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**CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
Division of Planning and Zoning  
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March 8, 2024

Paul J. Wiedefeld, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, MD 21076

**RE: Cecil County Transportation Priorities**

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

Cecil County submits this letter to articulate its transportation priorities for inclusion and funding by the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) FY2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). We continue to recognize our mutual challenges and opportunities to better determine our transportation future here in the northeast transportation corridor.

*Cecil County has established five broad transportation improvement categories. The categories represent important relationships among transportation and air quality, traffic congestion mitigation, and livable and sustainable communities, they are as follows:*

- *I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement*
- *Toll Coordination and Freight Transportation*
- *Public Transportation*
- *US Route 40 Corridor and Intersections*
- *Municipal Improvements*

Cecil County's priority improvements are as follows:

- 1) Implementation of Belvidere Road Interstate 95 Interchange and Belvidere Road Improvements.
- 2) Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study.
- 3) Mid-County Multi-Modal Transportation Hub.
- 4) Port Deposit Main Street Improvements.
- 5) State Highway Road and Intersection Improvements around Bainbridge Campus.

**Interstate 95/Belvidere Road Interchange and Belvidere Road Corridor Improvements**

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) has awarded a Design-Build contract for the construction of a partial cloverleaf interchange on Interstate 95 at Belvidere Road. The project is currently under construction and the interchange is expected to be placed into service in 2026. When the new interchange opens, traffic on Belvidere Road is expected to increase significantly, with one MDTA study projecting an increase from the current 2400 to over 18,000 vehicles per day.

The County has two projects in its Capital Improvement Program to upgrade Belvidere Road from the new interchange south to US40 to prepare it for the increase in traffic. The first project will replace County Bridge CE0055 which carries Belvidere Road over the CSX rail line with a new four-lane bridge and upgrade Belvidere Road to four lanes from the bridge north to the interchange.

The second project will improve Belvidere Road from Bridge CE0055 south to US40. The scope includes improving the roadway alignment and entrances, improving shoulders, and providing stormwater management where none currently exists. This section of Belvidere Road will remain two lanes for the present, but the County intends to upgrade this section to four lanes in the future as funding permits.

The County intends to complete these two projects before the new interchange is placed into service.

These projects are consistent with the objectives outlined in Cecil County's 2010 Comprehensive Plan, namely, to expand the road network within the designated growth corridor and to provide additional north-south routes between I95 and US40. The planned improvements to the Belvidere Road corridor will help facilitate the movement of goods and people and the continued development of Principio Business Park, one of the County's largest employment centers. When complete, the new I95 at Belvidere Road interchange is also expected to reduce truck traffic on MD222 into Perryville and MD272 into North East which should, in turn, improve the levels of service at their intersections with US40. It will also have the added benefit of improving air quality by reducing traffic idle time at those intersections.

### **Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study<sup>1</sup>**

The widening of North East Road (MD Route 272), between the Town of North East and the intersection of Joseph Biggs Memorial Highway (MD Route 274) is vital to Cecil County's growth corridor. Road and intersection improvements in recent years; such as, the reconstruction of the bridge over Amtrak, intersection improvements at US Route 40 and Gateway Drive have changed how the corridor is utilized. This area is targeted for further growth; however, accessibility to and through it is becoming more and more difficult. While the incremental improvements have provided some relief it has fallen short of providing for the planned growth within the corridor. This corridor needs a comprehensive review to ascertain current conditions, projected growth, and to evaluate transportation improvement alternatives. The result of the study will determine future transportation improvements for the corridor.

The study supports the Comprehensive Plan objective to expand the road network in the growth corridor to increase connectivity and provide alternate routes, especially through and around the towns and north-south between the US Route 40 and Interstate 95 corridors including nonmotorized transportation facilities and a potential connection to the East Coast Greenway: This route includes downtown North East.

This study will provide the initial steps towards a resilient multi-modal system by anticipating and planning for changing conditions and hazards (natural and man-made). Cecil County emergency response is of the utmost importance and this study will ensure road improvements address roadway clearance times and facilitate efficient and coordinated responses to emergency and disaster events throughout the transportation system. It is a strategic investment in operational improvements with the added benefit of reducing transportation delays

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this study was submitted to the UPWP on 2/26/2024.

overall. The results of the study will assist in mitigating traffic congestion, allows for the movement of freight, and reduces vehicle emissions.

### **Mid-County Multi-Modal Transportation Hub**

A Mid-County Multi-Modal Transportation Hub (“Mid-County Transit Hub”) in the North East area has been a priority of Cecil County since 2017. Cecil County has pursued a Mid-County Transit Hub to support the growth of Cecil Transit. The Mid-County Transit Hub will enhance ridership, reduce stem miles and provide additional office space. The Mid-County Transit Hub will look to contain: 1) a multi-modal public transit center to accomodate transfers and layovers, 2) a kiss-and-ride facility, 3) a covered area for customer queue, 4) pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and bicycle parking and 5) a stand-alone Transit Administration facility containing Transit offices. Cecil County is also exploring an onsite vehicle wash bay or reduced-capacity maintenance facility depending on future cost considerations. This facility will provide linkages between employment and commercial centers as well as more densely developed residential areas. Additionally, the Mid-County Transit Hub will be strategically centered within the County’s growth area and the County’s municipalities.

The project strategically invests in improvements that expand ridership and operational improvements that reduce congestion along Cecil County’s multi-modal transportation system. This is accomplished by prioritizing the equitable movement of people to and from employment centers, and initiatives to reduce fossil fuel consumption and reducing greenhouse gas through mitigation, and improvements to air quality. The Mid-County Transit Hub, being centrally located within the County’s growth area, will align with Environmental Justice goals by providing linkages between employment/commercial centers and a range of residential areas, allowing residents with limited transportation availability greater neighborhood choice. Implementation of the Mid-County Transit Hub provides transportation services and solutions that maximize value through local, state, and federal funding partnership that provide efficiency by reducing “dead head” bus mileage as the facility will provide space for onsite maintenance and the administration of Cecil Transit. The project aligns with the States’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by expanding transit service, providing for traffic congestion mitigation, and enhancing fuel quality standards.

### **Port Deposit Main Street Improvements**

The town of Port Deposit has long struggled with inadequate storm drainage infrastructure along Main Street (MD Route 222). Poor drainage poses a safety hazard to pedestrians and motorists and is also a significant source of inflow and infiltration into Cecil County’s sanitary sewer system. The problem is exacerbated by changing precipitation patterns amid climate change. Main Street also struggles with tractor trailer traffic and speeding within the town’s center. A frustrating situation that is compounded by the fact that there is limited space for road improvements due to geography. The streetscape plan will identify innovative traffic control measures to reduce speeding and tractor trailer congestion on Main Street, as well as provide for safe bicycle and pedestrian access. The improvements will provide accomodations for historic structures and infrastructure necessary to meet community needs.

### **State Highway Road and Intersection Improvements around Bainbridge Campus**

The maintenance of an acceptable level-of-service (LOS) at the intersection of Perrylawn Road (MD Route 275) is of the utmost importance as the Bainbridge campus matures. The road intersection improvements propose an extension of Commodore Boulevard from Phase I to Bainbridge Road (MD Route 222) in order to provide access from the campus to the state-owned 50-acre parcel known for the historical Tome School for Boys. The school is currently inaccessible by public infrastructure. Additional improvements at the intersections of Diamond Jim Road and MD Route 275 will provide service to Powers Road which is the employee entrance.

The redevelopment and proposed road improvements of the former Bainbridge Navy Base, west of MD Route 275, south of MD Route 276, north and east of MD Route 222 in Port Deposit are identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Approximately 400 acres or one-third of the site is set aside for uses that revolve around employment. These improvements began in 2021. These capital improvements to the transportation system will improve access to jobs and tourism while leveraging economic growth. Additionally it will improve logistics within and through Maryland by reducing freight bottlenecks. The project meets the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by improving and addressing freight transportation and traffic mitigation.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Justice**

Cecil County's priority improvements of a Mid-County Transit Hub, State Highway Road and Intersection Improvements around Bainbridge Campus, and the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study will address MDOT's Climate Change goals. These priority improvement's implementation of initiatives to reduce fossil fuel consumption, reduce greenhouse gases, and improvements to air quality address the States Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, and the 2023 Climate Pollution Reduction Plan through CMT reduction and congestion mitigation.

In addition, the Mid-County Transit Hub will incorporate Environmental Justice initiatives by providing linkages between employment, commercial centers, being centrally located within the County's growth area, and by linking more densely developed residential areas. These transportation linkages provide for the fair treatment and involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

### **Additional Priorities**

These priorities do not reflect all the needs within Cecil County but are included to reflect potential funding availability. An appendix of the remaining county and municipal priority projects are enclosed with this letter. Each of these projects are consistent with the County's land use plan and the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP); including, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act. Summary sheets of these projects are available upon request.

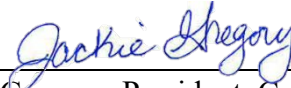
As traffic volumes increase and our economy continues to grow, we will continue efforts to improving air quality, mitigate traffic congestion, and provide for sustainable communities.

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

Sincerely,



Danielle Hornberger, County Executive



Jackie Gregory, President, County Council

Cecil County's State of Maryland Delegation

DocuSigned by:

Jason C. Gallion

Senator Jason C. Gallion, District 35

DocuSigned by:

Senator Stephen S. Hershey

Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr. District 36

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Kevin B. Hornberger

Delegate Kevin B. Hornberger, District 35-B

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Delegate Jay A. Jacobs

Delegate Jay A. Jacobs, District 36

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Delegate Teresa Reilly

Delegate Teresa Reilly, District 35-A

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Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist

Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist, District 36

DocuSigned by:

Delegate Mike Griffith

Delegate Mike Griffith, District 35-A

DocuSigned by:

Delegate Steven J. Arentz

Delegate Steven J. Arentz, District 36

# Cecil County Transportation Priorities

## Appendix

### **I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement Improvements**

- State Highway road and intersection improvements around Bainbridge Campus.
- Belvidere Road and I-95 Interchange and Belvidere Road improvements.
- Transportation Study for MD Route 272 Corridor.
- Road and intersection improvements to State Highways around the Bainbridge development.
- Widen MD 222 and MD 272 to four lanes, including bike lanes and sidewalks between US 40 and I-95 for pedestrian mobility within those incorporated towns.
- MD 781/Muddy Lane between I-95 and US Route 40.
- Examine the potential of widening MD 279 between US 40 and MD 213.

### **Public Transportation Improvements**

- Mid-County multi-modal transportation hub.
- The extension of MARC Penn Line commuter rail service from Perryville to connect with Philadelphia's SEPTA R-2 regional – an extension of existing service on existing right of way.
- Continued efforts to eliminate toll diversion from the Tydings bridge.

### **US 40 Corridor and Intersection Improvements**

- Improve the US 40-MD213 intersection with adequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
- Examine the potential of enhanced bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the use 40 corridor to provide transportation alternatives in the County's growth corridor.
- Rail crossing safety improvements at the Elk Mills Road (CSX), Frenchtown Road (NS), Jackson Station Road (CSX), Otsego Street (NS), Rail Lane (CSX), and Rowland Drive (NS) rail crossings.
- Improve intersection US 40 – Mechanics Valley Road
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Red Toad Road
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Cedar Corner Rd
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Jackson Station Rd
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Marley Road
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Nottingham Road
- Improve Intersection US 40 - Wells Camp Road

### **Toll Coordination and Freight Transportation Improvements.**

- Countermeasures to reduce or eliminate avoidance of DelDot's toll on US 301.
- Stepped-up Truck weight limit enforcement due to toll avoidance along route MD 213, MD 222, US 1 and US 301.

## Municipality Improvements

- Complete paving on MD537-C, South end of George Street, from Route 213 to intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> and George.
- Pave Route 286, East from intersection of Second Street and George Street to Town limits
- Repair/replace sidewalk on MD 284, Hemphill Street.
- Pave Biddle Street between Lock and Bank Street
- Pave Bohemia Ave between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Rees Wharf Road
- Repair stormwater and pave Moss Street between Lock and Hemphill Street
- Sidewalk replacement along MD 267, including Market Street beginning at Bladen Street, Cecil Street and a portion of Baltimore Street, up to the Charlestown Elementary School.
- Create 90-degree intersection and add pedestrian crosswalks with stop signs at Market and Cecil Streets, along MD 267.
- Create 90-degree intersection and add pedestrian crosswalks with rectangular rapid flashing beacons at Cecil and Baltimore Streets, along MD 267
- Replace vehicular and pedestrian bridges along the Cecil Street section of MD 267 over Red Rum Creek
- Install a mini-roundabout at the intersection of Bladen and Market Streets, along MD 267.
- Install a golf cart crosswalk at a MDOT-approved location along MD 267
- Create a bicycle/pedestrian trail from North East to Charlestown, following County line, partially on-road and off-road
- Extension of MARC Penn Line commuter rail service to Elkton and Newark, Delaware
- Sidewalk improvements on MD 213, MD 7D and US 40.
- Multi-use paths on MD 279 (Elkton-Newark Road) and US 40.
- Design and water quality improvements for North Street (MD 268) and Bridge Street (MD 213) within Elkton's downtown.
- A study of the intersection of MD 279 and Belle Hill Road for capacity improvements/realignment.
- Maintenance (cleaning or painting) of the MD 213 Bridge and North Street Bridge (MD 268) over the Amtrak railroad.
- Maintenance and improvements are requested for the Park & Ride lot on Belle Hill Road.
- State Highway Bridge on MD 7D - Delaware Avenue adjacent to Meadow Park.
- Stormwater Drainage Improvement Project on MD Route 222 as soon as possible.
- Include Streetscape Plan on Main Street with stormwater project to improve safe vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Main Street
- Continue to enhance traffic control measures for improved vehicle transportation that reduces speeding and impacts from tractor trailer traffic on weight restricted Route 222/Main Street
- Continue to investigate options to deal with the high toll rates and the diversion that results from the high toll rates on Tydings Bridge.
- Study MD Route 222 from U.S. 40 to Heather Lane for additional traffic controls at the:

- A. The intersection of Franklin Street and Route 222
- B. The intersection of MD Route 222 and Cedar Comer Road
- C. The intersection of MD Route 222 and Chesapeake Overlook Parkway
- D. Upgrade of the bridge over 1-95 to allow for additional lanes of traffic, thus making it four lanes.
- Pursue a Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over the Susquehanna River linking Harford and Cecil County.