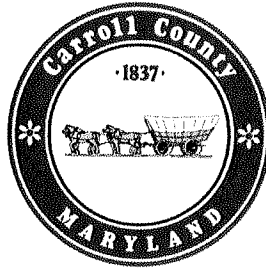


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**Carroll County Government**

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March 21, 2019

The Honorable Pete K. Rahn  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

**RE: FY 2020-2025 Consolidated Transportation Program - Carroll County, Maryland**

Dear Secretary Rahn:

We wish to express our gratitude for previous state funding for highway projects in Carroll County. In particular, we appreciate the state's commitment to portions of the widening of MD 32 into Carroll County from I-70 to MD 26. We also are pleased that the Phase I breakout project for safety and resurfacing improvements to a critical portion of MD 97 is underway and nearing completion. 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 widening of the entire portion of MD 97, as outlined below. Construction also continues on the MD 30 Hampstead Main Street "Streetscape Project", which was a top priority for the County for Urban Reconstruction. This project will begin to restore the Town's historic Main Street to an attractive and pedestrian-friendly urban local roadway. Finally, we appreciate the construction funding for turn lanes at Bennett Road and Johnsville Road, as well as the turn lanes and intersection realignment at Gillis Road and Harrisville Road.

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. This will translate most directly to expanding and retaining employment opportunities in the region and improving the fiscal health of the County and State.

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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) FY2020-2025 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). Project questionnaires for the major capital project priorities in Carroll County are attached.

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

### **Highway Capacity Enhancement Projects**

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

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 1-70 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 Complex", parts of which are currently leased or under construction. This is an important development for economic stimulus in this region. Over \$14 million has already been spent towards localized improvements within this corridor, which includes contributions from the state, County, and Town of Sykesville. In 2016, Governor Hogan announced that in addition to widening a nine-mile stretch of MD 32 in Howard County, the state was committed to completing a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study for the 7.2 miles of MD 32 from 1-70 to MD 26. County staff took an active role in providing input and feedback into this study, which was released by MDOT in April, 2018. 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 2040* 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

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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 the Warfield Complex. 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. Another consideration in choosing this segment for a breakout project relates to a major development project. The Maryland National Guard Readiness Center is locating a facility on the southeast side of MD 32, in the general vicinity of Freedom Avenue (also classified as an urban minor collector road). This project will further intensify development along this highway corridor, generate additional highway traffic, and increase development pressure along this segment of MD 32. The state has committed \$5 million for improvements to MD 32 in the immediate vicinity of the Readiness Center.

**B. Breakout Project for Design Funding: 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 currently underway. It is critical that the remainder of this project south to MD 140 be moved forward. This project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory and the approved *Maximize 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also prioritized in the *2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan* and the *2009 City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan*.

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### **3. MD 26 (MD 32 east to Liberty Reservoir):**

In previous years, this project has been the County's top priority for Final Engineering and Land Acquisition. The project scope was to widen the roadway from four to six lanes, including pedestrian facilities and other amenities at appropriate locations within the corridor. 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. Two major projects located within the corridor are nearly fully leased. The Eldersburg Commons project, which is a redevelopment of the 30-acre property that is the location of the former Carrolltowne Mall, brought 280,000 square feet of new retail space. Major tenants include a Super Walmart, Petco, and T.J. Maxx, as well as other national retailers. Eldersburg Crossing, at the intersection of MD 26 and MD 32, is nearly fully leased with major national tenants and other smaller retailers. 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. The state has spent \$290,000 for completion of Project Planning. The County contributed \$1 million for Engineering Design; 30 percent design completion was achieved before the project was put on hold.

The MD 26 priority project is listed in the Highway Needs Inventory, and the approved *Maximize 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan*. It is also included in the *2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **A. Breakout Project**

Currently, the County is discussing with the SHA 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.

### **Urban Reconstruction ("Streetscape") Projects**

#### **1. MD 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

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completed. In 2013, the state allocated \$1.882 million to fully fund Preliminary Engineering for this Urban Reconstruction project. Preliminary Engineering is underway and is expected to be completed in the spring of 2019. 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 (and possibly sewer) 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 2040* Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is also included in the *2007 New Windsor Community Comprehensive Plan*.

**2. 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 the Warfield Complex 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 2019 - 2024 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 2040* Long- Range Transportation Plan. It is also included in the *2011 Town of Sykesville Master Plan*.

**Transit Projects**

Carroll County is requesting in our ATP for FY2020 seven replacement buses, one expansion bus, preventive maintenance funding, and six tablet replacements. The seven replacement vehicles are requested to replace vehicles that meet or exceed their useful life of six years of age and 200,000 miles. We are requesting an additional bus to expand the current TrailBlazer routes in Westminster from two to three in order to decrease wait times and increase destinations as well as ridership. Maintenance funding is imperative to maintain our rolling stock. Each year,

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funding is used for preventive maintenance and major repairs. Tablet replacement consists of six tablets replaced to continue proper rider management electronically.

### **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. 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 State plans for a Readiness Center at the Springfield Hospital property. Since further progress is contingent upon the ability of the trail to co-exist with the new National Guard 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.

**2. 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. In 2019, SHA is scheduled to install a paved trail section along MD 27 from Hahn Road to MD 140 and an improved sidewalk along MD27 from MD 140 to Main Street in Westminster.

We want to emphasize the fact that there are several additional priority 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.

Necessary state projects for County Community Investment Priorities:

- MD 97 at Charles Carroll Building: The County committed \$3.5 million to this project in FY18 for demolition of the former elementary school and construction a new gymnasium and community space along with outdoor recreational opportunities. This

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project fills the gap left by the Charles Carroll school closure for much needed community amenities and is critical to the health and vitality of area. Given that this is new construction, it must meet newer state safety standards. These include a deceleration lane entering the site from the south as well as a left center lane from the north. The estimated cost for these road improvements is \$1 million dollars.


Other necessary projects are:


- **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.
- **MD 140 (at MD 91)**: widen the roadway from 2 to 4 lanes, with a full interchange at MD 91 and an additional auxiliary lane east of MD 91. As an initial breakout project, we are requesting design funding for this intersection, following completion of a concept study to evaluate a “jug handle” type design for westbound traffic.


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.

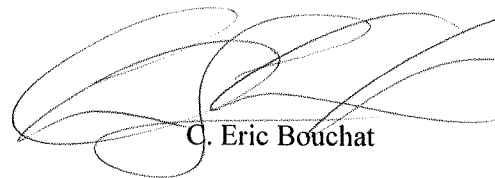
Sincerely,

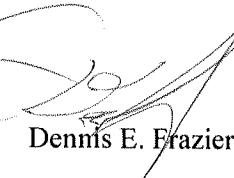
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