



Maryland Department of Transportation
Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) Tour
Prince George's County

October 10, 2023

Distinguished State of Maryland, Prince George's County, and Municipal Officials and Public Attendees,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is a nonprofit organization active in Prince George's County and throughout the Washington DC region. We envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

As of this morning, October 10, Prince George's County has experienced 94 roadway fatalities this year to date, including 23 pedestrians and 3 bicyclists. The county is on a pace to match the 121 road deaths experienced in 2022.

If we are to meet our state and county Vision Zero commitments, we must do better. We must redesign our transportation system – our roads – to elevate safety and mobility over rapid passage of motor vehicles.

Crafting the Consolidated Transportation Program is a huge undertaking, as is transforming Maryland transportation to make it safer, greener, and more equitable and convenient for all who live and work in and visit the state and Prince George's County. Our priorities should be to improve and expand transit service, to create safe places to walk and cross roads, to expand our bicycle network, to support both local and longer-distance biking and transit access.

While there's a lot to like, I will cite examples where we are falling short, emphasizing that these are just examples.

a) The State Highway Administration is planning to reconstruct the Medical Center Drive (Arena Drive) -Beltway interchange (STIP REFERENCE #PGA201, page SHA-PG-1). The options the SHA is advancing for this \$99 million project each degrade pedestrian and bicyclist safety. They worsen a dangerous situation. For instance, one solution is a diverging diamond interchange that in attempting to speed motor-vehicle passage, multiplies the number of pedestrian and bicyclist crossing – conflict points that make for slow and dangerous non-motor vehicle passage. This is justified by estimating a 15% increase in vehicles-per-day traffic over 20 years. This measurement criterion is antiquated – it puts single-occupant cars ahead of people – and should not be used.

The State Highway Administration should go back to the drawing board and produce a safe, forward-looking interchange design.

b) The CTP includes Transportation Alternatives Program funding for the Central Avenue Connector Trail (CACT) (PGA381, page SHA-PG-25), which is an important part of the county's Blue Line Corridor initiative. We'll be glad to see the CACT built, adding bike-lane miles and connectivity to the county's bicycle network. CACT Phase III shifts the bicycle Beltway crossing from Medical Center Drive to the MD 214/Central Avenue, completing the eastern portion of the trail to reach the Largo Metro station. We ask you to ensure that projects such as this one are fully funded for completion simultaneously with roadway improvements.

c) Example #3 is MD 450/Annapolis Road, an important cross-county route. The CTP states that the project (STIP REFERENCE #PG6541, page SHA-PG-22) would "Upgrade and widen existing MD 450 to a multilane divided highway from Stonybrook Drive to west of MD 3 (1.4 miles). Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be included where appropriate." The status is On Hold. The justification is, again, an increase in vehicles per day, a backward-looking measure based on antiquated thinking.

We don't need wider and more dangerous highways, and we shouldn't be tentative about creating bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There's a further flaw here, which is that major roads such as MD 450/Annapolis Road call out for corridor-length treatment. This means the extension of MD 450 improvements, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, west across MD 197/Collington Road (noting the shared-use path) (STIP REFERENCE #PG6911, page SHA-PG-19), across the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Trail (WB&A) intersection, and across the Beltway, plus hoped-for WB&A Trail extension on MD 704.

d) MD 193 non-CTP programmed item. MDOT is applying for federal Reconnecting Communities Funding for what they're calling the Unlocking University Boulevard Community Connectivity planning project. That's excellent, and should the project move ahead, of course we will look to you for planning, design, and construction funding in future years, whether the source is federal or the state or a combination. We also look forward to creation of the Greenbelt East Trail just east of the Unlocking University Boulevard segment – the SHA is conducting a study – and note the desirability of a corridor-long treatment from Kensington in Montgomery County across Prince George's County (forward-looking; not CTP programmed).

There are many other important routes that aren't CTP-programmed yet cry out for safety improvements, including MD 410/ East-West Highway , MD 212/Riggs Road, and MD 202, which is both an important connection to southern Prince George's and a safety disaster. There are bike lanes that last a few blocks (along a school or community college and other random places)), which morph into sharrows on the shoulder or "bike may use full lane signs" where the speed limit is 35-40 or 50. It's ridiculous to call that bicycle infrastructure.

Corridor-long treatments – creating *safe* bicycle and pedestrian facilities as first-class components of all projects and and improving and expanding transit service – while moving away from antiquated vehicle throughput metric and last-century approaches such as road widening, is how Maryland and Prince George's County will transform our transportation to elevate safety, equity, and mobility for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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