



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Jan H. Gardner  
County Executive

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Rick Harcum, Chief Administrative Officer

March 29, 2021

Mr. Greg Slater, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: 2021 Frederick County Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Slater:

On behalf of Frederick County, we are writing to share the County's transportation priorities for consideration in the development of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY2022-FY2027 Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

As a thriving community in central Maryland, Frederick County continues to seek investments in our transportation network that meet the rapidly diversifying needs of our residents, municipalities, businesses and industries. We value our collaborative relationship with MDOT and the Modal Administrations, and we appreciate past and present efforts to invest in meaningful transportation network improvements throughout Frederick County.

For the FY2022-2027 CTP, we have organized our priorities by emphasis area, including candidate projects suitable for a federal infrastructure package, and that aid in the programming of future State resources toward our local transportation needs. Our overall top priorities for project advancement include:

### **INTERSTATES AND STATE HIGHWAYS**

The County has been an active participant in the MDOT/SHA process for regionally significant projects. We agree with the need to improve the performance of our major interstate corridors, including expanded transit options. The following projects represent our highest priorities for improvements to our local Interstates and State Highways:

- 1. Full Design and Construction Funding – US 15: I-70 to MD 26.** This cost-effective improvement would improve safety and relieve the only segment within the US 15/I-270 corridor that is over capacity in both directions and in both peaks. It would also improve access to jobs in the region, including the County's largest employer – Fort Detrick. US 15 extends from the Virginia state line to Pennsylvania state line and is a critical north south route through the region. The corridor is heavily used by commercial and commuter vehicles and is a vital link to the I-270 corridor. *MDOT/Visualize 2045 - 2030 completion: Chapter 30 Rank #18 of 39 statewide.*

- 2. Planning/Design Funding – MD 85 Phase II/III: Ballenger Creek to Guilford Drive.** This project proposes improvements to widen/reconstruct to a 4-6-lane divided roadway, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements, along one of our primary business corridors containing the Francis Scott Key Mall and the Monocacy National Battlefield (approximately 100,000 tourists annually). The South Frederick Corridors Plan, among the first planning and design efforts launched after the adoption of the award winning Livable Frederick Master Plan, includes a focus on multimodal transportation alternatives in the MD 85 corridor. The proposed improvements between Ballenger Creek and Guilford Drive will support corridor redevelopment opportunities and improved motorist safety in this area.  
*MDOT/Visualize 2045 - 2035 completion: Chapter 30 Rank #9 of 39 statewide.*
- 3. Project Planning Funding – MD 194: MD 26 to Devilbiss Bridge Road.** This project proposes the widening from a 2-lane to a 4-lane divided urban boulevard, addressing both capacity and safety issues. Right-of-way has been acquired for the majority of the project. The priority first phase for construction is from MD 26 to Walkersville High School.  
*MDOT/Visualize 2045 - 2035 completion: Chapter 30 Rank #11 of 39 statewide.*
- 4. I-70 Phase 4 – I-270 to Mt Phillip Road.** This project would be a prime candidate suitable for a federal infrastructure package as it is the fourth and final phase of the I-70 project (limits from Patrick Street to Mt. Phillip Road) and has been reduced in scope. This is a priority freight movement project in the Maryland State Freight Plan and MWCOG Freight Priorities List. It would also improve safety related to the merge of I-270 and I-70 west and address congestion.

### **TRANSIT – LOCAL BUS**

We thank MDOT for its capital and operating support of the Frederick County Transit System. Sustained financial support from MDOT is critical to providing quality transit service in Frederick County. Priorities for local transit include:

- 1. TransIT Plus.** We request funding for the expansion of paratransit service to satisfy a growing demand in Frederick County. To meet current unmet needs would require additional operating funding above current and initial capital expenses: Year 1 – funding for an additional driver and vehicle operating expenses (\$75,000) and a capital expense of \$70,000 for a wheel chair accessible vehicle, and in subsequent years continued operating expenses (\$75,000 annually).
- 2. Connector Service.** The County requests an increase in annual operating funding, and one-time capital funding, to expand services by providing 30-minute service frequencies from start of service to 6 p.m., expand Saturday service hours, and implement Sunday service. To meet these demands it would require additional operating funding, above current, of \$2,680,000 annually. The expanded service would also require a one-time capital expense of \$3,500,000 for the purchase of seven (7) buses. This expansion of services would result in the need for one (1) additional dispatcher (\$65,000 annually).
- 3. Rural Service.** Transportation is taken for granted by most, but it is difficult for many seniors, disabled and low/moderate income individuals to go places. Frederick County has a population with a need where many individuals have found themselves trapped in situations where transportation is desperately needed. We are seeking to increase annual operating funding to provide rural areas of Frederick County with transit options. The current level of service is

inadequate to meet demand. Year 1 – operating funding for two (2) fixed routes (\$300,000) and two (2) additional drivers and vehicle operating expenses (\$150,000), capital expenses for two (2) wheel chair accessible vehicles (\$70,000 each), and subsequent years continued operating expenses for both routes and drivers (\$300,000 annually).

**MTA – COMMUTER BUS AND MARC COMMUTER RAIL**

The MARC system operated by MTA is important for moving commuters from Frederick to the greater urbanized areas of Rockville, Silver Spring, and Washington, D.C., and the system could provide even greater benefit through enhancements to the service and increasing the system’s accessibility. In the short-term, commuter bus is best equipped to improve service between Frederick and the Washington, D.C. region. This will be even more impactful when the additional lanes are added to I-270 and commuter bus will be able to travel at posted speed during peak periods of traffic. Additionally, the City of Frederick and Frederick County are asking for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) designation for the area surrounding two MARC Stations. Please refer to the Attachment 2 for additional information regarding Frederick County’s MTA and MARC priorities.

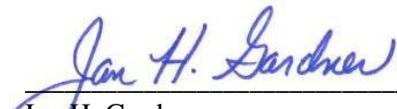
Finally, we recognize the efforts to add much needed capacity to I-270 under the Managed Lanes P3 project, and its benefits to the residents and businesses in the greater corridor. It is with appreciation that Frederick County has been involved in discussions over the past year on these proposed large-scale infrastructure improvements. We look forward to the opportunity to be a part of these discussions moving forward.

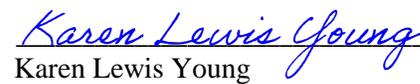
We thank you again for your continued partnership in meeting the needs of Maryland residents and businesses in Frederick County. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact Mr. Mark Mishler, Division of Planning and Permitting, at 301-600-6742 or [mmishler@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:mmishler@frederickcountymd.gov).

Sincerely,

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

MARYLAND STATE DELEGATION OF  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

  
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Jan H. Gardner  
County Executive

  
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Karen Lewis Young  
Chair

Attachments: Frederick County Annual Transportation Needs and Priorities Review

cc: Frederick County Delegation  
Frederick County Council  
The Honorable Michael C. O’Connor, Mayor, The City of Frederick  
Rick Harcum, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive  
Steven C. Horn, Director, Frederick County Planning and Permitting Division  
Mark Mishler, Transportation Engineering Supervisor, Department of Development Review and Planning, Frederick County Planning and Permitting Division  
Charles F. Nipe, Director, Frederick County Public Works Division  
Roman Steichen, Director, Frederick County Transit Services Division