

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

SUBJECT: *Status Report*

DATE: June 19, 2014

1. Hall Road/Rt. 214 Railroad Crossings

City Council recently sent a letter to CSX and SHA asking these agencies to look at the condition of the road at the rail crossing on Rt. 214 and to look at whether a crossing arm could be installed at the Hall Road rail crossing site. Staff met with a representative from SHA on-site about both of these issues.

Regarding the improvements to the roadway rail crossing at Rt. 214, SHA indicated that these improvements are planned to take place in the summer of 2015. Because the crew will be on-site to do this work next summer, SHA will also plan to do roadway rail crossing repairs at Hall Road as well during this time frame. These improvements will require the closure of Rt. 214 and Hall Road similar to the weekend closure of Rt. 301 when similar repairs were made earlier in the year. It is not anticipated that both roads will be closed simultaneously.

With regards to the crossing arm extension at Hall Road, if any of the following conditions exist, SHA should install a crossing arm:

- Multiple main tracks.
- Train speeds in excess of 45 mph.
- Three collisions in five years.
- A diagnostic team review determines that gates would improve the safety at the crossing.

Gates may be installed at any crossing as long as there are also flashing lights and the necessary circuitry. They have to be installed at crossings with any of the conditions above unless there is a really good reason not to. The SHA representative that met with staff indicated a concern about installing crossing arms at the Hall Road location because of the tendency for some drivers to drive around extended crossing arms creating a public safety hazard, particularly on a narrow road like Hall Road at this location. SHA has requested that trees be trimmed back at the Hall Road crossing to improve visibility of the warning lights at this location. Also, there have been no accidents at the Hall Road location in the past five years. Since 1976 there were four incidents at this crossing on

April 4, 1979, September 4, 1979, January 8, 1985 and September 13, 1986. These incidents may have pre-dated the flashing lights. The other two conditions of multiple main tracks and train speeds in excess of 45 mph do not exist at this crossing. The SHA representative asked for this information to be communicated to City Council to see if you are still interested in a crossing arm at Hall Road. If Council is still interested, SHA would do a more complete evaluation of the Hall Road Crossing to determine if a crossing arm is justified.

2. Carnival at Marketplace

From Wednesday, June 18 to Sunday, June 22, the Reithoffer Shows, Inc. Carnival will be held on the Marketplace property, in front of the former Safeway store. The hours of operation will be: Wednesday & Thursday 5-10 p.m.; Friday 5-11 p.m.; Saturday 1-11 p.m.; and Sunday 1-10 p.m. The vendor has secured all permits.

3. Arts Committee Purchase

The Arts Committee is moving ahead with its purchase of music component playground equipment using Public Art Funds in the FY15 Budget. The Committee worked with the City's Parks and Grounds Superintendent to choose music components to meet safety requirements and a suitable location to install the playground equipment. The location identified is at Allen Pond Park in the playground area near the Boathouse. Equipment includes a drum circle music component playground equipment that will be supplemented by two benches for parents to sit and view their children as they try out the drum circle.

We are receiving the Purchasing Alliance price for the equipment and installation. The Public Art Master Plan budgeted \$20,000 for this public art; however, the equipment and installation cost is \$10,953.06.

4. Weed Warrior Program First Year Accomplishments

In FY14, 11 Weed Warrior Work Days were held in Whitemarsh Park, and English ivy has been removed from over 100 trees. This would not have been possible without the help of 82 volunteers, who donated over 200 hours of their time. Additionally, the program now has 25 sets of tools to accommodate larger groups of volunteers and has marketing materials, which include brochures, a web page, and several educational signs placed at Whitemarsh Park. Weed Warrior Work Days will continue into FY15 on a periodic basis and more outreach will be provided to educate residents about the threats of invasive species.

5. City Tree Rebate Update

From March 1 – May 31, 2014, 49 Bowie residents participated in the \$100 City Tree Rebate and planted trees on their properties. Altogether, the trees planted are estimated to save **6,151** gallons of stormwater runoff, save **506** kWh and **23** therms of energy, reduce atmospheric carbon by **995** lbs., and provide **\$585** in total benefits per year. Additionally, when these trees mature, they will provide **\$1,765** in total benefits per year.

6. Bowie Heritage Trail Revised Grant Award

This week, staff received notice of a revised grant award from the Maryland State Highway Administration for Phase 1 of The Bowie Heritage Trail in Old Town Bowie. Because the City was unable to acquire the necessary easements from three property owners north of Zug Road, the project length had to be reduced from 1,950 linear feet to approximately 950 linear feet. The revised project limits are between the public parking area on 12th Street and 10th Street, east of the MD 564 bridge over the Amtrak Railroad. Since the total cost of the project decreased, the original grant award amount was reduced from \$574,747 to \$404,297. At the June 16th City Council Meeting, Council approved the awarding of an engineering services contract for design plans for Phase 1 to AB Consultants, contingent upon the City receiving approval of the revised grant request.

Attachment

Martin O'Malley, *Governor*
Anthony G. Brown, *Lt. Governor*



James T. Smith, Jr., *Secretary*
Melinda B. Peters, *Administrator*

June 12, 2014

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Joseph M. Meinert, AICP
Director of Planning and Economic Development
City of Bowie
15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie MD 20716

Dear ~~Mr. Meinert:~~^{Joe}

Thank you for your participation in the Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). The State Highway Administration (SHA) appreciates your involvement in this program.

SHA received the City of Bowie's request to change the scope of the Bowie Heritage Trail - Phase 1. SHA understands that the City was not able to acquire right-of-way from three property owners along the southern end of the trail alignment; therefore, 1,000 linear feet of the trail from Zug Road to 12th Street is unable to move forward to construction at this time. Since the remaining section of 950 feet of trail from 10th Street to 12th Street will provide a significant link between the trailhead at the Knights of Columbus Hall to two neighborhoods (a safe crossing of MD 564 via an underpass and a link to the City's Railroad Museum), the scope change request has been approved.

According to information provided by the City, the revised project total cost is approximately \$808,594; therefore, the revised TEP award is approximately \$404,297 for reimbursement of eligible project costs. Please provide Ms. Kate Ellis, SHA's Assistant Transportation Alternatives (TA) Coordinator, with an updated schedule for the project at your earliest convenience. Ms. Ellis may be reached at 410-545-5665, toll free 1-888-204-4828 or via email at KEllis@sha.state.md.us.

Thank you, again, for your involvement in the TEP. We look forward to working with the City of Bowie to move this project forward. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Kate Ellis. She will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory I. Slater', written over a circular scribble.

Gregory I. Slater, Director
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, SHA

cc: Ms. Kate Ellis, Assistant TA Coordinator, SHA

My telephone number/toll-free number is 410-545-0412/1-888-204-4828

Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

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