



March 29, 2022

The Honorable James F. Ports, Jr.  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
P.O. Box 548, Mail Stop 200  
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: FY 2023 Transportation Program Priorities

Dear Secretary Ports:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit St. Mary's County's priorities for your use in preparing the FY 2023 Consolidated Transportation Program.

As noted last year, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County are pleased with the construction progress on the MD5 Moakley Street Break-Out Project in Leonardtown. St. Mary's County hopes that the new scoring criteria will continue to more fairly rank future St. Mary's County construction projects, but we remain concerned with the slow progress toward construction of the major aspects of scope for our top ranked projects.

St. Mary's County realizes MDOT's continued challenges especially considering how funding will be affected from COVID19 and the significant transportation needs throughout the state and has focused on fundable projects rather than those with little opportunity based on previous experience (see note below). Consistent with the Chapter 725 process, we have included copies of the project questionnaires and maps and have copied our request to the local delegation for their endorsement. We have also submitted these high priority projects for the Section 30 scoring process.

## **CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM PROJECTS**

### **NOTE: Thomas Johnson Bridge/ MD Route 4**

As noted for nearly two decades, this project has been our #1 overall priority since 2002. The benefits of a widened bridge are well understood relieve commuter congestion, improve safety, help position Patuxent River Naval Air Station for future BRAC, improve emergency evacuation in the event of an incident at Calvert Cliff's Nuclear Plant or Cove Point LNG Plant, and provide bicycle tourism and commuting opportunities between the Three Notch Trail and Solomon's Island. However, submitting the bridge continually as our #1 priority seems unrealistic as our efforts have proved futile. We have seen no progress, no consultant hired, and the MDOT budget zeroed the project out for future years funding. We do understand that \$1 million will be placed into design in FY23 and ask that design starts again.

*Consideration: (A) As it appears the entire project cannot be funded for some time into the future, please consider that the intersection of MD 235/MD 4 be advanced ahead of the Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement, or potentially as a small project, extend the merge on MD-4 north beyond Patuxent Boulevard to the north end of South Patuxent Beach Road and close that end of South Patuxent Boulevard with a cul-de-sac to allow MD235/MD4 intersection to function more efficiently. We have listed that as #2 priority below.*

**1. MD Route 5, from MD Route 246 (Great Mills Road) to MD Route 249 (Piney Point Road)**

We understand that project design and right-of-way acquisition are nearing completion and that utility coordination agreements are also underway. We ask that the remainder of these tasks be expedited so that construction can begin no later than FY 2024. While we are appreciative of the hard work that your staff put in for the US Dept. of Transportation BUILD Grant that was denied and your potential resubmittal for the new year, we are also concerned that construction can begin as soon as the property is acquired, and utility agreements are in place.

We are happy to see that the preferred alternative, includes a pavement section with 4 lanes and a new bridge that includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and we concur with this alternative. We hope that in the very near future you can move ahead with full funding to final plans and bid the project. The existing traffic congestion that the project would address on MD -246 and on MD Route 5 between Flat Iron Road/Indian Bridge Road and MD Route 249 not only generates delays to important destinations along those routes including links between Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Webster Field, but also creates access problems for multiple businesses in the immediate area of that intersection and creates safety concerns for those entering and exiting the Holy Face Church, Holy Face Rectory and Little Flower School complex and Kings Christian Academy. We continue to request that a high priority be placed on evaluating whether these entrances could be improved by adding a left turn lane and extending the additional right lanes that are already in place.

**2. MD Route 4 Merge Lane Extension to North End of South Patuxent Beach Road**

As a breakout project of the Overall MD235/MD4 and Thomas Johnson Bridge project, due to lack of funding for such a large project, we are requesting funding for MDOT Planning to extend the MD4 north right lane from Patuxent Boulevard to the north end of South Patuxent Beach Road and closing that end of South Patuxent Beach Road and installing a T-Turnaround or cul-de-sac. The closing of the north end of South Patuxent Bridge Road and constructing a cul-de-sac there to eliminate cut-thru traffic bypassing backups is already part of the existing overall bridge project concept. The bridge project concept has already been through the planning process, so it's assumed some of that planning could be beneficial with planning for this proposed breakout project. This would shift the congestion away from the MD235/MD4 intersection. It would involve widening the current bridge over Kingston Creek for a new travel lane and relocating the traffic light pole at Patuxent Boulevard. Perhaps a MD-T could be considered at the Patuxent Boulevard intersection with MD4 North to allow for continuous flow from MD235/MD4 intersection to the bridge as part of this project.

**3. MD Route 5 (Point Lookout Road) from MD Route 4 (St. Andrews Church Road) to Moll Dyer Road**

As noted above, thank you for advancing the improvements at the Moakley Street intersection to the Secondary Construction Program, with preliminary utility work and advance grading moving along productively and funded through 2022. To tie-in to the MD5 project through Leonardtown, we are requesting a comprehensive feasibility study for the widening, including a bike lane, on MD Route 5 south from MD Route 4 (St. Andrews Church Road) to Moll Dyer Road, just past the Leonardtown School Complex. This 3-mile corridor, the south end of the Leonardtown Town Center, directly affects access to 7 schools, including the College of Southern Maryland and provides the transportation spine for the western and southern parts of the County, including NAS Pax River Annex Webster Field and is a route for tourists to St. Mary's City and Point Lookout State Park. The intersection of MD 5 and MD 244 is particularly inadequate, especially during peak AM and PM travel times due to the varying departure times of Leonardtown Middle, High and Vocational Schools, as well as St. Mary's Ryken High School. This could include a 4-lane road with bike/pedestrian facilities and left turn bays. The Leonardtown is experiencing rapid growth along this corridor, with 3 major subdivisions of 100+ homes each under construction and a 4<sup>th</sup> in the queue that would be a mix of residential, retail and office.

**4. Completion of the repairs and reopening of the MD 6, Newmarket Road Bridge over Persimmon Creek**

Tropical Storm Isaias washed out this bridge in August 2020. St. Mary's County requests a speedy completion of the replacement structure to reopen the bridge. The detour causes significant delays to both motorized and non-motorized traffic.

## **HIGHWAY PROJECTS**

**1. Overlay Program**

We are happy to see a continued level of increased funding for badly needed overlay projects. A higher-than-average funding for that effort, combined with lower asphalt prices will be needed to restore Maryland's roads to their once Nation leading condition. Please investigate paving MD 235, south of MD 5 in Mechanicsville, which is showing elevated levels of distress and MD 244 as it is showing signs of scaling as well.

**2. MD 249, St. George Island Shore Erosion Shoreline Resiliency Project**

Citizens living on St. George Island have registered complaints regarding the shore erosion and flooding along MD 249 at Sheaffer Lane. Representatives from St. Mary's County Government and DNR met with the State Delegation in 2018 to discuss possible solutions for MD249 in Schaeffer Lane. We appreciate the interim measures that have taken place, the study that's underway and concepts being considered. In 2018 preliminary recommendations and estimates from DNR suggested a system of breakwaters with a revetment and beach behind the revetment as well as a raised earthen berm to mitigate flooding. The DNR recommendation suggested approximately 600 linear feet of revetment. Approximately 155 homes would be cut off if that section of road were to give way during a storm event. We respectfully request funding in FY2023 for design and future years funding for construction of this project.

**3. MD 243, Newtown Neck Road Flooding Correction**

St. Mary's County and the Town of Leonardtown request that SHA undertake a targeted improvement at GPS 38.302050, -76.659390 on MD 243 to mitigate flooding on Newtowne Neck (MD 243). That state owned roadway is a critical access point between Point Lookout Road (MD 5), including a section of the Leonardtown commercial district and St. Mary's Hospital, for a substantial population of St. Mary's County residents in multiple communities along that road, including Compton, Avenmar, Breton Bay, as well as Newtowne Neck State Park and historic sites including St. Xavier's Church.

**4. MD 236 Wider Shoulders and Sight Distance Corrections**

MD 236 is major connector between MD 5 to Md 234 with poor vertical and horizontal geometry and no paved shoulders. Our biggest concern for this road is safety for the bicycles and the Amish buggies that use this route between MD5 and MD234. It also provides an important industry and farm to market connections for the agricultural, Amish and Mennonite Communities in our north county and for access to the Maryland International Raceway at the intersection of MD 236 and MD 234. But again, our main reason for this request is safety for the users. In addition, if upgraded, it could also support the item that follows below, Trails and Bikeways. To support all these needs, St. Mary's County requests the installation of paved shoulders or a side path to allow for safe travel of the buggies, bicycles, or walkers. A lower cost alternative of a pull-off shoulder area at strategic locations could be an interim step to mitigate sections with poor sight distance.

**5. Trails and Bikeways**

At the request of our increasing bicycling community, we have developed a draft County-wide Plan (attached). The County is including paved shoulders in our overlay program and requiring developers to provide facilities along their frontage. We are requesting that MDOT participate in this effort through their development review process as well as the CTP. Improved shoulders should be included in the System Preservation program and special projects. Some of the higher priority State roadways without shoulders in need of improvement include MD Route 6 from MD Route 5 to All Faith Church Road, MD245 east from MD 5 to Leonard's Grant Parkway, MD Route 5 from MD Route 243 to MD Route 245, MD Routes 236, 243, 272, and 244. We request that staff continue to discuss these priorities with SHA staff during their quarterly meetings.

In coordination with DPW&T, our Department of Economic Development is leading an effort to provide Bike Route signing on specific routes to encourage bicycle tourism and help attract and maintain a talented work force to the area.

Your continued support of the Three Notch Trail within the Transportation Enhancement Program is appreciated, including funding the Phase VII of the trail.

**PLANNING**

**1. Produce a concept improvement plan for MD 5, from Charles County line to MD 235, and MD 235 from MD 5 to MD 712 to include NAS PAX Gate 3**

With continued development of shopping areas in the north county (Charles County line to Airport Road), as well as the proposed Work Facilities Complex at NAS Patuxent River that includes five buildings of 18,000 sq. ft. each and a potential future BRAC, we are requesting that a review be conducted for widening to a consistent pavement section of the referenced roadways to mitigate current and future congestion and air quality problems.

**2. MD Route 245 and Old Three Notch Road**

With the ongoing and future development of the Hollywood Town Center as well as this intersection's current inadequate geometric alignment's safety issues for all approaches, we request a review of this intersection for a roundabout or other appropriate solution. The current unsafe geometric alignment is badly skewed with poor vertical and horizontal sight distance.

**3. MD Route 235 at MD Route 5 in Ridge, MD**

Please review this intersection and its geometric inadequacies. It currently is skewed at approximately 45 degrees, making it difficult for drivers on MD 235 to look back at oncoming traffic from the north. This junction is heavily used by tourists heading to Point Lookout and other destinations in the County. This project could be a relatively inexpensive correction with minor construction needed to the geometric problems of this intersection using right-of-way that already is owned by the state.

**SIDEWALK RETROFIT PROGRAM**

**1. MD Route 245 from MD 5 to Leonard's Grant Parkway and Town Run Drive**

St. Mary's County supports the Town of Leonardtown's request for construction funding for this project to extend the sidewalk from where it ends at Leonard Hall Drive to the Leonard's Grant Parkway intersection on the west side of MD245 due to the major residential development, a new elementary school, the recent opening of the new Leonardtown Library and Garvey Senior Activity Center as well as the future construction on the balance of the large, vacant County owned parcel where those last two facilities are located. We would also like to include a sidewalk on the east side of MD245 from Leonard Hall Drive to the Town Run Drive intersection. This will provide a safe access to a future traffic signal and crosswalk at the Leonard's Grant intersection.

**2. MD Route 4 from MD Route 235 to Wildewood Parkway**

We also request a sidewalk retrofit project along MD Route 4 to assist Wildewood residents and residents along that section of MD 4 access shopping areas along MD Route 235 on foot and bicycle. St. Mary's County has procured an engineer to design the sidewalk for this project. Our staff has been coordinating with SHA District 5 staff to scope the project. St. Mary's County is currently also funding a Traffic Impact Study for this project and a possible 4-leg traffic signal at the MD4/Wildewood Parkway intersection. Once the study and design are completed, we will provide this to MDOT to hopefully obtain funding to construct it. This improvement would link

the largest residential community in St. Mary's County to its largest shopping area and to the Three Notch Trail.

## **PUBLIC TRANSIT PROJECTS**

### **1a. MD Route 246 from MD 235 to MD 5 STS Bus Stop signs STS Transfer points**

We are requesting SHA's support for DPW&T installation of STS bus stop signs, pads, and shelters in the next fiscal year. The first location would provide safe pick-up points along Great Mills Rd./MD Rt. 246 for STS Bus passengers to board and disembark from the buses. In addition, this would provide highway drivers cautionary points as a safety measure along the roads instead of passengers flagging the bus for transportation to avoid vehicle or pedestrian accidents. We would also ask your consideration of support for a hub/transfer station at one of the parcels of land at the California Boulevard project that was conveyed to the State.

### **1b. MD Route 235 From Hermanville Road to MD Route 245 Bus Stop Signs**

The second location for STS bus signs, pads, and shelters would be along MD 235 from Hermanville Road in Lexington Park to Hollywood Leonardtown Rd. in Hollywood.

### **2. Tulagi Place STS Transfer Point Relocation**

We are also seeking MTA's support to move the STS bus transfer point at Tulagi Place in Lexington Park to another location. Building a more accommodating facility at Tulagi Place is not an option due to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station fly-over restrictions.

We look forward to receiving the final CTP and to discussing the continued progress on these local and regional projects during all the times that we meet with you and your staff, including the fall pre-tour, the fall tour, MACO meetings, meetings between County Staff and MTA and the quarterly meetings held between our County staff and SHA District 5. Your support and responsiveness to the transportation needs of St. Mary's County is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,  
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

  
James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/JG/sf  
T:/Consent/2022/124

Attachments

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey  
Delegate Matthew Morgan  
Delegate Gerald Clark  
Delegate Brian Crosby  
Commissioner Eric Colvin  
Commissioner Michael Hewitt  
Commissioner Todd Morgan  
Commissioner John O'Connor  
Mayor Dan Burris, Town of Leonardtown  
Ms. Kim Tran, District 5 Engineer  
Ms. Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming, MDOT  
Ms Kari Snyder, Regional Planner, Office of Planning, MDOT  
Mr. John Hartline, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland  
Mr. Dave Weiskopf, Interim County Administrator  
Mr. James M. Gotsch, P.E., Director, Department of Public Works & Transportation  
Mr. Bill Hunt, Director, Land Use & Growth Management