



CATHERINE E. PUGH  
MAYOR

*100 Holliday Street, Room 250  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202*

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Pete K. Rahn  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn:

I am pleased to provide this letter, in preparation for our meeting on August 16, 2018. This letter reflects updated information that has become available since our Baltimore City Consolidated Transportation Program priorities submission on March 29, 2018, and is based on the overall needs and goals that were provided at that time and have been captured in our ongoing dialogue.

## **PROJECTS REQUESTS**

### **Hanover Street Bridge and Multimodal Corridor**

Replacement of the iconic but deteriorated Hanover Street Bridge is critically needed. The structure, one of two drawbridges in Baltimore City, has a bridge sufficiency rating of 51.2 and is the largest source of claims against the City for pothole-related damage of any Baltimore City location.

North of the bridge are the City Centre, I-95, the east coast's most important highway, and Port Covington, the largest development site on the East Coast which will contain the headquarters of Under Armour. South of the bridge are a major hospital, the area Police Station, and areas of heavy industry that also contain Port Facilities. Connecting the truck traffic generated from the industries and port to I-95 guarantees quick access and keeps the trucks out of residential areas. The Police Station needs to be connected to the portion of their district that lies across the bridge. The Port Covington Development Site will certainly benefit if the bridge connectivity remains.

The existing draw span materials – steel grates and sometimes steel plates, do not provide a safe surface for bicycles. This would be rectified in the design process and will result in a bike-safe, truly intermodal crossing.

In 2014, Baltimore City was awarded a TIGER grant which funded a study of bridge options – replacement and rehabilitation options – for the venerable structure, complete with multimodal, economic and development considerations.

Ongoing work assisted by \$3 million in State Funds includes structural repairs, concrete deck repairs and an asphalt overlay. These items are designed to add years to the life of the bridge while funds for the major replacement or rehabilitation are being sought. A \$2.4 million BUILD Grant Application has been filed to fund work on the NEPA process including preliminary design which could lead directly to design and construction within 4 years. \$150 million would allow BCDOT to progress through design and construction.

### **Modernization of Signal Infrastructure**

Baltimore's Traffic Signal System is at the end of its useful life. While there are many areas that contribute to the quality of life of communities, having a stable signal system with a good communication network is critical for safety and enhances the pedestrian, transit and driving experience and provides for reliability in travel time. We requested \$50,000,000 in our CTP letter to design and upgrade the traffic signal and ITS communications system including signal rewiring. The City has experienced high levels of congestion due to inadequate signal technology and further delay in full implementation of the system will continue to cause problems for our residents, businesses and visitors. Complete connectivity to the Transportation Management Center is needed. This will establish communication between traffic signals and other field and centralized devices for prompt response to emergencies and varying traffic conditions. Upgrades will improve the safety and reliability of the system and will support technological advancements. This project will also improve the operation of the Baltimore Link transit signal priority program by improving overall transit time reliability and the resultant cost savings. Pedestrian safety will be enhanced with reliable dedicated pedestrian signal operation. This project also reduces operating costs by eliminating the need for telecommunications expenses

These critical improvements are amongst our highest priorities, and were included in our Chapter 30-Project submission. The total cost of the signal system upgrade is estimated to be \$102 M. With your support, including the addition of \$2M in State funds for our FY 2019 Capital Program, we have allocated \$22M of our Capital Improvement funds for Fiscal 2019 to prioritize these improvements. We are amending the original request of \$50 M to \$80M to fill the gap and provide adequate funding needed to accelerate the implementation of these critical improvements.

### **Central Business District (CBD) ADA Infrastructure**

Almost all of the pedestrian facilities in downtown Baltimore, 90%, require upgrading to meet current Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. The City of Baltimore is over 200 years old and there are many areas of existing pedestrian infrastructure that have not been upgraded to current standards. The cost to upgrade these facilities is \$57,400,000. This effort will enable all persons the ability to navigate the Central Business District by constructing ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossings which will provide residents and visitors safe, reliable and continuous pathways.

### **Transit Flow and Access Improvements- Dedicated Bus Lanes and Complete Streets Improvements**

In June of 2017, the Baltimore Link complete transit overhaul and rebranding was launched. This project included planning, design, and installation of dedicated bus lanes to provide efficient bus movement through downtown Baltimore. These lanes offer improved safety, reliability, on-time performance and speed efficiency.

Planning and design for the dedicated lanes is being done as a partnership between the MTA and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation. As a continuation of this partnership, we are requesting that we partner on the next stage of improvement, reconstructing and resurfacing these roadways to provide a quality riding surface for LINK, and further improved transit system performance, reduced cost and maintenance of vehicles and increased roadway network life expectancy. Baltimore City DOT proposes a cost sharing plan between the City and MDOT to resurface or reconstruct the corridors to include Roadway and ADA upgrades on the 7-lane miles of dedicated bus lane corridors. The cost for this effort is estimated at \$60 million. Most of these corridors have not been reconstructed or resurfaced in years. The additional wear due to concentrated bus traffic results in quicker deterioration of the roadway. These upgrades will provide a quality transit experience and enable a more complete streets roadway network for the LINK systems. It will also reduce congestion and promote safe and quick movement of people and goods. These critical improvements were included in our Chapter 30-Project submission. A program that phases these improvements over the life of the capital budget, or \$60M, would ensure continuous progress.

#### **MLK Boulevard (NEW)**

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is long overdue for a makeover. DOT envisions a Complete Streets approach to the redesign of the boulevard. This is a new request and was submitted as one of our BUILD grant requests in the amount of \$5M. We ask that the grant application be viewed favorably.

#### **Charm City Circulator**

The State's financial participation in the Charm City Circulator bus service has made the service accessible to a broader array of the transit dependent and transit choice public. The purpose of the Circulator is to enable equitable, easy and reliable transit service in the densest parts of the city to key destination points. This service is truly a complement to the LINK bus system. The City has a disproportionate share of users with below average incomes who may not own automobiles and the Circulator helps to support work and education by providing connections and basic mobility opportunities. This service also reduces congestion on city streets by providing access to and from local businesses and from parking garages in the city for citizens, business and tourists. Continued and additional financial and technical support is critical to the operation and growth of this service. Additional funding of \$35M is needed to complete this supportive network.

#### **Bicycle Lanes Network**

Implementation of our bicycle plan and program has been a joint initiative that has provided benefits for advancing bicycle accessibility in the City of Baltimore. DOT also created a separated bike infrastructure initiative aiming at constructing safer and more bike-friendly cycle tracks throughout the City. Bicycle facilities are an important piece of a multi-modal urban transportation network, and provide numerous benefits on a personal, local and regional level. There are health benefits, cost efficiencies, economic growth results, resource conservation, reduced environmental impacts and an overall reduction of traffic congestion and wear and tear on the roadway network. To provide for all users, Baltimore City has a goal of 77 miles of low stress bicycle facilities that will meet the basic travel needs by bike.

To achieve our goal of implementing 17 miles of new lanes per year, we request \$10.5 million from the State to be dedicated to the Baltimore Bicycle Network. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts to advance this important addition to a multi-modal system.

### ***PROGRAMS SUPPORT***

In addition to these specific project requests, we continue to request your support on the following critical programs.

#### **Restoration of Highway User Revenue Allocation**

The City continues to be challenged by the reduction in the allocation of Highway User Revenue. We request that the formula funding for these revenues be returned to the level prior to the drastic HUR reduction. In Fiscal Year 2007, Baltimore City received 12.3% of the \$1.8 billion that was distributed to the local jurisdictions. The City's share amounted to \$226 million. In Fiscal Year 2018, the percentage share dropped to 7.7% which amounted to \$140 million, down by more than a third. Deferred maintenance continues to accelerate due to this extreme shortfall.

#### **Port Covington Improvements**

We continue to work with the State to support funding requests that will enhance the redevelopment of this part of the City. The transportation improvements needed in this area of the City will be key to providing multi-modal opportunities for people of Baltimore to access the many jobs destined for this area. We know that direct connections from Light Rail, Bus, Road, Bridge, Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities are critical and we are happy that you are working with the team to achieve these transportation improvements.

#### **Metro Rail**

We would like to work with you to determine how transit will better serve the economic growth of the City of Baltimore. Implementation of a connected rail system is critical to support this growth and the resulting jobs and vitality of this City.

The existing North-South metro and light rail corridors along the west side of the city provide the opportunity for multiple travel options and land use connections. As Baltimore continues to grow and provide jobs, tourist and residential opportunities that are not only important to the City but are also a critical component of statewide success and prosperity, additional rail options are needed, especially connecting east and west Baltimore and the adjacent Counties and job centers. We request an accelerated rail redeployment program be initiated and implemented to maximize our advantage in preparation for the 2026 Soccer World Cup to be hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico. In fact, Baltimore City presents the potential to become a host city but would need a robust and reliable transit system to boost our chances.

*Autonomous Vehicle Technology*

Baltimore City DOT is pleased to support State efforts in advancing research in this field and is interested in partnering with MDOT on any future applications it may submit or projects it participates in related to autonomous vehicles.

*Bayview MARC Station*

Baltimore City continues to support this project which would help to tie the region together, leverage transit use, and would be a major economic growth opportunity.

*MAGLEV and Loop*

Baltimore City believes in the economic impact that high speed rail could bring to the region and supports both of these initiatives.

*Howard Street Tunnel*

Height restrictions within the Howard St. Tunnel prevent the shipment of double stacked containers and impact the regions ability to maintain historic levels of commercial vitality, not to mention growth and economic potential. Reconstruction of the tunnel must proceed to serve commerce through the port, to provide job opportunities, and to contribute to the overall success of the region and state.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Pugh  
Mayor  
City of Baltimore