



Document Review Form

From: Carreanne Eyler Date: 04/28/2025

Document for Signature: **State Transportation Letter**

Purpose / Background: **2025 City of Frederick Transportation Priorities**

Has this item been reviewed by the Legal Department? Yes ☐ No ☒

Reviewing Attorney

Reviews

Signature

Date

City Attorney	<i>Scott Waxter</i>	4/28/2025
Director of Budget and Administration	<i>Katie Barkdoll</i>	4/28/2025
Chief of Staff	<i>Mayon Sampson</i>	4/28/2025

Resubmit

Signature

Date

City Attorney		
Director of Budget and Administration		
Chief of Staff		



FREDERICK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

April 28, 2025

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: 2025 City of Frederick Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary, Wiedefeld:

On behalf of the City of Frederick ("City"), we are writing to share the City's transportation priorities for consideration in the development of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY2025-FY2030 Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). As you will see from this letter, we have aligned ourselves with Frederick County to provide a unified set of priorities.

We are also happy to see that design funding has been restored to the US 15 Widening project. As we stated in last year's letter, this project is a necessary safety improvement for the road and is not simply a travel time improvement. It is a strategic investment, drawing cut-through traffic off local streets and giving us the flexibility to prioritize more sustainable transportation infrastructure. It will also allow us to redesign the outmoded interchanges that currently prioritize drivers over pedestrians and bicyclists to the detriment of both.

Despite the ongoing cuts to MDOT's budget and uncertainty in the Maryland economy, we are very pleased to see continued investment in local transit operations and in our state's bikeways system. These systems are most utilized by those who cannot easily access the transportation system any other way, so their ongoing operation and expansion is a significant source of stability in our residents' lives.

We are continuing to work with the project's managers for the widening project to ensure the City's priorities are met, and we look forward to seeing construction funding restored.

We have organized the remainder of this letter by emphasis area.

SHA – Major Roadways

- **Full Design and Construction Funding – US 15 from I-70 to MD 26.** The section of US 15 from I-70 to MD 26 has long been targeted for critical safety upgrades that would eliminate dangerous weave conditions and provide important sound and safety barriers for adjacent residential homes and businesses. This project has been the longstanding top transportation priority for the City of Frederick, as well as the Frederick County General Assembly Delegation, as it will help alleviate safety issues and relieve traffic flow and route capacity challenges in both directions during both peak hours. We appreciate the Administration's commitment to reinstate design

and construction funding and urge the Administration to make every possible effort to continue with an accelerated design schedule.

- **Full Design Funding – I-70 Phase 4: I-270 to Mt. Phillip Road.** This project is a prime candidate suitable for funding consideration from the federal infrastructure package as it is the fourth and final phase of the I-70 project (limits from Patrick Street to Mt. Phillip Road). This is a priority freight movement project in the Maryland State Freight Plan and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Freight Priorities List and is a key link, essential to improving our regional supply chain network and the efficient transport of goods from the Port of Baltimore. It would also increase safety related to the merge of I-270 and I-70 West and address congestion through this segment as it transitions to the future US 15 widening.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Last year, the City's Active Mobility Advisory Committee (AMAC) expressed a desire for the City to prioritize completing existing and under-design bikeways over starting new projects. We are preparing to finish designs for 5 important bicycle and pedestrian projects, and we are now looking forward to securing construction funding.

- **North Branch Trail.** Our fast-growing northwestern neighborhoods currently do not have easy and comfortable routes to bicycle or walk to our downtown core, and the North Branch Trail is intended to provide just such a route. This project is approaching 100% design, and we have spoken with our Congressional delegation about securing construction funding.
- **Golden Mile Multimodal Access Lane.** Bus, pedestrian, and bicycle access along the Golden Mile (US 40) is significantly impaired by narrow sidewalks, high traffic speeds, and a built environment that requires buses to navigate parking lots to serve storefronts. This project will address all three issues with a shared-use path and bus-only lane on the north (westbound) side of Route 40. As it is approaching 100% design, we are excited to begin pursuing funding to complete this long-planned project.
- **East Street Rails with Trails Phase 3.** The critical bridge over the US 15/MD 26 interchange will provide, for the first time, safe and accessible crossings across this fast and dangerous road for bicyclists and pedestrians. It will stitch together the northern and southern neighborhoods for the first time and, along with Phase 4 (described below), link with a bicycle trail heading into the far north of the County, to Woodsboro. This project has been funded with \$5.6 million for design and construction, though inflation has crept up since these funds were awarded. We are looking forward to working with the State to ensure this project is fully funded and is completed.
- **Monocacy Village Path.** For decades, two paved trails built by developers have dead-ended at the edge of Monocacy Village Park, blocking anyone on wheels from using them to access East Street and our downtown core. Recently funded for 100% design, the Monocacy Village Path will build on existing infrastructure to create a safe and scenic off-street accessway between the City's eastern neighborhoods and its downtown core.
- **7th Street Protected Bikeway.** The northern boundary of our historic core is a key artery, serving Fort Detrick, Hood College, Frederick Hospital, the Downtown Historic District, and the East Street Corridor. It is currently not sufficient for the needs of non-motorists, however, and a protected bicycle lane will provide significantly improved access for everyone, whether or not they have the ability to drive.

In addition, we are, or soon will, pursue design funding from the State for the following projects:

- **East Street Rails with Trails Phase 4.** The northernmost phase of East Street Rails with Trails will link the Phase 3 Bridge to the county segment at Monocacy Boulevard – the last phase in a system 12 years in the planning. We are now working on the 30% design phase for this project, and we expect to pursue 100% design and construction funding soon.
- **Thomas Johnson Drive to Clemson Corner Connector.** This project, connecting to East Street Rails with Trails, will cut travel between Clemson Corner and the Thomas Johnson Drive corridor by at least 2.5 miles, significantly improving nonmotorized access to destinations and regional shopping on both sides of US Route 15. This critical barrier was identified in the draft Let's Move, Frederick document. With design work for East Street Rails with Trails underway, this connector needs to be evaluated for feasibility so that the Rails with Trails project can be designed with it in mind. We have already requested funding for a feasibility study from the Metropolitan Washington Transportation Planning Board.
- **North Market Bikeway.** Ensuring people have easy access to bikeways that are safe and comfortable for anyone to use is a key part of our strategy to create a balanced transportation system. The North Market Bikeway, from 7th Street to Worman's Mill Road via Routzahn Way, will provide significantly improved bicycle connectivity to the neighborhoods close to downtown. We have already applied for 100% design funding through the state's Climate Focused Funding program.

Finally, we have also applied to the state's Climate Focused Funding program for funding to design and construct a pilot sensor-driven lighting system in Waterford Park. This would provide appropriate lighting to users of Waterford Park and dim the lights when the park is not in use. Similar systems have been reported to cut energy use by 60%, and we expect this system to be no different. If successful, we hope to deploy similar systems elsewhere where there are currently no lights at all, balancing access and safety with the benefits to residents and our ecosystem of a dark night.

MTA - Commuter Bus and MARC Train

Presently, the only way to get to or from Frederick County outside of commute hours is either by driving or by using private operators. With the dramatic shift in travel behavior in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, midday and off-peak service has performed better at retaining and growing ridership than its commute-only alternatives. Through its commuter bus, regional bus, and MARC offerings, MTA can meet this growing and shifting demand.

- **Regional bus service:** Alongside the opportunities for regional transit travel presented by the American Legion Bridge and the I-270 Phase I North project, we urge MTA to plan for regional travel outside of typical commute hours and beyond this singular corridor. We ask that you move expeditiously to advance the funding for local and regional transit projects to bring this network online.
- **Improve the MARC Brunswick Line:** With the Brunswick Line Technical Report completed and an upcoming pilot program for midday Brunswick Line service, we urge the state to fully fund the necessary capital improvements to make the Brunswick Line a true regional rail service. We also urge MARC to study to what degree rolling stock could improve travel times, which have never been competitive with driving or even bus service. This would improve transportation reliability considerably, making Frederick a more attractive location for primary and satellite office growth.

Frederick Municipal Airport (City of Frederick)

The City has identified the following improvement project priorities:

- **The south corporate apron expansion** will expand the apron to the south creating opportunities to build new corporate hangars and add businesses to the airport. Grant funding will be used to construct the apron, and private development will construct the corporate hangars and the commercial driveway and parking lot.
- **Replacement of an Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS).** The AWOS is a critical system to pilots and has reached the end of its service life. The airport intends to replace the AWOS system utilizing grant funds.
- **Commercial Hanger Development.** Demand for aviation continues to grow as a shortage of commercial aircraft hangars for aviation businesses continues. Companies that utilize aircraft to conduct business and support aviation users are restricted in their growth due to a limited number of new starts to build commercial hangars. Expanded support for capital projects and a program specifically targeting commercial hangar development would directly remove the restrictions on airport-related commerce.

Transit Oriented Development Designations

As required by MDOT in Priority Letters, The City of Frederick and Frederick County are asking for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) designation for the area surrounding two MARC Stations, the first ready to begin implementation and the second in the planning stage:

- **Frederick MARC Station:** This is The City of Frederick's prime TOD site, and we are ready to move forward with the designation process with the state. We look forward to working with MDOT to make this planned designation a reality.
- **Monocacy MARC Station:** Serving both commuter rail and bus, as well as local transit bus, this station has 814 parking spaces and is serviced weekdays by six MARC trains, 40 commuter buses and several more local TransIT buses. A corridor (small area) study is underway in this area, and we will involve the MDOT ORED and MDOT MTA staff in the planning process, as we expect that the TOD would be the major centerpiece of this planning area.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our transportation priorities. We look forward to continuing a productive partnership with MDOT and to actively participating in the development of the CTP. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact our transportation planner, Mr. David A. Edmondson, at 301-600-1885 or at dedmondson@cityoffrederickmd.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael C. O'Connor
Mayor