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Governor  
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Acting Secretary

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**J00A01 MDOT The Secretary's Office  
FY 2024 Operating Budget  
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee  
Chair Sarah Elfreth  
February 17, 2023, 11:30 AM

House Appropriations Committee  
Transportation and the Environment Subcommittee  
Chair Marc Korman  
February 20, 2023, 3:00 PM

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**Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget**  
**Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis**

***DLS Budget Analysis***

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**1. Productivity and Quality – Recruit and Retain Quality Employees (Page 5)**

*The Secretary should comment on efforts being made to address the high vacancy rates across the department.*

**MDOT Response:**

MDOT is currently addressing vacancies in several ways which include: establishing apprenticeship programs and expanding internship programs; building relationships to create talent pipelines with local high schools, vocational schools and community colleges; increasing compensation for difficult-to-fill positions; expanding higher education opportunities; adjusting recruitment strategies, utilizing technology, and increasing the visibility of our MDOT job postings; and implementing a marketing/branding strategy with targeted advertisement placements using both traditional means and social media.

In the past few years, MDOT has seen an uptick in vacancies and/or failed recruitments especially in the areas of maintenance and skilled trades. With an aging workforce and more retirements on the horizon, MDOT established a Workforce Development Team which focuses on apprenticeship programs to capture high school, vocational school, and community college students. MDOT will offer apprenticeships, thereby building a pipeline of talent, in the following areas:

- Auto-diesel Mechanic (MPA)
- Electrician (MPA)
- Facilities Maintenance Technician (MDOT-wide)
- Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technician (MDOT-wide)
- Bus Maintenance (MTA)
- Cybersecurity (MDOT-wide)

In addition to the above position-specific apprenticeship programs, in the past year MDOT has established partnerships with many local high schools, trade schools, community colleges, and other community groups; attended and held numerous events and job fairs to recruit for entry-level positions and to target specific groups/demographics (e.g., veterans); increased and expanded internships opportunities across the TBUs; and pursued other avenues to access students and individuals who are eager to enter the workforce and experience on-the-job training. In addition to increasing the focus on recruiting individuals early in their careers, MDOT has increased the starting salaries of certain hard-to-fill positions. Working within the constraints of the State salary schedule and the law, MDOT constantly studies positions and compares salaries to relevant market data to identify classifications that have fallen below the State target for market rates. If a salary discrepancy is identified, one fix is to set a prevailing hiring rate for a classification whereby individuals are hired at an identified minimum step above the base of the

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salary scale. Another approach to increase the salary of a position is by advocating for Annual Salary Reviews (ASRs) during collective bargaining with the unions when the vacancy and turnover rates of a classification can support the request for an increase in grade. If classifications are not subject to bargaining or not identified during the negotiations timeframe, MDOT independently studies market data to determine whether an ASR is necessary and justifiable. Finally, in order to be more competitive in the job market, some TBUs have created unique classifications as a recruitment tool to ensure that appropriate minimum qualifications are captured, and proper compensation is offered.

Given the restrictions inherent in a statewide salary schedule, MDOT is also implementing creative solutions to add to MDOT’s “total compensation package.” In addition to a robust tuition reimbursement program, a “No Cost No Debt” higher education program with colleges and universities is available. Employees enroll in a participating institution and MDOT covers the cost up front instead of making the employee pay tuition and seek reimbursement.

MDOT has also adjusted and implemented recruitment strategies to streamline the hiring process, ensure efficiencies, and increase the visibility of MDOT jobs. Several TBUs have hosted hiring events for certain positions where contingent job offers can be made the same day. For some positions, it has been effective to keep the job posting “open until filled” to capture a constant stream of candidates. For other positions, TBUs have committed to hiring at the trainee level to show entry-level job seekers that working for MDOT is not just a job, but a *career*. MDOT recruitment analysts have taken on a proactive role in encouraging hiring managers to begin recruitments when there are active eligible lists for vacant classifications. MDOT has also focused on increasing the visibility of MDOT jobs on high-traffic websites because many job seekers do not realize that MDOT is independent from the rest of the State. So, in addition to making improvements to the MDOT Jobs and TBU Jobs websites, MDOT has ensured that websites advertising State Personnel Management System jobs also include a link to MDOT jobs. Further, at several TBUs, human resources is focusing on technology to utilize HR data to feed dashboards and show trends and updating standardizing operating procedures to ensure the recruiting process flows smoothly.

Finally, MDOT is working to improve its marketing strategy, focusing on consistent branding, targeted advertisement placements and outreach, and an increased use of social media to highlight difficult-to-fill jobs and to find qualified candidates. TBUs are using traditional advertising means (via ad placements, radio spots, etc.) and increasing advertisements with various professional organizations. Social media is being used to show video clips of specific jobs, profile existing employees, and highlight the benefits of working at MDOT. Some job postings have been made available in Spanish as well to target a more diverse pool of candidates. Within MDOT, it has also been important to take a pulse on the employees who have chosen to stay and using tools such as focus groups for certain demographics and stay interviews to understand what makes MDOT a choice employer.

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***DLS Budget Analysis (continued)***

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**2. Promote Fiscal Responsibility – System Preservation (Page 7)**

***The Secretary should comment on how the system preservation objective should be updated or changed to better guide system preservation funding and performance.***

**MDOT Response:**

MDOT is dedicated to ensuring the safety of its facilities and maintaining the State’s transportation network in a State of Good Repair (SGR). MDOT’s asset portfolio includes major interstates, highways, tunnels, and bridges; a transit system that includes local and commuter bus, light rail, heavy rail, paratransit, and commuter rail services; an international port and airport; and highly secure IT systems. The FY 2023-2028 invests \$7.1 billion, or 34%, of MDOT’s capital funding to system preservation and SGR needs.

MDOT’s Asset Portfolio

MDOT TBU	Facilities	Pavement	Structures	Tunnels	Rail	Vehicle Fleet and Equipment	Major IT Systems
MDOT SHA							
MDOT MAA							
MDOT MPA							
MDOT MTA							
MDOT MVA							
MDTA							

Since 2017, MDOT has expanded and enhanced its asset management program across the department. Asset management is a holistic approach of balancing costs, opportunities, and risks against the desired performance of assets. To date, MDOT has begun the process of defining and recording the assets it owns, determining the condition of its assets, developing a plan for maintaining a state of good repair across the entire transportation network, committing to asset management practices, and developing a framework for asset management software to enhance the data-driven decisionmaking process. Annually MDOT conducts SGR analyses to identify SGR funding needs across MDOT. In the upcoming ten-year period, MDOT has identified over \$22 billion in SGR funding needs for the most critical assets. The Department has implemented asset criticality frameworks and scoring processes to ensure a risk-based approach to direct funding to the most critical needs. This approach ensures that SGR funding decisions are informed by data, thus providing a more robust metric for funding system preservation.

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***Operating Budget Recommended Actions***

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1. Add annual language restricting operating grants-in-aid funding. (Page 21)

**MDOT Response:**

MDOT TSO concurs with the DLS recommendation.

***PAYGO Budget Recommended Actions***

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1. Add annual language limiting system preservation and minor project funding to the projects identified in the Consolidated Transportation Program. (Page 21)

**MDOT Response:**

MDOT TSO concurs with the DLS recommendation.