

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOMERSET COUNTY

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April 29, 2026

Katheryn B. Thomas, Acting Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 548
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Re: Somerset County – Priority Letter for Recommended Transportation Improvements

Dear Secretary Thomas:

As you know, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) asks counties to submit letters prioritizing transportation projects for possible inclusion in the upcoming Consolidated Transportation Program.

In response to this request, the Somerset County Commissioners are submitting a prioritized list of proposed transportation improvements in the County for your consideration. Both the City of Crisfield and the Town of Princess Anne were given the opportunity for input. We would be happy to discuss these with you and your staff in further detail. They are listed as follows:

ENHANCEMENTS

1. Westover to Crisfield Bike Trail (adjacent to MD 413):

Description:

This project consists of utilizing a 60-foot-wide right-of-way located between the County's regional recreational complex at Westover and extending to the outskirts of Crisfield for a bike trail. This right-of-way was formerly a rail line and is 13.5 miles in length. Once the trail approaches Crisfield, it would transition into a dedicated bike lane along MD 413 (Crisfield Highway). The first phase of this project located between Crisfield and Marion was recently completed. The second phase of this project located between Westover and Kingston is currently under construction. The third phase of this project located between Kingston and Marion has been designed with construction planned for the Spring of 2026.

Need:

This bike trail will encourage tourism and provide an economic benefit to local businesses, and will supplement the County's recreational opportunities. It can also be utilized as an educational resource by providing signage that details the historic importance of the railway as it was used extensively by the agricultural and seafood industries of the County in days gone by.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project is identified for development in the County's 2017 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. In addition to complying with that Plan's recommendations, this project would meet a number of Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goals – in particular those that address Quality of Service by enhancing users' access to MDOT's transportation services and Environmental Stewardship by developing an initiative that protects a community's natural and historic resources.

2. Crisfield – Somerset County Airport Hangars & Runway Rehabilitation:

Description:

Somerset County and the City of Crisfield own and operate the Crisfield-Somerset County Airport (W41). In order to promote economic growth in the region as well as use of this critical facility, completion of the airport hangar project as well as rehabilitation of runway 14-32 is needed. The project involves design, construction and project management of a ten-unit hangar and runway 14-32 improvements as shown on the approved Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP). The project scope includes permitting, site work and utilities. Permitting involves critical areas, floodplain, stormwater management, sediment control, FAA use, grading, electrical, plumbing, and building. Utilities include electric, telephone, cable, water and sewer. This project is also supported by the Mayor/Council of the City of Crisfield, Somerset County Economic Development Commission, the University of Maryland Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Navmar Applied Science Corporation.

Need:

Quite often, the County and City find businesses interested in relocating to the area which note the importance of air transportation. This involves not only delivery of products but executive personnel as well. There has also been interest in relocating aircraft from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Aviation Program to our airport and this project will enable the University of Maryland Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site to have a hangar at the test site and to also have a presence in Somerset County. Additionally, having the necessary amenities will strongly encourage businesses to consider relocating to this economically challenged region.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project is shown on the Airport Capital Improvement Plan as approved by the MAA and FAA. It would meet several MTP goals, such as, Community Vitality and Economic Prosperity by encouraging use of this vital resource.

3. Acceleration Lane Needed at US 13 North/MD 667:

Description:

There is no acceleration lane for vehicles travelling east on MD 667 (Rehobeth Road) to make a safe left turn onto U.S. 13 (Ocean Highway) heading north. Given the speed limit along U.S. 13, an acceleration lane would allow vehicles to merge into the flow of traffic

and improve the safety of the intersection. No additional right-of-way will be needed to construct this lane.

Need:

This acceleration lane would improve safety at the U.S. 13/MD 667 intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

4. Deceleration Lane Needed at MD 413 South/MD 361:

Description:

No deceleration lane exists for vehicles travelling south on MD 413 (Crisfield Highway) to make a safe turn onto MD 361 (Fairmount Road). Considering the speed limit on MD 413, a deceleration lane would provide improved safety at this intersection. Additional right-of-way may be needed to construct this lane.

Need:

This deceleration lane would improve safety at the MD 413/MD 361 intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

5. Widening of Intersection at MD 388/MD 675:

Description:

Located within the Town of Princess Anne, this intersection has seen a significant increase in truck traffic on MD 388.

Need:

The widening of MD 388 (West Post Office Road) at its intersection with MD 675 (Somerset Avenue) will allow for safer ingress and egress of trucks. This proposal would improve safety at this intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at this intersection.

6. Improved Vehicular Access at US 13 North/Stewart Neck Road:

Description:

Currently the intersection of U.S. 13 (Ocean Highway) and Stewart Neck Road partially located within the Town of Princess Anne is un-signalized with minimal staging area for large vehicles crossing to/from Stewart Neck Road. Large trucks with trailers often extend into U.S. 13 blocking traffic or are forced to roll through the stop sign causing a traffic violation. A preliminary assessment by SHA recommends improvements to the intersection to the south in order to minimize this issue.

Need:

Given the extensive agricultural use in this region, the unique geometry of this intersection and the volume of traffic on US 13, safety improvements are needed.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

7. Dualization of MD 413:

Description:

MD 413 (Crisfield Highway) is the main access to Crisfield and consists of a single lane north and south-bound for its entire length of approximately 15 miles. For safety reasons and to accommodate future growth, dualization is recommended. A preliminary engineering study would be needed for this project.

Need:

Given the length of this road and because it's a direct connection between Crisfield and U.S. 13, traffic is fairly heavy at times. A number of accidents have occurred on this road which would be avoided if dualization were to occur.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would improve safety and over time would also increase capacity as future growth occurs.

8. Widening of Intersection at US 13/ MD 413

Description:

Currently the intersection of US13 (Ocean Highway) and MD 413 is un-signalized with a high volume of traffic crossing and exiting onto MD 413. Considering the rate of speed and the narrow lane width of the intersection widening would improve safety at this intersection.

Need:

The widening of MD 413 at the proposed intersection will allow for safer ingress and egress of traffic. This proposal would improve safety at this intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at this intersection.

9. MD 413 Left Turn Turning Vehicles at Somerset County Transfer Station

Description:

MD 413 (Crisfield Highway) is the main access to Crisfield and consists of a single lane north and south-bound for its entire length of approximately 15 miles. For safety reasons in the immediate area of the transfer station a passing zone is needed.

Need:

Centerline striping improvements to extend south of the transfer station entrance and construction of a bypass lane to permit passing of stopped vehicles in the southbound lane.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at this intersection.

SYSTEM PRESERVATION

1. Signalization of Railroad Crossings Countywide:

Description:

The Delmarva Central Railroad tracks extend along U.S. 13 from the County's north end near the Village of Eden to the County's south end near Pocomoke City. Railroad crossings at the state highways are signalized, but need to be at the county roads as well. Somerset County DPW staff met with SHA Office of Traffic Safety staff on September 18, 2017 to conduct a site visit at these crossings. Action items were established and improvements were prioritized.

Need:

Improvements including signalization to railroad crossings at county roads are needed.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at numerous railroad crossings.

2. Sidewalks along MD 529:

Description:

This project involves installation of sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks and signage to allow for a safe route.

Need:

Pedestrians from several apartment complexes located on Loretto Road need a sidewalk to safely reach destinations in Princess Anne. Sidewalks exist on Somerset Avenue, but need to be extended along Loretto Road.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security as well as Community Vitality by allowing pedestrians to safely traverse the highway.

3. Widening of Roadway along MD 363:

Description:

MD 363 (Deal Island Road) extends from Princess Anne westward to the villages of Deal Island and Wenona located along the Chesapeake Bay. Its length is approximately 20 miles and it serves as a collector route for residents traveling to Princess Anne and to other destinations via U.S. 13. This two-lane road is narrow and although increasing its width in some places may be restricted by environmental factors, there are areas where widening is possible and would improve safety. A preliminary engineering study would be needed for this project.

Need:

Where possible, the widening of MD 363 would improve the safety of travelers.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by providing transportation assets that maximize personal safety and security in all situations.

4. Repair of Shoulder along MD 627:

Description:

MD 627 (Oriole Road) needs shoulder repair due to severe drop-offs from the travel portion of the road to virtually a non-existent shoulder.

Need:

Shoulder repairs along MD 627 would improve the safety of both motorists and cyclists.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for vehicle and bicycle users.

5. Drainage Improvements along MD 361, MD 362, MD 380, MD 663 and MD 667:

Description:

Drainage improvements to MD 361 (Fairmount Road), MD 362 (Mt. Vernon Road), MD 380 (Main Street), MD 663 (Deal Island Road) and MD 667 (Crisfield Marion Road) near the county's municipalities and rural villages.

Need:

Assessment of the drainage systems is needed to alleviate nuisance flooding in the low-lying areas of the county.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goals that Enhance Safety and Security by achieving zero traffic related fatalities and serious injuries, as well as Deliver System Quality by creating infrastructure that is sustainable, resilient and in good repair.

MAINTENANCE TRANSFERS

1. Extend State Maintenance of MD 361 to the end of Rumbley Road:

Description:

MD 361 (Fairmount Road) is currently maintained by SHA to Clinton Bozman Road. The project would extend state maintenance of this highway to the end of Rumbley Road in the Village of Rumbley. The existing County right-of-way would need to be deeded to the State of Maryland.

Need:

Improved access would be provided to the local fire department (Fairmount VFD), residences, businesses and marina (Goose Creek). This would relieve Somerset County of the responsibility of maintaining a portion of the highway system and allow County efforts to be focused on the local road system.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Community Vitality by improving the movement of people and goods that support the Village of Fairmount, the Village of Rumbley and the Village of Frenchtown. This project would also meet the MTP goal of Economic Prosperity by supporting the local watermen and farmers by improving transportation of their products to the markets.

2. Formalize State Maintenance of College Backbone Road on the Campus of UMES:

Description:

The portion of College Backbone Road within the campus of UMES is currently maintained by SHA, but owned by Somerset County. The project would formalize state maintenance of

this highway up to the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute driveway. The existing County right-of-way would need to be deeded to the State of Maryland.

Need:

Improved access would be provided to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore campus as well as the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute. This would relieve Somerset County of the responsibility of maintaining a portion of the highway system and allow County efforts to be focused on the local road system.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Community Vitality by improving the movement of people and goods that support the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) and the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute. This project would also meet the MTP goal of Economic Prosperity by supporting the educational benefits provided by UMES which are essential to a diverse and competitive workforce.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

1. Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry:

Description:

The project would establish a high-speed and long-range electric ferry (shuttle ship) between numerous ports along the Chesapeake Bay. It would promote tourism and multi-modal connections by allowing visitors to reach multiple destinations by boat without the need for a car, while also demonstrating the benefits of an electrified waterfront. A collaboration effort between several counties and municipalities has occurred to prepare a feasibility study to evaluate the vessel parameters, terminal sites, operational and maintenance needs, tourism and economic strategies and system partnerships. This study was completed in 2024 with the first phase planned near Annapolis and Baltimore.

Need:

MDOT's support for establishment of a passenger ferry system for the entire Chesapeake Bay region.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the following MTP goals:

1. Environmental Stewardship by minimizing and mitigating the environmental effects of transportation by using a zero emissions vessel on existing public waterways, while also demonstrating the benefits of an electrified waterfront.
2. Serve Communities & Support the Economy by expanding transportation options to allow Maryland's diverse communities to access opportunities and to support the movement of goods.

3. Deliver System Quality by delivering a reliable, high-quality, integrated transportation system.
4. Enhance Safety and Security by protecting the safety and security of all residents, workers, and visitors by developing a multi-modal alternative to the reliance on the road network by creating a port network.

2. Smith Island Passenger Ferry:

Description:

Currently residents and visitors to Smith Island are served by private passenger ferries operated by several independent local boat captains. The "Smith Island Vision Plan" identified a reliable and sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of residents and tourists as one of the Plan's five overall goals. A study funded by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) was recently performed to determine the most feasible way to develop an effective ferry system while incorporating the existing system. Ridership numbers have been collected, and Smith Island United is willing to coordinate this effort and the County Tourism Board has the expertise to promote tourism. There is interest in implementing a pilot program that allows the individual operators to work collaboratively in providing improved ferry service. An implementation plan needs to be established to determine the number of daily trips, arrival/departure times, days/months of operation, standard operating procedures and marketing plan for this ferry service.

Need:

Creation of an implementation plan is needed to establish a pilot program for an effective ferry system for Smith Island.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Quality of Service by providing an improved passenger ferry system.

Any assistance from the Maryland Department of Transportation towards the accomplishment of these improvements would be greatly appreciated. Should you need any additional information regarding these improvements, please feel free to contact me at (410) 651-0320. Thank you for your attention, and again, we appreciate any consideration you can give to these projects.

Sincerely,


Ernest J. Leatherbury, Jr.
County Administrator

Cc: Mark Crampton, District 1 Engineer, SHA
Tyson Byrne, Regional Planner, SHA

MDOT Priority Letter Submission Form

Submitted by Woody Barnes on Apr 29th, 2026 at 2:26 pm

Status: *Completed*

MDOT Priority Letter Submission Form

Introduction

Local governments have two ways to submit Local Priority Letters to MDOT. Either can be used. It is the choice of the local government which they prefer. The two ways are:

Submit Letters in the same way as they have in the past.

Submit Letters through this online portal.

The MDOT will give letters equal consideration regardless of the method chosen by the locality.

The MDOT has created this online portal as part of an overall effort to be more transparent and responsive in its processes and decision-making. With this portal, and the guidance it provides for articulating local priorities, the MDOT seeks to achieve better, more consistent understanding of local priorities. To do this, the portal provides localities with both fillable forms asking for specific priorities, as well as providing for free-form expression to provide the opportunity to offer greater context and narrative.

This portal is also responsive to The TRAIN (Transportation Revenue and Investment Need) Commission's Interim Report recommendation: "... MDOT should standardize local priority letters...". MDOT understands the need to ensure that local governments have the opportunity to express their priorities, and the following submission form seeks to balance that need along with the recommendation of the TRAIN Commission, with the aim to better serve and be responsive to each local jurisdiction.

Key Terms

Below are definitions of key terms. In the event a project may fit in one or more categories please use your best judgement. MDOT may follow up with you to clarify categorization.

"System preservation" and "state of good repair" project means a project where the purpose is to improve the condition or operations of an existing asset without adding new capacity such as travel lanes. Examples include bridge rehabilitation or replacement, pavement rehabilitation, incident responses, and variable message signs.

"New capacity" and "capacity expansion" project means a project where the purpose of the project is to improve the ability of the transportation system to move people and goods. Examples including widening a road, building a new road, a new transit station, and a new transit line.

A "feasibility study" takes a project from a concept to 10-15% design, including basic concept development, purpose & need, alternatives development, preliminary scope definition and cost estimates, etc. Once complete, the project is ready for project scoring under project prioritization.

"Safety" project means a project whose primary purpose is to reduce or prevent crashes but that does not add or expand the capacity of roads or transit. Examples include roadway realignment, installation of rumble strips, and guardrail.

"Bike/pedestrian" or "complete streets" project means a project to provide accommodations and/or improve safety for bicyclists and/or pedestrians. Examples include new sidewalks, installation of cycle-tracks and road diets with bike lanes.

"Transit-oriented development" project means a project to support or help the construction of new residential, commercial and institutional development near a rail or bus rapid transit station.

Section 1. Local Government Information

First Name		Last Name	
Woody		Barnes	
Title/Role		Government Entity	
Director - Department of Public Works		Somerset County	
Email		Phone	
wbarnes@somersetmd.us		410-621-9188	
Address Line 1			
11916 Somerset Ave			
Address Line 2			
City	State	Zip Code	
Somerset County	Maryland	21853	

Section 2. Local Government Priorities

1. What are the jurisdiction's goals related to transportation policies and spending?

Somerset County goals align with MDOT/SHA initiatives to focus on Safety and Security to the residents and motorist in the County.

For questions 2-10, please list the jurisdiction's priorities in ranked order, with #1 as the highest priority. Please limit responses to 4 lines of text per priority. Please include the following information in the description of the priority: location, need, proposed improvements, and, as applicable, partners and/or existing funding. An example of a priority description is provided below:

MD XX (Cross Street 1 to Cross Street 2) Bike/Pedestrian Improvements - MD XX from Cross Street 1 to Cross Street 2 has high rates of crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians. The County seeks to increase safety by installing a new sidewalk and bike lane in both directions of MD XX. The proposed project is identified in Corridor Study A.

2. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for system preservation/state of good repair?

1. Signalization of Railroad Crossings
2. Drainage Improvements along MD361, MD362, MD380, MD663 and MD667

3. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for new capacity or capacity expansion projects?

1. Widening of intersection at US13 and MD413
2. Acceleration lane needed at US13 and MD667

4. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for feasibility studies?

5. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for safety projects?

1. MD413 Left Turning Vehicles at Somerset County Transfer Station

6. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for bike/pedestrian and/or complete streets projects?

1. Westover to Crisfield Bike Trail (adjacent to MD413)

7. What are the jurisdiction's priority projects for Transit-Oriented Development projects?

8. What are the jurisdiction's priorities for smaller interventions (generally under \$5 million total cost)? Examples might include new striping, flex posts, addition of a stop sign or street light, signal retiming, or transportation demand management (e.g., vanpools) investments.

9. What are the jurisdiction's other transportation priorities that do not fit in the categories listed above?

- 1. Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry
- 2. Smith Island Passenger Ferry
- 3. Crisfield – Somerset County Airport Hangars & Runway Rehabilitation

10. Across all of the categories listed above, what are the jurisdiction's top five overall transportation project priorities?

- 1. Widening of intersection at US13 and MD413
- 2. Acceleration lane needed at US13 and MD667
- 3. MD413 Left Turning Vehicles at Somerset County Transfer Station
- 4. Drainage Improvements along MD361, MD362, MD380, MD663 and MD667
- 5. Westover to Crisfield Bike Trail (adjacent to MD413)

11. What are the jurisdiction's priorities for housing and economic development and where is it anticipated to occur?

If the jurisdiction has submitted a priority letter through different means, you may upload the letter here.

 [Somerset_County_Priority_Letter_2026.pdf \(0.51 MB\)](#)

I attest that I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of my organization and that all information contained within is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Woody Barnes

I agree to be legally bound by this document.