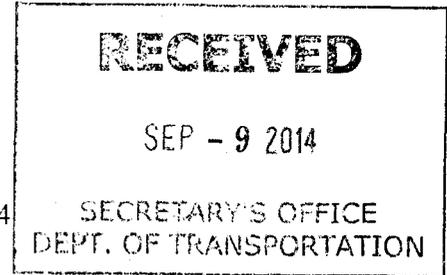




City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie, Maryland 20716



September 3, 2014

The Honorable James T. Smith, Jr.
Transportation Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: City of Bowie Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Smith:

The Bowie City Council reviewed the City's Transportation Priority List on August 4, 2014. We know that you appreciate the importance of funding "priority" highway projects, especially the long-standing ones developed for our community in conjunction with MDOT staff. The City Council feels strongly that these projects, which will improve vehicular safety conditions, expand transportation options and enhance the quality of life for our residents, are well-justified and should be given serious consideration at this time.

Local Road Improvement Priorities

The City's highest transportation priorities for roadway construction include four (4) projects previously recommended, including: (1) the urgently needed upgrade of MD 197, between Kenhill Drive and Relocated MD 450 (County Construction Priority #6); (2) the completion of MD 450 (County Construction Priority #4); (3) grade-separation of the US 301 intersections with MD 197, Harbor Way/Governor Bridge Road and Excalibur Road/Mill Branch Road (County Construction Priority #8); and, (4) project planning for US 301, between Excalibur Road and MD 214.

MD 197 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 24) – This project consists of improving the 1.4 mile segment of MD 197, between Kenhill Drive and Relocated MD 450, to a four-lane divided roadway. The existing, two-lane section is already severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods and at all hours on the weekends. In addition, there are continuing concerns voiced by residents about pedestrian safety and access from the side streets. The lack of roadway capacity has resulted in ever-increasing diversion of traffic from MD 197 onto the City's local street system. The City has worked closely with your staff during Project Planning, which is now concluded. As consensus has been achieved on this key project and it is currently in the engineering phase, MD 197 is ready for the State's investment of right-of-way and construction funding in the next CTP. In 2013, the average daily traffic was 31,400 vehicles per day, and it is projected to grow 84% to 57,925 in the Year 2030. **This is the City Council's highest transportation priority.**

MD 450 (Prince George's County CTP, Line 28) – Completion and land acquisition and construction of the segment of MD 450 is needed between Stonybrook Drive and west of MD 3. Design is over 90% complete. The average daily traffic volume on this section of MD 450 is expected to double by the Year 2030. This project is crucial to the City's economic development since it provides principal

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access to the Bowie Mainstreet commercial area. Most important, however, is the critical need to create a safer roadway. For all of these reasons, the City Council requests that funding be continued to fully complete design and engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction over the next several years.

US 301/MD 197 Interchange (Prince George's County CTP, Line 21) – The City Council worked very closely with SHA staff to identify an acceptable alternative (Alternative 2 With Roundabouts). Project Planning was completed in 2007, and the project is ready to move into design and engineering. Development pressures continue to mount in this area, including a proposed 180,000 square foot Wal-Mart superstore, additional retail development and a major sports complex now under review by the Maryland Stadium Authority. This intersection provides access to the majority of Bowie businesses and is at the heart of the City's downtown (designated as the smart growth, mixed use "Bowie Center"). As noted in the studies performed during the Project Planning study, increasing traffic volume will also create a permanent congestion bottleneck in the regional road network and potentially harm the local economy, unless something is done. Further delays in project implementation might warrant interim capacity improvements on mainline US 301, as well as on nearby roads. Unfortunately, this critical project has been lingering on hold since 2007 for lack of funding.

US 301, from Excalibur Road to MD 214 – There has been increasing growth in traffic volume on US 301, between Excalibur Road and MD 214, in recent years. The amount of current traffic congestion and the substantial amount of approved additional development in the corridor accentuates access and safety concerns. It is recommended that the CTP include funding for Project Planning and/or interim capacity improvements for this location as soon as possible. This evaluation should consider speeding, as well as congestion issues, and make recommendations for specific improvements. Since it is likely that the ultimate, controlled access improvements planned for US 301 will not occur for many years into the future, the existing roadway should be widened to three travel lanes in each direction as soon as possible, in order to keep pace with other projects slated for construction north and south of this segment.

Regional Transportation Priorities

In addition to the above, the City Council wishes to highlight several other extremely important improvements to the State transportation system. These are not currently listed in the State Consolidated Transportation Program but have regional consequences:

- **Public Transit Via the US 50 Corridor** - The US 50 corridor should be officially designated as a Priority Transit Corridor in the State's future planning. The regional planning process (MOMENTUM) resulted in a strategic plan for WMATA, the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority, which identifies priority transit corridors, including the US 50 corridor between New Carrollton and Annapolis. As our community grows and becomes more attuned to sustainable behaviors, the number of people using public transit is expected to increase. We cannot overemphasize the importance of planning for better transit service for residents and workers in the City. A new, regional transit route should be initiated from Annapolis to Laurel via the Northview Park-and-Ride lot within the next several years to provide transit service that integrates with existing WMATA routes.
- **A New Interchange on US 50 (I-595) at MD 193** - The City Council is very concerned that traffic levels on MD 197, which are expected to increase by about 84% between 2013 and 2030, may even be made worse unless a MD 197 is upgraded and a new interchange is constructed on US 50 at MD 193. The current Prince George's County Transportation Priority List recommends a Project Planning study for an additional interchange on US 50, at some location between MD 197 and MD 704 (County Project Planning Priority #9), and the project's stated purpose is to relieve

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congestion and improve safety on MD 197 and MD 450. Since it is both a City and County priority, the next logical step for this project would be to add it to the Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) at the earliest possible opportunity.

- A New Roadway Connecting MD 197 near Bowie State University with MD 3 in Anne Arundel County – There is a need to conduct a feasibility study to further examine regional traffic congestion in the MD 450 corridor, east of Race Track Road, and the heavy volume of motorists that are projected to use MD 450, Race Track Road and Jericho Park Road in order to travel between Laurel and Crofton. Please note that this need to evaluate the operational and environmental feasibility of this roadway connection is recommended in both the Approved Prince George’s County Master Plan of Transportation and the Approved Bowie State/MARC Station Sector Plan. We are anxious for a feasibility study to begin so that this long-standing issue can be addressed definitively. If the study indicates that a roadway connection is warranted, we would request that it be added to the Highway Needs Inventory at that time. Prince George’s County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III also supports a State Feasibility Study for this roadway.
- Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis (WB & A) Trail - Bridge over the Patuxent River – The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is constructing the WB & A Spur Trail to connect the existing WB & A Trail to Bowie State University. In addition, the City is actively planning and constructing segments of The Bowie Heritage Trail, which will provide access to the Bowie State/MARC Station. All of these trails are part of the State Transportation Trail network. The WB & A Trail is also part of the East Coast Greenway and the American Discovery Trail. A crossing of the Patuxent River is a crucial piece of this planned system that will connect Prince George’s County and Anne Arundel County. We request that you give this project high priority for coordination by, and financial assistance from, the applicable State agencies.

Other Transportation Priorities

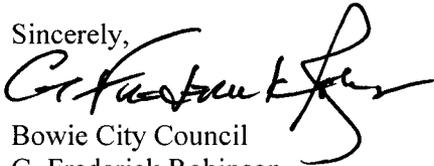
The remaining City Council transportation priorities are identified below.

1. MD 978 (Hall Road) – This project will address the need for sidewalk connectivity and pedestrian safety from Pointer Ridge Drive to Devonwood Drive, including a crossing of the CSX railroad tracks. It is critical that the State continue to support this project, which is under concept development by District 3 engineering staff. Both the City and County are committed to partnering with SHA to complete pedestrian improvements that will ensure safe access to the new South Bowie Library.
2. MD 564 (9th Street) sidewalk retrofit, east of Maple Avenue – This project provides improved, ADA compliant accessibility along the main street within the Old Town Bowie revitalization district and, after several contractor delays, is now under construction. Long term, we are looking for the State to follow through on its longstanding recognition of the need to provide traffic calming measures on MD 564 as the road bisects the center of Old Town.
3. MD 197 Landscaping Retrofits – Over a decade ago, the Office of Environmental Design prepared concept plans for landscaping of the median areas between Rockledge Elementary School/MD 450 and US 50/US 301. The projects were put on hold indefinitely for lack of funding. We would like to see these plans implemented, especially in light of the State’s new stormwater regulations, which require SHA to treat

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or remove impervious surfaces. The median between Rockledge Elementary and MD 450 offers a huge opportunity to convert unneeded pavement to pervious landscape areas, for which the State can achieve credit under MS4 stormwater permit regulations. A small portion of the median south of US 50, between Holiday Lane and US 301 was recently planted with shade trees and is a welcome addition. You should be aware that, because the emphasis on community beautification is so important to our residents, the City recently signed an agreement with SHA to maintain the median landscaping to a higher standard of maintenance. The referenced landscape retrofit designs were achieved with community consensus, and the City feels the promised work is long overdue and should be initiated as soon as possible.

The City Council greatly appreciates your concurrence with these priorities and we respectfully request your assistance in moving all of the referenced projects forward. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on transportation improvements which affect our City.

Sincerely,

 Bowie City Council
 G. Frederick Robinson
 Mayor

cc: The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, State Senator
 The Honorable James W. Hubbard, Delegate
 The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Delegate
 The Honorable Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Delegate
 The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner, County Councilmember
 The Honorable Derrick Leon Davis, County Councilmember
 The Honorable Rushern L. Baker, III, County Executive
 The Honorable Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman
 Ms. Melinda B. Peters, SHA Administrator
 Mr. Alvin J. Nichols, Maryland WMATA Board Member
 Ms. Artis Hampshire-Cowan, Maryland WMATA Board Member
 Mr. Michael Goldman, Maryland WMATA Board Member
 Mr. Richard Sarles, WMATA CEO
 Mr. Darrell Mobley, Director of Prince George's County DPW &T