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## **CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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**April 23, 2021**

**Gregory I. Slater, Secretary**  
**Maryland Department of Transportation**  
**7201 Corporate Center Drive**  
**P. O. Box 548**  
**Hanover, MD 21076**

**RE: Cecil County's 2021 Transportation Priorities**

**Dear Secretary Slater:**

Cecil County Government submits this letter to articulate its transportation priorities to your department for 2021. We continue to recognize not only our mutual challenges and opportunities to better determine our transportation future, here in the northeast transportation corridor. The needs of the County and its eight municipalities are reflected in these priority projects.

Because of the important relationships among transportation and air quality, congestion mitigation, and providing more livable and sustainable communities with better linked land use and transportation, we have established five broad transportation improvement categories, as follows:

- I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement Improvements
- Toll Coordination and Freight Transportation Actions
- Public Transportation Improvements
- US 40 Corridor and Intersection Improvements
- Municipal Priorities

Based upon those categorical priorities, our overall top five individual priority improvements are as follows:

- 1) Implement the new Belvidere Road I-95 interchange including the expansion of Belvidere Road between I-95 and US 40.
- 2) Continue efforts to relocate and/or replace the I-95 toll plaza with cashless tolling.
- 3) The establishment of a mid-county multi-modal transportation hub in the North East area.
- 4) Road and intersection improvements to state highways around the Bainbridge development.
- 5) Countermeasures to reduce or eliminate avoidance of DelDot's toll on US 301.

### **Implement the new Belvidere Road I-95 interchange including the expansion of Belvidere Road between I-95 and US 40.**

This project implements the County's Comprehensive Plan objective of expanding the road network in the County's growth corridor and providing alternate north-south route options between I-95 and US 40. The 2010 plan identified a "potential new I-95 interchange between MD 222 and MD 272" with the implementation of the change tied to "redevelopment of the Mineral Extraction Area." This area is currently being redeveloped into the Principio Business Park. The interchange will improve the secure movement of people, goods and data and improve emergency response on of the County's largest employment centers. Additionally, it will minimize travel delays on Maryland's transportation system by reducing freight traffic in the towns of North East and Perryville and have the added benefit of air quality improvement by reducing idle times in the towns.

### **Continued efforts to relocate and/or replace the I-95 toll plaza with cashless tolling.**

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) collects tolls on northbound I-95 north (east) of the Tydings Bridge, and on northbound US 40 north (east) of the Hatem Bridge. Cecil County has the unique distinction of being the only County in Maryland which interstate traffic must pay a toll to enter our County. Toll-evading traffic and freight transportation continue to travel through the Town of Perryville via MD 222. Additionally, the County is concerned that the tolls, both of which are near Cecil County's western border, discourage travel to and economic development within Cecil County. The Comprehensive Plan considered an option to address the economic impacts of MdTA's tolls is to relocate the toll facilities. This project will pursue capital improvements to the transportation system that will improve access to jobs and tourism and leverage economic growth opportunities; strategically modernize infrastructure through new and innovative technology, enhanced partnerships, design standards, and practices to facilitate the movement of people and goods; minimize travel delays and improve predictability of travel times on Maryland's transportation system; and implement initiatives to reduce fossil fuel consumption, mitigate greenhouse gases, and improve air quality. The project meets the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by improving freight transportation, enhancing fuel quality standards and traffic mitigation.

### **Establishment of a Mid-County multi-modal transportation hub in the North East Area**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies development of a countywide transit system should include expansion of bus transit options. Bus service should link employment and commercial center as well as more densely developed residential areas. Increase transit options (bus and rail) to increase transportation choices and reduce automobile trips. Establish commuter rail transit and infrastructure to serve the Designated Growth Area, including its five towns. The project strategically invests in the expansion and operational improvements to reduce congestion along the multimodal transportation system; facilitates the movement of people to and from employment centers, implements initiatives to reduce fossil fuel consumption, mitigate greenhouse gases, and improve air quality. Implementation of their prove provides transportation services and solutions that maximize value through a local, state, and federal funding partnership and provides efficiency by reducing "dead head" bus mileage. The project meets the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by expanding transit service, providing for traffic congestion mitigation, enhancing fuel quality standards and traffic mitigation.

## **Road and intersection improvements to State Highways around the Bainbridge Development**

The redevelopment of the former Bainbridge Navy Base, west of MD 222 and south of MD 276 in Port Deposit, which approximately 400 acres or one-third of the site have been set aside for the first phase of employment uses, has begun site work and proposing groundbreaking in 2021. These capital improvements to the transportation system that will improve access to jobs and tourism and leverage economic growth opportunities. Improve the movement of goods within and through Maryland by investing in intermodal connections and improvements to reduce freight bottlenecks. The redevelopment of this site, and these proposed road improvements are identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The project meets the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by improving freight transportation and traffic mitigation.

## **Countermeasures to reduce or eliminate avoidance of DelDot's toll on US 301.**

Additionally, since US 301 has been converted to a limited-access toll road beginning at the state boundary with Delaware, toll evasion now endangers the distinctive character and sense of place in Cecilton, Chesapeake City, Elkton, and Warwick, as well as the historic and rural character along the MD 213, MD 285, MD 286, MD 282, and MD 310 corridors. The current toll-evading traffic has shifted an undue burden of maintenance and operations costs from appropriately designed arterial roads to collector and local roads in Cecil County. The County's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2010 states *"A separate concern is DelDOT's plans to convert US 301 to a limited access toll road in New Castle County (associated with the planned US 301 bypass around Middletown). Cecil County is concerned about toll and truck weight evasion, which could increase traffic in rural parts of southern Cecil County, and through small communities such as Cecilton and Chesapeake City."* Resolving long identified issue will reduce the number of freight vehicles on rural county roads and provide the movement of goods on the appropriate routes.

These five priorities do not reflect all the needs within Cecil County. A table of all the County's identified projects supports the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP), including the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act goals, and are consistent with the County's land use plan goals is attached to the digital submission. A paper copy can be provided upon request.

In summation, as our economy continues to grow, we will face growing traffic volumes that will test our efforts to ameliorate air quality, mitigate traffic congestion, and provide more sustainable and viable communities.

Thank you for your consideration of Cecil County's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,



Danielle Hornberger, County Executive



Robert Meffley, President, County Council

### Cecil County's State of Maryland Delegation

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Senator Jason C. Gallion

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Senator Jason C. Gallion, District 35

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Senator Stephen S. Hershey

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Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr. District 36

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Delegate Kevin B. Hornberger, District 35-A

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Delegate Teresa Reilly, District 35-B

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Delegate Mike Griffith

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Delegate Mike Griffith, District 35-B

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Delegate Steven J. Arentz

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Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist, District 36

Delegate Steven J Arentz, District 36