



September 15, 2026

Secretary Katie Thomson
Maryland Department of Transportation
Office of Planning, Programming, and Project Delivery
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Thomson:

The City of Gaithersburg is one of Maryland's largest and most diverse municipalities, home to more than 70,000 residents, a vibrant and growing business community, and several major employment centers. As a city served by multiple state highway corridors, we work closely with MDOT and SHA to ensure safe, reliable, and equitable mobility for the residents, workers, and visitors who depend on these facilities each day. We welcome your leadership as you begin your tenure as Secretary and look forward to strengthening our partnership and continuing our collaborative work to advance critical transportation projects throughout Gaithersburg and the region.

The City also wishes to acknowledge SHA's ongoing partnership and responsiveness in addressing operational and safety needs throughout the community. SHA recently installed intersection safety improvements on Great Seneca Highway (MD119) at High Gables Drive, including rumble strips to enhance driver awareness. SHA also continues to coordinate closely with the City on planned intersection improvements on Great Seneca Highway (MD119) at Kentlands Boulevard/Orchard Ridge Drive and at Quince Orchard Road (MD124), both of which are progressing through design.

Quarterly coordination meetings between City staff and SHA staff have been productive and fostered better communication, timely issue resolution, and improved project delivery. SHA has completed the design of traffic signal and lane configuration modifications at Clopper Road (MD117) and Watkins Mill Road / Pheasant Run Drive and continues advancing the MD124 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) from MD355 to Saybrooke Oaks Boulevard. We also appreciate SHA's prompt response to routine maintenance items and its recent removal of dead trees in the Watkins Mill Road median at the City's request.

Additionally, the City wishes to recognize SHA for its partnership in addressing encampment sites located within the I-270 cloverleafs. SHA's coordination ensured these sites were cleared in a manner that was both expeditious and humane, reflecting a shared commitment to safety, dignity, and interagency collaboration.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects

Olde Towne Shared Use Path (BP-10)

We strongly support the dedicated funding of \$451,808 for this project. This investment enhances multimodal access within Gaithersburg's historic core and is an essential component of our citywide bicycle and pedestrian network.

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I-270/NIST East Shared Use Path- Phase II (BP-13)

This project provides a vital connection along the I-270 corridor, enabling safe, non-motorized movement parallel to one of the region's busiest commuter routes, and we appreciate the \$176,000 funded for this investment.

Industrial Drive → Morris Park Bicycle & Pedestrian Route (SHA-M-6)

The City supports SHA's continued design work on this important multimodal connection. This project provides safe access for residents, connects recreational facilities with employment centers, and fills a key gap within the citywide active transportation network.

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit Oriented Development Capital Grant Program (TSO-5)

The TOD Grant Program is an important tool supporting compact, mixed-use, transit-accessible development. We strongly support continued investment in this program, which provides crucial financial resources to jurisdictions advancing TOD at key stations, potentially including MARC's Metropolitan Grove station in Gaithersburg.

Transit Investments

MARC Brunswick Line Improvements (MTA-3)

We support the increased investment toward improvements along the MARC Brunswick Line. Enhancements to rail operations, equipment, and station facilities directly benefit Gaithersburg's two MARC stations and improve travel reliability for thousands of regional commuters. These improvements also reinforce ongoing TOD efforts and strengthen access to employment hubs throughout the region.

Montgomery County Local Bus Program (MTA-40)

We support continued funding for Montgomery County's local bus system, which invests in fleet replacement and preventative maintenance. These improvements bolster Ride On service that is foundational to mobility within Gaithersburg and the surrounding area.

Freight Infrastructure

We recognize MDOT's broader freight-related investments, including over \$2.3 billion in planning, design, and construction projects statewide, which indirectly support regional reliability along multimodal corridors serving Gaithersburg.

Highway User Revenue (HUR – Page HUR-1)

Highway User Revenue (HUR) is a critical revenue source for the City of Gaithersburg, supporting:

- Street resurfacing and pavement preservation
- Sidewalk and ADA ramp improvements
- Local road safety enhancements

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- Snow removal, traffic operations, and maintenance activities

Because HUR represents one of the City's largest dedicated funding sources for local transportation maintenance and small capital improvements, fluctuations in annual allocations directly impact Gaithersburg's ability to maintain infrastructure and ensure safe mobility.

Concern Regarding Declining Allocations

The Draft FY27-FY32 CTP shows a noticeable drop in HUR annual allocations- from \$428.8 million in FY 27 to \$334.4 million in FY 28 statewide, with only moderate increases in subsequent years (\$344.5M in FY 29; \$354.5M in FY 30; \$362.7M in FY 31; \$367.5M in FY 32).

This reduction in statewide funding translates into lower distributions for municipalities, including Gaithersburg. The impact is significant:

- Deferred pavement resurfacing
- Slowed sidewalk and ADA compliance improvements
- Backlogs in local road maintenance
- Reduced ability to respond to emergent safety issues on neighborhood streets

The City urges MDOT to consider ways to stabilize HUR funding, reduce volatility tied to statewide revenue projections, and increase municipal shares where feasible. Consistent and predictable HUR allocations are essential to maintaining safe local transportation infrastructure.

I-270 / I-495 Corridor (SHA-SW-10)

The I-270/I-495 project is of critical importance to the City of Gaithersburg and the entire Montgomery County region. As one of Maryland's most heavily traveled corridors, I-270 profoundly affects commuter travel times, freight reliability, regional job access, and overall economic competitiveness. The Draft CTP's Montgomery County section notes ongoing implementation of innovative congestion management (ICM) tools along I-270, including ramp metering, technology upgrades, and multimodal enhancements.

We underscore that advancing both the North and South phases of this project is essential, not optional. Traffic volumes along I-270 have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, regional employment continues to grow, and congestion routinely impacts safety, emergency response times, and economic productivity. Gaithersburg strongly encourages SHA to maintain momentum on environmental review, preliminary engineering, and grant pursuit activities to ensure this project proceeds without delay.

Critical Corridor Priority: MD 117 – Clopper Road/Diamond Avenue (SHA-M-6)

The City remains deeply concerned and disappointed that the MD 117 Clopper Road/Diamond Avenue project remains "on hold" with no funding provided in the past five years, despite having been a longstanding top priority for both Montgomery County and the City of Gaithersburg.

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This critical project proposes intersection capacity improvements, new sidewalks, and a shared-use path. These improvements are essential for addressing persistent and worsening safety issues, heavy congestion, pedestrian gaps, and multimodal deficiencies along the corridor.

We strongly recommend restoring sufficient funding to, at minimum, complete intersection improvements under Phase 2, and ideally advance full roadway section reconstruction.

The need for this project has only intensified:

- The Watkins Mill Interchange opening has shifted traffic patterns and increased volume along MD 117.
- Traffic has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with congestion routinely affecting both peak and off-peak periods.
- Employment and residential growth continues in the immediate area, increasing strain on an already overburdened arterial.
- The corridor lacks continuous sidewalks and safe pedestrian accommodations, presenting daily hazards for residents and workers.

Given these evolving conditions, it is imperative to advance this long-delayed project to address MD 117's growing safety and congestion challenges.

MD 124/Quince Orchard Road – Russell Avenue Intersection Safety Improvements (SHA-M-6)

The City supports the FY 2028 safety improvements at the MD 124 (Quince Orchard Road) and Russell Avenue intersection. This high-volume intersection serves multiple commercial destinations, transit stops, and community facilities. The planned improvements are essential for improving signal operations, reducing crash risk, enhancing pedestrian safety, and supporting multimodal travel along one of Gaithersburg's most important corridors.

We appreciate MDOT's continued collaboration and attention to these critical needs and look forward to working together to ensure a safe, connected, and resilient transportation system for Gaithersburg and the region.

Sincerely,



Jud Ashman
Mayor, City of Gaithersburg

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