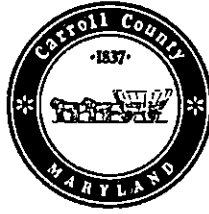


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Carroll County Government

225 North Center Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157
410-386-2043; 1-888-302-8978
fax 410-386-2485
MD Relay 711/800-735-2258

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: FY 2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program - Carroll County, Maryland

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

We wish to express our gratitude for funding for the design and construction of the geometric improvements on MD 32 between 2nd and Main Streets, and the feasibility study for the MD 97 corridor. We are also pleased that progress is being made on the drainage improvements on Springfield Avenue in Sykesville, which is an important step in the ultimate completion of this Urban Reconstruction "Streetscape" project. These projects, through the dedication and coordination of County, state, and municipal resources, exemplify the type of interjurisdictional cooperation necessary to move our priorities forward.

In this year's letter, as in previous years, we continue to target our focus on those critical projects that will provide the greatest enhancement to economic development and redevelopment opportunities for the County. We expect that by pursuing a strategy of joint cooperation of resources for our top priority projects, we can then leverage the State's commitment for transportation infrastructure into the largest improvements for economic vitality.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer Carroll County's transportation project priorities for consideration and possible inclusion in the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

The following represents Carroll County's top transportation project priorities:

Highway Capacity Enhancement Projects

- MD 97 (Bachmans Valley Road to MD 140 in Westminster):

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One of the highest priorities for Project Planning, the project scope is to widen the roadway from 3 to 5 lanes, with a full interchange at Meadow Branch Road and pedestrian facilities. This portion of MD 97 is strained by a significant amount of commuter traffic from the northern part of the County and Pennsylvania. It also provides direct access to the Carroll County Regional Airport, and numerous industrial parks (including the Westminster Air Business Center, Meadow Branch Industrial Park, Carroll County Commerce Center, Westminster Technology Park and West Branch Trade Center), linking them to the MD 140 corridor and the Baltimore Region. The Carroll County Industrial Development Authority and the City of Westminster dedicated 2.1 million dollars for improvements to this segment of roadway, resulting in the construction of the Phase 1 Breakout Project, which is now complete. This project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Maximize 2045* Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is also prioritized in the *2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan, the 2009 City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan and the 2014 Carroll County Master Plan as Amended 2019*.

- **MD 32 (MD 26 south to Carroll County line):**

This project is also a high priority. The project scope is to widen the roadway from two to four lanes, including pedestrian facilities and other amenities at appropriate locations within the corridor. MD 32 is a heavily traveled commuter route, linking Carroll County with I-70 and the Baltimore-Washington region, including job centers in Columbia and Fort Meade. It also provides access to current and future employment centers within Carroll County for commuters coming into the County from elsewhere. Improvements within this corridor are needed to ease commuter congestion, enhance access to employment areas, and address safety concerns throughout the corridor. Moreover, this project is essential for advancing economic development opportunities already being created in the southeastern portion of Carroll County. This includes the mixed-use project, "Warfield at Historic Sykesville", which recently was the first recipient of Maryland's Catalytic Revitalization Tax Credit, designed to help fund rehabilitation of formerly government-owned properties for economic and community development purposes. This is an important development for economic stimulus in this region. Considerable funds have already been spent towards localized improvements within this corridor, which includes contributions from the state, County, and Town of Sykesville. In 2018, MDOT completed a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for the 7.2 miles of MD 32 from I-70 to MD 26. While the PEL Study concluded that the entire corridor is not expected to exceed its capacity until beyond 2040 and will not require complete dualization to four lanes until beyond that year, it identified a number of potential improvement concepts to address identified needs at specific locations. The first of these projects, geometric improvements between 2nd Street and Main Street, is funded for construction, and we are encouraging a plan of action that breaks this priority project into further phases to facilitate overall advancement of the project while preserving further expansion of the corridor and remaining open to new connections as the area develops. The MD 32 priority project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the

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approved *Maximize 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan* and the *2021 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*.

- **MD 26 (MD 32 east to Liberty Reservoir):**

This segment of MD 26 is a heavily traveled commuter route, linking Carroll County with the Baltimore region, including job centers in and around Baltimore City. It also provides access to current and future employment centers along the corridor and elsewhere within Carroll County for out-of-county commuters. Transportation improvements within this corridor are needed to ease commuter congestion, enhance access to employment areas, improve function and aesthetics, and enhance safety throughout the corridor.

In July 2020, SHA completed the Maryland 26 Corridor Study – Traffic Analysis and Targeted Improvement Recommendations. The purpose of this study was to find ways to revise the 30 percent design to a new “practical” design approach. Rather than complete widening to six lanes, improvements will consist of more limited breakout projects that focus primarily on enhancing the safety of the corridor. This may be achieved through the extension of auxiliary lanes, increased signalization, and a center median in certain segments of the road which have been identified as critical to the safe and efficient functioning of the entire corridor. Through further analysis and collaboration with SHA staff, breakout projects will be identified and prioritized. The MD 26 priority project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory, and the approved *Maximize 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan*.

A. Breakout Project to Convert Eastbound MD 26 Right-Turn-Only lane at Georgetown Boulevard: This breakout project will increase safety and operations at this intersection. The project is to extend the lane back to Eldersburg Crossing and west to Homeland Drive. The scope of this project is almost entirely within existing right-of-way and will allow conversion of right-turn-only lane at Eldersburg Crossing to a thru-lane. The project includes sidewalk from Carroll Bank to Georgetown Boulevard. The initial cost estimate for this project is \$6.0M.

- **MD 140 Corridor Improvements from County line to Kays Mill:**

This approximately two-mile portion of MD 140 is a gateway to Carroll County and one of the most heavily travelled roadways in the County. Many of the County residents who travel to work in other areas of the region commute through this corridor, and it is the location of a high concentration of commercial and industrial uses that provide valuable economic development assets to the community. Improvements to this major arterial, including a four-lane divided roadway, a full interchange at MD 91 with an additional auxiliary lane east of MD 91, and access management improvements, are necessary to maintain the functionality of this corridor. The MD 140 Corridor Improvements project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the *Maximize 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2013 Finksburg Plan*.

- **Breakout Project (MD 140 at MD 91):** As an initial breakout project, we are

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pleased that this project has received design funding for a “jughandle” type design for westbound traffic. We look forward to its ultimate construction.

- **MD 27 Corridor Improvements from the Carroll County line to Leishear Road:**

MD 27 (Ridge Road) is a major north-south corridor in Carroll County. This approximately two-mile stretch of roadway consists of eight intersections located within the corporate boundaries of the Town of Mount Airy or immediately outside the municipal limits. There are several large undeveloped parcels within and abutting the town that are targeted for significant employment and residential uses. Improvements to this road are necessary to support the planned growth in the corridor as well as to serve the region for freight travel and as a commuter route between residents in northern Carroll County and employment centers south of the Town. A number of improvements to this corridor are called for, including widening of the roadway to a consistent four lanes, dedicated turn lanes, signalized traffic control, boulevard separation of lanes, and controlled intersections to allow pedestrian crossings. Through further analysis and collaboration with SHA staff, breakout projects will be identified and prioritized. The MD 27 priority project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the 2014 Carroll County Master Plan as Amended 2019. It is also included in the Town of Mount Airy’s 2013 Master Plan.

Urban Reconstruction ("Streetscape") Projects

- **MD 851 - Sykesville Main Street/Springfield Avenue (Cooper Drive to South Branch of the Patapsco River):**

This Urban Reconstruction project is a high priority for Construction. MD 32 handles most of the through traffic in the vicinity of Sykesville, bypassing the downtown area. This project will help to restore the Town's historic Main Street to an attractive and pedestrian-friendly urban local roadway. In 2008, the state completed the project to relocate Springfield Avenue at its intersection with MD 32, which involved major investment by the state, County, and Town of Sykesville. This improvement project included the extension of Springfield Avenue east of MD 32, which greatly improved access to Warfield at Historic Sykesville and provided an important connection between this major employment center and downtown Sykesville. The Urban Reconstruction project along Springfield Avenue and Main Street would involve roadway reconstruction and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as inclusion of streetscape amenities. In 2013, the state allocated \$0.5 million to fully fund Concepts for this Urban Reconstruction project. Concept has been completed. A public hearing was held in May 2016 and the Town and County sent letters of participation to MDOT indicating joint support for the project with no progress since. The County is moving forward with water and sewer upgrades in conjunction with the stormwater project being completed by SHA. This would be an opportune time to advance this project to include the full engineering of the streetscape. The next highest priority of these phased improvements is the existing bridge over the South Branch Patapsco River to allow for safe pedestrian connection to South Branch Park recently improved with an investment of over \$.75 million by the Howard County government. This area was also awarded a \$2.0 million capital grant in the 2022 legislative session which will help further

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advance the Town of Sykesville's ongoing efforts for several other adjacent projects to build off of the planned Urban Reconstruction of MD 851. These efforts include parking upgrades, expanded sidewalk and pedestrian facilities, and improved multi-modal connectivity through the area. The streetscape project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Maximize 2045* Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is also included in the *2021 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*.

- **31 - New Windsor Main Street/High Street (Main St. MD 31 from Church St. to High St. and High St. from Main St. to Coe Dr.:**

This Urban Reconstruction project is a high priority for Construction. Over a decade ago, the Town of New Windsor worked with the State Highway Administration to develop a streetscape plan for MD 31, which includes Main Street and High Street. This effort was meant to coordinate with the relocation of High Street, which would redirect heavy truck traffic away from the intersection of MD 31 and MD 75. The streetscape project was halted in 2002 as a result of a reduction in program funding, but the relocation of High Street was completed. In 2013, the state allocated \$1.882 million to fully fund Preliminary Engineering for this Urban Reconstruction project, and Preliminary Engineering is underway. The project will include improvements to sidewalks, enhancements to bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, as well as roadway improvements. This project will be coordinated with the replacement of water lines within the limits of the SHA Streetscape and would have a positive economic impact on businesses in the Town. New Windsor has awarded a contract for the Water Main Improvement Project. Construction will begin in June 2023 and is expected to be completed within 18 months. With the MD 31 Water Main Project proceeding, and the Town looks forward to discussing next steps for the Streetscape Project. The MD 31 streetscape project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Maximize 2045* Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is also included in the *2007 New Windsor Community Comprehensive Plan*.

Transit Projects

Carroll County is requesting in our ATP for FY2024 operating funding, four replacement buses, security related transit facility improvements, ten replacement tablets, and preventive maintenance funding. The replacement vehicles are requested to replace vehicles that meet or exceed their useful life of seven years of age and 200,000 miles. Maintenance funding is imperative to maintain our aging rolling stock. Each year, funding is used for preventive maintenance and major repairs. Outside of the ATP, Carroll County is also in the early planning stages of preparing for alternate fueled vehicles along with the supporting infrastructure, including the use of solar panels for power as well as bus coverage.

Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Projects

Carroll County continues to support state funding of two bikeways projects that will create local, and in the future, regional connections to area destinations and recreational resources. Both projects are the County's top priority for construction of non-motorized transportation

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alternatives that will contribute to larger multi-modal transportation networks. These projects will provide an alternative mode of travel by accommodating bicyclists, as well as pedestrians, skaters, and other non-motorists. These projects are:

- **Westminster Community Trail:**

This project will link parks, residential development, local employers, and downtown Westminster. It is a multi-phase project that has been underway since 2010. The existing Bennett Cerf trail links Hahn Road near MD 27 to Sunshine Way, passing through the Bennett Cerf Park to an adjacent residential community known as Eden Farms. In 2017, two additional sections of this trail were completed, one that connects the Westminster Community Pond trail to the adjacent Commerce Center, and the Commerce Center to the adjacent Autumn Ridge community. These two new trail sections, along with the sidewalk in Autumn Ridge and Eden Farms, allow pedestrians and cyclists to transit from the Westminster Community Pond all the way to Hahn Road at MD27. The only remaining section of this trail is to connect from Hahn Road (near the railroad tracks) at Random House and utilize SHA ROW to connect to Railroad Avenue, just past the MD Route 140 bridge.

- **Wakefield Valley Community Trail and Wakefield Valley Park:** For over a decade, the City of Westminster and the Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks have been working together to create a trail system that will connect critical locations throughout Westminster. This trail system, referred to as the Westminster Community Trail, directly connects to the City of Westminster's highly utilized Wakefield Valley Community Trail and Wakefield Valley Park. Approximately 2.5 miles in length, the Wakefield Valley Community Trail parallels Rt. 31 from WMC Drive to Long Valley Road. Wakefield Valley Park is a 187-acre parcel of dedicated parkland bordered by Tahoma Farm Road, Firestone Road, Bell Road, Fenby Farm Road, Fairway Drive, Old New Windsor Pike, and Long Valley Road. A master plan for Wakefield Valley Park, finalized in July of 2021, contemplates approximately eight miles of bike and pedestrian trails as well as a historic house that will be adaptively reused as a visitor center and will also provide comfort facilities for trail users. Connecting the Wakefield Valley Community Trail and Wakefield Valley Park to the Westminster Community Trail would expand bike and pedestrian-friendly facilities by adding over ten miles of dedicated trails and directly linking at least six recreational facilities, nine residential developments, one elementary school, one college, and a historic Main Street with safe pedestrian and bike routes. To fully actualize this critical expansion of the Westminster Community Trail, endorsement in the CTP is requested so that initiatives to construct trails and valuable bike and pedestrian access points identified in the master plan for Wakefield Valley Park can be actualized.

We want to emphasize the fact that there are additional highway projects that are very important to the County, to which we are committed. These projects are critical to maintaining traffic safety and flow and will contribute to a high quality of life and economic development opportunities in Carroll County. These projects are:

MD 140 (Sullivan Road to Market Street): widen the roadway from 6 to 8 lanes, with a full

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interchange at MD 97 and Continuous Flow Intersections (CFI) at Center Street and Englar Road; includes pedestrian facilities.

MD26/Johnsville Road: a study of the safety concerns at this intersection and potential mitigation efforts.

MD140 at turn-around for Northern Landfill: The county's Northern Landfill is located on MD140 in Westminster and is utilized by both residents and commercial entities. The current turnarounds on MD140 are not adequate for safe movements of multi-axel vehicles in a heavily traveled corridor. Northern Landfill is currently in a feasibility study that will include looking into a change to the entrance location, but the cross-over traffic will need to be addressed to provide safe crossings of multi-axel vehicles. Safety enhancements should include widening of MD140 at the turnarounds immediately east and west of the Northern Landfill, development of jughandles, and/or the addition of signaling.

Taneytown Bypass: We are requesting that MDOT investigate the efficacy of re-evaluating the potential for the Taneytown Bypass for inclusion in the state's Highway Needs Inventory. This section of roadway was removed by the state in 2014. This is a critical roadway to alleviate traffic and truck traffic that comes through the town and harming historical properties.

As a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, we are very invested in cost effective, systematic, and regionally integrated approaches to addressing multimodal congestion, mobility, and safety in the Baltimore region. Therefore, we have identified several regional priorities:

- We strongly support funding and implementing the regional transit corridors in the State's Regional Transit Plan and request MDOT advance planning, design, and operational funding, in coordination with our local and regional transit systems, to meet the goals and priorities in the Regional Transit Plan. MDOT should ensure public transit can provide equitable and high-quality service to all public transit riders, particularly our transit dependent community members, regardless of whether they are served by the State or local system or need to travel between two systems for essential services.
- Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies offer cost effective and considered approaches that leverage our investments in the existing transportation system. We strongly support funding and implementing TSMO strategies, particularly in MDOT SHA TSMO System corridors 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 13, and are particularly interested in how these strategies can address the region's freight bottlenecks.
- We strongly support funding and implementing bike and pedestrian projects, particularly cross border projects, to enhance safety and provide expanded multi-modal options.
- To facilitate this interjurisdictional coordination, we would prioritize the following multi-jurisdiction corridors/projects that fall within our jurisdiction:
 - MD140 through Westminster
 - MD 32 to MD 26 in the Sykesville area

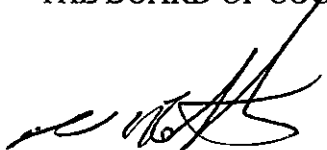
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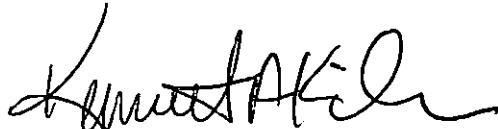
As always, thank you for your positive consideration of Carroll's state transportation projects and priorities. We look forward to our continued partnership with MDOT.

Sincerely,

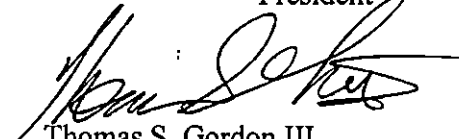
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