



April 12, 2022

The Honorable Secretary James F. Ports, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: 2022 MDOT Tour Meeting / Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)
Board of County Commissioners Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Ports:

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners, County Administrator, and staff look forward to your 2022 MDOT CTP Tour Meeting with us and the City of Hagerstown. Please consider these priorities in the upcoming six-year CTP budget for transportation projects.

Interstate 81 Widening: The Interstate 81 widening project remains a top priority for Washington County. The County is grateful to have the Potomac River Bridge and improvements to Williamsport completed. Last year the County collaborated with MDOT on the Fiscal Year 2021 INFRA Grant Application for Phase 2 Construction, and the project was deemed eligible for the USDOT INFRA Extra Initiative loan program. We are encouraged to hear about the Federal Infrastructure Funding and anticipate funding availability to provide improvements. Please continue to evaluate cost-effective ways to phase the remaining widening to the Pennsylvania state line.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO): Washington County is pleased with the plan and progress to implement TSMO strategies/projects and looks forward to the expansion of Intelligent Traffic Systems infrastructure. Recently this initiative has been discussed as part of the Interstate 81 project.

Interstate 70 and Maryland 65 Interchange Improvements: Construction is near completion on the replacement of the Interstate 70 bridges at the Maryland 65 Interchange as identified in the CTP, and we are hopeful design/engineering of the proposed cloverleaf is included in this year's CTP. The interchange currently serves the Premium Outlets to the north and several other 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.

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MDOT Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART): Washington County looks forward to collaborating with MDOT to incorporate the CHART program in various aspects of training and coordination at the new public safety training center, which is nearing completion.

Highway User Revenue (HUR): The County is encouraged to hear about House Bill 1187 regarding restoring the highway user revenues for counties and municipalities. This funding supports the operations associated with maintaining approximately 900 miles of road in Washington County, and while the amounts municipalities are receiving is nearing the amounts from years past, County funding is still considerably lower than its peak in Fiscal Year 2008.

Aviation Program: The Hagerstown Regional Airport (HGR) has completed two major projects over the past few years: an expansion of the terminal facility, including a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) checkpoint and passenger boarding bridge installation, and the rehabilitation of primary Runway 9/27. HGR is finalizing acquisition of approximately three acres for the design and construction of a project to promote both the clearance of the Runway Visibility Zone (RVZ) and the Runway 2/20 Object Free Area (ROFA) to improve safety on the airfield. The demolition of the old fire station and relocation of the air operations area (AOA) fence and access gate will take place later this year. Additionally, much-needed pavement rehabilitation of the Taxiway P Apron, Taxiway P, and Taxiway C will commence this year. Finally, design will commence this year for the approximately 4,800-square-foot terminal expansion that will allow for additional ticket counters, baggage processing, and ground service vehicle storage. In FY23, we look forward to the relocation and reconstruction of Taxiway F that will greatly improve safety on the airfield. The Snow Removal Materials Storage Building and Salt Dome design and construction is planned, as well as the acquisition of a snow removal loader/plow and the design of Runway 9/27 lighting and signage replacement, construction of which is to be completed in Fiscal Year 2024.

Transit Program: Washington County Transit (WCT) has recovered over 75% of its pre-COVID ridership. We anticipate that with the continued ramping-up of businesses and workplace output, public demand for transportation services will continue to be realized. Through continued federal transit funding opportunities, WCT has maintained service levels and avoided personnel lay-offs. As a matter of fact, WCT is now experiencing the same driver shortages seen nationwide. Creative recruitment practices are being implemented to help fulfill the transit system's needs. Each year, WCT logs over 500,000 service miles in and around Hagerstown, Maryland. Ridership continues to grow. While CARES Act and ARPA funds are helping to offset unanticipated COVID-related expenses and lost revenue, additional formula-based FTA and State operational funds will serve as a basis to expand public transit throughout Washington County in accordance with the most recent Transportation Development Plan. For many years now, federal operating fund allocations have remained consistently flat for WCT. State revenues (grant funding matches and SSTAP) have not kept pace with program costs thus impacting local authority contributions of both federal match dollars and over-match dollars to cover expenses. In Fiscal Year 2023, local County over-match dollars will again swell by approximately \$300,000. WCT is requesting consideration for financial relief via an increase in Federal and State formula-based funds. These increases are needed to bridge the gap between revenues and expenses associated with expansion of transit-related services to rural areas of the County.

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Along with expansion of demand response, paratransit service for individuals with disabilities, additional funding would also support staffing at the Transit Transfer Center in downtown Hagerstown.

Sidewalks: The County appreciates your continued support of Transportation Alternatives Programs (TAP) that enhance infrastructure and pedestrian safety in the County as well as the City of Hagerstown. Along with recent sidewalk improvements along Dual Highway, a speed management study is currently being developed, specifically looking at traffic and pedestrian safety between Cannon and Cleveland Avenues.

Railroad Crossings/Study: Washington County has 37 railroad crossings and looks forward to working with the MDOT SHA Rail Coordinator on safety improvements this year. House Bill 1367, Transportation - Western Maryland, MARC Rail Extension - Study, is still pending for which the County will be consulted as a stakeholder and provided any recommendations regarding feasibility and cost associated with extending the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train rail service to western Maryland.

Appalachian Regional Commission and County-State Coordinated Projects: The County is collaborating with your staff on several upcoming projects that involve State/Federal funding, including Eastern Boulevard at Maryland 64 intersection improvements, Professional Boulevard Phase 2, Halfway Boulevard Extended, and Wright Road.

Washington County thanks you for the continued support on projects to improve local transportation and pedestrian safety. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (240) 313-2407 or shobbs@washco-md.net.

Sincerely,



Scott Hobbs
Director of Engineering

cc: Board of County Commissioners
John Martirano, County Administrator
Washington County Delegation Members
Senator Benjamin Cardin
Senator Christopher Van Hollen
Congressman David Trone
Anthony Crawford, SHA District Engineer
Rodney Tissue, City Engineer
Matthew Mullenax, HEPMPO Executive Director
Rick Johnson, Airport Director
Kevin Cerrone, Transit Director