



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

June 9, 2022

Mr. James F. Ports, Jr.
Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Ports:

On behalf of the Executive branch of Prince George's County (the "County"), please find this letter providing an outline of high-level priorities as an interim between our most recent joint signature priority letter of November 18, 2021, and the official 2022 letter and projects list, traditionally sent later in the year. With the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), there is much needed relief in the form of more robust funding for traditional formula and discretionary programs, as well as several new discretionary programs. Some examples of new programs that the County has an interest in include, but are not limited to, the Safe Streets and Roads for All, Reconnecting Communities, and the Bridge Investment Program. In addition, the County views programs designed to promote electric vehicles and the transition of transit fleet to zero emission vehicles as extremely important new opportunities. The County is enthusiastic about the new and expanded opportunities as a result of this landmark reauthorization.

In preparation for the draft Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) FY 2023-2028, Prince George's County continues to advance priorities for a comprehensive multimodal transportation network that will strengthen the County, the Capital region and the state. The County emphasizes projects that further wholistic transportation approaches like Vision Zero Prince George's, Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and strategies designed to spur economic growth while promoting sustainability, safety, and equity. In addition to forward thinking aspirational programs, dedicated funding is critical to preserving and maintaining County infrastructure and state of good repair needs of our aging roadways, bridges, sidewalks, facilities, and stormwater structures.

The County appreciates important recent improvements including the **Medical Center Drive Interchange**, construction funding for the **Blue Line Corridor Improvements**, and our collaborative initiatives in our collaborative efforts for accommodating a new FBI in **Greenbelt or Landover**, as well as the burgeoning joint development projects in **New Carrollton**. We are encouraged by these positive steps, however, historically, too many of the County's priority projects have stalled, been delayed or have not been advanced.

As a result, while recent progress is very much appreciated, incremental steps alone will not be enough.

The widening gap within the Washington Region between East and West has become even more pronounced. By the year 2045, recent analysis provided by the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board (TPB) shows increased congestion of vehicular traffic in Prince George's County, which is more severely and disproportionately impacted than any other jurisdiction in the Region. This not only negatively affects Prince George's County, but directly impacts the long-term economic well-being of the State. While there is not a singular solution, working with Regional and interjurisdictional partners, emphasizing investment in addressing the jobs and housing imbalance is critical. A concerted and meaningful focus on Transit Oriented Development around the 15 Metro Stations in Prince George's County is integral to address equity, congestion and sustainability in the Washington Region. While this issue is larger than just transportation, it is a key component. The County looks forward to continued partnership and the State's leadership in addressing this vital matter and to prompt action.

We also appreciate the efforts of the State to get the **Purple Line** project back on track, but to also do so as expeditiously as possible while stressing aspects of pedestrian safety and the aesthetics of the alignment. The Purple Line is a light rail facility designed to enhance access for people walking, biking and using transit. We recognize the increase in crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists, and will continue to partner with the State to enhance safety improvements and countermeasures on local and state roadways in the County. Specifically, we urge integration of critical elements recommended by M-NCPPC (MD 193 SPACES report) and the County, including sidewalk and bicycle facilities where they currently do not exist in that segment and other portions of the alignment (i.e., along MD 410 Veterans Parkway). The County looks forward to working with the State and the Concessionaire on the path forward for expeditious completion of the project, advancing safety both during construction and operations once in revenue service.

The County requests that the State directs its resources toward projects that enhance community revitalization, promote economic development, increase transit access, reduce congestion, and improve roadway safety for all users. As we do these things, it is also important that critical elements of maintenance, including care of medians and trash removal are carried out effectively.

The projects expressed are some of the key priorities for the County and cover a range of transportation issues and areas that are needed in the draft FY 2023-2028 CTP. They include:

VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- **Vision Zero Prince George's Multimodal Enhancements on State-Maintained Roadways:** Both Prince George's County and the State of Maryland are Vision Zero jurisdictions. During the COVID-19 period, we have been confronted even more clearly by the limitations and opportunities provided by our built environment.

We are grappling with how the risks to vulnerable road users might have recently changed and how we can effectively respond. The County and the State collaborate in implementing Vision Zero. However, much more is needed as the data shows a preponderance of these crashes are at night and along State maintained high-speed arterial roadways. We look forward to working with SHA, District 3, in advancing the Multiagency Vision Zero Working Group, which focuses on improving specific high pedestrian crash corridors as part context-driven design. As this is an important step, much more is needed to address safety for all road users.

TRANSIT/WMATA/MULTI-MODAL

- **Medical Center Drive Interchange/Blue Line Corridor Initiative Improvements:** Medical Center Drive is integral to the new University of Maryland Regional Medical Center and the gateway to the new downtown Largo, and the Blue Line Corridor. The County appreciates the appropriation of \$8.7 Million towards improvements to local infrastructure, now that the Medical Center Drive Interchange in the CTP, we look forward to expeditiously advancing the planning and design of this critical project and the others that support improvements in Largo and Blue Line Corridor, especially the Central Avenue Connector Trail.
- **New Carrollton:** Continued investment in this vital TOD, which will soon serve as the beginning of the Purple Line, is essential. With the incoming light rail, existing MARC and Amtrak Stations, and the Joint Development project involving WMATA and the State, additional funding is needed to enhance connectivity, environmental treatments, and streetscaping.
- **Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Headquarters: I-95 / Greenbelt Metro Access; Landover Improvements:** The County is pleased that SHA has already renewed funding to complete design of the Greenbelt interchange and in working together with Federal partners in readying both the Greenbelt and Landover sites in anticipation of a GSA announcement on a new facility. Re-locating the principal facility for the FBI in Prince George's County is an essential part of the larger need to add much needed employment opportunities near where so many of the employees reside. We look forward to our continued efforts to ensure that both the Greenbelt and Landover locations are appropriately funded with the support infrastructure necessary for a successful bid and most importantly, facility that will best serve the needs and interests of both the State and County.

- **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**
Funding: Transit systems have been particularly hard hit during the pandemic. To address the recovery and the post-COVID 19 environment, sustained funding for the WMATA system is essential. While WMATA has been beset with numerous issues, a new era of leadership serves as an important opportunity to ensure that both the Metrorail and Metrobus systems receive the support that they need for success. An increased focus on Transit Oriented Development through the Joint Development Process and overall coordination are essential to the health and vibrancy of both WMATA and the County.
- **TheBus:** Prince George’s County operates “TheBus,” a transit system independent of WMATA and the system faces similar difficulties during the pandemic. More robust funding is needed for the Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) programmed for Prince George’s County. The County is in dire need to rehabilitating the existing facility, initiating the process for a new LEED certified facility, and making the successful transition to Zero Emission Busses and related infrastructure. Enhanced funding is critical to meet not only existing needs, but to enable future growth while addressing new efficiencies, technologies and climate change.
- **MD 5, Branch Avenue/Southern Maryland Rapid Transit:** Planning for the Branch Avenue corridor and the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT), proposed fixed guideway project along the MD5/US-301 corridor from Prince George's County to Charles County, both need to be advanced. We look forward to working with the state on the first phase of the SMRT NEPA process, made possible through a recent earmark and matching funds from the 2021 General Assembly Session. Securing the remaining funding needed to complete the remaining project planning and design elements for the projects so they can move into construction is critical for this burgeoning corridor.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** Prince George’s County is finalizing a Feasibility Study, under the auspices of a State Innovation Transportation Innovation Grant (STIG), that demonstrated five routes for advancement as BRT. Continual funding will allow Prince George’s County to advance the projects from study corridors to functioning BRT. Moving into the next phase of planning is critical to meet the needs of County residents, but also effectively connect to neighboring jurisdictions in Virginia and Montgomery County, which are aggressively pursuing their own initiatives.
- **Transit Oriented Development:** Placing an emphasis on bringing jobs closer to housing is central to a long term development and sustainability strategy for the County, the State and the Region.

Prince George's County appreciates MDOT advancing previously requested TOD designations. However, five additional TOD's in the County are needed as soon as possible and funding is needed for projects at TOD's including Greenbelt, New Carrollton, Branch Avenue and Largo.

STATE ROADS & HIGHWAYS

- **MD 210 Palmer Road at Livingston Road West Interchange):** We look forward to the long-awaited completion of the Kerby Hill Road interchange. Advancing expeditiously with subsequent interchanges are crucial to improve safety on this dangerous roadway. The County appreciates the coordinated effort in advancing a shared use bicycle-pedestrian corridor as well as planning of the next interchange.
- **MD4 at Suitland Parkway:** During the CTP Tour in 2020, the County expressed extreme displeasure regarding the delays, scale backs, and construction issues that have befallen this project. The County is pleased that the state has reinitiated the project and restored the flyover to the design as originally planned. However, given delays and inconvenience the community faces, it is imperative that SHA quickly complete this project.
- **US 1, Baltimore Avenue (MD 193 to I-95/495):** The County appreciates the State advancing Phase I of this vital project through the current construction process. The County is now looking to the State to quickly fund and advance the subsequent phases.

The passage of the BIL presents new and exciting opportunities for the County and the State. We look forward to collaborating with the Maryland Department of Transportation in leveraging and utilizing these programs to support a comprehensive multimodal transportation program through added attention to the projects that we have noted in this letter. Expeditious advance of these projects will strengthen Prince George's County, the region, and the State of Maryland. The traditional joint priority letter and list, once approved by the Council, will be provided later in the year. We thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,



Angela Alsobrooks
County Executive

CC:

Honorable Joanne C. Benson, Chair, Prince George's County Senate Delegation
The Honorable Nick Charles, Chair, Prince George's County House Delegation
The Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Chair, Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Deni L. Taveras, Vice-Chair, Prince George's County Council
Tara H. Jackson, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
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