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March 11, 2021

The Honorable Gregory Slater
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: FY 2022-2027 Consolidated Transportation Program - Carroll County, Maryland

Dear Secretary Slater:

We wish to express our gratitude for construction funding for turn lanes at Bennett Road and Johnsville Road, as well as the completed turn lanes and intersection realignment at Gillis Road and Harrisville Road. We are also pleased that the Phase I breakout project for safety and resurfacing improvements to a critical portion of MD 97 is complete. This project, through the dedication of County, state and municipal resources, exemplifies the type of interjurisdictional cooperation necessary to move our priorities forward. We look forward to the future widening of the entire portion of MD 97, as outlined below.

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) FY2022-2027 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

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

Highway Capacity Enhancement Projects

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

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This project remains the County's top priority for new Project Planning. 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", parts of which are currently leased or under construction. 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 MD 32 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* and the *2011 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*. As suggested in the MDOT PEL study, Carroll County proposes a plan of action that breaks this top priority project into phases to facilitate overall advancement of the MD 32 project.

A. Breakout Project for Engineering Design: Piney Ridge Parkway/Macbeth Way to North of Springfield Avenue (MD 851).

This sub-project would be the first of the above referenced break out projects. The segment of MD 32 from MD 26 to the Piney Ridge Parkway/Macbeth Way intersection has been upgraded to 4 lanes. This breakout project would pick up at the Piney Ridge Parkway/Macbeth Way intersection (to the point of existing dualization) and extend the 4-lane highway cross section to tie into the dualized intersection at Springfield Avenue. When completed, the 4-lane highway cross section will extend continuously from MD 26 to Springfield Avenue, the main gateway into Warfield at Historic Sykesville. This extension would take advantage of the fact that the segment of MD 32 north and south of Springfield Avenue was dualized to 4 lanes when Springfield Avenue was relocated. This project continues to move forward with another critical segment completed in conjunction with the Maryland National Guard Readiness Center. This project will intensify development along this highway corridor, generate additional highway traffic, and increase development pressure along this segment of MD 32.

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B. Breakout Project for Design Funding: 2nd Street to Main Street.

This sub-project would include design funding for five operational improvements that were presented in the PEL Study for this half-mile segment of MD 32. They will improve intersection geometry, extend turn lanes, modify access, and evaluate signal warrant at Main Street. This project was identified as an implementation priority in the MD 32 corridor analysis, and these improvements are compatible with the four-lane corridor concept.

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

A high priority 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.

A. Breakout Project for a MD97 Corridor Feasibility Study:

It is critical that the remainder of this project north to Bachmans Valley Road and south to MD 140 be moved forward. As an important next step, we are requesting that a feasibility study for this project be initiated. This type of study is necessary for eligibility for Chapter 30 scoring and inclusion in the CTP. It is also crucial that the necessary right-of-way begin to be reserved as development continues to occur in this corridor. This is especially important for a new project in this corridor, a Royal Farms Store and Station, should be a priority for improvements to MD97. 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*.

3. 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.

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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.

4. 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*.

- A. Breakout Project (MD 140 at MD 91):** As an initial breakout project, we are requesting design funding for this intersection, following the recent completion of a concept study to evaluate a “jug handle” type design for westbound traffic.

Urban Reconstruction (“Streetscape”) Projects

1. 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

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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. Timing will be critical so that streetscape and roadway improvements are coordinated with the replacement of water and sewer lines in the project area. Reconstruction will also address inadequate stormwater management, which is compromising the structural integrity of the roadway. 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. The County programmed money for streetscape water and sewer upgrades in the FY 2020- 2025 CIP that could significantly advance aspects of this project, as well. This priority project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Maximize 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2011 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*. Recently the functional classification of this segment was upgraded from local classification to a Major Collector and was approved by Federal DOT in February of 2021.

2. 31 - New Windsor Main Street/High Street (High Street to Church Street/Coe Drive to Main Street):

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 would be coordinated with the replacement of water lines and would have a positive economic impact on businesses in the Town. 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 FY2022 four replacement buses, preventive maintenance funding, as well as additional funding for extended hours for the Trailblazer routes.

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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. The extended hours for the Trailblazer system would expand the current hours of approximately 7 am – 5pm to 6 am – 6pm for each Trailblazer route. Outside of the ATP, Carroll County is also in the early planning stages of preparing for alternate fueled vehicles along with the supporting infrastructure.

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 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:

- 1. 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 Route 140 bridge.
- 2. Governor Frank Brown Trail (formerly known as the Freedom Area Trail Network):** This project will link parks, residential developments, commercial areas, and communities, including Eldersburg and the Town of Sykesville. The first phase of this project (Macbeth Way) was completed in spring 2017. Future trail phase design is on hold due to construction of a National Guard Readiness Center at the Springfield Hospital property. Since further progress is contingent upon the ability of the trail to co-exist with the new Readiness Center, your continued support and assistance in ensuring completion of this project is critically important, as is your leadership in coordinating with the Department of General Services on both the trail and the Readiness Center.

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:

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MD 140 (Sullivan Road to Market Street): widen the roadway from 6 to 8 lanes, with a full interchange at MD 97 and Continuous Flow Intersections (CFI) at Center Street and Englar Road; includes pedestrian facilities.

MD31/Medford Road: an assessment of the safety concerns at this intersection, which has been the site of numerous crashes resulting in fatalities over the past several years.


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


MD140/Mayberry Road: we would like to reaffirm our support for finalizing design and construction of MD 140 at Mayberry Road. We understand the design was 90% complete last summer but was paused at the start of the fiscal year. It is critical this safety project approved for construction funding.


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, as well as our successful relationship with the Maryland Department of Commerce. These relationships strengthen Maryland's counties and economies.


Sincerely,


THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY


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C. Richard Weaver
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CC: Christopher M. Nevin, Mayor of Hampstead
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