



Thomas E. Dernoga

Chair
District 1

"Effective. Responsive. Committed."

October 3, 2023

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

On behalf of Prince George's County ("the County"), the Executive Branch, and the County Council, please find the (FY) 2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) priority letter and list expressing the shared vision of the County's most pressing priorities for your consideration in finalizing the current draft CTP. Prince George's County is excited that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the federal government's comprehensive National Roadway Safety Strategy, addressing climate change, and the critical backlog in bridge and roadway repair, amongst other important initiatives of the Biden-Harris Administration, is already making a difference. This includes the recently awarded 2023 RAISE Grant of \$25 million that will accelerate more than \$70 million in regional projects to help build the Central Avenue Connector Trail, and a suite of other vital local bicycle and pedestrian projects, the 2022 RAISE Grant of \$20.5 Million to accelerate economic development in New Carrollton, the 2022 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) funding of \$21,253,985 for making 7 of the most dangerous roadways in the County safer for all, and the \$25 Million of 2022 funding under the Low to No Emissions Grant to facilitate the County's transition to a Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Fleet and the supporting infrastructure. The County is also poised to utilize the State's \$50.7M commitment to the ongoing build-out of the New Carrollton joint development and \$6M contributions in WMATA's joint development studies supporting TOD at WMATA stations.

The County very much appreciates the Moore-Miller Administration's commitment to a mutual interest in tackling these same issues, including safety, equity, and climate. In particular, the County views programs designed to enhance multi-modality, the re-engineering of roadways, safety for all with emphasis on protecting our most vulnerable users, and a renewed commitment to transit with the promotion of electric vehicles, and the transition of our transit fleet to zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) as paramount to that agenda.

Prince George's County continues to advance priorities for a comprehensive multimodal transportation network that will strengthen the County, the Capital region, and the State. The County emphasizes projects that further safe system transportation approaches like Vision Zero Prince George's, Zero Emission Fleet Transition, Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and strategies designed to spur economic growth while promoting sustainability, safety, and equity. In addition to forward-thinking and aspirational programs, dedicated funding is critical to preserving and maintaining County infrastructure and the state of good repair needs of our aging roadways, bridges, sidewalks, facilities, and stormwater structures. A key example is the County's initiative to re-imagine transit through the Prince George's County Transit Transformation (PGC TT). The PGC TT is taking a multi-pronged approach to take transit in the County to an entirely new level.

Several pillars of this new initiative include:

- **Zero-Emissions Bus Transition** – The County is committed to transitioning 70% of its transit fleet to zero emissions by 2035 and 100% by 2040.
- **Transit Forward** – A new and active approach that engages the community and seeks to move transit forward by prioritizing performance of the services we provide for residents and other users of our system.
- **Service Changes** – In alignment with WMATA’s Better Bus Network redesign, the future of transit in the region starts with incremental changes by all service providers, maximized travel time savings, and improved quality of service for customers.
- **Transit Vision Plan** – The Department has embarked on a new focus and vision for transit in Prince George’s County. This will include enhanced and expanded transit service as well as a re-invigorated approach to new mobility options and weekend fixed route service.

It is evident that Prince George’s County is on the move, but to attain our aspirations, partnerships, particularly with the State, will be critical to its success.

Central to an enthusiastic commitment to transit, is robust funding for the Locally Operating Transit Systems (LOTS), ensuring that any formula distributions or readjustments consider enabling systems to grow, with equity as a central factor, not merely rewarding those that already have more established systems that prioritize data factors over serving those who need transit the most. This will be crucial in not only ensuring that the County will be able to adequately address our transit needs but also as the County has embarked on an aggressive sustainability initiative in converting our fleet to Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs).

In addition, investing in the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA) ability to sustain and enable a robust network, address present needs as well and advance important aspirational projects like the Blue Orange Silver Study is vital for the County, the State, and the Region. In working together with our partners at the State Highway Administration (SHA) and WMATA, we look forward to pursuing and implementing tactical bus lanes and other treatments designed to enable a high-capacity transit/bus rapid transit network to be realized in the County. This will require careful consideration of the context of each corridor and appropriate agency roles.

Moving aggressively on the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Project (SMRT) is vital to addressing congestion and climate by providing a much-needed alternative to travel by single occupancy vehicles in the busy MD 5/US 301 corridor. We look forward to not only advancing the Memorandum of Understanding with the State and Charles County, with a supporting tiered structure that involves key stakeholders in laying the foundation for completing the National Environmental Policy Act process and achieving a record of decision. The State’s commitment to making this critical project a reality is vital to the Region, and the County looks forward to partnering with the state to ensure the SMRT ultimately advances to construction and revenue service.

The County continues to stand arm-in-arm with the State in pursuing locating the new FBI headquarters in **Greenbelt or Landover**, as vital to a cost-effective, more readily constructed, secure facility as well as furthering President Biden’s commitment to equity. The County also looks forward to continued coordination on essential joint development projects in **New Carrollton** and the other 14 Metro Stations in Prince George’s County. The County is appreciative of the State’s advancing of critical projects to the County, including the continued funding for the planning, design, and construction of the **Medical Center Drive Interchange**, and additional construction

funding for the **Blue Line Corridor Improvements**. While the movement of traffic in these vital transit-oriented developments is important, it should not be done at the expense of non-motorized mobility and safety. Particularly regarding the crossing of the Beltway at Largo. In addition to bicycle and pedestrian access as part of the Medical Center Drive bridge currently in design, it is also important to leverage the new FY24 RAISE grant that includes the Central Avenue Connector Trail Study for a bicycle and pedestrian connection directly to the Largo Medical Center campus over the Beltway.

As the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Transportation Planning Board (TPB) moves forward with approval of the next long-range plan in visualize 2050, TPB analysis shows that by 2045, for those traveling by car, Prince George's County is disproportionately negatively impacted in projected commute time (see attachment). As a result, while State progress on key County initiatives is very much appreciated, re-doubling efforts on equity and taking dramatic steps now in advancing the County's priorities will be essential to achieve our shared goals of a greater, more equitable jobs to housing balance in the region. To realize these goals, a concerted and meaningful focus on Transit Oriented Development around the 15 Metro Stations in Prince George's County is integral to addressing equity, congestion, and sustainability in the Washington Region. While this issue is larger than just transportation, it is a key component. The County looks forward to continued partnership and the State's leadership in addressing this vital matter and to prompt action.

The County is appreciative of the State's ongoing commitment to the construction and realization of advancing the **Purple Line** through construction, and eventually to revenue service, the County does want to emphasize the imperative need to do so as expeditiously as possible, hopefully with minimal or no additional delays or cost increases above those recently approved by the Board of Public Works. Continued delays have a compounding impact on the affected communities, especially those in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Maintaining corridor aesthetics, road resurfacing, and placing paramount importance on improving, not merely holding harmless pedestrian safety is essential. As the Purple Line is a light rail facility designed to enhance access for people walking, biking, and using transit, it is critical to consider that many of the segments in Prince George's County are among those with the highest pedestrian and bicycle fatality and crash rates in the State. Therefore, continued and enhanced investment in advancing safety improvements and countermeasures is critical. As the design of these treatments is now approaching, if not exceeding the decade mark, and there have been significant advances in best practices, we urge a reassessment and integration of critical elements recommended by M-NCPPC (MD 193 SPACES report) and the County, including sidewalk and bicycle facilities where they currently do not exist in that segment and other portions of the alignment (i.e., along MD 410 Veterans Parkway). Focusing on intersections, and short-term improvements that can be made, particularly in the segments with the highest crash rate (MD 193, MD 201, MD 410, etc.). While it is appreciated that the State added MD 193 to the State's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP), some of the most dangerous segments are still not included, the PSAP needs to align with where the data shows the problems are most acute. Improving safety in this corridor now is critical, and waiting until project completion is not acceptable.

A priority that is critical for the County is that the elements of maintenance, including care of medians and trash removal, are carried out effectively. The County appreciates the strong working relationship that has been developed in this critical issue. Responding to the need to more frequently and strategically coordinate with SHA to better understand operations and challenges facing existing state contractors. The Department now has recurring meetings between DPW&T, SHA, and the

National Park Service to more frequently discuss operational needs and find opportunities to better coordinate along state and county roadway intersections. Another part of this strategy is a partnership to tackle the most troublesome intersections. The County looks forward to continuing the effort to positively influence operations and maintenance conditions along state roadways in the County for the betterment of residents in Prince George's County.

The County requests that the State directs its resources toward projects that enhance community revitalization, promote economic development, increase transit access, reduce congestion, and improve roadway safety for all users. Expanding on these objectives, the projects expressed below and in the attached priority list are some of the key priorities for the County and cover a range of transportation issues and areas in the draft FY 2023-2028 CTP, which include the following:

VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Vision Zero Prince George's Multimodal Enhancements on State-Maintained

Roadways/Creating Safer Streets: Both Prince George's County and the State of Maryland are Vision Zero jurisdictions. In recent years, unfortunately, the overall trend shows an increase in fatalities and serious injuries, particularly involving pedestrians, in the State and Region. We are grappling with the risks to vulnerable road users and how we can effectively respond. However, much more is needed as the data shows that a preponderance of these crashes are at night and along State-maintained high-speed arterial roadways. As both the County and the State are Vision Zero jurisdictions, we will need to collaborate in implementing the safe systems approach to safety, which requires a holistic treatment that will require the re-engineering of our highways to optimize safety for all with emphasis on protecting our most vulnerable users. This means embracing best practices like continuous lighting, road diets, protected bike lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, and advancing sidewalk projects expeditiously when they are needed, regardless of who will maintain them.

As SHA advances the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP), the County appreciates the corridors identified to date as well as the Pedestrian Safety Road Audits already conducted, however, according to SHA data, most of the 1-mile road segments in the County with the highest severity index for pedestrian crashes are on State maintained roadways, it is imperative that the State re-evaluate both the PSAP corridors (and their limits) to best align with crash data and equity needs.

With regards to the SHA Context Driven Contexts, the County wishes to express extreme concern that the jurisdiction with the highest number of fatalities and serious injuries has very few communities identified. In particular, with regards to Urban Centers and Urban Core, there are not any represented from Prince George's County. This appears to be a tremendous oversight. The County's General Plan, Plan Prince George's 2035, identifies 3 downtowns for the County, they are Largo, New Carrollton, and Hyattsville Crossing (aka Mall at Prince George's). If the objective is to identify countermeasures that can be applied to areas that statistically have high rates of fatalities and injuries, it is essential to not rely on existing conditions alone but to consider development in the pipeline and for areas that have been identified by local planning as a major activity center (Downtown or Regional Transit Center as identified in Plan 2035), those factors, in our view, must all be considered. Otherwise, it seems that the solutions will likely not be applied effectively or efficiently to where the problems are most acute. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the Context-Driven Context is requested. The County stands ready to work with the State in partnering to turn the corner

and achieve zero fatalities.

The list attached to this letter contains a category for the County's High Injury Network (HIN). As we understand that the State uses a similar system called PSAP, it will be important that all of the corridors on both lists are addressed. The [Prince George's County High Injury Network \(HIN\)](#), encompasses one-mile segments of roads with the greatest severity of bike and pedestrian crashes. Each of the HIN corridors is located within Equity Emphasis Areas (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments), with most crashes occurring in urban areas reflecting higher concentrations of low-income and minority populations. As 19 out of the 20 top overall road segments in the HIN are along State-maintained roadways, it is critical that the State significantly increase its investment efforts to address this scourge and reverse the curve so that we can truly achieve zero deaths and injuries.

In 2017, Prince George's County was among the first urban/suburban jurisdictions to adopt Urban Street Standards. These standards have details that, if complied with, will produce roadways that can safely accommodate all users. In advancing safe streets for all and ensuring that our standards meet the needs of the time, it is essential to re-evaluate and update when necessary. In order to do so in a manner that will be effective and implementable, it is critical to follow a process, like the one the County employed in developing the initial Urban Standards that utilized peer review, outreach, and stakeholder involvement in order to maximize their efficacy in practice. In so doing, it is also vital to recognize how these standards can be implemented to the fullest by incorporating the partners critical to the process of development, as public capital programs are a relatively small portion of how urban communities can be retrofitted and created. The County looks forward to coordinating with the State in advancing processes that will create safer, more livable communities for all.

TRANSIT/WMATA/MULTI-MODAL

- **Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Headquarters: I-95/Greenbelt Metro Access; Landover Improvements:** The County appreciates the highly coordinated and cooperative effort with the Governor's Office, MDOT, and SHA in aggressively advancing these two sites as being optimally positioned for selection by the General Services Administration (GSA) as the preferred site for a new FBI Headquarters. Funding to complete the design of the Greenbelt interchange and working together with Federal and development team partners in readying both the Greenbelt and Landover sites will be critical. Re-locating the principal facility for the FBI to Prince George's County is an essential part of the larger need to add much-needed employment opportunities near where so many of the employees reside. We look forward to our continued efforts to ensure that both the Greenbelt and Landover locations are appropriately funded with the supporting infrastructure necessary for a successful bid and, most importantly, a facility that will best serve the needs and interests of both the State and County. The County values the support and high degree of coordination on this initiative.
- **Medical Center Drive Interchange/Blue Line Corridor Initiative Improvements:** The Blue Line Corridor and Medical Center Drive are integral to the new University of Maryland Regional Medical Center, the gateway to the new downtown Largo, and the Blue Line Corridor. The County appreciates the appropriation of State funding towards improvements to local infrastructure, and the speed at which the project is advancing in planning. We look forward to expeditiously advancing the planning and design of this critical project and the

other elements in Largo and Blue Line Corridor that will best enable unlocking the full potential of this corridor. As a part of these improvements, it is vital to ensure a smooth and efficient system for delivery of the Central Avenue (MD 214) Complete Streets or other critical projects in this corridor as well as ensuring safe bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the entire corridor, especially in safely crossing the Beltway.

- **New Carrollton:** As this vital TOD will soon serve as the beginning of the Purple Line, it is essential to maximize the full potential of this regional infrastructure nexus. With the incoming light rail, existing MARC and Amtrak Stations, and the Joint Development project involving WMATA and the State, additional funding is needed to enhance much-needed connectivity, environmental treatments, and streetscaping, and help leverage MDOT's existing focus on improving the Penn Line.
- **Prince George's County Transit Transformation (PGC TT) Investment:** Prince George's County will soon launch the PGCTT Year 1 plan in the fall of 2024 to re-imagine bus service, operations, and customer experience. This new approach will focus on transit performance reliability and safety. As the Prince George's County transit system, "The Bus" is independent of WMATA, faces similar challenges. Therefore, to be successful in making this transition, coordination and partnership with the state will be vital. More robust funding is needed for the Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) programmed for Prince George's County. Specifically, any changes to LOTS funding distribution that is principally based on a limited number of metrics or factors, will likely hinder or stymie growth of other systems. In addition, it is imperative to factor in population and equity as part of any distribution and not exclusively revenue hours, revenue miles, and passenger trips. The County's effort to invest in the **Transit Vision Plan and Prince George's County Transit Transformation**, leveraging funding including the federal earmark and \$25 million low-no emissions grant to rehabilitate the existing facility, initiate the study for a new facility, (which will then need funding for engineering and construction) and continuing the transition to **Zero Emission Buses** and related infrastructure are central to the County's vision for a more comprehensive, climate-friendly and efficient delivery of transit services is only the beginning of the resources needed to truly realize this program. Enhanced funding is critical to meet not only existing needs, but to enable future growth while addressing new efficiencies, technologies, and climate change. Changes to the distribution of LOTS funding could hinder those critical sustainability initiatives.
- **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Funding:** Transit systems have been particularly hard hit the past few years, and federal funding is not sufficient for existing, let alone future needs. However, sustained funding for the WMATA system is essential for the County, the Region, and the State. The County appreciates the high level of coordination with WMATA in advancing the Better Bus initiative network redesign to make sure that bus service is provided in an effective and efficient manner. Now it is imperative to ensure that both the Metrorail and Metrobus systems receive the support that they need for success. An increased focus on Transit Oriented Development through the Joint Development Process and overall coordination are essential to the health and vibrancy of both WMATA and the County.
- **Southern Maryland Rapid Transit:** The Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT), proposed fixed guideway project along the MD5/US-301 corridor from Prince George's

County to Charles County, needs to be advanced. As the Maryland General Assembly has approved a funding mechanism that matches State funding with Federal Funds, and the first \$10 million has been secured, the County looks forward to working together with Charles County and the State to advance this funding as the first phase of the SMRT NEPA process. Through the 2021 General Assembly Session language, there is a clear path forward. Securing the remaining funding needed to complete the remaining project planning and design elements for the projects so they can move into construction is critical for this vital and burgeoning corridor.

- **Bus Rapid Transit/ High-Capacity Transit (BRT/HCT):** Advancing the corridors identified in the Prince George’s County Feasibility Study, and other projects that will advance treatments setting the foundation for BRT/HCT is critical at this time. Advancing the WMATA Tactical Bus Lane/Queue Jump project in a manner consistent with agency areas of maintenance and responsibility will be important to move this project forward fairly and efficiently. Continual funding will allow Prince George’s County to advance the projects from study corridors to locally preferred alternatives with strong community and political support. Moving into the next phase of planning and implementation is critical to meet the needs of County residents, but also effectively connect to neighboring jurisdictions in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Montgomery County, which are aggressively pursuing their own initiatives.
- **Transit-Oriented Development:** Placing an emphasis on bringing jobs closer to housing is central to a long-term development and sustainability strategy for the County, the State, and the Region. Prince George’s County appreciates MDOT advancing previously requested TOD designations. However, five additional TODs need to be added in the short term to the State Designated TOD list. Realigning the State list to be consistent with County plans as well as aggressively advancing projects at all TODs, including Greenbelt, New Carrollton, Branch Avenue, and the Largo/Blue Line Corridor, is critical to sustainable economic development for the County, the State, and the Region.
- **Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity and Reliability Study:** The County appreciates the WMATA Blue/Orange/Silver Line study initiative. As the selection of the preferred alternative is scheduled to take place soon, and alternatives 3,4,5 & 6 would all benefit the County, it is alternative 4, Blue Line to National Harbor, that is of greatest interest. If chosen as the preferred alternative, the County expresses support for the first phase to be the section utilizing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, as the 11th and 12th lanes were constructed to support heavy rail and stops at National Harbor as well as Oxon Hill and Forrest Heights would serve as the strongest of the alternatives for addressing Capacity, Sustainability, and Equity.
- **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) I--495 Southside Express Lanes Study (I-495 SEL Study):** While Prince George’s County is very supportive of greater connectivity within the region, the County is extremely concerned with the current VDOT SEL Study, which will likely worsen bottlenecks on the Maryland side of the study region. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge (WWB) Project Record of Decision (ROD) stated that the “HOV lanes and a shoulder are of a sufficient width and structural strength to allow for their future conversion to WMATA rail transit use.” If the 11th and 12th lanes were to become HOV lanes, it is of great concern that any related ramp and approach roadway

reconfigurations to accommodate the HOV lanes would significantly hinder the possibility of a conversion to rail.

Alternative 4, Blue Line to National Harbor (via the Woodrow Wilson Bridge), of the WMATA Blue, Orange, Silver Line Capacity and Reliability Study of the rail options studied, based on the cost-benefit analysis, would provide the **highest level of benefits**. Advancing an alternative that does not support sustainable, equitable, and transit-specific benefits appears to be in direct conflict with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (WWB) Project Record of Decision (ROD).

STATE ROADS & HIGHWAYS

- **MD 210 (Palmer Road at Livingston Road West Interchange):** The County looks forward to the expeditious advance of the subsequent interchanges as crucial to improve safety on this dangerous roadway and looks forward to seeing concepts for the next interchange soon. The County appreciates the coordinated effort with the County and the Parks Department in determining how best to advance, construct, and maintain a shared-use bicycle-pedestrian corridor, as well as planning and expeditious advance of the next interchange.
- **MD4 at Suitland Parkway:** During the CTP Tour in 2020, the County expressed extreme displeasure regarding the delays, scale backs, and construction issues that have befallen this project. The County is pleased that the state has reinitiated the project and restored the flyover to the design as originally planned and is soon ready to advertise the project. Given the delays and inconvenience the community has faced for nearly two decades, the County appreciates the pace of the current project, as it is imperative that SHA quickly complete this project.
- **US 1, Baltimore Avenue (MD 193 to I-95/495):** The County appreciates the State advancing Phase I of this vital project through the current construction process. The County is now looking to the State to quickly fund and advance the subsequent phases.
- **MD 197, Collington Road (US 50 to MD 450):** The County appreciates the renewed study of the widening MD 197 from US 50 to MD450 and a context-sensitive design that provides both greater capacity and features designed to manage speed and enhance safety. The County appreciates the inclusion of funding for this project in the FY 23 CTP to advance planning and design and looks forward to subsequently programming this project for construction.
- **MD 223 Piscataway Road/Woodyard Road (MD 4 to Steed Road):** The County wants to call attention to the need for widening of MD 223. Specifically, much-needed improvements at the intersection with Brandywine Road/Old Branch Avenue. Action is needed to advance this long-standing project to widen this intersection (the “BK Miller Intersection”), per the County Master Plan of Transportation and Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) plans to widen Brandywine Road from 2 lanes to 4 lanes, as stipulated in County Master Plans.

The County is excited to work closely with the State in advancing opportunities of mutual benefit. We look forward to further collaborating with the Maryland Department of Transportation to support a comprehensive multimodal transportation program. The expeditious advance of the noted priority projects will strengthen Prince George's County, the region, and the State of Maryland. We thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

Angela Alsobrooks
County Executive

Thomas Dernoga
County Council Chair

cc: The Honorable Thomas E. Dernoga, Chair, Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Wala Blegay, Vice-Chair, Prince George's County Council
Tara H. Jackson, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
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William Pines, Administrator, State Highway Administration
Holly Arnold, Administrator, Maryland Transit Administration
Heather Murphy, Director of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
Victor Weissberg, Major Projects Manager, DPWT
J. Kenneth Battle, Director, TIEE Committee, Prince George's County Council

Attachments