



April 29, 2025

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

RE: 2025 MDOT Tour Meeting / Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP)
Board of County Commissioners Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners, County Administrator, and staff look forward to your 2025 MDOT CTP Tour Meeting with Washington County, the City of Hagerstown, and representatives from our other local municipalities. I have written this letter after consultation with the aforementioned leadership and the Directors of Public Works, Airport, Transit and the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO). The County's transportation priorities are listed below.

Interstate 81 Widening: Washington County was very pleased to learn that the I-81 Phase 2 funding through construction was restored in MDOT's current CTP. Please have staff continue to focus on finishing the design in 2027 as anticipated in the project schedule. As you are aware, I-81 Phases 3 and 4 are on hold in the approved CTP. We will continue to ask for additional planning funding, as well as engineering, right-of-way, utility, and construction funding to be added in out years for future phases of work to finish the widening to the Pennsylvania line.

Interstate 70 and Maryland 65 Interchange Improvements: This interchange has been on the priority letter for many years, and we were glad to see the bridge work completed recently. Please add engineering funding to design a cloverleaf interchange as evaluated in earlier project planning studies. 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 recent increases in County HUR allocation-in FY25 and FY26; however, despite progress to restore some funding to the counties, this vital funding source is consistently targeted for reduction, and the counties' HUR revenue share continues to remain

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well below historical rates. 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 2029: a crosswind runway rehabilitation (including lighting and marking upgrades); a second phase of terminal parking lot and entrance roadway improvements; a fuel farm facility relocation, including adjacent property acquisitions; 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"; construction of a new salt/materials storage building; pavement rehabilitation in our T-hangar area; acquisition 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 foot addition to our commercial passenger terminal. HGR also hopes to complete an Airport Master Planning process (including Terminal Study) in 2029 after our BIL 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. Recent announcements indicate a further state reduction in 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 encumbrance to support 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: 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. We are pleased that the Dual Highway Sidewalk project (Eastern Boulevard to All Star Court) is moving forward this year. In FY25, HEPMPO completed a corridor safety study of US11/Virginia Avenue, which is identified in MDOT's Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. This study includes a number of recommendations and countermeasures MDOT could implement in a similar fashion to the Dual Highway Sidewalk project.

Railroad Crossings/Study: There are three operating rail systems in Washington County (CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Winchester & Western Railroad Company) including 37 at-grade crossings with County roads. The County has been working with the MDOT SHA Rail Coordinator on developing a plan for safety improvements at a CSX railroad crossing and several Norfolk Southern railroad crossings. For the CSX crossing at Wright Road, construction of new gates and lights was completed last summer, and safety improvement surveys for Norfolk Southern crossings at Mondell Road, Tommytown Road, and Taylors Landing Road are underway. The County continues to await updated reports for the MARC Brunswick Line Expansion Study. A Technical Report was published in 2023 and explores up to four railroad alignment options to extend the Brunswick Line service into Western Maryland. The MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) conducted public involvement activities 2023 and 2024 that included an online public survey and a virtual public meeting in December 2024.

State Bridges in County Municipalities: As indicated in the letter dated April 3, 2025 from the Town of Williamsport to your office regarding its transportation priorities, the Town's highest priority is the

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exploration of the condition and future of the US11 Bridge and cordially calls for a final version of the Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) study. The Town has also invited you to visit the site during your tour of Washington County to see firsthand the trials and tribulations that community stakeholders experience daily. They look forward to discussing the importance of moving this issue forward. Similarly, the County requests a planning and environmental study of the US 522 bridges in the Town of Hancock, which were built in the 1930s and are nearing the end of their useful service life. MDOT resurfaced the US 522 bridge over the Potomac River in 2015.

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, 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. The Wright Road project is currently in design.

Washington County is grateful for MDOT's commitment to the I-81 widening project and likewise appreciates your continued support on the other projects mentioned herein 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
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