



KEVIN KAMENETZ
County Executive

October 23, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Rahn:

On behalf of the citizens of Baltimore County, I thank the staff of the Maryland Department of Transportation for your continued consideration of our transportation priorities. Recently, Amazon announced its plans for a second headquarters. *The New York Times* indicated that Amazon has laid out in meticulous detail its desires for the new headquarters. In addition to a metropolitan area with more than one million residents, Amazon insists that its new project have on-site access to mass transit, a commute of 45 minutes or less to an international airport and easy access to a major highway or arterial road — no more than two miles. Amazon also wants traffic congestion figures. As you are aware, several counties in Maryland have submitted bids for this new economic opportunity.

This is one of the many reasons I continue to advocate for congestion relief and that a cost analysis be undertaken statewide to include the average daily trips (ADT) to be accommodated for each State dollar of investment for transportation improvements. This reasoned, non-binding analysis could help guide the Department in making wise investment choices of limited capital dollars. It is estimated that each State dollar invested in the Baltimore region will reach more than 25% of the State's population.

We need a comprehensive regional transit system that will support our local economy and accommodate future economic growth in a safe and reliable manner. For these reasons, I am requesting the following transportation priorities be considered as part of the FY 2019 - FY 2024 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

I remain hopeful that some of the recent improvements to the bus system will benefit existing riders. However, I also believe that a comprehensive mass transit strategy will 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, which the Red Line offered as the consensus solution by local, state and federal partners.

Notwithstanding the Governor's decision to abandon the Red Line, it remains 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 provides 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 and Port Covington 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.

A mass transit link to Port Covington will also aid in attracting Amazon quality projects to the region, benefitting all of us.

Economic Development Related Traffic Improvements

Owings Mills

- Funding of the long-planned interchange on Northwest Expressway (I-795) at Dolfield Boulevard remains a top County priority, 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. 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.

Sparrows Point

Baltimore County is excited that its vision for the future of Sparrows Point is being embraced by Trade Point 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. State infrastructure investment to support the Port of Baltimore and Trade Point Atlantic will result in a generation of new jobs for the region.

- The construction of a full interchange at I-695 and Exit 44 (Broening Highway) would maximize the potential redevelopment activities at Trade Point Atlantic, 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 Trade Point Atlantic 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)

White Marsh/Middle River

- Designation of the AV Williams property and the former federal depot site adjacent to the Middle River MARC Train Station as a transit-oriented development project would stimulate the economy creating retail, residential and transportation opportunities for that area. Relocation of the Martin MARC Station to the east side of MD43 will accelerate opportunity.
- Funding for street improvements on Philadelphia Road (MD 7) including, widening and raising of the road from Mohrs Lane to Campbell Boulevard is needed. 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.

Towson - York Road

York Road (MD-45) is a critical artery serving the greater Towson area. Large businesses and institutions like UMMS/St. Joseph's and Towson University are connected to downtown Towson by York Road, as well as a number of local communities like Anneslie, Rodgers Forge, Stoneleigh, Wiltondale, Aigburth Manor, Burkleigh Square, The Green and Yorkleigh. Bike and pedestrian access from south to north into downtown Towson is virtually non-existent, while key intersections like York Road and Burke Avenue prove both daunting for bike/pedestrian crossing and operate at a near failing level of service (LOS) for vehicular traffic. The demand for safe and reliable passage to and from downtown Towson by York Road will only escalate in the future, as the \$350 million mixed-use development Towson Row progresses toward construction at the southern entry point of downtown Towson.

- Baltimore County proposes that the State commit funding into the FY2019-2024 Consolidated Transportation Program for the planning, design, engineering and construction of multi-modal enhancements to York Road to facilitate access into downtown Towson. Project elements should include an off-road shared pedestrian/bicycle path on York Road from Cross Campus Drive to Burke Avenue, an extended sidewalk and congestion reduction improvements at the intersection of York Road and Burke Avenue, conversion of yield lane to right turn only lane at York Road and Burke Avenue to enhance pedestrian safety, and the widening of York Road to allow for turn/pass lanes that facilitate the provision of efficient and dependable transit service. These

improvements would be supported by local communities and businesses, and local property owners have indicated an interest in providing right of way to support implementation of multi-modal access.

Community Development – Streets, Streetscape and Sidewalk Improvements

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

- **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.

- **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.

- **Loch Raven Boulevard MD 542 (Taylor Avenue to Loch Hill Road)**

A number of years ago, Loch Raven Boulevard benefitted from extensive median and streetscaping work from Putty Hill Avenue to Taylor Avenue. While this was an appreciated improvement, it has not been completed. Funds are being sought to provide for the continuation of median and streetscape improvements from Taylor Avenue to Loch Hill Road.

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Thank you for this opportunity to present Baltimore County's transportation priorities in the FY 2019-
FY 2024 CTP.

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, Administrative Officer, Baltimore County
Steve Walsh, Director, Baltimore County Department of Public Works