

# Wicomico County, Maryland

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November 8, 2011

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, Secretary of Transportation  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
P. O. Box 548  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

**Re: Wicomico County - Recommended Transportation Improvements**

Dear Ms. Swaim-Staley:

As the Wicomico County Executive, I'd like to share with you a number of recommended transportation improvements in Wicomico County with which we would request assistance from the State of Maryland. We have always had an excellent working relationship with the State, and we look forward to future cooperation as we strive to meet the needs of our citizens. As such, I submit the following for your consideration:

- 1. Multi-lane reconstruction of State Route 349 from U.S. Route 50 to North Upper Ferry Road:** This is listed in the current Highway Needs Inventory (Revised in 2009) with a different boundary, extending to Crooked Oak Lane instead of the County-recommended North Upper Ferry Road. We recommend that this extended boundary be considered by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). This project would alleviate congestion on the County's west side, an area that has experienced extensive residential development over the last 20 years. Previously, planning funds were included in Fiscal Year 2008 for this project, as listed in MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Program, but the focus since then has been for SHA to conduct a corridor feasibility study as opposed to a project planning study. At the time of this submission, we understand that funding for this study has not been secured. Upon securing appropriate funding for this study, it is recommended the extent of the corridor feasibility study be extended from intersection of MD 349 and Rockawalkin Road to the intersection of MD 349 and North Upper Ferry Road.
- 2. Geometric Improvements & Signalization of State Road 349 at Crooked Oak Lane:** This intersection along MD 349 (Nanticoke Road) experiences significant congestion and moderate queuing during the morning and evening peak hours. In an effort to reduce congestion along Nanticoke Road and Pemberton Drive, the County is constructing Naylor Mill Road Extended (Westside Collector), which is a three-phase capital expansion project extending Naylor Mill Road



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from U.S. Route 50 Business to Crooked Oak Lane. Upon completion of this County project, this intersection will experience an increase in traffic volumes and will require signalization and geometric improvements to accommodate the projected traffic demands. We support the on-going design and engineering efforts of the State Highway Administration at this intersection for the purpose of improving safety and reducing congestion.

This proposed project is consistent with recommendations contained in the completed Pemberton Drive Corridor Study funded by the Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

3. **Multi-lane reconstruction of State Route 12 from Vine Street to the Salisbury Bypass:** This portion of the Salisbury Metro Core is experiencing rapid development, providing justification for future widening. The State's Highway Needs Inventory (revised in 2009) includes this multi-lane reconstruction project.

The design phase of the re-alignment of Johnson Road with Robins Avenue at their intersect with Snow Hill Road has been completed. The developer-funded geometric improvements and signalization have not been initiated at this time.

4. **East Side Corridor Study:** The MPO funded this corridor study, which extends from South Division Street Extended in the City of Fruitland north to Zion Road near the Salisbury Bypass. This corridor extends through the City of Salisbury and is heavily-traveled, with several large development projects being proposed. A number of intersection improvements were recommended in this study, several of which affect State-maintained roads (i.e., Business U.S. Route 13, MD 12, Business U.S. Route 50 and the Salisbury Bypass). A copy of this report has been provided to the local District Engineer for your Department's consideration.
5. **Geometric Improvements & Signalization of U.S. Route 13 Business at Division Street:** In anticipation of the relocation of Bennett Middle School, funding for preliminary design and engineering should be considered at this intersection to determine if geometric and signalization improvements are necessary on U.S. Route 13 Business to accommodate future traffic demands.
6. **Replacement of the Zion Road bridge at the Salisbury Bypass:** This would provide a direct link between Kelly Road and Naylor Mill Road and will help relieve congestion on U.S. Route 13 Business through Salisbury.
7. **Construction of an additional bridge across the Wicomico River:** This would provide an alternate route thereby reducing traffic delays caused by the drawbridge at U.S. Route 50. A feasibility study would be necessary to determine the best location for this bridge, as well as the possibility of converting the existing drawbridge to a stationary bridge. The FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program of the MPO has allocated funding for a study to determine the feasibility and proposed costs related to the recommended roadway improvements contained in the Draft 2010 Wicomico County Comprehensive Plan, which the additional bridge crossing has been identified as one of the recommended roadway improvements.  
  
With respect to the drawbridge on U.S. Route 50, the County has had discussions with MDOT in the past about this, as it was recognized that the removal of the drawbridge would have benefits from a regional standpoint by eliminating a traffic chokepoint for travelers using this major roadway.
8. **Construction of an additional lane from U.S. Route 50 onto the Salisbury Bypass:** This would be provided for westbound traffic on U.S. Route 50 to relieve traffic congestion near Hobbs Road, as well as the Salisbury Bypass onto U.S. Route 13 North.
9. **Funding for Shore Transit Operations:** Shore Transit provides an invaluable service to segments of our population that don't currently have adequate transportation choices. As fuel costs potentially

increase, we anticipate that Shore Transit will become even more valuable to our area. As you are aware, the Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore (TCCLES), with assistance from the federal and State government, purchased the new facility located at the northwest quadrant of the U.S. 50 Route and Walston Switch Road intersection.

In addition to serving Shore Transit, this facility will also benefit other agencies that serve the Lower Eastern Shore region. In an effort to demonstrate the on-going support of this organization, the MPO has embarked on two transportation related planning studies to assist Shore Transit in the determination of the traffic impacts associated with the upcoming relocation to the new facility, as well as a routing analysis for the purpose of determining the impact of relocating the primary transfer point from Calvert Street located in the City of Salisbury to the new facility. We commend the State for supporting this project, and request that adequate funding be provided to ensure their operation continues, at a minimum, to the current level of service.

10. **Support for Maryland Safe Routes to School Program:** The County is actively participating in this Program, which has been designed to ensure the safety of our children as they attend school. The County plans to pursue the installation of sidewalks along a section of East College Avenue between the new James M. Bennett High School and Snow Hill Road. This segment of this heavily-traveled road is the only section between the new high school and existing Parkside High School, located farther to the east, and does not have sidewalks. We appreciate your continued support as we proceed forward to implement this program.
11. **Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport:** Being the second largest airport in the State, the airport provides a vital service to our region. Continued funding for this essential facility, including the funding for the Maryland Aviation Administration's Office of Regional Aviation Assistance and its Airport Improvement Grant Program, the creation of an MDOT state-funded "routine" airport maintenance program, and the re-introduction of a possible intrastate airline subsidy to fund scheduled airline service between the commercial service airports located in Hagerstown, Salisbury and Baltimore is requested.
12. **Support for Wor-Wic Community College's request for direct egress to U.S. Route 50 eastbound:** As a result of increased enrollments, as well as the construction of new facilities on the Campus, students attending this institution are encountering congestion / queuing problems while attempting to exit the Campus heading north on Walston Switch Road. Moreover, because of the moderate queuing problems at the U.S. Route 50 eastbound and Walston Switch Road intersection, motorists are experiencing delays in turning movements to the approach of the freelane access point along Walston Switch Road. This freelane provides a direct access to U.S. Route 50 eastbound.

The County commends the recent efforts of the State Highway Administration to improve the current conditions at this intersection by changing the signaling pattern to a split-phase; however, further improvements should be programmed because of future development occurring in the surrounding area. Recognizing the limited funding available to make significant geometric improvements at this intersection, it is recommended that consideration be given to provide Wor-Wic Community College direct egress onto U.S. Route 50 eastbound.

13. **Support for Freight Water Transport:** Salisbury has the second busiest port in Maryland, and with fuel costs anticipated to continue to rise, water transport of freight will become even more economically viable. We respectfully request supplemental funding support for the Delmarva Water Transport Committee (DWTC) to help sustain water transportation and commerce in the County, and also support State assistance that can be provided for the acquisition of dredge material placement sites, especially for dredge material from the Wicomico River.

In acknowledgement of the integral role of freight movement, the MPO Area Freight Plan was prepared. This Freight Plan provides information about the various components of the area's freight

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14. **Continued Support of the MPO:** Although the MPO has been in existence for only a few years, much has been accomplished. The MPO has provided a framework for bringing representatives together from the various local member jurisdictions to help plan for an effective, coordinated transportation system. The completion of our corridor studies is just one example of this coordinated effort. These accomplishments would not have been possible without MDOT's assistance, and we look forward to a continuation of these efforts.

Any assistance from State Highway Administration towards the accomplishment of these recommended improvements will be greatly appreciated. Should you require any additional information regarding these improvements, please contact Keith D. Hall, Long Range/Transportation Planner, Salisbury – Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning & Community Development at (410) 548-4860 or via e-mail [Khall@wicomicocounty.org](mailto:Khall@wicomicocounty.org).

Sincerely,



Richard M. Pollitt, Jr.  
County Executive

cc: Sharon Morris, Acting Director of Administration, Wicomico County  
John Redden, Public Works Acting Director, Wicomico County  
Andrew Mackel, Director of Finance, Wicomico County  
Bob Bryant, Airport Manager, Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport  
Brian Foret, Director of Facility Services, Wicomico County Board of Education  
Mark Rudnick, Vice President for Administrative Services, Wor-Wic Community College  
Becky Robinson, Executive Director, DWTC Executive Director  
Mike Pennington, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore  
Rick Konrad, City Manager, City of Fruitland  
Keith Hall, Staff, Salisbury/Wicomico Department of Planning, Zoning, & Community Development