



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

April 24, 2023

Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation 7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: MDOT FY 2024 - FY 2029 Consolidated
Transportation Program Baltimore County Requests

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

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

Thank you for your support of multiple initiatives and projects that were included in last year's CTP request letter. We appreciate the support of 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 continued funding, this long-awaited project is finally making progress, and look forward to the next steps in the phasing of the project to sustain our continued partnership.

Our top priorities include growing Baltimore County's Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS). As detailed below, we are seeking additional LOTS support to grow circulator service throughout the County and also expand our CountyRide services with the inclusion of Saturday service.

Our LOTS programs, which includes CountyRide and the recently launched Loop in Towson, complement existing MTA fixed-route service by providing sorely needed transportation to our disabled population and by creating last mile connectivity in and around Towson's central business district. Despite being Maryland's third most populated jurisdiction, our LOTS programs have been historically underfunded and have served as an impediment to your broader goal of a comprehensive regional transit system for the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Currently, there is no publicly available formula or process that jurisdictions or their LOTS programs can rely on to accurately predict or request LOTS funding to grow local service. The lack of predictability creates significant operational challenges and creates the risk of service reductions on an annual basis. To remove this risk and provide our residents with sustained, reliable and comprehensive transit service, we are requesting that LOTS funding be distributed

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based on a transparent, population-based formula, and that baseline funding for LOTS programs be increased in acknowledgement of the critical role that these systems play in achieving our shared goal of comprehensive regional transit. These investments will support growing jurisdictions across the region, and allow for future transportation innovation that will strengthen our local efforts towards providing more well-planned transit for sustainable future growth.

Our Administration is actively committed to implementing multi-modal transportation initiatives, and we have made transportation planning and capital investments a top priority. Our Transportation Bureau 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 grown our LOTS program by launching The Loop in Towson, which has supported over 80,000 riders in just over a year of operation. We are currently initiating partnerships for the potential launch of other future circulator lines to provide last-mile connectivity to other central business districts and support connectivity within the East, West and Central portions of the County.

Baltimore County will be releasing an updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which will encompass the entire County, expanding the scope offered in previous plans which only included land within our urban area. We received over 200 comments during our public comment period, all of which will be incorporated into the new plan. The updated master plan will tie into our efforts of focusing on connectivity in the County. The Department of Public Works and Transportation has initiated a Street Connectivity and Safety Program. This program will put a focus on cohesive projects that address all issues related to street connectivity and safety in a particular area.

The plan will also provide recommendations for bike lane infrastructure and identifies complete street locations. Based on these suggestions, DPW&T will be initiating pilot projects to incorporate protected bicycle lanes as well as the implementation of increased visibility signage and road enhancements to enhance pedestrian conspicuity and increase driver awareness.

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 2024 - FY 2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

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Transit Initiatives

East-West Corridor Study (Redline Project) from Woodlawn to Essex

We request that consideration be given to extend the outer limits of the corridor from the Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services in Woodlawn on the County's west side to Essex on the County's east side. The East-West corridor study is a multi-modal transportation enhancement project that will add transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements along a multi-mile corridor in Baltimore and should reach Baltimore County residents. Improving transit reliability for residents and strengthening direct connections between these communities will allow better access to employment centers, education, and healthcare for equitable growth to both the west and east sides of Baltimore County.

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 supporting over 12,000 employees. This expansion would include additional East-West Service through the City of Baltimore, as well service from the eastern portions of the County to the Tradepoint site, enhancing the ability of our residents to gain access to and from this vital economic generator. We request an increase service in Baltimore County to TPA, specifically from the Middle River, Essex, Dundalk and Sparrows Point communities.

Circulators & Microtransit

We request continued 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. We continue to include County funding in our budget for critical transit services supporting our disabled populations and last-mile connectivity to MTA's fixed route service. In the last year, the County has advanced funding to study circulator services in Owings Mills and Catonsville that would support increased ridership on MTA's Metro and fixed-route bus service. 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.

Local Link 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.

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LOTS Facilities

We request supplemental capital funding 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 support would allow optimization of the hours and days when this service is available for communities with limited mobility. We ask for consideration of 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.

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 for the County's bicycle and pedestrian project initiatives. Baltimore County committed \$4.85 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: 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 the continuation of design for the West-East Trail Connection between Double Rock Park in Parkville and Linover Park in Overlea. We strongly support funding and implementing bike and pedestrian projects, particularly cross border projects, to enhance safety and provide expanded multi-modal options.

We also ask for assistance in funding streetscape projects on local and State roads. Streetscapes can help increase environmental sustainability by decreasing automobile dependency, minimizing traffic congestion, and reducing carbon emissions. Upgraded streets attract more people, thus strengthening both communities and the businesses that serve them.

Economic Development Related Improvements

(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 channels, two interstate highways and two rail lines. We once again urge the State to invest in certain infrastructure improvements to facilitate implementation of this 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 communities on Dundalk Avenue and Holabird Avenue. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) has completed a point-to-point study for this project location, and \$1 million was provided through a federal earmark last year to support the initial planning of a full interchange near Tradepoint Atlantic and I-695 to assist in the increasing industrial expansion and related traffic.

(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 at this location. This area has seen a significant increase in background traffic over the past 5 years from UMBC and business growth

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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 (Mohrs Lane) extension which is being advertised this year. 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. With the increased development, we request the assistance in funding for an area wide traffic impact study for the White Marsh area to help assess the growing capacity needs.

In addition, the intersection of Old Philadelphia Road and Cowenton Avenue is in need of evaluation to address the increased congestion due to the extensive development occurring in the area. The intersection is a combination of County and State roads. We request added support to the growing community concerns with traffic flow to increase volume on the roadway.

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. Liberty Road has been the most crash ridden road in Baltimore County since 2018, and had the most pedestrian fatalities in the County in 2022. The County has 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. We are pursuing assistance from MDOT based on the completion of outreach and an action plan for the Liberty Road corridor.

(Middle River) Pulaski Highway US-40 Corridor Improvements

Pulaski Highway is a critical artery serving the east side of the County. The County is deeply invested to work with the State to address the pedestrian and vehicular safety concerns that plague our four-lane arterial roadways. Pulaski Highway had the most pedestrian fatalities in Baltimore County in 2020 and 2021. Decreasing the number of pedestrian and motor vehicles

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fatalities is of utmost importance to the County and we support the MDOT SHA with any initiatives put forth to the heighten safety along the Pulaski Highway corridor.

(Overlea) Belair Road US-1 Corridor Safety Improvement Project

The segment of US 1 (Belair Road) through Overlea is an important and historic main street corridor connecting many Baltimore-area communities, including historically disadvantaged communities in the project area, to economic opportunities, parks, churches, a community center, and crucial social services. Transit along this corridor connects the Overlea community, including students and staff at the nearby Maryland School for the Blind, to downtown essential services, schools and jobs in Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, White Marsh, and other job centers and community focal points.

Unfortunately, the project segment presents barriers and challenges to the community, limiting access and mobility for pedestrians and vehicles in a very tight right-of-way (ROW). The project corridor experiences a high pedestrian crash rate, which is two times higher than the statewide average. Within the project area, there is a half-mile segment of US 1 that experiences a pedestrian crash rate four times higher than the statewide average for similar routes.

Last year, MDOT, in partnership with Baltimore County, unsuccessfully sought a \$15.34 million RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant from USDOT to address critical safety risks and community concerns, reduce congestion delays, and provide more reliable travel times in order to support equitable access to opportunity and economic growth in this corridor. The issues identified above and in the jointly filed RAISE grant application are still present, and need to be addressed to ensure the safety and mobility of our residents in this area. We are requesting that MDOT fund the \$9.65 million in pre-construction costs associated with this \$47.59 million project.

(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 the road in this area for increased capacity and safety, pedestrian sidewalks, and evaluate possible developer participation in the study.

(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

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this road segment is required. Community groups and businesses have advocated for many years for improvements to this roadway and invested private funds to develop 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. We would appreciate your support and additional funding as we embark on this vital community safety improvement project.

Pikesville Intersection Improvements and Sidewalk

We request funding for intersection and sidewalk improvements in the Pikesville community. The existing Old Court Road, Park Heights/Stevenson Road intersection poses concerns for drivers navigating from the southern Old Court at Park Heights intersection. Alternative geometric design at this location will aid in the reduction of accidents and their severity. This modification will provide optimum efficiency in traffic operation and maximum safety.

Additional sidewalk improvements on Old Court Road are needed to provide connectivity within the community. The County is taking strides to install new sidewalk such as the Seven Mile Lane project as well as other pedestrian facilities in Pikesville as a result of a recent walkability study. Our continued efforts along with State support will contribute to the goal of more walkable, bike friendly neighborhoods.

Patapsco Regional Greenway

The Elkridge to Guinness segment of the Patapsco Regional Greenway is in the stages of final design. We are partnering with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to conduct preliminary design work on the next section of the Greenway, which will go from Guinness to Baltimore County's Southwest Area Park. These segments are 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 final 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.

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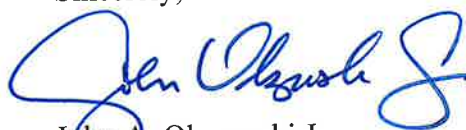
The County continues to be open to exploring multi-jurisdictional funding contributions to provide additional support to these types of projects. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will provide an updated network, comprehensive policy, program and implementation strategies to increase connectivity throughout 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 2024 - FY 2029 CTP. We look forward to increased opportunities for partnership and collaboration as we work together to solve our collective transportation challenges.

Sincerely,



John A. Olszewski Jr.
Baltimore County Executive

cc: Honorable Wes Moore, 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
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