



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Rick Harcum, Chief Administrative Officer

April 1, 2022

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

Re: 2022 Frederick County Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Ports:

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) FY2023-FY2028 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 Transportation Business Units (TBUs), and we appreciate past and present efforts to invest in meaningful transportation network improvements throughout Frederick County.

We recognize the challenges and uncertainty surrounding the continued state of the COVID-19 global pandemic, however, as the economic recovery continues, revenues rise, and with the passage of a federal infrastructure package, we anticipate the funding and advancement of many transportation projects previously placed on hold. Frederick County would like to note our sincere appreciation of MDOT's commitment to improving the safety of US 15 by funding the full design of the County's longstanding priority, in the FY2022-FY2027 CTP, and we look forward to the allocation of construction funding.

For the FY2023-FY2028 CTP, we have organized our priorities by emphasis area, including candidate projects suitable for the recently approved federal infrastructure package, and ones that aid in the programming of future State resources toward our local transportation needs.

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, especially with the Op Lanes Maryland proposed high occupancy toll lanes (HOT) continuing to advance through planning and design and moving closer to construction. The following projects represent our transportation priorities for planning, design, and construction funding for our local Interstates and State Highways:

1. **Full Construction Funding – US 15: I-70 to MD 26.** This project received full design funding in the FY2022-FY2027 CTP and the County would like to continue to request that MDOT allocate full construction funding for this cost-effective improvement that 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 design advancement of US 15 (6 lanes) and the I-270 Op Lanes Maryland project (6 lanes) makes the short I-70 link (4 lanes) between the two interstates a critical bottleneck. The County's second priority, I-70 Phase 4, would widen this section from 4 to 6 lanes alleviating the bottleneck. *MDOT/Visualize 2045 - 2030 completion: Chapter 30 Rank #20 of 40 statewide.*

2. **Full Design and Construction Funding – I-70 Phase 4: I-270 to Mt. Phillip Road.** This project is a prime candidate suitable for funding consideration from the federal infrastructure package as it is the fourth and final phase of the I-70 project (limits from Patrick Street to Mt. Phillip Road). This is a priority freight movement project in the Maryland State Freight Plan and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Freight Priorities List and is a key link, essential to improving our regional supply chain network. It would also increase safety related to the merge of I-270 (including the additional HOT lanes) and I-70 west and address congestion through this segment as it transitions to the future US 15 widening. It is essential I-70 Phase 4 is funded for design and construction concurrently. *MDOT/Visualize 2045 - 2035 completion: Chapter 30 Rank #28 of 40 statewide.*
3. **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, 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 #16 of 40 statewide.*
4. **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 #10 of 40 statewide.*

TRANSIT – LOCAL BUS

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

TransIT Plus. The County requests an increase in annual operating funding and one-time capital funding for the expansion of paratransit service to meet growing demand in Frederick County. To meet these demands, additional operating funding above current expenses is requested: Year 1 requires operating funding for an additional driver and vehicle operating expenses (\$75,000) and a capital expense of \$70,000 for a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV), and in subsequent years continued operating expenses (\$75,000 annually).

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 service would result in the need for one (1) additional dispatcher (\$65,000 annually).

Rural Service. Access to reliable transportation continues to be a challenge for many County residents, including older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income or Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. In both the urbanized and rural areas, the need is great for more transportation options. We are seeking to increase annual operating funding to provide rural areas of the 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 (\$350,000 annually).

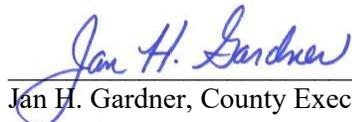
MDOT MTA – COMMUTER BUS AND MARC TRAIN

The MARC Train system operated by MDOT MTA is a critical link from Frederick to Montgomery County and Washington D.C. The system could provide even greater benefit through strategic service enhancements and increased system accessibility. In the short-term, we recognize that commuter bus service is best equipped to improve connections between Frederick and the Washington, D.C. region. This will be even more impactful when the additional HOT 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 requesting Transit Oriented Development (TOD) designation for two MARC Stations. Please refer to the Attachment for additional information.

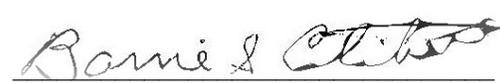
We thank you again for your continued partnership in meeting the needs of Maryland residents and businesses in Frederick County. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact Mr. Mark Mishler, Division of Planning and Permitting, at 301-600-6742 or mmishler@frederickcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND


Jan H. Gardner, County Executive

MARYLAND STATE DELEGATION OF
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND


Barrie S. Ciliberti, Chair

Attachment: Frederick County 2022 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 Eng. Supvr., Frederick County Planning and Permitting Division
Robert Shen, Deputy Director, Frederick County Public Works Division
Roman Steichen, Director, Frederick County Transit Services Division