



April 4, 2023

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

RE: 2023 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 2023 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: Thank you, your staff, and Governor Wes Moore for the continued commitment to the I-81 project. MDOT announced in January that the State's CTP has been amended to include \$100 million for design and construction of Phase 2. The County requests that MDOT allocate full funding in the next CTP for planning and engineering for the final phase of widening I-81 to the Pennsylvania line, and plan for construction funding to complete the remainder of the project.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) and Regional Freight Summit: The Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO) held a Regional Freight Summit on February 1, 2023, and discussed regional trends, challenges, priority corridors, and strategies. I-81 and I-70 are major corridors in Maryland, and MDOT identified several regional candidate projects in the Maryland State Freight Plan: I-81 (multiple phases including interchange work) and I-70 (interchange at MD 65 and various bridges), as well as identifying the need for rest areas. We look forward to your support of these regional needs and other efforts to improve the corridors with various TSMO projects, including the expansion of Intelligent Traffic Systems infrastructure.

Interstate 70 and Maryland 65 Interchange Improvements: Construction is near completion on the replacement of the Interstate 70 bridges at the Maryland 65 Interchange, and we are hopeful the proposed partial cloverleaf project, currently on hold per this year's CTP, can proceed. 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.

Aviation Program: The Hagerstown Regional Airport (HGR) has completed several projects over the past few years, including an expansion of the airside portion of our terminal facility. This involved an improved Transportation Security Administration (TSA) checkpoint, an enlarged passenger hold-room and the

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installation of a passenger boarding bridge. Additionally, HGR completed a rehabilitation of our primary airport Runway 09-27. At this time, we are finalizing an acquisition of three acres of property that will improve airfield safety by removing structures and fences from the Runway Visibility Zone (RPZ) and Runway 09-27 Object Free Area (ROFA). A pavement-rehabilitation project for a portion of the Taxiway C Object Free Area and a replacement of our primary runway 09-27's existing incandescent lighting and signage with energy-efficient LED technology is also anticipated. In FY24, we look forward to the construction phase of our relocated and reconstructed Taxiway F, which will also feature new LED taxiway edge lighting. The airport is planning for future improvements in later years, including but not limited to the rehabilitation of our full parallel Taxiway Alpha and the design and construction of a Snow Removal Materials Storage/Salt Dome facility. The airport also plans to apply for funds to replace an aging, FAA-owned Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) structure and to build out an eastward expansion to the land-side portions of our terminal. This would involve an addition of some 4,800 square feet, increasing the space available for passenger queuing, ticket counters, airline offices, baggage processing, ground service equipment, vehicle storage and related needs. The airport is appreciative of the generous and reliable financial support it has received from the state Office of Regional Aviation Assistance over the years. We ask that an increase in funding for the grants-in-aid program be considered. Returning to the levels provided in past years or perhaps even to surpass those sums would enable the unhindered flow of much-needed state matching assistance to airports, especially given the realities of price-inflation we are all experiencing. The airport is hopeful that the Office of Regional Aviation Assistance could once again have the resources to provide state matching funds to include coverage for soft costs such as design, bidding, and construction phase services.

Transit Program: Washington County Transit (WCT) continues to recover from driver shortages and overall ridership numbers dampened from the effects of COVID. WCT anticipates continued growth, not only with the ramping-up of business and workplace output, but also strong economic growth driven by the impact of numerous warehouse/distribution centers within Washington County. Public demand for transportation services will continue to be realized. A large portion of the warehouse/distribution centers located in Washington County are geographically placed outside the current service area of WCT. Creative driver recruitment practices and boosting transit operating and maintenance staff levels, along with procurement of preferred Lo-No Emissions vehicles, are the driving force needed to fulfill the community's public transit needs. In Fiscal Year 2024, WCT will embark upon updating our Federally required five-year Transportation Development Plan (TDP). This cycle of the Plan's review will take on a focus of service expansion and bus stop frequency. With the continued growth in and around Hagerstown, major transit system routing segments must be adapted to better serve the community. Additional formula-based FTA and State funds will serve as a basis for the expansion. WCT is looking forward to several years of opportunity. It will be an exciting time for the transit system and most importantly for those who are dependent upon public transportation.

Highway User Revenue (HUR): The County was pleased that a bill was passed to prevent a reduction in the County's HUR revenue; however, the County's HUR revenue share remains well below historical rates. This funding supports the operations associated with maintaining approximately 900 miles of road, and under any reasonable metric, the County's share is less than other recipients. With the State's adoption of a Clean Car Rule and full implementation by 2035, pursuing a sustainable revenue source that more accurately reflects the users' impact and establishing an equitable division of the revenue associated with each owners' highway maintenance costs is recommended.

Sidewalks: Dual Highway pedestrian safety remains a high priority, and we look forward to MDOT's planned work to install sidewalks between Eastern Boulevard and All Star Court. We are also aware of the efforts to update the MDOT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. A virtual public meeting has been

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scheduled for April 13, and MDOT has provided an opportunity for the stakeholders and community to comment through an on-line survey.

Railroad Crossings/Study: The MARC Brunswick Line Expansion Study Technical Report was published in January and explores up to four railroad alignment options to extend the Brunswick Line service into Western Maryland in order to comply with the Transit Safety and Investment Act (SB 199/HB114). A survey has been posted and public meetings have been scheduled. The County has been following the progress of the study and awaits the report on the Western Maryland MARC expansion alternatives that is planned to be finalized this year.

Route 11 Bridge Relocation/Replacement: The Town of Williamsport and MDOT have met about completing a Planning & Environment Linkage (PEL) Study to analyze the feasibility, location, and potential environmental impacts of relocating the bridge. The County supports the Town's request that MDOT fund a PEL Study.

Appalachian Regional Commission and County-State Coordinated Projects: Professional Boulevard Phase 2 is now under construction, and the County plans on advertising the Eastern Boulevard at MD 64 intersection improvements and Halfway Boulevard Extended projects this summer. The County is collaborating with your staff on these projects and the Wright Road project.

Washington County looks forward to sharing with you and your staff the local transportation and pedestrian safety priorities at our meeting in the fall. 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
Senator Benjamin Cardin
Senator Christopher Van Hollen
Congressman David Trone
Maryland State Senators and Delegates for Washington County
Tyson Byrne, MDOT OPCP, Regional Planning Manager
Anthony Crawford, MDOT SHA District 6, District Engineer
Jim Bender, Interim City Engineer
Matthew Mullenax, HEPMPO Executive Director
Andrew Eshleman, Public Works Director
Neil Doran, Airport Director
Kevin Cerrone, Transit Director