



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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

April 27, 2022

Secretary James Ports, Jr
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Ports:

I am pleased to provide this letter reflecting the City of Baltimore's transportation priorities for inclusion in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). We are grateful for the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) partnership and State investments in infrastructure in Baltimore City, especially efforts from the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to implement the Regional Transit Plan, East-West Priority Transit Corridor RAISE Grant project, and other transit-related improvements supporting our goals to improve multimodal accessibility, transportation equity, and Complete Streets in Baltimore. We are also grateful for efforts by the MDOT Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) to remain an important economic generator in Baltimore and to support environmental enhancements benefiting water quality and habitat restoration in the Baltimore Harbor. We must continue to work in partnership to ensure our mutual goals can be met by supporting the safety, reliability, accessibility, and sustainability of the multimodal transportation network we all rely upon.

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 and comprehensive Complete Streets ordinance; support the safe and reliable movement of freight, and connect City residents with major employers across the region. These requests also represent the funding we need to maintain our transportation network in a state of good repair to meet the mobility and safety needs of the traveling public.

Capital Programming

Allocation of Federal Highway Dollars - Historically, the City of Baltimore has received 5.5 percent of federal formula highway dollars appropriated to the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) to support the state highway network within the City of Baltimore that is fully maintained by the City. It is our understanding that MDOT SHA has chosen to treat federal stimulus dollars differently and not apportion a percentage to the City. We respectfully request that you reconsider this position and allocate 5.5 percent of federal highway dollars to the City of Baltimore to support BCDOT's ability to maintain a safe, resilient, reliable, and equitable transportation network in a state of good repair. As discussed in the Baltimore City CTP meeting in 2021, federal dollars to support the rehabilitation and repair of concrete roads that support the Port of Baltimore would be a mutually beneficial use of these funds.

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Partnership in pursuing Federal discretionary funding opportunities – The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) establishes new funding opportunities for transportation projects. Many of these new funding opportunities are available as discretionary grants, which will be competitive and require a minimum 20 percent match. The City is seeking State support to further leverage our investments and present attractive grant applications when competing for limited funds at the national level. We request your strategic and proactive partnership in coordination and leveraging matching funds to pursue discretionary opportunities that will significantly impact the transportation network in Baltimore and beyond.

Innovative Financing – Given the ongoing discrepancy of available funding to meet the ongoing transportation investment, operations, and maintenance needs, the City of Baltimore is interested in exploring innovative finance opportunities to better leverage our capital program. We are interested in exploring Public-Private Partnerships (P3s), bonds, and other innovative financing opportunities in coordination with the State to advance major infrastructure projects that are otherwise beyond our ability to finance with current revenue levels. Additionally, we reiterate our request to receive dedicated toll credits from the State to assist with matching federal dollars. The majority of toll revenues are generated in the Baltimore region and we strongly believe that a dedicated annual allocation of toll credits is a reasonable request.

High-Impact Priority Projects

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and Hanover Street Multimodal Corridor Improvements – The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and Hanover Street corridor in south Baltimore are in critical need of investments to rehabilitate or replace the structure and improve multimodal transportation infrastructure. This corridor is part of the arterial roadway network in Baltimore City serving as a freight connection between MDOT MPA's Port of Baltimore and I-95 and several of MDOT MTA CityLink bus routes. Furthermore, this corridor serves as an important connection for the historically disadvantaged, low-income, and minority Cherry Hill and Greater Baybrook communities to job centers in Port Covington, Downtown Baltimore, and points south in Anne Arundel County. The bridge cannot safely accommodate bicycles, the sidewalks are not ADA compliant, and the bascule draw bridge section routinely requires long closure periods for inspection and maintenance.

With a federal grant, BCDOT conducted a planning study to identify safety, multimodal accessibility, and state of good repair improvements for the bridge and the Hanover Street corridor in the surrounding communities. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) is currently funding a structural assessment of the bridge to assess the feasibility of repair versus replacement. State and federal support is needed to advance improvements for this bridge and the Hanover Street Corridor. The next step is to conduct a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Study to engage with stakeholders, identify environmental constraints and select a preferred alternative. Completing a NEPA study allows this project to become eligible for new Federal discretionary grant funding opportunities that can help fund final design and construction. The City requests active State participation in the planning processes for the bridge repair or replacement.

US 40 Franklin and Mulberry Highway Redevelopment and Ramp Removal – In the 1970s, the State Roads Commission built the US 40 expressway decimating 16 continuous city blocks that used to be homes and businesses in Black communities of West Baltimore. The intent to connect with I-70 never happened, and today this massive scar across the City has become known as the Highway to Nowhere. Building this expressway has caused irreparable damage to community cohesion and economic stability in West Baltimore. BCDOT has made progress in the past to reestablish part of the grid and reconnect Payson Street. BCDOT is partnering with MDOT MTA to design and implement multimodal Complete Street elements along this corridor for the East West Transitway RAISE Grant. With new federal funding opportunities available in the IIJA for Reconnecting Communities, BCDOT is seeking State support to leverage federal dollars for a planning study to assess new alternatives and redevelopment opportunities to support community cohesion and economic growth.

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Implementation of the Greenway Trails – The City of Baltimore is developing a 35-mile world-class urban trail network that would link neighborhoods, anchor institutions, parks, schools, commercial districts, waterfronts, transit hubs, and more. There are ten miles remaining to realize a completed Greenway Trail network. The City is currently advancing planning and design work on several remaining gaps in the public ROW, including 6.3 miles of trail to connect Leakin Park, Druid Hill Park, Lake Montebello, and Herring Run Park. The City is also working towards connecting the Inner Harbor to Middle Branch Park, as well as the two-mile gap along Norfolk Southern and BGE corridors, which needs to be acquired. If this project were to receive state funding support, it would allow the City to leverage already identified private and federal dollars.

Locally Operated Transit Services - The Charm City Circulator and Harbor Connector are free and locally operated transit services in Baltimore City. These services connect residents, tourists, and commuters to job centers and important destinations, and support the MDOT MTA's transit operations. Capital improvements for these complimentary transit services would support improvements needed to connect new destinations and leverage equity improvements to ensure free transit service is more accessible to historically disadvantaged communities. The capital improvements needed to improve service, as outlined in our Transit Development Plan, include bus stop enhancements, pier, and docking infrastructure expansion and repairs, and purchasing boats to replace vessels at the end of their service life.

Transit Oriented Development – Infill and redevelopment with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near Transit Hubs in Baltimore City supports our City goals to promote equitable development, economic growth, and multimodal transportation. The City of Baltimore supports MDOT initiatives to create TOD areas in Baltimore City linking land use and transportation with new mixed-use development and Complete Street transportation enhancements. The City of Baltimore supports MDOT's efforts and designation of TOD areas at Penn Station, Westport, and Reisterstown Plaza. BCDOT can further support MDOT's TOD program with supplemental State funding to provide multimodal transportation improvements to the roadway network in and around these TOD areas. 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 new TOD opportunities adjacent to MARC and Metro stations in the City of Baltimore.

Programmed Citywide Initiatives with Insufficient Funding

Roadway Resurfacing – Unlike all other jurisdictions within the State of Maryland, Baltimore City is responsible to maintain all roadways within the City limits, including on State routes and critical freight routes supporting the MDOT MPA Port of Baltimore. Impacts from heavy freight traffic generated by the Port of Baltimore has significantly degraded Baltimore City's roadway network. There are over 2,000 miles of roadway in Baltimore City, and BCDOT manages hundreds of street improvement projects each year. BCDOT's goal is to keep all roads in a good condition however, heavy truck traffic, winter weather, and ongoing wear and tear creates an extensive backlog of maintenance needs. Supplemental funding and support for BCDOT's roadway resurfacing program can ensure the street network, including State routes and critical freight routes inside Baltimore City limits, is in good condition. This will help improve safety, network reliability, and reduce ongoing maintenance needs for infrastructure and vehicles.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance - As is the case with other aging cities, Baltimore has a significant backlog of infrastructure needs to meet ADA requirements and increase accessibility for pedestrian facility users of all ages and physical abilities. The majority of pedestrian facilities in downtown Baltimore require upgrades to meet current ADA standards. Constructing ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and pedestrian infrastructure will enable everyone, regardless of physical abilities, to navigate downtown. This will provide residents, workers, and visitors with safe, reliable, and continuous travel pathways. My Administration has also prioritized upgrades of ADA infrastructure around bus stops to increase access to public transit options. Our efforts can be accelerated significantly with increased State and federal support.

Traffic Safety Improvements - BCDOT has recently prepared a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) to identify, expand, and prioritize safety measures for the traveling public in Baltimore City. BCDOT has initiated a "quick build"

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program to address high crash intersections, and this program has become very popular with a long waitlist of projects originating from the analysis of high-crash locations as well as through community requests. However, in order to achieve the City's goal of zero traffic-related injuries and fatalities, MDOT's support is a critical element to funding projects. This includes additional funding to implement safety projects to protect the most vulnerable users of the transportation network. Increased funding to improve roadways would provide opportunities to implement traffic calming, increase accessibility of our pedestrian infrastructure and Complete Streets as outlined in the City's new Complete Streets Manual.

Transit Flow and Access Improvements - The Baltimore CityLink network includes dedicated bus lanes for improved safety, reliability, on-time performance, and efficiency. BCDOT and MDOT MTA are already working together proactively and dedicating resources to resurface or reconstruct the corridors to include roadway improvements, ADA compliant bus stops and sidewalks to increase access, and active transportation upgrades on the dedicated bus lane corridors. Ongoing support from the State to expand, reconstruct, and resurface roadways can improve transit system performance, reduce cost of vehicle maintenance, 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, transit bus movement exemptions, and bus stop enhancements for transit rider comfort and safety. Pedestrian infrastructure upgrades to meet ADA standards are a critical component at bus stops and along corridors to provide accessible routes from neighborhoods. These investments to our roadway, transit, and pedestrian infrastructure would improve ridership experiences for users of MTA transit, improve transit reliability, and maintain critical infrastructure for all users of the road.

New Finance Options and 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, including those under design. 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. Baltimore would benefit from the use of toll credits for the required local match to draw down more federal funds. Also, 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.

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 Steve.Sharkey@baltimorecity.gov. Working together, we can provide the safe, reliable transportation network that the people of Baltimore deserve.

In service,



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore