

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary of Transportation
PO Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076-0548

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld,

On behalf of the City of Frederick, we are pleased to submit to you our transportation priorities for consideration in the development of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY2024-FY2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). As you will see in this letter, we have aligned ourselves with Frederick County and our regional partners to provide a unified set of priorities.

Despite the monumental upheaval of the past year, we have been pleased to see progress on improvements to I-270 as well as ongoing funding opportunities for our bicycle and pedestrian projects. *Let's Move, Frederick*, our comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan, is nearly completion, and we are making progress on making our streets safer for all users.

SHA – Major roadways

- **Full Design and Construction Funding – US 15: I-70 to MD 26:** This cost-effective improvement would improve safety and improve access to jobs in the region, including the County's top employer – Fort Detrick. We are happy to hear from the project manager that this is fully funded and that the design of how on/off ramps interface with surface streets will be examined and improved as part of this project.
- **Modifications to I-70 westbound Exit Ramp 56 serving Bowmans Farm Road:** This improvement would shift the existing I-70 westbound off-ramp approximately 1,000 feet to the east and add a new I-70 westbound on-ramp, with both ramps connecting to a realigned Bowmans Farm Rd at Airport Drive. This proposed project would improve capacity and safe access to public and private land/uses in East Frederick including those located along Bowmans Farm Road and Airport Drive East. In addition, this improvement will generate economic impact for the City and State in terms of jobs and tax base.
- **Biggs Ford Road Interchange:** The Biggs Ford Road interchange will accommodate future growth in the area and improve traffic safety by eliminating an at-grade crossing of US 15, providing for a more redundant and safer east-west traffic system.
- **Mount Philip Road Interchange:** The proposed interchange at Mount Philip Road will serve as a primary connector for accessing Christopher's Crossing from I-70 from the west side of the City. This will reduce traffic demand on US 40 west of Waverly Drive and reduce turning movements at the intersection of Christopher's Crossing and US 40, allowing for a smaller and more pedestrian-friendly intersection at that location.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

The following are our bicycle and pedestrian priorities, approved by the City Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, in order of priority:

1. **Rock Creek Trail Improvement:** This project would consist of a feasibility analysis and preliminary designs. The Rock Creek Trail is a critical off-street connection from Frederick's

western neighborhoods, many of which are within Equity Emphasis Areas, to downtown and the MARC station. Currently, its width varies substantially and some segments have insufficient lighting. The City plans to modernize and widen this trail in preparation for extending it westward for one mile to Rock Creek Drive.

2. **East Street Redesign:** The East Street Corridor is one of the most important arteries in the City, but it currently does not serve its purposes well and lacks sidewalks for significant portions of its length. As a next step to the conceptual plan developed in 2022, we are planning to move forward with designing for new sidewalks, mid-block crossings, and bikeways.
3. **Completing Bicycle Projects:** The City will be creating a preliminary set of protected bicycle lanes to link the City's eastern, western, and northern neighborhoods to one another and to downtown. These projects consist of 7th Street, from Fort Detrick to East Street; Baughman's Lane, from West Patrick Street to Rosemont Avenue; and North Market, from 7th Street to Routzahn Way. Segments of each of these projects are already underway by developers or as part of utility work, and the City will be working to complete the designs and make them shovel-ready by the end of next fiscal year.

In addition, the City is advancing the Golden Mile Multi-Modal Lane to the 100% Design phase this fiscal year, which will provide a multi-modal path along the northern (westbound) side of US40/W Patrick Street between Baughmans Lane and Waverly Road. As well, we are advancing the North Branch Trail to 100% Design, which will create a bicycle path from the our fast-growing northwestern neighborhoods to our downtown, and we are moving forward with our East Street Rails with Trails project. No additional funding is anticipated to be needed this coming fiscal year, but the following year will likely see a need for construction funding for the Golden Mile and North Branch projects.

Transit – Local

- **TransIT Plus:** Expand paratransit service to meet growing demand. To meet the current unmet needs will require additional operating funding above current: Year 1 – funding for an additional driver and operating expenses for a small vehicle: \$75,000 annually. Capital expenses of \$115,000 for a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- **Fixed-Route Urban Service:** We support the County's request for an increase in annual operating funding of \$2.68 million and one-time capital funding of \$4.2 million to expand and deepen service, providing 30-minute service frequencies, expanded Saturday service, and, for the first time, Sunday service.
- **Urban and Rural Shuttle Service:** The transit connections between the city and county are currently inadequate to meet the needs of county residents, hurting older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income households. They are unable to access the services of the city, hurting both the city and county. We join the County in requesting funding for additional operating funding for two new fixed routes, including drivers and vehicle operating expenses, (\$450,000), as well as capital funding for two wheelchair accessible vehicles (\$115,000 each).

MTA - Commuter Bus

- **#515 Line Commuter Bus Service:** Add peak reverse flow (back haul) and off-peak service to provide a critical intercity transit link between downtown Frederick and Washington, DC. This will better accommodate travel patterns that have emerged in the post-COVID world.
- **Additional Intercity Bus Service:** Add bidirectional, on- and off-peak Frederick-Baltimore intercity bus service to provide a critical transit link between the two largest cities in Maryland.

- **I-270 Corridor Commuter Bus Service Enhancements:** In anticipation of significant growth in commuter bus demand with the opening of the I-270 Electronic Toll Lanes (ETLs), study the need for expanded park and ride capacity, more efficient bus stops, and better linkage/connections with I-270.

MTA – MARC Commuter Rail

- **Implement MARC Cornerstone Plan:** Strategically expand parking, track, yards and maintenance facilities, and systems to accommodate additional peak direction, off and reverse peak, and weekend service, as well as longer trains. These would improve transportation reliability considerably, making Frederick a more attractive location for primary and satellite office growth.
- **Point of Rocks Platform:** Construct new platform to allow Frederick Branch trains to stop at Point of Rocks, which will provide additional train options for riders using the Point of Rocks station.

Frederick Municipal Airport (City of Frederick)

The City has identified the following improvement project priorities:

- **A pavement condition study** will be conducted to evaluate and index all airport runways, taxiways, and aprons. This study will guide the priorities for long term pavement maintenance and rehabilitation
- **Fully enclosing the airport perimeter** is a priority for security and wildlife purposes. The airport is planning to complete the last 3,500 feet of perimeter fence utilizing grant funds.
- **The south corporate apron expansion** will expand the apron to the south creating opportunities to build new corporate hangars and add businesses to the airport. Grant funding will be used to construct the apron, private development will construct the corporate hangars, and local funding will be used to construct the commercial driveway and parking lot.
- Demand for aviation continues to grow as a shortage of commercial aircraft hangars for aviation businesses continues. Companies that utilize aircraft to conduct business and support aviation users are restricted in their growth due to a limited number of new starts to build commercial hangars. Expanded support for capital projects and a program specifically targeting commercial hangar development would directly remove the restrictions on airport-related commerce.

As required by MDOT in Priority Letters, The City of Frederick and Frederick County are asking for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) designation for the area surrounding two MARC Stations, the first ready to begin implementation and the second in the planning stage:

- **Frederick MARC Station:** This is The City of Frederick's prime TOD site and is ready to move forward with MDOT ORED for joint development since the site has up to date zoning and several underutilized parcels.
- **Monocacy MARC Station:** Serving both commuter rail and bus, as well as local transit bus, this station has 814 parking spaces and is serviced weekdays by six MARC trains, 40 commuter buses and several more local TransIT buses. A corridor (small area) study is underway in this area and we will involve the MDOT ORED and MDOT MTA staff in the planning process, as we expect that the TOD would be the major centerpiece of this planning area.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our transportation priorities. We look forward to continuing a productive partnership with MDOT and to actively participate in the development of the CTP. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact our transportation planner, Mr. David A. Edmondson, at 301-600-1885 or at dedmondson@cityoffrederickmd.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. O'Connor".

Michael C. O'Connor
Mayor