



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

April 1, 2022

Honorable James F. Ports, Jr., Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
P.O. Box 548  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: MDOT FY 2023 – FY 2028 Consolidated Transportation Program  
Baltimore County Requests

Dear Secretary Ports:

On behalf of the residents of Baltimore County, I wish to acknowledge the leadership and staff from the Maryland Department of Transportation for their continued consideration of our transportation priorities.

We want to thank you for your support of multiple initiatives and projects that were included in last year's CTP request letter. We especially appreciate the recent progress on the County's longstanding request to make improvements on I-795 at the Dolfield Boulevard interchange, which has been Baltimore County's top priority in many of our prior year's letters. We are confident that, with your support, this long-awaited project is finally making progress, and look forward to learning of next steps to sustain our continued partnership on this project.

Our top priorities again include growing Baltimore County's Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS), and we appreciate your funding of our capital and operational budget during FY2022. As detailed below, given many years of underfunding for Baltimore County's LOTS, we are seeking additional LOTS support to grow microtransit service throughout the County and also expand our Countyride services. Baltimore County is the third most populated jurisdiction within the State of Maryland. The Baltimore metropolitan region is now the sixteenth most congested in the United States.<sup>i</sup> This is already providing a significant challenge to the growth of our local economy, and without additional investment and innovation, the traffic congestion and related economic development challenges will only worsen. We are in critical need of a comprehensive regional transit system bolstered by an increased investment in our Locally Operated Transit System which will match the levels of similar sized counties within our State. These investments should account for all modes as well as future capital and

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programmatic transportation innovation that will strengthen our local and regional economy by accommodating well-planned, sustainable future growth in a safe and reliable manner.

We are supporting this growth with local investments. My Administration is actively committed to implementing multi modal transportation initiatives, and we have made transportation planning and capital investments a top priority. We have created a Transportation Bureau within our renamed Department of Public Works *and Transportation* (DPW&T). Our Transportation Bureau continues to actively engage BMC/BRTB as well as MTA through regular meetings as part of a larger effort to implement multi-modal planning initiatives. With the support and guidance of my office, this unit is actively engaging with State and Regional entities as we continue to work across jurisdictions to embark on the mission of a regional approach to transportation. We have also grown our LOTS by creating a Towson Circulator as well as initiating partnerships for the potential of other future microtransit lines and supporting connectivity between the East, West and Central portions of the County. We also have included funding in our CIP for pedestrian and bike project initiatives as well as put funding forward and started our Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

We are also expanding bike and pedestrian access. Design is completed for the 2021 Bloomsbury Construction Project, funded under the 2021 Kim Lamphier MD Bikeways Grant Program. We expect construction to begin in Fall of 2022. We want to thank you for the funding of a bicycle and pedestrian project located within Baltimore County through SHA grant programs. This project is the Torrey C. Brown (NCR Trail) – Jones Fall Trail Connection which will evaluate the feasibility of connecting the gap between the Torrey C. Brown trail at Ashland Road and the Jones Fall Trail in Mt. Washington Village.

We also want to thank you for funding the development of our five-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) which was finalized in December 2021. We have completed the process of developing a State Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) which I have endorsed. We are appreciative of being awarded funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in order to support the implementation of our safety priorities. This grant funding will be utilized for the construction of nine (9) raised crosswalks where the Torrey C. Brown (NCR) Trail intersects county roads.

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In light of the progress we have made and the needs identified, I request the following transportation priorities be included as part of your FY 2023 – FY 2028 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

## **Transit Initiatives**

### **Additional Transit Service to Tradepoint Atlantic**

We continue to support implementation of additional transit to and from Tradepoint Atlantic (TPA), which is a major employment hub for the County. This would include additional East-West Service through the City of Baltimore as well as a service from the eastern portions of the County to the Tradepoint site. This would enhance the capabilities of our residents to gain access to and from this vital economic generator. We are actively pursuing the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program grant to enhance circulator services to and from the TPA campus. With this transit funding we can develop transportation services to connect the underserved surrounding communities to employment and support services. We request as part of this process MDOT increase service in Baltimore County to TPA.

### **LocalLink 35**

If this proposed new service is put into operation, it would be more adaptive to the needs of TPA and other activity corridors, such as new development on MD-43 in White Marsh. This line would support economic growth and improve connectivity to job centers on the East side of the county.

### **Circulators & Microtransit**

We request that the MDOT continue to provide supplemental capital and operational funding as part of our Annual Transportation Plan (ATP) to incubate the growth of our LOTS system, including but not limited to, expansion of services into fixed route lines and on-demand microtransit within Baltimore County. The County has included funding in our budget for transit initiatives. We will support applications for funding to add transit to Baltimore County and continue to partner with MDOT to apply for additional capital funding from FTA and other entities.

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### **Owings Mills Microtransit Service**

The potential for microtransit services was well received by the TDP Advisory Committee and identified as a key component of expanding mobility in Baltimore County. Microtransit services will need to be tailored to specific communities based on additional stakeholder input and available funding. Several communities in Baltimore County were identified as prime candidates for microtransit services. In particular, the Owings Mills area possesses many of the attributes that are synonymous with successful microtransit services and is proposed as the initial community for this on-demand transportation option. In addition, we have applied for a federal Bus and Bus Facilities Grant for additional microtransit services.

### **LOTS Facilities**

We request that the MDOT provide supplemental capital funds and land for a bus operations facility and bus equipment for the expansion of Baltimore County's transit operations to accommodate fixed route service and to expand our human services capabilities. This would allow us to optimize the hours and days when this service is available for communities with limited mobility. We ask that you consider the transfer of sale of a viable property for a possible hub for transportation and public safety uses.

### **Electric Buses & Charging Infrastructure for Transit**

We request that MDOT-MTA provide an electric bus purchase option and partner to provide funding which will enable us to purchase electric buses and other electric transit vehicles through their contracting and grant process. We also request funding for new and replacement electric bus vehicles in order to further enhance transit service and reduce emissions in our county.

### **Area Transit Circulator Studies**

We request that the MDOT provide planning funds for the assessment of the feasibility and transit service route alternatives for Catonsville, White Marsh, Middle River, Owings Mills, and Sparrows Point Circulator fixed route, CAV and Microtransit lines.

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## **Commuter Mass Transit Alternatives (Baltimore Region) - Comprehensive Plan**

We request that the MDOT fund the completion of a comprehensive plan for Greater Baltimore County that crosses jurisdictional lines, cuts commute times and provides safe, reliable and efficient transportation facilities connecting our region's residents to their jobs and their families in the world class manner we all agree they deserve. The targeted focus should be on the bus routes and rail services with a heightened emphasis on both capital, policy, and programmatic initiatives. This should include the study of potential corridors which provide connectivity for residents that commute within the County as well as the corridors which neighboring Counties utilize to access job locations within our community.

## **Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan**

We encourage continued work to advance detailed and specific corridor studies on the priority corridors identified in the final Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (CMRTP). Regular and continuous engagement with county staff and elected officials to implement the RTP and strategic actions identified in the Plan is vital. Corridors were identified defining specific routes, service patterns, alignments, levels of service, potential stations or transit mode of travel.

We strongly support funding and implementing the regional transit corridors in the State's Regional Transit Plan and request MDOT advance planning, design, and operational funding, in coordination with our local and regional transit systems, to meet the goals and priorities in the Regional Transit Plan. MDOT should ensure public transit can provide equitable and high quality service to all public transit riders, particularly our transit dependent community members, regardless of whether they are served by the State or local system or need to travel between two systems for essential services. We are especially interested in the inter-jurisdictional east-west corridors and north-south corridors.

## **Multimodal Planning Initiatives**

### **Bicycle & Pedestrian Initiatives**

We request State support of the County's bicycle and pedestrian project initiatives. Baltimore County committed \$4.7 million dollars for bicycle and pedestrian projects in our multi-year CIP. We have dedicated matching funds in our applications for the following

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MDOT Bikeways grants: Bloomsbury Crossing construction (Catonsville) and the Torrey C. Brown Trail/NCR Trail connection. We intend to pursue additional capital funding for the Northeast Trail, as it was not funded during last year's grant cycle. In addition to the Northeast Trail, the County will potentially be applying for funding for design of a shared-use path connection between the Jones Falls Trail and the Torrey C. Brown Trail as well as the 6 Brides Trail Project located Towson. We strongly support funding and implementing bike and pedestrian projects, particularly cross border projects, to enhance safety and provide expanded multi-modal options.

## **Economic Development Related Improvements**

### **(Owings Mills) Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard Interchange**

Since 2007, the top County priority for State funding has been for improvements to the Northwest Expressway. It remains a top County priority due to the continuous growth and economic development in the area. We again request funding of the long-planned interchange on Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard, as it will alleviate traffic congestion due to increased economic development in the area associated with the Metro Center transit-oriented development (TOD) and Foundry Row (Wegmans) retail and office center. Based on recent communication with MDOT-SHA an alternative of a new full interchange at MD-795 and Dolfield Blvd with widening of MD-795 between Owings Mills Blvd and Dolfield Blvd and Part Time Shoulder Use (PTSU) between Dolfield Blvd and Franklin Blvd is being evaluated in order to reduce the project cost. Baltimore County is in full support of this alternative and is looking forward to working with MDOT-SHA to implement a phased approach that will allow some incremental congestion relief prior to the completion of the entire project.

### **(Sparrows Point) Full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway)**

Baltimore County is excited that its vision for the future of Sparrows Point is being embraced by Tradepoint Atlantic. The plan incorporates the highest and best use of this unique asset: 3,100 acres of industrial zoned land, with access to deep water port channel, two interstate highways and two rail lines. We once again urge the State to invest in certain infrastructure improvements to facilitate implementation of the plan. The construction of a full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway) would maximize the potential redevelopment activities at Tradepoint Atlantic, would allow for truck avoidance of the toll plaza, and would reduce truck traffic impacting residential

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communities on Dundalk Avenue and Holabird Avenue. Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) has completed a point-to-point study for this project location.

**(Catonsville) Wilkens Ave MD-372 and Kenwood Ave at I-695 Interchange Exit 12 (inner Circulator)**

We request intersection improvements at MD-372 and Kenwood Avenue and along Kenwood Avenue to the NB Beltway on-ramp. These improvements would improve safety and road capacity, and would have a significant impact on traffic in the vicinity. The area has seen a significant increase in background traffic over the past 5 years from UMBC and business growth and development/redevelopment activities in the area. These road improvements would spur ongoing growth in the area and provide positive economic impact.

**(White Marsh/Middle River) Philadelphia Road (MD-7) Improvements and MD-7 at MD-43 Interchange ramp addition**

We request funding for roadway improvements on Philadelphia Road (MD-7) including, widening and raising of the road from Mohrs Lane to Campbell Boulevard and an on-ramp from Philadelphia Road (MD-7) to eastbound White Marsh Boulevard (MD-43). This roadway improvement will increase traffic capacity and roadway safety for the future Campbell Boulevard extension. This future connection would, not only provide another important link between MD-43 corridor and White Marsh Town Center in the White Marsh Growth area, but it would also enhance Pulaski Highway as a location for new employment-related development. Currently, there is no east-west access from Pulaski Highway between Middle River Road and MD-43

**Road/ Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Capacity Improvements**

**(Randallstown) Liberty Road MD-26 Corridor improvements**

Liberty Road is a critical artery serving the west side of the County. The County has a renewed interest in promoting economic development and investment in this corridor and is requesting additional SHA and MTA review for roadway (traffic congestion study), sidewalk including crosswalk lights and transit stop amenities and improvement. Baltimore County is pursuing assistance from MDOT based on the completion of outreach

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and an action plan for the Liberty Road Corridor. We are utilizing the state legislative budget allocation for Liberty Road to design and construct five new bus shelters and have signed an MOU with MDOT-MTA. We will use the remainder of the funds for additional pedestrian amenities including but not limited to lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, trees, and bicycle lanes based on public input from our outreach efforts.

**(Hunt Valley) MD-45 York Road realignment- Shawan to Phoenix**

There have been long standing safety concerns with the two lane curved section of York road between Shawan road and Phoenix road. The State should consider a feasibility study of the realignment and widening of road in this area for increased capacity and safety, pedestrian sidewalks, and evaluate possible developer participation in the study.

**(Overlea) Kenwood Avenue (MD -588) roadway improvements (Lillian Holt to Hazelwood)**

The County portion of Kenwood Avenue has been completed for many years. The State's portion of Kenwood Avenue has not been completed. Completion of Kenwood Avenue improvements, including sidewalks, would enhance pedestrian safety for Overlea High School. To support MDOT-SHA, we will be performing a feasibility study that will evaluate the incorporation of new sidewalk, converting shoulder areas to sidewalk, as well as consideration for narrowing lanes to provide space for pedestrian walkways. This study will be provided to MDOT-SHA in an effort of collaborative partnership to assist in preliminary planning.

**(Pikesville) Reisterstown Road (MD-140) roadway improvements (Old Court Road to Sudbrook)**

The State portion of Reisterstown Road requires additional study and re-design. Baltimore County completed a planning study of the area but a corridor segment analysis and redesign of this road segment is required. Community and business groups have advocated to the County for many years to improve this roadway segment and invested private funds into developing potential solutions.

**(Windsor Mill) Windsor Mill Road Project**

The Windsor Mill Road project from Featherbed Lane to Woodlawn Drive is fully designed. The project is currently in the land acquisition phase. Impacted property



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owners will be contacted once the Real Estate Compliance has completed their assessments. We would appreciate your support of additional funding as we embark on this vital community safety improvement project.

### **Patapsco Regional Greenway**

The preliminary design of the Elkridge to Guinness segment of the Patapsco Regional Greenway is complete. We have partnered with Howard County to continue to final design. This segment is an impactful investment and will provide new pedestrian and bicycle access connecting Howard and Baltimore Counties. We ask for continued financial support of non-motorized connections to enhance mobility and reduce congestion in our area.

### **Baltimore County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

The draft plan is expected to be complete by May. The plan will include recommendations for complete streets, trails, and on-road bikeways. In addition, proposals for local connections and recreation bike routes will be identified. The County continues to be open to exploring multi-jurisdictional funding contributions to provide additional support to these types of projects. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will provide an updated network, comprehensive policy, program and implementation strategies to increase connectivity throughout Maryland.


### **Bridge Infrastructure**

We would like to emphasize the importance of updating our bridge infrastructure. We recognize the need for improvement and push for continual aid to assist in the systematic approach for bridge preservation like that embraced by many states, whereby existing deterioration is prioritized and the focus is on preventive maintenance.

In conclusion thank you for this opportunity to present Baltimore County's transportation priorities in the FY 2023 — FY 2028 CTP. We look forward to increased opportunities for partnership and collaboration as we work together to solve our collective transportation challenges.

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Sincerely,



John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
Baltimore County Executive

JAO:SAW

cc: Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Governor  
Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House  
Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore County Senate and House Delegations  
Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore County Council  
Stacy L. Rodgers, County Administrative Officer  
Patrick Murray, Chief of Staff  
Drew Vetter, Deputy Administrative Officer  
Joel Beller, Acting Director, Government Affairs  
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Steve Lafferty, Director, Department of Planning  
Leonard Howie, Director, Department of Economic and Workforce Development  
Laura Riley, Director, Department of Aging  
Pete Gutwald, Director, Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections

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<sup>i</sup> <https://inrix.com/scorecard-city/?city=Baltimore%20MD&index=111>