



CATHERINE E. PUGH
MAYOR

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

April 1, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Let me begin by thanking you for convening the Central Maryland Transit Commission. As you will see from many of our requests below, excellent transit is our highest priority. Defining a clear path to improve and enhance transit in Baltimore and throughout the region is paramount to the City, Region and State economic vitality and we are excited to work with you to do this.

This letter reflects the Baltimore City Consolidated Transportation Program priority requests for transportation investment and collaboration with the State. The first group contains projects we are asking MDOT to pursue. These are transit projects, and some contain highway improvements as well. The second group contains City projects for which we are requesting funding assistance. The final group contains initiatives for which we are seeking your support. I look forward to the shared accomplishments this effort will bring.

MDOT TRANSIT REQUESTS

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 (BCDOT). 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. BCDOT 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 would ensure continuous progress.

Baltimore City DOT has requested \$2 million in the Baltimore City Capital Improvement Program to perform an engineering analysis on one of these most important corridors - Baltimore Street through the Central Business District. This street is severely deteriorated and is a high priority of the Downtown Partnership for repair. BCDOT has initiated preliminary discussions with our infrastructure partners – DPW, BGE and Veolia as well as having very early discussions with MTA regarding partnering on this effort. Although the initial focus will be to determine how this corridor is rebuilt to current standards to overcome the longstanding pavement and subsurface issues, we would also like to determine the “Complete Streets” use of this and parallel corridors through the center of downtown. Your participation in this effort from a multi-modal perspective is critical to our ability to realize an overall improved transit experience.

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 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. Today, as the City faces potential reduction in State funding participation and as we are embarking upon a new contract to be executed soon, we would welcome a return to funding of \$3 million annually to continue investments in the system and improved service.

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/central of the city provide the opportunity for multiple travel options and land use connections. To achieve our goal of creating jobs, and to reduce the travel time on transit for residents to reach jobs throughout the region, additional rail service is needed. Connections are especially needed between east and west Baltimore and beyond especially to the counties 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. Thank you for participating with the City on the World Cup Transit Task Force.

Bayview MARC Station

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

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.

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Hanover Street Bridge and Multimodal Corridor

Baltimore City Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Port Administration, private industry and community partners has identified the Hanover Street Bridge corridor as a major barrier to multimodal transportation. Connectivity between the city center, major employment opportunities, communities in south Baltimore and Anne Arundel County and even places along the eastern seaboard served by the port are severely hindered by the existing conditions of the bridge.

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 in poor condition, needing replacement according to Federal guidelines. This bridge is the number 1 regional priority as established by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

North of the bridge are the city center, 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 Armor. 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. There is growing demand for access through this corridor and traffic volumes continue to increase.

The existing draw span riding surface – steel grates and sometimes steel plates, do not provide a safe surface for bicycles, and pedestrian movement is equally difficult along narrow sidewalks. The result is a challenging transportation corridor for motorists and an inhospitable one for non-motorized modes of transportation. With an expected replacement cost of \$150 million, the city acknowledges that an in-kind replacement of the 100 plus year old bridge will not meet the current and future multimodal transportation needs of the citizens and businesses of Baltimore City or the State of Maryland. Improvements are required to protect the vehicular and freight movements to maintain and improve economic competitiveness of Baltimore, the region and the State.

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 are being sought. BCDOT would like to request state participation and assistance with federal support to initiate financial construction allotments beginning now to achieve \$150 million in 4 years when all NEPA and design are complete.

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.

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 the our residents, businesses and visitors. Complete connectivity to the Transportation Management Center (TMC) is needed. This will establish communication between traffic signals, other field devices, and the TMC 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. To date, BCDOT and MTA have jointly upgraded 2 corridors for bus prioritization and currently have 3 more corridors, including the North Avenue Rising bus prioritization project underway. We would like to join with you to add 2 more corridors to this inventory to further improve and extend bus access and reliability. Previous efforts have cost approximately \$2 million per corridor. Your continuation of \$2 million per year will continue upgrades along high capacity corridors.

Pedestrian safety is also 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 priority, and were included in our Chapter 30-Project submission. The total cost of the signal system upgrade is estimated to be \$102 million. With your support, we have allocated \$22 million of Capital Improvement funds to prioritize these improvements. Your assistance with filling the \$80 million gap is requested.

Central Business District (CBD) ADA Infrastructure

Almost all of the pedestrian facilities in downtown Baltimore, approximately 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. We would like to join with you to prioritize our joint resources, especially in bus corridors and jointly pursue grant and other funding sources to expedite this effort.

MLK Boulevard

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is long overdue for a makeover. DOT envisions a Complete Streets approach to the redesign of the boulevard. This was previously submitted, but not selected, for a \$5 million BUILD grant. We are requesting your financial support for this project that connects and serves so many state facilities and operations would be beneficial to the growth and vitality of this corridor.

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. We are working closely with your offices to finalize implementation of grant opportunities provided to the City and to position the City for future grant and other financial awards to achieve our bike goals. We appreciate your participation in maximizing the existing and future financial potential of this program and hope that you will join with us to fund expedited implementation at a cost of approximately \$10 million per year.

MDOT 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

In 2008, Baltimore City received \$214 million in HUR Dollars, this changed to \$158 million in 2009 and has been below \$150 million per year ever since. This represents about a 1/3 annual reduction in funding and even more drastic reductions in capital funding. We are now seeing increases from the State and we are very appreciative of these actions. We look forward to continued work with MDOT to further increase these funding levels.

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.

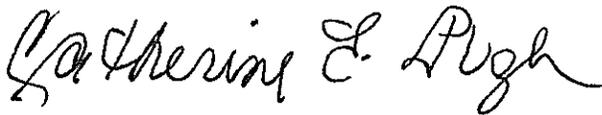
MAGLEV and Loop

Baltimore City believes in the economic impact that high speed rail could bring to the region and supports both of these initiatives and we appreciate the assistance that MDOT is providing.

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, job opportunities and the overall success of the region and state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine E. Pugh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "C" at the beginning.

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor
City of Baltimore