ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Richard Madaleno, Chair
Montgomery County Senate Delegation
214 James Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Montgomery County House Delegation
223 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Madaleno and Delegate Feldman:

In light of the Draft FY2011-2016 Consolidated Transportation Program we have updated the State transportation priorities we transmitted to you on July 16, 2008. This letter describes our latest sets of priorities for currently unfunded State transportation projects and studies.

We acknowledge and commend the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) for its ongoing support for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority multi-year capital improvement programs for infrastructure investment to maintain a state of good repair and to implement the National Transportation Safety Board recommendations. Additional capital funding beyond the multiyear funding agreement is needed to operate eight-car trains, 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.

Two other points are noteworthy. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) transportation improvements near National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda have been funded for design and land acquisition, but construction funds necessary to complete the improvements are not programmed. Also, the County is currently engaged in a feasibility study of county-wide bus rapid transit (BRT) service. Once the study is complete, we intend to incorporate elements of the countywide study in our master plans to then be in position to have MDOT begin project planning for specific routes in addition to those already underway.

The balance of this letter describes our priorities in several categories.

I. Projects of regional significance that are in the D&E Program but not in the Construction Program. Two major transitways, the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from Shady Grove to Clarksburg, and the Purple Line from Bethesda to Prince George's County are our highest, and co-equal, priorities. The next priority is to complete the BRAC transportation improvements for the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. Other regionally significant projects with high priority are the widening of I-270 for high-occupancy-toll (HOT) or high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes north of Shady Grove and the widening of I-495 for HOT or HOV lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. While there are issues to be worked out on important aspects of some of these priorities, decisions must be made and funding must be identified promptly to move them forward to completion.

II. Projects of local importance that are in the D&E Program but not in the Construction Program. These are priority projects that have been previously identified by the Executive and Council to the State and/or Federal Delegations. We have already taken steps in the last few years of dedicating the extraordinary amount of $286 million of County funds to design, acquire land for, and/or build several projects that are or should be the State's responsibility:

- $14,463,000 to forward fund the MD 355/Montrose grade-separated interchange (being reimbursed by the State).
- $22,375,000 to construct a 1,200-space garage at the Glenmont Metro Station.
- $66,961,000 to design and reconstruct Rockville Pike (MD 355) through White Flint.
- $70,296,000 to design, acquire land, and construct Montrose Parkway from east of Rockville Pike (MD 355) to Parklawn Drive.
- $14,362,000 towards design and land acquisition for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97)/Randolph Road grade-separated interchange.
- $6,447,000 to build several intersection improvements on State highways.
- $10,000,000 to design and acquire land for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Bypass around Brookeville.
- $4,900,000 towards the design of the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange.
- $6,000,000 for preliminary engineering for the Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) BRT line between Wheaton and Rockville.
- $2,000,000 for preliminary engineering for a pedestrian underpass beneath Georgia Avenue (MD 97) at the Forest Glen Metro Station.
- $5,000,000 for preliminary engineering for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway from Glenmont to Olney.
- $3,000,000 for preliminary engineering for the reconstruction of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) through Montgomery Hills, from 16th Street (MD 390) to Forest Glen Road (MD 192).

Our priority rankings for projects that will be ready for construction funding during the next six years and are currently in the design or project-planning stages are listed below. The funding that needs to be programmed to complete each project is indicated as well.

1st	I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: build bridge over I-270	$110M
2nd	Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Highway to Snouffer School Road	$47M
3rd	Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville	$22M
4th	Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange	$142M
5th	Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park	$56M
6th	I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: complete grade-separated interchange	$55M
7th	Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29	$31M
8th	Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road	$135M
9th	I-270/Newcut Road: build grade-separated interchange	$138M
10th	Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road	$54M
11th	US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange	$148M
12th	MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike	$183M

The total funding that needs to be programmed to complete these 12 projects is more than $1.1 billion.

III. Transit projects that are not in the D&E Program. As noted above, the County has programmed sufficient funds for MDOT to conduct preliminary engineering studies for the Veirs Mill Road BRT and the Georgia Avenue Busway. MOUs are being finalized and these studies should appear in the D&E Program of the Draft FY12-17 CTP. The County has also programmed funds for a project planning study of a pedestrian underpass beneath Georgia Avenue at the Forest Glen Metro Station.

Our priority in this category is to fund corridors proposed by our Countywide BRT Study and subsequent master plan amendments. These corridors may include, but are not limited to: US 29, MD 355, MD 650, the North Bethesda Transitway, and MD 193. Furthermore, as we move forward on this project, we seek support for interim steps to give higher priority for buses on State roads throughout the County.

IV. Highway and bikeway projects that are not in the D&E Program. Our priority rankings for highway and bikeway projects to be added to the D&E Program are:

1st Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
2nd Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
3rd Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George's County
4th Sam Eig Highway: grade-separated interchanges from I-270 to Great Seneca Highway (MD 119); and grade-separated interchange at Great Seneca Highway and Muddy Branch Road
5th Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
6th Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane
7th Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
8th Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
9th Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction north of Old Town Gaithersburg
10th I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
11th MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville

V. Other comments. We appreciate your acceptance of the White Flint Sector Plan area as the State's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area (BPPA). We will work with you to coordinate an implementation plan that will time the State's bicycle and pedestrian facility investments so they are coordinated with White Flint's staging plan.

We also appreciate your having accepted the Wheaton, Twinbrook, and Shady Grove Metro Station areas as transit-oriented development (TOD)-designated areas under Section 7-102 of the Maryland Code. We now nominate the White Flint Metro Station vicinity as a fourth area to be granted TOD status, but with the understanding that capital projects in any of these areas do not supersede the priorities listed above. Maps describing these areas are enclosed.

If you need any clarifications about our recommendations, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Valerie Ervin, President
County Council

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland
Beverley Swaim-Staley, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Françoise Carrier, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board