



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

January 17, 2014

Mr. Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Executive Office Building (EOB)
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

and

Mr. Craig Rice, Council President
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

RE: State Transportation Priorities

Dear Mr. Leggett and Mr. Rice:

At our regularly scheduled meeting on January 9, 2014, the Planning Board discussed the update of the County's State Transportation Priorities letter that is expected to be transmitted to the Montgomery County Delegation next month. (A copy of the staff memo for this discussion is enclosed for your information.) We offer our comments below for your consideration in the preparation of that letter.

Highest Priorities

We recommend the following as the County's highest transportation priorities:

- Support for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority multi-year capital improvement programs for infrastructure investment to maintain a state of good repair.
- Additional Metrorail funding to operate eight-car trains to eliminate the Red Line turnbacks at Grosvenor and Silver Spring, and to expand the existing station platform and circulation capacity to accommodate existing and projected riders.
- Construction of the Purple Line.

- Construction of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Stage 1.
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas, including those designated in the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan.

The first three priorities were included in your February 15, 2011 letter to the Delegation. The CCT was also included on that list, but since design work is proceeding only on Stage 1 of the CCT from Shady Grove to Metropolitan Grove, we have included only that segment in the highest priority list. Stage 2 is included in the priorities for the Construction Program, which is shown below along with the priorities for the Development and Evaluation Program.

The last item on this list is new. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are greatly needed in commercial business districts and Metro station areas. With the County's growth coming increasingly in the form of mixed use development, the growth of transit usage, and the increase in bicycling, including from the County's introduction of bikeshare, a comprehensive program of bicycle and pedestrian improvements is needed in these areas to ensure that benefits of the County's investments in transit can be fully realized.

The White Flint Sector Plan area is the state's first Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Area. More than two dozen other areas have been designated in the County's master plans, most recently in the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, and are awaiting State confirmation of the designation. The major roadways in all of these areas that serve as transit routes are State highways whose safety and accessibility must be improved.

Other Priorities

Our recommendations for additions to the Construction and Development & Evaluation programs are also tailored to support the County's economic development goals. Where a transit solution could reasonably be considered to provide the needed transportation capacity in the near-term over roadway improvements, it was given a higher priority.

With the Council's recent unanimous approval of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, it is clear that transit must become a much more significant part of our future transportation system. Where transit can be used to meet our transportation needs, we believe that it moves us closer to a sustainable transportation network that has lesser impacts on existing communities, natural resources, and parkland. We also understand that heavy investment in transit is not the solution to the transportation needs in every area of the County, nor is it the answer to every transportation problem, even in densely populated areas of the County.

We recommend the following as the County's priorities for the Construction and Development & Evaluation programs:

Construction Program

1. Montrose Parkway East: contribution to cost of segment from MD 355 to Parklawn Drive
2. US 29 Bus Rapid Transit line, White Oak to Silver Spring
3. Roadway and other capital improvements to facilitate implementation of WMATA's Priority Corridor Network, which would enhance bus service through improvements such as signal priorities and queue jumpers, better passenger amenities, new buses with low floors and hybrid technology, and new limited stop services.
4. Corridor Cities Transitway Stage 2, Metropolitan Grove to Clarksburg
5. MD 28 (Norbeck Rd.), Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road: widen to 4 lanes, with safety improvements, and intersection improvements to the Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Avenue intersection
6. US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: grade-separated interchange
7. MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road) Bus Rapid Transit line
8. Forest Glen Pedestrian Underpass beneath Georgia Avenue
9. I-270/Newcut Road: grade-separated interchange
10. MD 97 (Georgia Avenue), Forest Glen Road to 16th Street: safety and accessibility improvements
11. MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Bus Rapid Transit line, Olney to Wheaton
12. MD 124 (Woodfield Road), Midcounty Highway to Airpark Drive: widen to 4 lanes
13. MD 117 (Clopper Road), I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park: improve intersections
14. MD 97 (Georgia Avenue)/MD 28 (Norbeck Road): grade-separated interchange

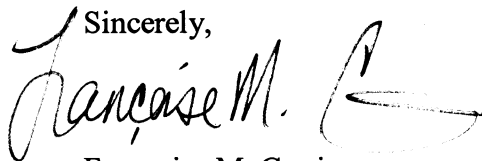
Development & Evaluation Program

1. US 29 Bus Rapid Transit line, Burtonsville to White Oak
2. MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit line, Germantown to Bethesda
3. I-495 (Capital Beltway): extend HOV lane south of I-270 West Spur, including HOV ramps on the south side of Westlake Drive/Fernwood Road
4. MD 355 (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
5. MD 115 (Midcounty Highway) Extended, ICC to Shady Grove Road

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6. MD 119 (Great Seneca Highway)/Sam Eig Highway and Muddy Branch Road:
grade-separated interchanges
7. MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) Bus Rapid Transit line, White Oak to Eastern
Avenue

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project and for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or comments concerning our review, please call Larry Cole at 301-495-4528.

Sincerely,


Françoise M. Carrier
Chair

Enclosure