

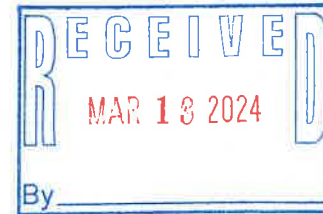
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ST. MARY'S COUNTY



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March 12, 2024

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548, Mail Stop 200
Hanover, MD 21076



Re: FY 2025 Transportation Program Priorities

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit St. Mary's County's priorities for your use in preparing the FY 2025 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

St. Mary's County understands that Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has significant challenges with determining how funding will be allocated to transportation needs throughout the state. We have also submitted these high priority projects for the Chapter 725 and Chapter 30 scoring process to gain eligibility for state funding. Copies of the letter will be sent to local delegations for their endorsement.

CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM PROJECTS

NOTE: Thomas Johnson Bridge/ MD Route 4

This project was our #1 overall priority from 2002 to 2021. The benefits of a widened bridge are well understood, to 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. We understand a new study has been funded; however, we see no progress toward construction and the MDOT budget zeroed the project out for future years funding. We ask that the next phase of this project, full design, continue to move forward.

NOTE: MD Route 5 (SM 2105171, Point Lookout Road), from MD Route 246 (Great Mills Road) to MD Route 471 (Indian Bridge Road) – 4 Lane Urban Reconstruct

St. Mary's County would like to thank MDOT for accepting this project into the CTP Construction Program and facilitating the design and construction of this critical road improvement project. 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 continue to be expedited so that construction can begin as scheduled, FY 2026. We are pleased 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. St. Mary's County has also requested additional funding from the State Legislature to restore the funding which would allow bidding later this year as originally planned.

NOTE: MD 249 (SM 2595174), Raise Roadway Thomas Road to Stark Drive – Drainage Improvement

St. Mary's County would like to thank MDOT for accepting this project into the CTP Construction Program and facilitating the design and construction of this critical road improvement project. We understand that the funding has been pushed further out for budget constraints. We would also like to thank MDOT for their proactive approach of pursuing grants to get this project funding from other sources. MDOT has created a project to raise the road between Thomas Road to Stark Drive, approximately 2-miles in length. St. Mary's County is funding raising the road beyond the SHA limit of work and SHA Right-of-Way and have adjusted our funding to match the anticipated MDOT CTP schedule.

1. MD Route 4 (St. Andrews Church Road) 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 we are requesting funding for MDOT to extend the MD4 north right lane from Patuxent Boulevard to the north end of South Patuxent Beach Road. This design can work in conjunction with Thomas Johnson Bridge concept plan. This would shift the congestion away from the MD235/MD4 intersection. The additional lane width can be accommodated without replacement of the existing bridge over Kingston Creek.

2. 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, 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. Leonardtown is experiencing rapid growth along this corridor, with 3 major subdivisions of 100+ homes each under construction and a 4th in the queue that would be a mix of residential, retail and office.

HIGHWAY PROJECTS

1. **Overlay Program**

We request increased funding for critical overlay projects due to inflated asphalt prices to restore Maryland's roads to their once Nation leading condition. Please investigate paving MD 235, from Mechanicsville to Charlotte Hall, which is showing elevated levels of distress and MD 244, from Whirlwind Road to Chingville Road, as it is showing signs of scaling as well. Overlay of MD 5 near intersection with MD 246 is requested if roadway improvement project doesn't move forward.

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 at 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 FY2025 for design and in the 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 Nelson Run (GPS 38.302050, -76.659390) on Newtowne Neck (MD 243) to mitigate flooding. 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 (Thompson Corner Road) Wider Shoulders and Sight Distance Corrections**

MD 236 is a 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. It also provides important industry and farm to market connections for the agricultural, Amish and Mennonite Communities in our north county as well as access to the Maryland International Raceway at the intersection of MD 236 and MD 234. In addition, if upgraded, it could also support the items that follow 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, and 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.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

1. Bikeways

Your continued support of the Three Notch Trail within the Transportation Enhancement Program is appreciated, including funding the Phase VII of the trail from the Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad (HVRS) property to the Wildewood Community along Three Notch Road. The design and construction phases of Phases VIII and IX connect this 7-mile portion from HVRS to Baggett Park. Ultimately this project will connect with the Indian Head rail Trail in Charles County and has the potential to be a significant recreational commute, and tourism facility for the Tri-County area. An additional connection from the southern terminus of the Wildewood Community is proposed along FDR Boulevard between Route 235 and Route 4 which will connect the 10-foot-wide trail to the existing trail along FDR Boulevard ending at MD 237. Additional construction of FDR Boulevard and the trail is underway to extend the trail to Pegg Road, near Gate 1 of the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River (NAS PAX). Funding for the connection to the existing crosswalk at the Pegg Road and MD 235 intersection would be helpful.

2. Sidewalk at 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 concept sidewalk plan for this project. The Traffic Impact Study and concept sidewalk plan for this project, along with an essential 4th-leg to the existing traffic signal at the MD4/Wildewood Parkway intersection, have been submitted to MDOT for review. This improvement would link the largest residential community in St. Mary's County to its largest shopping area and to the Three Notch Trail.

3. Three Notch Trail Overpass at MD Route 6

To improve traffic through the southern end of Charlotte Hall at the MD Route 5 and 6 intersection, St. Mary's County would like to create an overpass for the Three Notch Trail over MD Route 6. The overpass would remove a dangerous crossing of a State Highway currently posted at 50 mph. Initial funding will provide design and construction estimates. Once approved, additional funding will be requested for construction.

4. Sidewalk at MD Route 245 Feasibility Study for Hiker Biker Connection to the Three Notch Trail

We are requesting a feasibility study to connect Leonardtown to the Three Notch Trail along the MD 245 corridor. Currently the large shoulder is interrupted at several subdivisions making bicycling and pedestrian access dangerous.

5. Bicycle Compatible Shoulders

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 and MDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Study. 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 6 from MD 5 to All Faith Church Road, MD 245 east from MD 5 to Leonard's Grant Parkway, MD 5 from MD 243 to MD 245, MD 5 Southbound at MD 4, 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.

PLANNING

1. MD Route 235 at FDR Blvd Intersection, California

A signaled full movement intersection at MD 235 and FDR Blvd would positively affect the MD 235 and MD 4 intersection level of service and create a safer junction for both pedestrian and vehicle traffic. This intersection improvement will give the north bound traffic along FDR Blvd and east bound traffic along MD 4 an additional option that helps mitigate the number of vehicles at the MD 4 and MD 235 intersection while also better serving the residential and business developments along the section of FDR Blvd between MD 4 and MD 235.

2. MD Route 245 at Old Three Notch Road Intersection, Hollywood

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 seriously skewed with poor vertical and horizontal sight distance.

3. MD Route 5 at MD Route 6 Intersection, Charlotte Hall

This intersection is currently operating at a Level of Service D. Lane striping and signal timing efforts have been evaluated and completed to achieve this level of service. Creating an overpass for North and South MD 5 to continuously flow would positively affect the level of service while increasing vehicular and pedestrian safety. Road Widening could be evaluated as an alternative.

4. MD Route 235 at MD Route 5, Intersection, Ridge

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 on MD 5 headed southbound. 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.

PUBLIC TRANSIT PROJECTS

1a. MD Route 246 between MD 235 and MD 5, St. Mary's County Transit System (STS) Bus Stop signs / Transfer points

We are requesting MDOT's support for the Department of Public Works & Transportation (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 MD Route 246/Great Mills Road 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 thank MDOT for providing four of the first five sign permit requests to date. 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

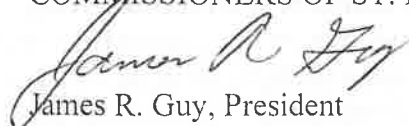
The second location for STS bus signs, pads, and shelters would be along MD 235 from Hermanville Road in Lexington Park to MD 245 Hollywood Leonardtown Road in Hollywood.

2. Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry

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.

We look forward to receiving the final CTP selections and discussing the continued progress towards these local and regional projects. We eagerly anticipate further conversations during the multiple meetings between State and Local staff. Your support and responsiveness to the transportation needs of St. Mary's County is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY



James R. Guy, President

CSMC/JG/sf
T:/Consent/2024/054

CC: Senator John D. (Jack) Bailey
Delegate Todd B. Morgan
Delegate Matt Morgan
Delegate Brian M. Crosby
Commissioner Michael Alderson
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Scott Ostrow
Mayor Daniel Burris, Town of Leonardtown
Mr. Simon Chacha, District 5 Engineer
Ms. Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming, MDOT
Ms. Sean Varsolona, Regional Planner, Office of Planning, MDOT
Mr. John Hartline, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
Mr. David A. Weiskopf, County Administrator
Mr. James M. Gotsch, Director, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Ms. Courtney Jenkins, Deputy Director, Land Use & Growth Management