Dear Jennifer Meacham and the Baltimore County Planning Board,

Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places (BaltPOP) is a community advocacy group made up of residents of Baltimore, Maryland and its adjacent suburbs. We seek to strengthen our community via reforms that result in more productive, connected, walkable, sustainable, lovable places.

We appreciate the Baltimore County Planning Board providing us the opportunity to comment on the Baltimore County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for fiscal year 2028 through fiscal year 2033.

The major change that we would like to see with this CIP and those that follow is an end to highway expansions. Instead, any future expansions of the surface transportation system should be focused on public transit and active transportation. Looking through the County's 2026 priority letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation [1], we see much to cheer:

- Expansion of fixed-route service, micro transit, and last-mile connections
- Red Line project
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings, lighting, traffic calming, and Complete Streets improvements
- Patapsco Regional Greenway
- Old Court Road Complete Streets project
- MD 588 (Kenwood Avenue) sidewalk
- Lighting enhancements, wayfinding signage, sidewalk gap closures, crosswalk installations, and transit stop improvements

For all of this, we thank you. However, we also see several highway expansions prioritized:

- 1-795 (Northwest Expressway) at Dolfield Boulevard interchange
- Philadelphia Road (MD 7) and MD 43 capacity enhancements
- Additional through and turn lanes at Perry Hall Boulevard, Honeygo Boulevard, and Innovations Street

These expansions appear to be in low density, automobile-centric suburbs with exclusionary zoning in place that will prevent them from ever evolving beyond their initial state. With their development potential capped, the present and future productivity yield of these areas is

likewise capped. Adding the liability of maintaining additional lane miles in these communities, into perpetuity, in support of such low-return development, is fiscally irresponsible.

Every year, we spend millions of tax dollars to expand and widen our roads and highways. And yet, every year, traffic gets worse. It never gets better, ever – despite decades of pouring money into road projects. Highway expansions have proven to be a wasteful use of public dollars.

According to a Central Maryland Transportation Alliance analysis of data from the Texas Transportation Institute, between 1982 and 2011, the Baltimore region increased highway lane miles by 76%. During that time, the region's population grew by 48% (from 1.7 million to 2.5 million). Even though road expansion far outpaced population growth (76% vs. 48%), traffic congestion got worse. One key measure, known as congested lane miles, increased from 31% to 58%, and the annual hours of delay per automobile commuter more than quadrupled from 9 hours a year to 41 hours a year. [2]

Simply put, the rate at which we keep **expanding** our highway lane miles **exceeds** the state's population growth – and yet the rate at which congestion is **worsening** keeps exceeding **both**.

Expanding our roads and highways has never alleviated traffic, ever. The solution isn't more highway capacity or more lanes. As such, we'd like to see this next CIP (and future CIPs) explicitly exclude any highway expansions.

We hope the Planning Board finds these points helpful and convincing. Thank you very much for your efforts on behalf of Baltimore County and the people who live here and care so much about its future. We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places
Michael Scepaniak, President

[1] Baltimore County Executive Kathy Klausmeier. "2026 Baltimore County Priority Letter". April 27, 2026.
https://mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/Priority_Letters/FY_2027/Baltimore_County_FY2027_PL_Comb.pdf

[2] Eric Norton and Brian O'Malley. "Opinion: More Roads Mean More Congestion". September 4, 2019.
https://www.marylandmatters.org/2019/09/04/opinion-more-roads-mean-more-congestion/