional justification and updated background for several projects on our list.

The City's Transportation Priorities for 2023-2024 include:

1. Local Road Improvement Priorities

The City's highest transportation priorities for roadway construction include the following five projects. MD 197 is the City Council's highest transportation priority.

MD 197 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 24):
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

The State Highway Administration is moving ahead with a re-design of Preliminary Engineering plans for the project. In the FY 2023-2028 CTP, \$1.8 million in funding has been dedicated to advance the project to complete final design. This project consists of upgrading and widening existing MD 197 to a multilane divided highway from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated (1.4 miles). Access will be controlled with three roundabouts, and the existing trail will be relocated where appropriate. In 2022, the average daily traffic was 34,000 vehicles per day, and it is projected to be 43,800 in the Year 2042.

The existing, two-lane section is already severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods and at all hours on the weekends. The lack of roadway capacity has resulted in ever-increasing diversion of traffic from MD 197 onto the City's local street system. In addition, there are continuing concerns voiced by residents about pedestrian safety and access from the side streets. In response to numerous safety incidents, a mid-block crossing was installed recently near the Foxhill Park entrance. MD 197 is ready for the State's investment of right-of-way and construction funding in the next CTP. As you may know, City residents have been waiting for relief from this harmful congestion bottleneck for more than three decades. The MD 197 is currently Construction Priority #6 for Prince George's County.

MD 450 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 27):
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

This project is the last portion of a multi-segment improvement of Maryland 450, from the Whitfield Chapel Road near the Capital Beltway to MD 3. Project planning was completed for the entire alignment

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

in 1991. Completion of design, as well as right-of-way acquisition and construction are needed, between Stonybrook Drive and west of MD 3. Design is over 90% complete but the project is on hold. Traffic volume in 2022 was 24,600 average vehicles per day; projected traffic volume for the Year 2042 is 40,700 vehicles per day. This project is very <u>crucial</u> to the City's economic development since it provides principal access to the Bowie Mainstreet commercial area. <u>More importantly, is the critical need to create a safer roadway.</u>

The City Council appreciates your consideration of a re-examination of the roadway design concept for Bowie Mainstreet, as in 2021 Administrator Tim Smith concurred with our request to reexamine the existing MD 450 design as soon as funding resources have been identified. We would like to see some forward movement regarding this project as the City Council has approached SHA numerous of times to redesign the Bowie Mainstreet portion of this corridor. We urgently request the State to place funding into the CTP to fully complete design and engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction of the Bowie Mainstreet portion of MD 450 over the next several years

• <u>US 301/MD 197 Interchange</u> (Prince George's County CTP, Line 20): FUND DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

The City Council worked very closely with SHA staff to identify an acceptable alternative (Alternative 2 with Roundabouts). Project Planning was completed in 2007, and the project is ready to move into design and construction. Development pressures continue to mount in this area, including mixed-use development at the Mill Branch Crossing project and a regional recreational park being planned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. This intersection provides access to many Bowie businesses and is at the heart of the City's downtown (designated as the smart growth, mixed use "Bowie Local Center"). As noted during the Project Planning study, increasing traffic volume will also create a permanent congestion bottleneck in the regional road network and potentially harm the local economy, unless the interchange project moves forward. Improvements are needed to accommodate the existing and projected high volumes of traffic generated by continuous growth along the US 301 corridor and to address existing safety problems. Unfortunately, this critical project has been lingering on hold since 2007 for lack of funding. Traffic volume in 2022 was 64,200 average vehicles per day on US 301/19,100 on MD 197; projected traffic volume for the Year 2042 is 75,600 vehicles per day on US 301/25,600 on MD 197. The forecast for 2042 represents about a 18% increase on US 301 and about a 34% increase on MD 197. The project is now Construction Priority #11 on the Prince George's County Transportation Priority List.

<u>US 301, from Excalibur Road to Leeland Road (not currently in the CTP):</u> FUND PROJECT PLANNING OR INTERIM CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH DISTRICT 3

There has been increasing growth in traffic volume on US 301 increasing from 62,400 to 64,200 (AADT) from August to December of 2022, a traffic increase up to almost 3% in 5 months. The amount of traffic congestion and the substantial amount of approved additional development in the corridor accentuates access and safety concerns. Since it is likely that the ultimate, controlled access improvements planned for US 301 will not occur for many years into the future, the existing roadway should be widened to three travel lanes in each direction as soon as possible, in order to keep pace with other road improvement projects slated for construction north and south of this segment. If a separate Project Planning study is not possible, we would respectfully request that a study be funded at the District level.

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

When fully constructed, the South Lake development plan will include 380,000 square feet of retail use, 220,000 square feet of office use, two hotels and 1,360 dwelling units, including 325 multi-family apartment units, 126 multi-family condominium (two-over-two) units, 567 townhouse units and 342 single-family detached units. In addition, a major County sports complex is approved just south of South Lake. Liberty Sports Park will feature multiple fields for a variety of youth sports, including lacrosse, football, soccer, field hockey and rugby. This complex will draw visitors from throughout the country and will have a significant economic impact on Prince George's County and the surrounding area. The tremendous amount of new development in this area deserves a comprehensive approach to improving US 301. The US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study (Prince George's County CTP, Line 19), also on hold, might present a funding opportunity to plan for construction of a third northbound lane.

MD 3 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 13): FUND DESIGN, ENGINEERING AND RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

This project will upgrade MD Route 3 from US Route 50 to MD Route 32 (8.89 miles) to address safety and capacity concerns. The project will improve safety and relieve traffic congestion in this heavily traveled corridor. In 2022, the average daily traffic range was 66,500 - 84,600 vehicles per day and is projected to grow to 88,600 - 137,400 vehicles per day in the Year 2042. The forecast for 2042 represents about a 63% increase in growth of the traffic volume, and it demonstrates that a need to move ahead with design and engineering now exists.

Additional traffic in the corridor will be generated by the mixed-use development at Melford Village, located at the MD 3 interchange with Belair Drive. The approved plan for Melford Village, includes up to 100,000 square feet of retail, up to 260,000 square feet of employment, 126,520 square feet of research space and up to 2,500 dwelling units (including up to 1,000 senior adult multi-family units, 1,000 non-senior multi-family units and 500 townhome units). This site is now under development and the first multi-family building (388 units) is nearly finished construction and should be open to leasing by the end of the fall. The new growth is in addition to the 1.4 million square feet of employment use already existing or approved at the same site. To their credit, the developer of Melford, St. John Properties, has contributed significantly by making traffic capacity improvements at the MD 3/MD 450 intersection ahead of schedule. Because Project Planning is completed for the MD 3 project, it is recommended that funding be provided to begin Design and Engineering, as well as advanced right-of-way acquisition.

The City Council greatly appreciates SHA's recently completed interim safety improvements and signalization along the southbound lanes of MD 3, south of MD 450. The City Council also notes that \$45 million has been expended in right-of-way acquisition for the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study along US 301(Prince George's County Line 19). The City Council believes that acquiring vacant parcels in the MD 3 corridor in a similar manner would be a cost-effective way to assemble right-of-way for lane widening and construction of the future interchange at MD 450/MD 3.

2. Other Immediate Transportation Priorities

Two remaining local priorities for State transportation facilities are identified below.

 MD 978 (Hall Road) – District 3 completed construction of a sidewalk between Hall Station Drive and the CSX railroad tracks in 2017. We ask that you continue to support improvements to MD 978, as this roadway is part of the City's master planned trail network, known as The Bowie Byway. A concept development plan was completed and is awaiting design funds for the segment between the CSX railroad and MD 214. Both the City and Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

County are committed to partnering with SHA to complete pedestrian improvements that will ensure safe access to the new South Bowie Library. In 2021, the City completed a feasibility study, working with District 3, that confirmed the potential for a grade-separated pedestrian bridge over MD 214 in the vicinity of Hall Road.

2. MD 197 North Landscaping Retrofit – Twenty years ago, SHA's Office of Environmental Design prepared a concept plan for landscaping of the median areas between Rockledge Elementary School. We would like to see this plan implemented. The retrofit design was achieved with broad community consensus, and the City feels the promised work is long overdue and should be initiated as soon as possible. We believe the State would qualify for stormwater credit by reducing impervious surfaces in this part of the MD 197 corridor. The City Council asks that you provide a current cost estimate for this project so that it might be implemented by SHA District 3 as soon as possible.

3. Long-Range Transportation Priorities

In addition to the above, the City Council wishes to highlight several other extremely important improvements to the State transportation system. These projects are not currently listed in the State Consolidated Transportation Program but have regional significance:

- Acquisition of the CSX Railroad tracks from Morgantown on the Potomac River all the way to Bowie There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a regional hiker-biker trail amenity in place of the CSX railroad tracks, since the coal fired power plants at Morgantown on the Potomac River and Chalk Point on the Patuxent River will be shutting down operations soon. The railroad corridors could be repurposed to a Rails-to-Trails concept, enhancing multi-modal travel opportunities within Prince George's and Charles Counties. MDOT leadership is essential in this regard, and we implore you to work at the highest levels to ensure that the opportunity for non-vehicular travel is preserved and eventually realized.
- Public Transit Via the US 50 Corridor The City Council requests that you accelerate project development of the US 50 Transit Corridor, referred to as Corridor 28 in the MTA Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland. The City concurs with the plan's recommendation for a new, regional bus route from Annapolis to Union Station via US 50, with a stop at the Northview Parkand-Ride lot in Bowie, within the next several years to provide transit service that integrates with existing WMATA bus routes and national and regional rail systems at Union Station. The city also requests the examination of the current conditions of the bus shelter and routes here in Bowie. At certain stops there are no bus shelters forcing people to stand in the street or the grass making the susceptible to inclement weather, and the improving the wait time and efficiency on our already low frequency routes are just some of the conditions we would like to improve along with requesting better bus shelters.
- A New Interchange on US 50 (I-595) at MD 193 The City Council is very concerned that traffic levels on MD 197, which are continuing to increase, may even be made worse unless MD 197 is upgraded and a new interchange is constructed on US 50 at MD 193. The current Prince George's County Transportation Priority List recommends a Project Planning study for an additional interchange on US 50, at some location between MD 197 and MD 704 (County Project Planning Priority #6), and the project's stated purpose is to relieve congestion and improve safety on MD 197 and MD 450.

Letter to Transportation Secretary Wiedefeld re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

• A New Roadway Connecting MD 197 near Bowie State University with MD 3 in Anne Arundel County – There is a need to conduct a feasibility study to further examine regional traffic congestion in the MD 450 corridor, east of Race Track Road, and the heavy volume of motorists who are projected to use MD 450, Race Track Road and Jericho Park Road in order to travel between Laurel and Crofton. Please note that this need to evaluate the operational and environmental feasibility of this roadway connection is recommended in both the Approved Prince George's County Master Plan of Transportation and the Approved Bowie State/MARC Station Sector Plan. This facility will greatly enhance access to the planned, mixed-use Transit Oriented Development community charted for the Bowie State MARC Station area. State leadership is key to realizing this future transportation concept

As always, City will keep working to make the community a better place for all. The City Council appreciates your time and dedication to responsible transportation planning and for the state's uninterrupted commitment to serving the residents of Maryland. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council Timothy J. Adams

Mayor

cc: The Honorable Ronald L Watson, Ph.D., State Senator

The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate

The Honorable Adrian Boafo, Delegate

The Honorable Kym Taylor, Delegate

The Honorable Thomas E. Dernoga, County Council Chair

The Honorable Ingrid Watson, County Council Member

The Honorable Wala Blegay, County Council Member

The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks, County Executive

The Honorable Peter Shapiro, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman

Mr. Tim Smith, SHA Administrator

Mr. Derek L. Gunn, P.E., SHA District Engineer

Mr. Randy Clarke, WMATA General Manager/CEO

Mr. Michael Johnson, Director of Prince George's County DPW&T



City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way Bowie, Maryland 20716

August 28, 2023

The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks Prince George's County Executive County Administration Building Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

RE: Bowie City Council 2023-2024 Transportation Priority List

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks:

On August 14, 2023, the Bowie City Council reviewed the City's Transportation Priority List. We wish to provide you with this letter to highlight our priorities for State and County transportation facilities. Below are the City's transportation priorities and recommendations:

1. State Transportation Priorities

The attached letter to Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld includes the City Council's top priorities for projects that would be State funded. The City's highest priority for State roadway facilities continues to be the reconstruction of MD 197 (Collington Road) between Kenhill Drive and Relocated MD 450 (currently County Priority #6). The State Highway Administration is moving ahead with a re-design of Preliminary Engineering plans for the project. In the FY 2022-2027 CTP, \$2.5 million in funding has been dedicated to advance the project to 30% design. This project consists of upgrading and widening existing MD 197 to a multi-lane divided highway from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated (1.4 miles). In 2022, the average daily traffic was 34,000 vehicles per day, and it is projected to be 43,800 in the Year 2042. The existing, two-lane section is already severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods and at all hours on the weekends. The City asks that you amend the County's Transportation Priority List to make expediting MD 197 one of the County's highest priorities for construction.

The City's other major priorities for State facilities include:

- Reconstruction of MD 450 (Annapolis Road) between Stonybrook Drive and MD 3 (County Priority #9), with immediate emphasis on the segment between Stonybrook Drive and Race Track Road (known as Bowie Mainstreet);
- Construction of an interchange at the US 301/MD 197 intersection (County Priority #9).
- US 301 capacity and safety improvements between Excalibur Road and Leeland Road (The City recommends adding a Project Planning study for US 301 to the County Priority List).
- Design and engineering, as well as right-of-way acquisition, for MD 3, between US 50 and MD 32 (State Consolidated Transportation, Plan Prince George's County Line 13); Acquiring vacant parcels in a similar manner to the right-of-way acquisitions for US 301 would be a cost-effective way to assemble right-of-way for lane widening and construction of the future interchange at MD 450/MD 3.

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Letter to County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks City Council Transportation Priority List

2. County Capital Improvement Program

<u>Church Road</u> - The City's highest priority for County roadways is Church Road. An improvement project has remained in out years of the CIP for many years, but with no real effort to move it forward. Unfortunately, the \$9.7 million upgrade project for Church Road continues to be shown in the "Beyond 6 Years" category of the CIP, and the completion date for the project is "to be determined". The referenced project provides geometric and safety improvements to Church Road between Woodmore Road and MD 214 (Central Avenue) which will include intersection improvements, local realignment of the roadway (horizontal and vertical), and the addition of shoulders and roadside drainage where necessary. This roadway upgrade would help enhance safety and lessen congestion south of Woodmore Road.

Church Road is a major road serving a large portion of the Prince George's County's estate-home community. Because of the overwhelming need for a safer road that provides adequate traffic carrying capacity, full construction funding for the segment of Church Road between Mount Oak Road and MD 214 should be programmed in the first years of the CIP. The City is willing to donate six acres of land to Prince George's County thus providing the land needed for a roadway realignment at this location.

We urge you to support a feasibility study for the Church Road corridor in the DPW&T budget for FY 2025 and consider placing funding for design of improvements between MD 214 and Mount Oak Road in Year 2 of the FY 2025 CIP and funding for construction in Years 2-3, so that this critical safety project can move forward soon.

Mitchellville Road – This important roadway serves as a major conduit for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, from the Bowie Town Center to Pointer Ridge and US 301. It is our understanding that a project to improve Mitchellville Road exists within the Countywide CIP page, the road is undergoing resurfacing now and there is currently no funding available for it or any larger project. The City recommends a cost-effective project consisting of a 2-lane urban section roadway (including on-road bike lanes) which will provide needed refuge for pedestrians, allow for safer bicycle access and improve drainage conditions. We ask for your cooperation by including full funding for these improvements, south of Mount Oak Road, in the Countywide CIP project over the next three years.

Race Track Road - The City Council supports a continuation of funding for pedestrian safety and aesthetic landscaping improvements to Race Track Road. There is avid community support for the project. The design status is about 40% complete and includes a full road layout plan, profiles, and cross sections, as well as maintenance of traffic/signing and pavement marking plans. In May 2018, a public information session was held at Yorktown Elementary School. We understand that the County is still funding this project, but construction will not begin until FY 2026 under the current budget plan. The Race Track Task Force recommends a complete street cross section and extend the limits of the project past the Race Track. The City appreciates your helping to address the many safety challenges on Race Track Road.

Governor's Bridge Replacement - The Bowie City Council is very disappointed with the decision not to replace or repair Governor Bridge, which crosses the Patuxent River within the City limits. Governor Bridge Road is an important vehicular route connecting Prince George's County with Anne Arundel County and construction of a replacement bridge is called for in the approved Bowie, Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan. The road provides a second point of access for the 240 single family dwellings in the Longleaf community, 478 multi-family apartment units at Governor's Green, the Prince George's Stadium North Parking Lot, several automobile dealerships and other properties. The City has always understood that the bridge would be repaired or replaced, so that vehicular access could be restored. The City would like to see a bridge improvement that enhances safety and preserves access (especially for emergency vehicles).

<u>US 301 Improvements</u> (south of MD 214) – This project consists of the improvement of US 301 by providing a third through lane north and south bound between MD 214 and MD 4 and further widening as needed, at Trade Zone Avenue, MD 214 and MD 725. Associated intersection improvements at Old Central Avenue, Trade Zone Avenue, Leeland Road and Village Drive West will also be undertaken. This project is necessary to provide satisfactory levels of service during peak periods at the intersections along US 301 should State Highway Administration planned improvements be delayed. It provides for increased capacity to accommodate planned development in this area as well as enhanced safety for the traveling public. Construction funding of \$410,000 is programmed in Year 1 of the current CIP. Construction funding allocations of \$4.13M annually appear in each CIP year, from Year 2 through Year 6.

The City Council observed that developers have added a third through lane to some segments of the southbound lanes of US 301, south of MD 214, but that no projects or funding appear to be available to add a third *northbound* lane. It is recommended that the County join the City in requesting that the Prince George's County portion of the CTP include funding for Project Planning. Alternatively, the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study (Prince George's County CTP, Line 19), also on hold, might present a funding opportunity for construction of a third northbound lane.

3. Public Transit

Planned mixed-use development, such as at Bowie Town Center, Melford Village, South Lake and Mill Branch Crossing strengthens the case for better and more frequent transit service within our City. In addition, some of the more remote portions of the City are sorely underserved by public transit or have no service at all. The establishment of a new Transit Oriented Development at the Bowie State MARC Station will help with this, but it won't address many of our needs. Also, the Council identified several concerns with the existing bus facilities and routes. At certain stops there are no bus, shelters forcing people to stand in the street or the grass, making them susceptible to inclement weather. Council also indicated improving the wait time and efficiency on our already low frequency routes along with requesting better bus shelters.

Expansion of the County transit service to the Bowie area will go a long way toward addressing the priority transit needs identified by the City Council, as follows:

- 1. Establish a downtown circulator route (The Bus) serving the Bowie Center, including Covington and Melford.
- 2. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between the 450 Mainstreet area and the City of Greenbelt.
- 3. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Bowie Town Center and Largo Town Center, including service along Woodmore, Mount Oak and Mitchellville Roads.
- 4. Evaluate County bus (The Bus) service between Fairwood and Upper Marlboro, via Fairwood Parkway, Church Road, Leeland Road and US 301.
- 5. Designate the US 50 corridor as a Priority Transit Corridor on all future County plans.
- 6. Ensure the establishment of a regional transit route from Annapolis to Laurel via the Northview Park-and-Ride lot in the next several years.

Letter to County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks City Council Transportation Priority List

- 7. Continue to advocate for efficiency improvements to WMATA bus service and the Better Bus Network Design initiative regarding Bowie.
- 8. Initiate County bus (TheBus) transit service in <u>Old Town Bowie</u> to connect it to other cultural and business attractions, including Bowie State University

4. Trails

Pedestrian Bridge over MD 214 – Funding should be included to the M-NCPPC CIP to help construct a new pedestrian bridge over MD 214 (outside the City limits). In 2021, the City completed a feasibility study, working with the Maryland State Highway Administration, that confirmed the potential for a grade-separated pedestrian bridge over MD 214 in the vicinity of Hall Road. A recommended location for a future bridge is on M-NCPPC land situated between Hall Road East and Pennsbury Drive, on the north side of MD 214, and County owned land in the South Lake (Karington) development, on the south side of MD 214.

Bowie Heritage Trail - The County's assistance, through the M-NCPPC CIP, is requested for construction of a pedestrian underpass of MD 197 (outside the City limits) to connect Lemon's Bridge Road near the D.S.S. Goodloe House to the MARC Train Station at Bowie State University. A feasibility study and preliminary engineering plan, funded by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Transportation-Land Use Connections program, was completed in 2014. Also, this fiscal year, the City will complete a 2,200 linear foot extension of The Bowie Heritage Trail, from Old Town Bowie to Jericho Park/Lemon's Bridge Road.

<u>A-44 Greenway Trail</u> - The City is also interested in a partnership with M-NCPPC to design and build a north-south trail system in the Church Road corridor (mostly outside the City limits), using lands dedicated to public use from the now-obsolete Inter-County Connector (A-44). The City would like to explore the possibility of trail construction on M-NCPPC property between Dolphin Way in Woodmore Estates and Dunwood Crossing Drive in Woodmore Highlands.

Acquisition of the CSX Railroad tracks from Morgantown on the Potomac River all the way to Bowie - There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a regional hiker-biker trail amenity in place of the CSX railroad tracks, since the coal fired power plants at Morgantown on the Potomac River and Chalk Point on the Patuxent River will be shutting down operations soon. The railroad corridors could be repurposed to a Rails-to-Trails concept, enhancing multi-modal travel opportunities within Prince George's and Charles Counties. State and County leadership are essential in this regard, and we implore you to work at the highest levels to ensure that the opportunity for non-vehicular travel is preserved and eventually realized.

As always, City will keep working to make the community a better place for all. The City Council appreciates your time and dedication to responsible transportation planning and for your uninterrupted commitment to serving the residents of Prince George's County. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations

Letter to County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks City Council Transportation Priority List

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council Timothy J. Adams

Mayor

Attachment #1: Letter to Paul Wiedefeld dated August 28, 2023

ce: The Honorable Ronald L Watson, Ph.D., State Senator

The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate

The Honorable Adrian Boafo, Delegate

The Honorable Kym Taylor, Delegate

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