



ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

September 18, 2024

The Honorable Paul Wiedefeld, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Drive, Post Office Box 548
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld,

Montgomery County appreciates our cooperative relationship with the State of Maryland to collaboratively meet the transportation needs of our diverse residents and businesses. Montgomery County submitted a comprehensive update of its State Transportation Priorities Letter in February 2023; this letter serves to identify minor changes in those priorities based on our FY2025-2030 Capital Improvements Program and other recent plans and programs. We anticipate our next comprehensive update in early 2025, which will entail an extensive outreach process including consultation with Executive agencies, the County Council, our State Delegation, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Planning Board, municipalities, and the public. Until this new letter is transmitted next year, our letter dated February 16, 2023, represents our priorities with the following amplifications. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact us.

Locally Operated Transit Support (LOTS)

Locally Operated Transit Support (LOTS) grants to Montgomery County were proposed to be cut in FY25 and restored only through a last-minute, one-time restoration from Governor Moore. The \$17.4M LOTS funding is integral to serving Montgomery County Transit's 18.3 million annual trips, with passengers with a median income of \$35,000. HB 950, passed in the 2024 Maryland General Assembly session, provided greater certainty on future LOTS funding, which will be imperative to ensuring continued transit operations in the County.

Interstate Program

Through the Transportation Planning Board's Visualize 2050, Board members have included the American Legion Bridge/I-270/I-495 project to advance into air quality conformity modeling for inclusion in the constrained long-range plan. While the timeline and funding remain unclear, we seek details and clarity on the State's intentions for advancing this project and the associated transit commitments. In a resolution dated May 15, 2024, MDOT agreed to continue the transit commitments included in Visualize 2045 until both parties can mutually agree upon revisions. We ask that you provide more clarity about the status of this project and work with the County to reach an agreement on any revisions to the transit commitments.

Vision Zero Implementation

In 2023, there were 534 fatal crashes resulting in 612 fatalities in the State of Maryland. Within Montgomery County alone, there were 45 fatalities, including 15 pedestrians and 1 bicyclist. Vision Zero was adopted by the State and many of its subdivisions - including Montgomery County - to address this life and death matter. While progress has been made, we continue to see significant numbers of severe and fatal crashes on our road network, particularly for pedestrians. MDOT made a demonstrable commitment to support safety for non-auto modes as part of its Complete Streets Policy, made effective on June 1, 2024. We urge MDOT to increase the allocation of resources to implement pedestrian and bicycle safety, accessibility projects, and speed reduction strategies, to evaluate all their projects for improved safety outcomes, and to expedite the review of access permit policies to prioritize Vision Zero projects that are implemented by local jurisdictions within the State right-of-way.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Implementation

Bus Rapid Transit is a priority for the County, and we remain committed to implementing a comprehensive BRT network to support residents and drive economic development in Montgomery County, with benefits for the state as a whole. We appreciate the collaboration demonstrated by MDOT in advancing this program and look forward to continued and improved partnership to realize the promise of these projects.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Investment

We commend MDOT for providing major capital and operating support to WMATA and we are deeply grateful for the Moore-Miller Administration's continued commitment and prioritization of WMATA, which helps secure many dimensions of the county and state's future.

The priorities for WMATA from the February 2023 letter remain with the following changes:

1. **North Bethesda North Metro Entrance.** The County has signed an MOU with WMATA for joint redevelopment covering the North Bethesda Station and centered around a second station entrance. The County submitted an unsuccessful RAISE grant for this project in early 2024 and plans to resubmit the project later this year. We ask for MDOT's advocacy as it relates to funding at the state, regional, and federal levels.
2. **Bethesda Metro Station South Entrance, new Mezzanine.** As part of the MDOT MTA Purple Line project, the County is funding a second entrance into the Bethesda Metrorail station. A significant funding gap remains for the mezzanine component that will provide this access from MDOT MTA's Purple Line to WMATA's Metro Red Line. State support in seeking additional funding to complete this element of the project is appreciated.

The Honorable Paul Wiedefeld, Secretary
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Page 3 of 3

We thank you again for your continued partnership and support in meeting the needs of Maryland residents and businesses in Montgomery County. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Marc Elrich, Executive
Montgomery County



Andrew Friedson, Council President
Montgomery County

cc: The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor, State of Maryland
Montgomery County House Delegation
Montgomery County Senate Delegation