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Budget and Taxation Committee

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Sent via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Samantha Biddle
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: Baltimore County Consolidated Transportation Plan

Dear Secretary Biddle,

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight several long-standing transportation priorities at the Baltimore County Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) meeting. These projects are vital to improving safety, supporting economic growth, and enhancing the quality of life for residents across Eastern Baltimore County.

The collapse of the Key Bridge continues to disrupt both Maryland's economy and the daily lives of thousands of families. The resulting congestion isn't just inconvenient, it burdens working families, strains businesses, and undermines the reliability of our regional transportation system. It is critical that Maryland expedite all Key Bridge-related projects to restore pre-collapse productivity and get our state moving again.

For more than a decade, the eastbound ramp at Philadelphia Road (MD-7) and MD-43, along with related roadway improvements, has remained in the CTP without meaningful progress. This long-standing project remains one of the top concerns for Eastern Baltimore County, with direct impacts on commuter safety, emergency response, and overall mobility. Currently, Route 7 at Route 43 only provides a westbound exit, despite original plans for full access. The lack of an eastbound ramp has left a serious gap in the network, forcing detours for residents and even emergency responders like the White Marsh Volunteer Fire Company.

I respectfully request funding for the following:

- Widening and elevating Philadelphia Road (MD-7) from Mohrs Lane to Campbell Boulevard.
- Construction of an eastbound on-ramp from MD-7 to White Marsh Boulevard (MD-43).
- Evaluation and improvements at the Old Philadelphia Road and Cowenton Avenue intersection, which faces growing congestion from nearby development.

These improvements are especially critical as the Campbell Boulevard (Mohrs Lane) extension advances this year, creating a vital new link between MD-43 and White Marsh Town Center while supporting Pulaski Highway as a hub for future economic development.

This project has earned broad support from residents, community associations, and organizations including the Perry Hall Improvement Association, the Essex Middle River Civic Association, and the White Marsh Town Center Task Force. All recognize the importance of this investment to address safety, reduce congestion, and strengthen the area's economic future. While I understand both state and county funding will be needed, I strongly urge this project be prioritized without further delay.

Additional safety concerns also require attention:

- Eastern Boulevard (MD-150): Studies by Baltimore County and MDOT SHA identified hazards including speeding, inadequate pedestrian facilities, and high crash rates. Recommended fixes, such as medians, a center turn lane, signal upgrades, and pedestrian enhancements, should be funded to make this corridor safer and more accessible.
- Pulaski Highway (US-40): This critical artery has also become one of the most dangerous roadways in Baltimore County, with the highest number of pedestrian fatalities in 2020 and 2021. Partnering with MDOT SHA to implement safety upgrades, pedestrian improvements, and traffic calming measures is essential to saving lives and reducing crashes.

I respectfully request that these projects, *expediting the Key Bridge rebuild, constructing the MD-7/MD-43 eastbound ramp, enhancing safety along Eastern Boulevard, and addressing hazards on Pulaski Highway*, be escalated. Each will deliver lasting improvements in mobility, safety, and economic vitality for those who live and travel through Eastern Baltimore County.

Best regards,

J.B. Sen.

Senator J.B. Jennings