



City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie, Maryland 20716

RECEIVED

AUG 23 2022

**SECRETARY'S OFFICE
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION**

August 15, 2022

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

RE: City of Bowie 2022-2023 Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Ports:

The Bowie City Council is pleased to present the City's Transportation Priority List for 2022-2023, which was the subject of a public hearing at City Hall on August 1, 2022. The City's priorities for State transportation facilities are unchanged from last year; however, this year we wish to add some additional justification and updated background for several projects on our list.

The City's Transportation Priorities for 2022-2023 include:

1. **Local Road Improvement Priorities**

The City's highest transportation priorities for roadway construction include the following five projects. **MD 197 is the City Council's highest transportation priority.**

- **MD 197 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 26):**
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

The State Highway Administration is moving ahead with a re-design of Preliminary Engineering plans for the project. In the FY 2022-2027 CTP, \$2.5 million in funding has been dedicated to advance the project to 30% design. This project consists of upgrading and widening existing MD 197 to a multi-lane divided highway from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated (1.4 miles). Access will be controlled with three roundabouts, and the existing trail will be relocated where appropriate. In 2021, the average daily traffic was 33,000 vehicles per day, and it is projected to be 42,500 in the Year 2041.

The existing, two-lane section is already severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods and at all hours on the weekends. The lack of roadway capacity has resulted in ever-increasing diversion of traffic from MD 197 onto the City's local street system. In addition, there are continuing concerns voiced by residents about pedestrian safety and access from the side streets. In response to numerous safety incidents, a mid-block crossing was installed recently near the Foxhill Park entrance. **MD 197 is ready for the State's investment of right-of-way and construction funding in the next CTP.** As you may know, City residents have been waiting for relief from this harmful congestion bottleneck for more than three decades. The MD 197 is currently Construction Priority #6 for Prince George's County.

- **MD 450 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 29):**
FULLY FUND RIGHT-OF-WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

Letter to Transportation Secretary Ports
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

This project is the last section of a multi-segment improvement of Maryland 450, from the Whitfield Chapel Road near the Capital Beltway to MD 3. Project planning was completed for the entire alignment in 1991. Completion of design, as well as land acquisition and construction are needed, between Stonybrook Drive and west of MD 3. Design is over 90% complete but the project is on hold. Traffic volume in 2021 was 23,900 average vehicles per day; projected traffic volume for the Year 2041 is 39,500 vehicles per day. This project is crucial to the City's economic development since it provides principal access to the Bowie Mainstreet commercial area. Most important, however, is the critical need to create a safer roadway.

The City Council appreciates your consideration of a re-examination of the roadway design concept for Bowie Mainstreet, as last year Administrator Tim Smith concurred with our request to reexamine the existing MD 450 design as soon as funding resources have been identified. The City feels the Bowie Mainstreet setting, with its origins as the center of commerce and social activity for the original Levitt-built subdivisions constructed in the 1960s, represents a unique combination of Urban Center, Traditional Town Center and Suburban Activity Center characteristics. This area would greatly benefit from an expert review of the conditions and an evaluation of context driven opportunities for future implementation when the MD 450 project is constructed. Such recommendations may possibly alter (and improve upon) the physical design shown in the current design and engineering plans.

For all these reasons, the City Council requests that funding be placed into the CTP to fully complete design and engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction of the Bowie Mainstreet portion of MD 450 over the next several years. This project is currently #8 on the Prince George's County Transportation Priority List.

- **US 301/MD 197 Interchange (Prince George's County CTP, Line 22):**
FUND DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

The City Council worked very closely with SHA staff to identify an acceptable alternative (Alternative 2 with Roundabouts). Project Planning was completed in 2007, and the project is ready to move into design and engineering. Development pressures continue to mount in this area, including mixed-use development at the Mill Branch Crossing project and a regional recreational park being planned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. This intersection provides access to many Bowie businesses and is at the heart of the City's downtown (designated as the smart growth, mixed use "Bowie Local Center"). As noted during the Project Planning study, increasing traffic volume will also create a permanent congestion bottleneck in the regional road network and potentially harm the local economy, unless the interchange project moves forward. Unfortunately, this critical project has been lingering on hold since 2007 for lack of funding. Traffic volume in 2021 was 62,400 average vehicles per day on US 301/18,600 on MD 197; projected traffic volume for the Year 2041 is 74,500 vehicles per day on US 301/24,900 on MD 197. The project is now Construction Priority #9 on the Prince George's County Transportation Priority List.

- **US 301, from Excalibur Road to Leeland Road (not currently in the CTP):**
FUND PROJECT PLANNING OR INTERIM CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS
THROUGH DISTRICT 3

There has been increasing growth in traffic volume on US 301, between Excalibur Road and Leeland Road, in recent years. The amount of traffic congestion and the substantial amount of approved additional development in the corridor accentuates access and safety concerns. Since it is likely that the ultimate, controlled access improvements planned for US 301 will not occur for many years into the future, the existing roadway should be widened to three travel lanes in each direction as soon as possible, in order to keep pace with other road improvement projects slated for construction north and south of this

Letter to Transportation Secretary Ports
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

segment. If a separate Project Planning study is not possible, we would respectfully request that a study be funded at the District level.

When fully constructed, the South Lake development plan will include 380,000 square feet of retail use, 220,000 square feet of office use, two hotels and 1,360 dwelling units, including 325 multi-family apartment units, 126 multi-family condominium (two-over-two) units, 567 townhouse units and 342 single-family detached units. In addition, a major County sports complex is approved just south of South Lake. Liberty Sports Park will feature multiple fields for a variety of youth sports, including lacrosse, football, soccer, field hockey and rugby. This complex will draw visitors from throughout the country and will have a significant economic impact on Prince George's County and the surrounding area. The tremendous amount of new development in this area deserves a comprehensive approach to improving US 301. The US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study (Prince George's County CTP, Line 22), also on hold, might present a funding opportunity to plan for construction of a third northbound lane.

- **MD 3** (Prince George's County CTP, Line 15):
FUND DESIGN, ENGINEERING AND RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

This project will upgrade MD Route 3 from US Route 50 to MD Route 32 (8.89 miles) to address safety and capacity concerns. The project will improve safety and relieve traffic congestion in this heavily traveled corridor. In 2021, the average daily traffic range was 64,600 – 82,200 vehicles per day and is projected to grow to 86,100 – 133,500 vehicles per day in the Year 2041. The forecast for 2041 represents about a 50% increase in growth of the traffic volume, and it demonstrates that a need to move ahead with design and engineering now exists.

Additional traffic in the corridor will be generated by the mixed-use development at Melford Village, located at the MD 3 interchange with Belair Drive. The approved plan for Melford Village, includes up to 100,000 square feet of retail, up to 260,000 square feet of employment, 126,520 square feet of research space and up to 2,500 dwelling units (including up to 1,000 senior adult multi-family units, 1,000 non-senior multi-family units and 500 townhome units). This site is now under development and the first multi-family building (388 units) is now under construction. The new growth is in addition to the 1.4 million square feet of employment use already existing or approved at the same site. To their credit, the developer of Melford, St. John Properties, has contributed significantly by making traffic capacity improvements at the MD 3/MD 450 intersection ahead of schedule. Because Project Planning is completed for the MD 3 project, it is recommended that funding be provided to begin Design and Engineering, as well as advanced right-of-way acquisition.

The City Council greatly appreciates SHA's recently completed interim safety improvements and signalization along the southbound lanes of MD 3, south of MD 450. The City Council also notes that \$45 million has been expended in right-of-way acquisition for the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study along US 301 (Prince George's County Line 21). The City Council believes that acquiring vacant parcels in the MD 3 corridor in a similar manner would be a cost-effective way to assemble right-of-way for lane widening and construction of the future interchange at MD 450/MD 3. The City recommends adding a new project to the CTP for MD 3 expressly devoted to advanced land acquisition, following the example of the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study.

2. Other Immediate Transportation Priorities

Two remaining local priorities for State transportation facilities are identified below.

1. MD 978 (Hall Road) – District 3 completed construction of a sidewalk between Hall Station Drive and the CSX railroad tracks in 2017. We ask that you continue to support improvements to MD 978, as this roadway is part of the City's master planned trail network,

Letter to Transportation Secretary Ports
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

known as The Bowie Byway. A concept development plan was completed and is awaiting design funds for the segment between the CSX railroad and MD 214. Both the City and County are committed to partnering with SHA to complete pedestrian improvements that will ensure safe access to the new South Bowie Library. Last summer, the City completed a feasibility study, working with District 3, that confirmed the potential for a grade-separated pedestrian bridge over MD 214 in the vicinity of Hall Road.

2. MD 197 North Landscaping Retrofit – Twenty years ago, SHA’s Office of Environmental Design prepared a concept plan for landscaping of the median areas between Rockledge Elementary School. We would like to see this plan implemented. The retrofit design was achieved with broad community consensus, and the City feels the promised work is long overdue and should be initiated as soon as possible. We believe the State would qualify for stormwater credit by reducing impervious surfaces in this part of the MD 197 corridor. The City Council asks that you provide a current cost estimate for this project so that it might be implemented by SHA District 3 as soon as possible. Additionally, City staff is requesting that the District 3 engineer pursue this project.

3. Long-Range Transportation Priorities

In addition to the above, the City Council wishes to highlight several other extremely important improvements to the State transportation system. These projects are not currently listed in the State Consolidated Transportation Program but have regional significance:

- Acquisition of the CSX Railroad tracks from Morgantown on the Potomac River all the way to Bowie – There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a regional hiker-biker trail amenity in place of the CSX railroad tracks, since the coal fired power plants at Morgantown on the Potomac River and Chalk Point on the Patuxent River will be shutting down operations soon. The railroad corridors could be repurposed to a Rails-to-Trails concept, enhancing multi-modal travel opportunities within Prince George’s and Charles Counties. MDOT leadership is essential in this regard, and we implore you to work at the highest levels to ensure that the opportunity for non-vehicular travel is preserved and eventually realized.
- Public Transit Via the US 50 Corridor – The City Council requests that you accelerate project development of the US 50 Transit Corridor, referred to as Corridor 28 in the MTA Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland. The City concurs with the plan’s recommendation for a new, regional bus route from Annapolis to Union Station via US 50, with a stop at the Northview Park-and-Ride lot in Bowie, within the next several years to provide transit service that integrates with existing WMATA bus routes and national and regional rail systems at Union Station.
- A New Interchange on US 50 at MD 193 - The City Council is very concerned that traffic levels on MD 197, which are continuing to increase, may even be made worse unless MD 197 is upgraded, and a new interchange is constructed on US 50 at MD 193. The current Prince George's County Transportation Priority List recommends a Project Planning study for an additional interchange on US 50, at some location between MD 197 and MD 704 (County Project Planning Priority #7), and the project’s stated purpose is to relieve congestion and improve safety on MD 197 and MD 450. Since it is both a City and County priority, the next logical step for this project would be to add it to the Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) at the earliest possible opportunity and consider funding of a Project Planning study in the out years of the CTP.
- A New Roadway Connecting MD 197 near Bowie State University with MD 3 in Anne Arundel County – There is a need to conduct a feasibility study to further examine regional traffic

Letter to Transportation Secretary Ports
re: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

congestion in the MD 450 corridor, east of Race Track Road, and the heavy volume of motorists who are projected to use MD 450, Race Track Road and Jericho Park Road in order to travel between Laurel and Crofton. As further justification, Prince George's County District Council resolution CR-018-2022, approving the Bowie, Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan, specifically states to "add a new strategy of the Transportation and Mobility Element of the (Prince George's County Master Plan) to explore the feasibility of adding a future roadway between MD 197 and MD 424."

As always, the City Council greatly appreciates your dedication to responsible transportation planning and for your impressive commitment to serving the residents of Maryland. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Bowie City Council
Timothy J. Adams
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Ronald L. Watson, State Senator
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate
The Honorable Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Delegate
The Honorable Cheryl S. Landis, Delegate
The Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, II, County Council Chair
The Honorable Todd M. Turner, County Council Member
The Honorable Jonathan M. Medlock, County Council Member
The Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks, County Executive
The Peter Shapiro, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman
Mr. Tim Smith, SHA Administrator
Mr. Derek L. Gunn, P.E., SHA District Engineer
Mr. Randy Clarke, WMATA General Manager/CEO
Mr. Michael Johnson, Acting Director of Prince George's County DPW&T



City of Bowie
15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie, Maryland 20716

CAPITAL DISTRICT 208
20 AUG 2022PM 4



UNITED STATES POSTAGE
PITNEY BOWES
\$ 000.810
02 1P 0000872109 AUG 15 2022
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 20716

RECEIVED
AUG 23 2022
SECRETARY'S OFFICE
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

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



21076-141501