



KEVIN KAMENETZ
County Executive

October 29, 2015

Honorable Pete K. Rahn, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn:

On behalf of the citizens of Baltimore County, I thank the staff of the Maryland Department of Transportation for its continued consideration of our transportation priorities. The Baltimore metropolitan region is now the fifth most congested in the country, and it is inhibiting the growth of our local economy. Researchers indicate that traffic congestion will only get worse in the next twenty years. We need a comprehensive transit system that will support our local economy and accommodate future growth in a safe and reliable manner.

We also urge MDOT to consider as part of its cost analysis the average daily trips (ADT) to be accommodated for each State dollar of investment for transportation improvements. Each state dollar invested in the Baltimore region will reach more than 25% of the state's population. For these reasons, I am requesting the following transportation priorities be considered as part of the FY 2016 - FY 2021 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), to ensure that Baltimore County and the entire Baltimore region have the transit solutions necessary to promote economic growth and enhance the quality of life for our communities.

Commuter Mass Transit Alternatives - Baltimore Region

The Governor has announced a much-needed review to upgrade the region's bus system, and we look forward to learning more details about how this effort might improve on-time performance, reliability and passenger comfort. There is certainly a dire need for a plan that re-examines the existing MTA network. As part of this review, the MTA should acquire mobile applications that allow all system riders (bus and rail) a real-time view of the arrival times, as well as on-board wi-fi access.

While potential improvements to the bus system will benefit existing riders, we also believe that a comprehensive mass transit strategy must attract new riders – those choice riders who must be persuaded to give up their use of automobiles - if we truly want to relieve gridlock in our region.

The idea of attracting choice riders to mass transit is not a new concept. The State accepted responsibility for providing our region with rail mass transit 45 years ago, and Baltimore County has benefitted from construction of terminus stations for both the Metro and Light Rail systems. This shared vision also offered hope that reliable and efficient transit to

connect east-west commuters through the region would become a reality, with the Red Line offered as the consensus solution by local, state and federal partners.

In light of the Governor's decision to abandon the Red Line, it is imperative that an east/west plan be developed that will address the transit needs of these choice riders. Such discussion should include consideration of a rail or rapid bus transit link starting from Woodlawn, which is home to more than 10,000 employees of the Social Security Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the FBI. Woodlawn also has easy access to I-695 and I-70, along with an existing park and ride lot, with right-of-way access already leading into the city. This line should extend to an expanded Lexington Market transit hub, where it could join the existing Metro and Light Rail systems as transfer points. This concept represents a major opportunity to increase transit accessibility to a high volume of commuters in search of alternative transportation options. It could also mitigate the downtown tunnel cost that appeared to impact the State's decision on the Red Line.

Economic Development - Traffic Improvements for Owings Mills and Sparrows Point Terminal

Owings Mills (Metro Center Transit Oriented Development and Foundry Row Shopping Center)

- Funding of the long-planned interchange on Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard 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. Baltimore County previously has demonstrated its support by providing \$1.5M in planning and acquisition money to the State for the interchange, as well as completion of the \$6M Dolfield Boulevard improvements. This priority has the support of the Owings Mills Corporate Roundtable, comprised of the region's major employers, including CareFirst and T. Rowe Price, as well as the developers of major job producing projects situated on Red Run Boulevard.
- Recently approved state road improvements at Reisterstown Road (MD 140) and Painters Mill Road has the support of county government.

Sparrows Point Terminal

Baltimore County is excited that its vision for the future of Sparrows Point is being embraced by the current ownership of Sparrows Point Terminal. 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. The State needs to invest in certain infrastructure improvements to facilitate implementation of the plan. Continued state infrastructure investment to support the Port of Baltimore and Sparrows Point will result in generation of new jobs for the region.

- The construction of a full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway) to maximize the potential redevelopment activities at Sparrows Point, would allow for truck avoidance of the toll plaza, and would reduce truck traffic that impacts residential communities on Dundalk and Holabird Avenues.

Several bridges are in danger of closure due to lack of maintenance, and without rehabilitation present an impediment to the success of the Sparrows Point Terminal project.

- ✓ MD 151 over Wharf Road and Industrial Railroad (Bridge No. 0309900)
 - ✓ MD 157 over Ramps to I-695 (Bridge No. 0330900)
 - ✓ Wharf Road Ramp over Wharf Road
 - ✓ Wharf Road over Baltimore Industrial Railroad (Bridge No. 0335100)
- The creation of a signalized intersection from Sollers Point Road and Main Street at Broening Highway will enhance road access and reduce traffic congestion as increased redevelopment activities begin to take place at the Port and on the Sparrows Point peninsula.

Community Development – Streets, Streetscape and Sidewalk Improvements

There are a number of minor transportation projects that can inject new opportunities for older business communities.

- **Extension of Security Boulevard to Johnnycake Road**

This project could jumpstart new economic development opportunities at the Johnnycake Road sites to the Federal Center at Woodlawn and would enhance access to mass transit for County, State and Federal employees.

- **Street Improvements on Philadelphia Road (MD 7) - Widening and raising of the road from Mohrs Lane to Campbell Boulevard**

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, but it would also enhance Pulaski Highway as a location for new employment-related development. Currently, there is no east to west access from Pulaski Highway between Middle River Road and MD 43.

- **Kenwood Avenue Sidewalk from Lillian Holt Road to Hazelwood Avenue**

The County portion of Kenwood Avenue has been completed for many years. The State's portion of Kenwood Avenue near Overlea High School has not been completed. Completion of Kenwood Avenue sidewalk would enhance pedestrian safety for Overlea High School.

- **Liberty Road MD 26 (Phase 1 – Between Rolling Road and Courtleigh Drive)**

Baltimore County proposes a center lane boulevard streetscape on a heavily traveled commercial corridor to provide aesthetic treatment and enhanced pedestrian safety. Phase 1 is a one mile "greening project" that is primarily zoned residential and residential/office, and would soften the approach to the commercial core at Liberty and Old Court Roads. The County successfully completed a similar boulevard "greening project" on the County portion of Greenspring Avenue between Old Court and Green Summit Roads, enhancing the approach to the Greenspring Quarry project.

- **Frederick Road MD 144 (Frederick Road from Prospect Avenue to Briarwood Road)**

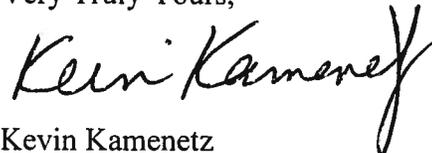
Local residents and property owners have been discussing ways to improve the Paradise Business Community. There have been significant improvements made to the greater Catonsville commercial corridor on Frederick Road outside of the Beltway, but more needs to be done for the vulnerable part of the corridor inside the Beltway. Specifically, improvements would include sidewalks, landscaping, tree trimming, street lighting, and furniture that would help give Paradise a more cohesive appearance. The most important improvement would be the removal of the elevated tree planters that impede pedestrian traffic and block signage. The main building behind the planters has been purchased and a new streetscape could leverage/encourage reinvestment into this building and others along this section of the corridor.

- **Eastern Avenue MD 150 (Mace Avenue to MD 702)**

The Eastern Avenue Streetscape project in downtown Essex is one of the oldest in the County and in need of significant upgrades. The wooden benches have rotted, trees have died leaving empty wells, sidewalks are in need of repair, etc. The public realm looks downtrodden and it is very difficult to encourage private reinvestment for improvements in buildings. A priority would be the downtown blocks and gateways into the older downtown "main street." Public investment could also jumpstart renewed business activism and involvement.

I appreciate your consideration of Baltimore County's transportation priorities.

Very Truly Yours,



Kevin Kamenetz
Baltimore County Executive

KK:yw

cc: Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor
Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., Senate President
Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House
Baltimore County Senate and House Delegation
Baltimore County Council
Fred Homan, Chief Administrative Officer, Baltimore County
Ed Adams, Director, Baltimore County Department of Public Works