



BRANDON SCOTT  
Mayor  
250 City Hall, 100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Gregory Slater  
Office of the Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Slater:

I am pleased to provide this letter reflecting the City of Baltimore's transportation priorities for inclusion in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The priorities contained in this letter are consistent with my Administration's commitment to increase access to public transportation; advance the implementation of our innovative, comprehensive complete streets ordinance; and connect City residents with major employers across the region.

The projects requested here should be familiar to you, as the ongoing dialogue between the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) informs our assessment of needs and goals. Thank you for your favorable consideration of the included requests as you prioritize allocation of federal stimulus dollars and develop the next iteration of Maryland's CTP.

#### **PROJECT REQUESTS**

##### **Priority: Increase State Support for Implementation of Regional Transit Plan**

The City of Baltimore is appreciative of the comprehensive analysis and engagement that informed the corridors outlined in the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan. We join our peers in the region in requesting the prioritization of state funding to advance these corridors into planning and design.

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### ***East-West Priority Transit Corridor***

The East-West Priority Corridor project proposes a comprehensive suite of investments that will facilitate more efficient transit trips, improve multi-modal connections, and address existing safety issues. This project applies strategies from the Transit Priority Toolkit to addresses existing challenges in the corridor, offering near-term investments to better connect people to jobs, education, amenities, and leisure activities; while the region considers long-term options via the Regional Transit Plan. The corridor is currently served by multiple routes, including both the CityLink Blue and Orange. The investments included in this project could facilitate future limited-stop service on the important east-west connection across the Baltimore metropolitan area.

This project would improve accessibility and transit reliability in Baltimore's highest-need locations, as East and West Baltimore have some of the highest concentration of those without access to a personal vehicle in the city. It would also improve transit services for those most reliant on MTA service, and would overcome Baltimore's spatial mismatch of where jobs are located and where those in need of employment reside. This service would provide an imperative connection to needed amenities, rider choice, and foster improved economic and physical health of residents of Baltimore City.

The City of Baltimore has committed resources to improve infrastructure along this corridor, and our local investment would be significantly leveraged by a corresponding state investment.

### **Priority: Fund and Prioritize Complete, Accessible, and Safe Streets Improvements**

#### ***Greenway Trail Network***

The City of Baltimore is developing a 35-mile world-class urban trail network that would link neighborhoods, civic amenities, anchor institutions, outdoor resources, parks, schools, main street commercial corridors, waterfronts, transit hubs, downtown, universities and more. There are ten miles remaining to realize a completed Greenway Trail network. BCDOT is currently advancing planning and design work on several remaining gaps in the public ROW, including 6.3 miles of trail to connect Lake Montebello to Leakin Park, connecting the Inner Harbor to Middle Branch Park, and two miles of Norfolk Southern and BGE, which needs to be acquired.

The estimated cost of completing the network is \$28 million. Of that, \$2.3 million is required to design the segments that are not completed. This includes tasks to advance all segments to 30 percent design and to advance all segments to shovel ready (90 percent) design. If this project were to receive state funding support, funding could be leveraged to secure private and federal dollars as sources have already been identified. Additionally, the current trail network is already understaffed and requires a trail manager and program management. The City of Baltimore would also like to explore possibilities for a new non-profit or public/private partnership similar to the Waterfront Partnership to manage coordination and management of the trail system.

#### ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Infrastructure***

As is the case with other aging cities, Baltimore has a significant backlog of infrastructure needs to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and increase accessibility residents and visitors of all ages and physical abilities. Most pedestrian facilities in downtown Baltimore (90%) require upgrades to meet current ADA standards. This effort will enable everyone, regardless of physical abilities, to navigate downtown by constructing ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossings. This will provide residents and visitors safe, reliable and continuous walking and wheelchair pathways. My Administration has also prioritized upgrades of ADA infrastructure around bus stops to increase access to

transit. Our efforts would be accelerated significantly with increased state and federal support.

### ***Transit Flow and Access Improvements***

The Baltimore CityLink bus includes dedicated bus lanes for improved safety, reliability, on-time performance and efficiency. Planning and design for the dedicated lanes is being pursued a partnership between the MTA and BCDOT. BCDOT and MTA are already working together proactively and dedicating resources to resurface or reconstruct the corridors as needed to include road, ADA, and active transportation upgrades on the dedicated bus lane corridors. The total cost for this effort is estimated to be \$60 million. A program that phases improvements over the life of the capital budget (\$60 million) would ensure continuous progress.

Support to reconstruct and resurface these roadways would improve transit system performance, reduce cost and maintenance of vehicles, and increase roadway network life expectancy. Additional support is needed from the state to implement traffic control measures such as transit signal priority (TSP), queue jumps, and transit bus movement exemptions. These improvements to the roadway and transit infrastructure would improve ridership experiences for users of MTA transit, improve transit reliability, and maintain critical infrastructure for all users of the road.

The City of Baltimore respectfully requests that MDOT utilize federal stimulus funds to support adjacent infrastructure in transit priority areas in partnership with BCDOT.

### ***Vision Zero Safety Infrastructure***

The City of Baltimore has initiated a “quick build” program to address high crash intersections, and is working on a Vision Zero strategy. However, in order to achieve zero traffic-related injuries and fatalities, we require MDOT support. This includes additional resources to implement safety projects to protect the most vulnerable users of the road. Increased funding to resurface Baltimore City’s would provide opportunities to implement Complete Streets as outlined in the City’s new Complete Streets Manual.

### **Priority: Prioritize State Support for Projects of Regional Significance**

Freight and passenger rail are critically important to the economic viability and competitiveness of the City of Baltimore, the region, and the State. The City of Baltimore is advocating for increased federal support for Amtrak and respectfully requests that MDOT continue to prioritize investment in the Howard Street Tunnel and the B&P Tunnel. Additionally, we ask that MDOT also revisit previous iterations of the MARC Growth and Investment Plans (2007 and 2013), increase capital investment in MARC stations, and identify transit-oriented development opportunities adjacent to MARC and Metro stations in the City of Baltimore.

### **Priority: Assist with Innovative Finance Options and Assist with State Support for Bridge Repair and Replacement**

There are 296 City-owned and maintained bridges in Baltimore. Of those, 178 are in “Fair Condition” and 38 are in “Poor Condition.” Due to funding gaps, there are only eight currently under construction, eight currently in design, and 16 scheduled in the CIP, which including those under design, but not the I-83 bridges.

To address these failing bridges, Baltimore City requires increased State support for developing innovative financing models to rehabilitate and replace failing bridges and greater flexibility in funding uses and

sources. State assistance with the use of Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEEs) bonds would allow Baltimore City to spread the financing over the life of the bridge rather than the construction period. Baltimore would benefit from the use of toll credits for the required local match to draw down more federal funds.

### ***Hanover Street Bridge***

Rehabilitation or replacement of the iconic but deteriorated Hanover Street Bridge is critically needed. The structure, which is 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. Additionally, the existing draw span materials, steel grates and sometimes steel plates, do not provide a safe surface for bicycles.

The City of Baltimore is hesitant to enter the NEPA process and start the 10-year federal funding clock for the bridge without a full understanding of the scope and cost of the project, which ranges from roughly \$80 million for a rehabilitation to \$200-\$250 million for replacement. Financing at either level will require significant federal, state, and possibly private investment. As an immediate next step, the City of Baltimore seeks approximately \$1 million in local or state funding to complete a structural assessment on the Hanover Street Bridge. Upon assessment, the City will be better positioned to partner with the state and potentially the private sector to develop innovative financing concepts for rehabilitation or replacement of the bridge and utilize federal funds to advance planning and design.

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT**

### **Priority: Equitably allocate federal stimulus dollars received by State**

I have publicly called for adequate and equitable investment in the Baltimore area's transit network and commend MDOT for allocating Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSA) funds accordingly. As funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) are distributed and allocated, I request that you consider the MTA's significant backlog of maintenance needs and prioritize funding to address the years of underfunding of this critical infrastructure. Ensuring that the MTA receives adequate funding is critical to the economy of Baltimore City, the region, and the State of Maryland as a whole. This has always been true, but is especially now, as we imagine what economic recovery will look like once the COVID-19 pandemic has passed. MTA's weekday ridership often exceeds 300,000 trips per day. These riders include people traveling to school, work, visiting family, and running essential errands. The recently published Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) report identified a \$2 billion capital funding deficit split nearly equally between state of good repair and system enhancement needs. Ensuring MTA is able to provide safe, affordable, and reliable transportation is critically important to the residents and businesses of Baltimore City.

Historically, the City of Baltimore has received 5.5 percent of federal formula highway dollars appropriated to SHA to support the state highway network within the City of Baltimore that is fully maintained by the City. As MDOT determines the timing and formula by which funds allocated to the State Highway Administration (SHA) from the CRRSA and the ARPA will be distributed to local jurisdictions, we respectfully request your consideration of allocating 5.5 percent of the capital funds that SHA receives to the City of Baltimore. Access to these federal funds would have significant impact on the City's efforts to maintain our aging roads, bridges, and sidewalks and to create safer, more accessible streets for residents and commuters in the City of Baltimore.

**Priority: Restore Highway User Revenue Allocation**

While the City is appreciative of mandated increases in Highway User Revenue (HUR) allocation, we continue to be challenged by the fact that these revenues have not returned to pre-2007 levels. In FY2007, Baltimore City received 12.3 percent of the \$1.8 billion that was distributed to local jurisdictions. By contrast, in FY2020 Baltimore City received 8.3 percent of the HUR share. Legislatively-mandated increases have helped but are set to expire in FY 2025 and fall short of meeting the City's deferred maintenance needs. As you are aware, the City is unique among Maryland's jurisdictions in that we bear the cost of maintaining state roadways within our boundaries. Further restoration of Baltimore's HUR allocation will significantly impact our ability to address the major backlog of transportation infrastructure improvements currently pending.

Thank you, again, for your favorable consideration of these requests. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Department of Transportation Director Steve Sharkey at (410) 396-6802 or [s.sharkey@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:s.sharkey@baltimorecity.gov). Working together, we can provide the safe, reliable transportation network that the people of Baltimore deserve.

In service,



Brandon M. Scott  
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City of Baltimore