



April 14, 2026

The Honorable Secretary Kathryn Thomson
Acting Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: 2026 MDOT Tour Meeting / Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)
Board of County Commissioners Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Thomson:

I enjoyed meeting with you and MDOT staff last month about the County's transportation priorities. We thank you for your follow-up letter to our 2025 Transportation Priorities Letter and spending the time in March to hear our pressing issues. The Washington County Board of County Commissioners, County Administrator, and staff look forward to your 2026 MDOT CTP Tour Meeting in the fall with the County, City of Hagerstown, and representatives from our other municipalities. This letter is written after consultation with County leadership and Directors of Public Works, Airport, Transit, and the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO).

Interstate 81 Widening: The I-81 Phase 2A project had its Final Review meeting on April 10 and is scheduled to begin construction in spring 2027. As mentioned in our meeting in March, the County is grateful for the work completed to date and the upcoming construction of Phase 2A followed by 2B, but we will continue to ask that planning and engineering funding be added in the CTP for Phases 3 and 4. Nearly half of the fatalities on I-81 in the last 5 years have occurred in Phase 3 through the Exit 7 interchange in Phase 4. Over the next few months, we will have conversations with the MDOT SHA staff regarding ways to keep the momentum of the project moving forward.

Chapter 30 Transportation Project Scoring: The County appreciates MDOT's transparency in sharing the early results of the pilot project for the new biannual project prioritization process for new capacity surface transportation projects costing more than \$5 million that has been developed to update the Chapter 30 scoring process. After meetings with MDOT staff over the past year, we have a better understanding of the scoring. As you are aware, preliminary numbers were shared, and I-81 Phases 3-4 project scored in the bottom quarter of 48 submitted projects. Please continue to look for ways to refine the process to ensure equity in scoring for all projects, recognizing the Secretary's discretion for moving forward projects of statewide significance.

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Interstate 70 and Maryland 65 Interchange Improvements: Now that the bridge work has been completed, please consider adding engineering funding to design a cloverleaf interchange as evaluated in earlier project planning studies as this interchange has been a high priority for many years. The interchange currently serves the Premium Outlets to the north and a growing number of new developments to the south. These interchange improvements, as well as coordination by MDOT for much-needed traffic signal synchronization along Maryland 65 in this area, continue to be important to local businesses, citizens, and commuters.

Highway User Revenue (HUR): The County appreciates the short-term increases in County HUR allocations in FY24-FY27; however, despite progress to restore some funding to the counties, the current share will reduce from 3.6% to 1.5% in FY28 if no action is taken. This vital funding source is consistently targeted for reduction, and the counties' HUR revenue share continues to remain well below the historical rate of 15.3%. This funding supports the operations associated with maintaining approximately 900 miles of road, and under any reasonable metric, the counties' share is less than other recipients. The County supports efforts where taxes and fees collected from highway users are reinvested in a manner reflective of the collection method and each owners' highway maintenance costs.

Aviation Program: The Hagerstown Regional Airport (HGR) is grateful for the continued generous and reliable financial support from the state Office of Regional Aviation Assistance (ORAA). To maintain safety and service, HGR is looking to undertake the following by 2030: a potential Air Traffic Control Tower replacement, crosswind runway rehabilitation (including lighting upgrades); a second phase of terminal parking lot and entrance roadway improvements; a fuel farm facility replacement/relocation, adjacent property acquisitions and demolitions to create a new corporate/manufacturing hangar build site; demolition of an old fire station, along with the relocation of airport fence and gates segments outside of the Runway Visibility Zone/Object Free Area; rehabilitation of Taxiways "A" and "H"; pavement rehabilitation in our T-hangar area; acquisition of 1-3 pieces of Snow Removal Equipment (SRE); replacement of our primary Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) vehicle; installation of a Runway Approach Lighting system (MALSR); and completion of a 4,800-square feet addition to our commercial passenger terminal.

HGR also hopes to complete an Airport Master Planning process (including Terminal Study) in 2029 or 2030 after our IJA programs are concluded.

We note the increasing costs to deliver projects and respectfully request that the State of Maryland adequately fund the ORAA. This should allow for the payment of all typical aspects of State Matching, including "soft costs" such as design, bidding, and construction phase services. Ideally, increasing ORAA's budget to an annual \$5 million would better serve our state's airport system needs and maximize access to federal grants awarded to Maryland's non-MAA-administered airports.

HGR also continues to seek State funding for replacement of its Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). The current FAA-owned facility is functionally and technically obsolete, in poor condition and state of repair, and of insufficient height. Finally, HGR recommends that Maryland consider developing a grant program similar to the Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP) provided by State of Texas to its airports (https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/avn/ramp_grants.pdf).

Transit Program: Washington County Transit (WCT) appreciates MDOT for its ongoing capital and operational assistance, particularly the USDOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant application in 2025 to upgrade and expand WCT's transit facility to support current and future growth. Continued technical support and financial backing from MDOT is crucial for providing accessible, safe, and reliable transit services in Washington County.

Federal operating fund allocations for WCT have increased, whereas state operational funding has remained flat and has not kept pace with the traditional 50/25/25 federal/state/local cost share. Increased program costs over the past several years have outpaced state funding, affecting local authority utilization of federal match dollars and requiring greater local match and over-match dollars to cover expenses. WCT is seeking an increase in state formula-based funds to support the recommended services outlined in the 2025 Transit Development Plan (TDP). WCT's priorities include ongoing funding for preventive maintenance, expanding into unserved rural communities, upgrading fare collection equipment with mobile payment options, and meeting staffing needs for the Transit Transfer Center in downtown Hagerstown. Long-term priorities involve service hour and day extensions, implementing Micro-Transit, and expanding facilities to address the current inadequacies supporting WCT's administrative operations and maintenance.

Recent population and economic growth trends show western migration and changing travel patterns. Washington County is concerned about the Transportation Trust Fund's capacity to support investments in public transit without compromising the existing system and rural communities. The State has reduced its capital support for the Locally Operated Transit Systems from the traditional 10% to 2.5% during a time of record capital and operational support in transit systems that do not serve Washington County. Unlike other states, Maryland funds two metro transit systems entirely from its Transportation Trust Fund, which is a major commitment and financial challenge for investing in other systems and transportation modes. Washington County supports a statewide transit plan that considers the long-term capital and operational financial burden on the state's Transportation Trust Fund relative to the financial participation/benefit of the local beneficiaries. Washington County supports a system that ensures County residents and businesses are not left behind and can continue to benefit from transportation investment and connect to the larger network, population centers, and transportation hubs and thrive.

Pedestrian Safety: We appreciate the partnerships with the Transportation Alternatives Programs (TAP) that enhance infrastructure and pedestrian safety in the County and City of Hagerstown. All are pleased that the Dual Highway Sidewalk project (Eastern Boulevard to All Star Court) is nearing completion. We are aware of MDOT SHA's plans to move forward with the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) corridor (US40) project in Hagerstown and appreciate that currently the State's only PSAP corridor and Vulnerable Road User (VRU) corridor (US11) projects in Western Maryland are located in Washington County.

Railroad Crossings/Study: Thanks to MDOT and the MDOT SHA Rail Coordinator, safety improvements (new gates and lights) for Norfolk Southern crossings at Mondell Road, Tommytown Road, and Taylors Landing Road are under construction and will be completed this spring. The County looks forward to construction at the Sterling Road and Doub Road crossings, which are currently under review. Once those are completed, there will be no passive Norfolk Southern crossings, greatly improving at-grade crossing safety. We would appreciate MDOT SHA's assistance with our efforts to improve the nine passive CSX at-grade crossings as well. The County also awaits advancement of the MARC Growth and Transformation Plan and recognizes the bus service connection between Hagerstown and Monacacy as a step toward the ultimate goal of extending the rail line directly to Hancock and Cumberland.

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State Bridges in County Municipalities: The Town of Williamsport received the US 11 Transportation Planning Study and continues to identify the US 11 Bridge over the Potomac River as its highest priority. Please continue to evaluate concepts from the study and initiate environmental resource coordination. The Town of Hancock is seeking continued support for the US 522 Bridge in Hancock Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Planning Grant (w/ WVDOT), and we look forward to learning of funding opportunities that allow grant coordination meetings for this project to resume and Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) studies to be scheduled.

Appalachian Regional Commission and County-State Coordinated Projects: The County has enjoyed collaborating with your staff on projects that involve State/Federal funding. Construction commenced on Halfway Boulevard Extended last fall, the Hopewell/Wright Road project is currently in design, and the County will begin construction on the Eastern Boulevard project that includes improvements to the intersection of Eastern Boulevard and Maryland 64 later this year.

Washington County appreciates your support of the I-81 widening project and looks forward to working with you and your staff this year to improve safety and mobility in our community. Please contact me at (240) 313-2407 or at shobbs@washco-md.net if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Scott Hobbs
Director of Engineering

cc: Board of County Commissioners
Michelle Gordon, County Administrator
Washington County Delegation Members
Senator Angela Alsobrooks
Senator Christopher Van Hollen, Jr.
Congresswoman April McClain Delaney
Linda Puffenbarger, SHA District Engineer
Jim Bender, Hagerstown City Engineer
Matthew Mullenax, HEPMPO Executive Director
Andrew Eshleman, Public Works Director
Neil Doran, Airport Director
Shawn Harbaugh, Transit Director