

A Resolution Calling for Reinvestment in Pedestrian Safety, Transit Access, Affordability, and Climate Action over Highway Expansion

For the purpose of urging the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) to align the I-97 widening project with the State's Complete Streets Policy, Vision Zero, and climate commitments, and with the City of Annapolis's adopted goals for safe streets, resilience, affordable housing, and expanded transit access; and to express the City Council's preference that State transportation funding be coordinated or reallocated toward multimodal, climate-forward, and transit-ready investments rather than highway expansion alone, including the incorporation of express bus or transit lanes designed for future upgrading to fixed-rail service, consistent with other regional fixed-rail projects advancing in Maryland.

**City Council of the
City of Annapolis**

Resolution 44-25

**Introduced by: Alderman Savidge
Co-sponsored by:**

A RESOLUTION concerning

A Resolution Calling for Reinvestment in Pedestrian Safety, Transit Access, Affordability, and Climate Action over Highway Expansion

FOR the purpose of urging the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) to align the I-97 widening project with the State's Complete Streets Policy, Vision Zero, and climate commitments, and with the City of Annapolis's adopted goals for safe streets, resilience, affordable housing, and expanded transit access; and to express the City Council's preference that State transportation funding be coordinated or reallocated toward multimodal, climate-forward, and transit-ready investments rather than highway expansion alone, including the incorporation of express bus or transit lanes designed for future upgrading to fixed-rail service, consistent with other regional fixed-rail projects advancing in Maryland.

WHEREAS The Maryland State Highway Administration has initiated the I-97 from US 50/US 301 to MD 3/MD 32 Six Lane Divided Highway project (AA9455172), which is currently in the design phase and for which partial planning and engineering funding was restored in the Final FY 2025–2030 Consolidated Transportation Program; and

- 1 **WHEREAS** The Maryland Department of Transportation has adopted a department-wide
2 Complete Streets Policy and issued an Implementation Plan that requires
3 Maryland Department of Transportation agencies to evaluate multimodal
4 outcomes, including public transit options, during project development and design
5 decision-making for capital projects and major resurfacing opportunities; and
- 6 **WHEREAS** The Complete Streets Policy applies across Maryland Department of
7 Transportation modal administrations, including the Maryland Transit
8 Administration, and directs project teams to consider transit accommodations and
9 to document decision-making and performance measures when advancing
10 roadway and bridge projects; and
- 11 **WHEREAS** The State has expressed policy commitments to reduce traffic fatalities and to
12 prioritize safer, more equitable, and less auto-dependent transportation systems as
13 part of its statewide planning and safety objectives; and
- 14 **WHEREAS** The State of Maryland has adopted policies and programs to expand high-capacity
15 transit, including fixed-rail projects such as the Purple Line in the Washington
16 suburbs and the Red Line in Baltimore, demonstrating a statewide commitment to
17 long-term rail transit infrastructure; and
- 18 **WHEREAS** A dedicated express bus or transit lane on I-97 would provide a safe, efficient
19 alternative to driving, enable Annapolis and Anne Arundel County transit services
20 to connect more effectively to destinations throughout the County, and strengthen
21 interconnectivity between local and regional transit options while advancing
22 shared goals for climate, safety, and sustainable mobility; and
- 23 **WHEREAS** The State of Maryland has adopted ambitious climate goals, including achieving
24 net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, and has recognized that the
25 transportation sector is the single largest source of emissions in the state; and
- 26 **WHEREAS** The City of Annapolis is already experiencing the costly impacts of climate
27 change, including chronic flooding at City Dock and other low-lying areas,
28 requiring significant public investment in resilience and protection; and
- 29 **WHEREAS** The City of Annapolis's Annapolis Ahead 2040 Comprehensive Plan prioritizes
30 resilience, active transportation, affordable housing, and equitable access to
31 multimodal transportation. The Plan calls for integrated transportation, land use,
32 and climate adaptation strategies that align with the City's safety and equity goals;
33 and
- 34 **WHEREAS** The transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in
35 Maryland, and continued auto-centric expansion without corresponding
36 investment in transit, safe streets, and multimodal options exacerbates the very

climate risks that threaten the City, placing an undue burden on local taxpayers and undermining State and City climate commitments; and

WHEREAS Expanding highways with more asphalt increases impervious surface and stormwater runoff, worsening pollution and flooding in the Chesapeake Bay; and both the State of Maryland and the City of Annapolis are committed through Bay restoration plans and stormwater permits to reduce impervious cover and improve water quality, making unchecked highway expansion inconsistent with these obligations; and

WHEREAS The City of Annapolis partnered with the Maryland Transit Authority and State Highway Administration in 2009 to draft the West Street Transit Study, outlining short-term transit improvements and long-term shifts to fixed rail to plan for expanded multi-modal options in the greater Annapolis area; and

WHEREAS The City and Maryland Transit Authority have begun implementing the long-term plans we committed to jointly in the 2009 plan, to explore fixed rail and high-value transit improvements for the West Street corridor; and

WHEREAS Annapolis residents have repeatedly requested more funding and state partnership for safe streets, pedestrian crossings, and school-zone protections on state corridors, such as West Street (MD 450) and Forest Drive. These requests reflect local public safety, climate resilience, and accessibility priorities that intersect with state transportation investments; and

WHEREAS Investments in transit, safe streets, and active transportation directly advance the State's and City's shared climate, safety, equity, and public health objectives; and

WHEREAS Highway expansion projects that induce additional vehicle travel are inconsistent with these goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that:

1. The City Council urges Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration to reallocate a portion of I-97 planning and design funds to Annapolis-area projects that advance already-adopted safety, climate, and mobility goals, including Safe Streets improvements, climate-resilient infrastructure, and multimodal connections, as opposed to expanding automobile travel and reliance.
2. The City Council requests that the Maryland Department of Transportation, and specifically the State Highway Administration, work with Annapolis and surrounding jurisdictions to advance regional transit and rail planning, building on the 2009 West Street Transit Study, which implemented new transit service (Downtown Circulator) and called for a long-term fixed-rail study now underway with State cooperation.

- 1 **3.** The City Council requests that the State Highway Administration conduct an alternatives
2 analysis comparing: (a) the currently scoped widening of Route 97, (b) widening with
3 transit-ready provisions, and (c) reallocation to local safety and transit investments, with
4 evaluation of impacts on vehicle miles traveled, emissions, safety, equity, and
5 affordability, and evaluating how widening may impact the goals stated previously.
- 6 **4.** If reallocation or a broader alternatives analysis is not feasible, the City Council requests
7 that State Highway Administration, in coordination with its Complete Streets Policy,
8 incorporate a comprehensive multimodal, safety, climate, and equity assessment into the
9 I-97 project design, ensuring the corridor is transit-ready for eventual fixed-rail service to
10 connect to existing or planned transit in Annapolis.

11
12 **AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that:

- 13 1. This resolution shall take effect upon passage; and
- 14 2. The City Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to:
 - 15 a. The Maryland Secretary of Transportation;
 - 16 b. The State Highway Administration Administrator;
 - 17 c. The Anne Arundel County Executive;
 - 18 d. The Anne Arundel County Council;
 - 19 e. The Annapolis Transportation Board;
 - 20 f. The Severn River Commission; and
 - 21 g. The Anne Arundel County Transportation Commission.