



ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

June 8, 2022

James Ports, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Drive, P.O. Box 548  
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Ports:

Montgomery County conducts a comprehensive update of our State Transportation Priorities Letter when there is a major change in the status of our priorities or when there is a change in our elected leadership. We anticipate our next comprehensive update in 2023 when a new County Council is seated, and the next County Executive term is underway. Our comprehensive update follows an extensive outreach process including consultation with Executive agencies, the County Council, our State Delegation, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Planning Board, municipalities, and the public. Until this new letter is transmitted, our letter dated May 14, 2020, represents our priorities with the following amplifications. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact us.

### **Locally Operated Transit Support (LOTS)**

At the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Locally Operated Transit Support (LOTS) grants to Montgomery County were reduced given the significant transit-specific pandemic aid provided by the federal government and the strain on State transportation trust fund revenues. It is important that the State Aid provided through this program is increased above pre-pandemic levels now that the federal operating assistance is no longer being provided, transit operations remain under financial strain, and State revenues have been strong enough to restore this support.

### **Interstate Program**

The Opportunity Lanes project status remains unclear as legal challenges to the State's procurement of a P3 partner continue through mid-2022 and opinions about this project remain sharply divided in Montgomery County. Notwithstanding these issues, little to no progress has been made by MDOT in advancing the State's transit commitments to the County associated with the project. These commitments are required by multiple actions of the Board of Public Works, are included in the project's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) record, are enshrined in the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) actions on Visualize 2045 (the federally mandated long range transportation plan), with MDOT voting in favor of these requirements and are reiterated in several letters between the MDOT Secretary and County officials.

It appears that work on the specific transit projects including the bus maintenance facility at Metropolitan Grove, Shady Grove Station enhancements, and Westfield Montgomery transit center enhancements has been suspended by the MDOT technical team. Further, MDOT officials have not advanced work with the County on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for not less than \$360 million of financial support to high priority transit projects required of the Opportunity Lanes Phase 1 South project, despite numerous efforts to restart this work by the County. We ask that you move expeditiously to advance the specific projects and to finalize the MOU.

**FY23 State Budget Actions**

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the significant contributions provided in the FY23 State Budget based on recommendations of the Governor and the Legislature. This financial support provides substantial funding to some of our priority projects, like North Bethesda/White Flint area infrastructure and bus rapid transit, among numerous other transportation projects that received support through the State budget actions outside MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP).

Sincerely,



Marc Elrich  
County Executive



Gabriel Albornoz  
County Council President