HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE
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October 12, 2011

The Honorable Beverly K. Swaim-Staley
Office of the Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Swaim-Staley:

I am pleased to forward Howard County's updated list of priority projects for proposed inclusion in the FY2013 to FY2018 Consolidated Transportation Program. Our priorities this year continue to emphasize BRAC related needs within the region, highway safety, and targeted transportation improvements to support smart, sustainable growth.

We are grateful for State funding for transit and highways, as well as for the technical assistance provided by MTA and SHA staff. Attached is the list of our priorities for State transportation projects in Howard County.

Our highest transit priority for Fiscal Year 2013 is the State's continued support for development of the Central Maryland Transit Operations Facility (CMTOF). Once operational, the facility will reduce costs for three LOTS programs: Howard Transit, Western Anne Arundel Transit, and Connect-A-Ride. Of equal importance is funding to replace an additional four buses with environmentally responsible hybrid transit vehicles.

Howard County continues to endorse capital improvements to the MARC Camden Line and encourages additional State operating support to provide increased Camden Line service to support the new Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) that are being developed at three Howard County stations. The Savage TOD has received its designations; I also urge TOD designation for transit oriented developments at the Dorsey and Laurel Race Track MARC stations.

In the important area of highway safety improvements, my highest priority continues to be efforts to develop and implement safety improvements on Route 32. I appreciate the work of the SHA staff to address safety concerns along MD 32 between MD 108 and our border with Carroll County. These concerns were heightened following tragic accidents along this stretch of road. I also appreciate

initiation of the MD 32 – Wellworth Way access management project between MD 144 and Chase Fox Drive, which will increase safety by eliminating private driveways entering directly on to MD 32. Between I-70 to the Carroll County line, we ask that the State continue supporting safety initiatives through a comprehensive access management plan that would seek to reduce the number of access points to the existing road. Between MD 108 and I-70, we ask the State to pursue safety improvements by continuing to support current design work on access management and grade separated crossings, as well as funding these improvements. We recommend that the selected safety improvements be given a high priority and be implemented as quickly as possible.

Of equal importance in the safety category is the installation of battery back-up systems with capacity for generator installation at state highway intersections in Howard County. The County's recent experience during Hurricane Irene demonstrated the value and importance of this investment. Twenty-five state highway signals in the County can operate on battery back-up, but with no generator capacity, meaning the signals can operate for approximately 10 hours. Many other intersections have no back-up systems. During the recent hurricane, County police personnel staffed state-controlled intersections that had no power or back-up system, and providing those improvements would save money, increase public safety staffing levels and improve safety for all motorists. We ask that the State fund the best systems available for all State traffic signals in the County.

Our top highway capacity priority is to widen northbound US 29 to three mainline lanes from north of Seneca Road/Shaker Drive to south of MD 175. This 3-mile improvement will eliminate one of two remaining constrictions on US 29 and greatly alleviate congestion on the facility as well as at the interchanges with MD 175, Broken Land Parkway and MD 32. We ask for the State's continued support to complete SHA's current access control projects on Old Columbia Road and Gales Lane, complete ongoing design and fund construction for this very needed segment of US 29. The project also facilitates the redevelopment of the Columbia Downtown which we consider a Smart Growth priority.

Thank you for considering Howard County's priority transportation needs.

Sincerely,

Ken Ulman
County Executive

Attachment
cc: Howard County Delegation
Howard County Council Members
Public Transportation Board Members
Don Halligan, Director, Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
Heather Murphy, Deputy Director, Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
Darrell B. Mobley, Acting Administrator, SHA

Greg Slater, Director, Planning and Preliminary Engineering, SHA
David Coyne, District Engineer, District 7 SHA
Douglas Simmons, Deputy Administrator, SHA
Mary Dietz, Chief Regional & Intermodal Planning Planner, SHA
Vaughn Lewis, Regional Planner, SHA
George Miller, District 7, SHA
Ralign T. Wells, Administrator, MTA
Henry Kay, Deputy Administrator, Planning and Engineering, MTA
Diane Ratcliff, Director, Office of Planning, MTA
Lenny Howard, Chief of Regional Planning, MTA
Elizabeth Kreider, Director, Local Transit Support, MTA
Tom Holsclaw, Regional Planner, Office of Planning & Programming, MTA
George Cardwell, Office of Planning, Anne Arundel County
John Powell, Transit Administrator, Central Maryland Regional Transit
Todd Lang , Director of Transportation, BMC
Jessica Feldmark, Chief of Staff
David Nitkin, Director of Governmental Affairs
Joshua Feldmark, Director of Environmental Sustainability
Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer
Kent Menser, Executive Director, BRAC Task Force
James Irvin, Director, Department of Public Works
Mark DeLuca, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works
Ron Lepson, Chief, Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works
Steve Sharar, Chief, Division of Transportation & Special Projects, Department of Public Works
Kevin Enright, Administrator, Public Information Office
Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
Kimberley Flowers, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
Ben Pickar, Acting Chief, Division of Transportation Planning
File: CTP – FY 2013

PRIORITY STATE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN HOWARD COUNTY

A. Transit

1. ***Transit Operations Facility.*** The development of the Central Maryland Transit Operations Facility is the highest transit priority for Howard County. Provide ongoing technical and funding assistance with regard site planning, environmental analysis, engineering and construction.

2. ***Fleet Replacement.*** Provide funding to replace the four oldest and least reliable Howard Transit buses and/or paratransit vehicles with hybrid vehicles.

3. ***Technology Upgrades.*** Provide funding for upgraded on-board bus technology in order to enhance operating performance, cost effectiveness and passenger safety.

    a. ***Smart Cards Paratransit.*** Smart Card technology for paratransit vehicles to increase ease of payment and accounting of paratransit revenues.
    b. ***Smart Cards Fixed Route.*** Smart Card technology for fixed route vehicles to facilitate transfers among transit systems in central Maryland and provide a more functional and seamless transportation network for transit users.

4. ***Camden MARC Line and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).*** Support transit-oriented development near the Savage, Dorsey and Laurel Race Track MARC stations with enhanced MARC Camden line transit service. State of Maryland TOD designation is requested for "Oxford Square" at the Dorsey MARC station and "Laurel Park" adjacent to both the Laurel Race Track and the Laurel MARC stations.

5. ***MTA Service.*** Restore frequency and service especially for early morning service to John Hopkins Applied Physics Lab (APL) on the MTA 929 bus route. The anticipated completion of the Silver Spring Transportation Center will facilitate increased commuter demand from Washington D.C. and Montgomery County to Howard County and APL.

6. ***Shelter Program.*** Continue to provide funding for bus shelter installation at high use bus stops as a means of improving customer satisfaction and encouraging added ridership. Program should include funding to provide safe and accessible sidewalk connections.

7. ***MD 32/Broken Land Parkway Park'n Ride Lot Expansion.*** Initiate a planning study to assess future demand and costs of increasing parking capacity including development of a multiuse parking garage.

B. Highway Safety

1. ***MD 32 between MD 108 and I-70.*** My highest safety priority continues to be efforts to develop and implement safety improvements on Route 32 between MD 108 and I-70. Between I-70 to the Carroll County line, we ask that the State continue supporting safety initiatives through a comprehensive access management plan that would seek to reduce the number of access points to the existing road with no capacity improvement. Between MD 108 and I-70, we ask the State to pursue safety improvements by continuing to support current design work on access management and interchange design, and fund the improvements. We recommend that the selected safety improvements be given a high priority and be implemented as quickly as possible.

2. ***Battery back-up for traffic control systems at interchanges.*** Of equal priority for safety is the installation of battery back-up traffic control systems with capacity for generator attachment at all intersections of state highways and roads in Howard County. We ask that this project be undertaken quickly for safety and for cost savings associated with public safety personnel during emergencies.

C. Highway Capacity

1. ***US 29.*** My first and highest highway priority is for the State to widen northbound US 29 to three lanes by adding one lane from the interchanges of Seneca Road/Shaker Drive to MD 175. This 3-mile improvement will eliminate one of two remaining constrictions on US 29 and greatly alleviate congestion on the roadway as well as at the interchanges with MD 175, Broken Land Parkway and MD 32. We ask for the State's continued support to complete SHA's current access control projects on Old Columbia Road and Gales Lane, complete ongoing design and fund construction for this very needed segment of US 29. The project also facilitates the redevelopment of the Columbia Downtown which we consider a Smart Growth priority.

2. ***US 1/MD 175/Columbia Gateway.*** My second highest highway priority is for SHA to continue its project planning study by evaluating improvements to the MD 175 corridor between Dorsey Run Road and Snowden River Parkway. The corridor intersects major arterial facilities such as US 1, I-95, MD 108 all of which are exhibiting seriously deteriorating operational conditions. The corridor and connecting arterials are major freight facilities for the County that if left unimproved may affect future commerce and economic development in the area. The planning study is necessitated not only by the existing conditions but by the forecasted residential and commercial redevelopment, increased freight traffic in the I-95, MD 175 and US 1 corridors, and the increasing BRAC related commuter traffic.

3. ***I-70.*** Restore project planning funds for the widening of I-70 between US 40 and US 29. Proceed with design and construction of short-term improvements recommended in the study, including the Marriottsville bridge improvements. This effort should be coordinated and scheduled with the County's widening of Marriottsville Road and I-70 interchange improvements.

4. ***MD 32.*** Initiate a project planning study for widening of MD 32 from Cedar Lane to I-95 and Fort Meade with dedicated High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in anticipation of BRAC and Cyber Command traffic impacts, and long term regional growth.

5. ***MD 100.*** Conduct project planning studies to rebuild the MD 100/I-95 interchange to meet future I-95 and MD 100 capacity demands.

6. ***MD 175.*** BRAC and Fort Meade related, I urge SHA to conduct a project planning study to provide a minimum of four continuous mainline lanes on MD 175 from US 1 to MD 295. This project should be coordinated with plans underway for improvements east of MD 295 and the planning studies for the widening of MD 295.

7. ***US 1 Corridor.*** Begin phased implementation of arterial highway reconstruction incorporating a network of pedestrian, transit and streetscape improvements as specified in the SHA-Howard County Route 1 MOU.

8. ***MD 32.*** Continue the phased reconstruction and widening of MD 32 from MD 108 to I-70, including construction of an interchange at Linden Church Road.

9. ***US 29 interchange between Broken Land Parkway and MD 175.*** Initiate project planning studies in coordination with Howard County to replace the South Entrance Road access to Downtown Columbia with a partial or full movement interchange on US 29 between the Broken Land Parkway and MD 175 interchanges.