



TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND

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April 15, 2021

The Honorable Gregory Slater, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Drive
P.O. Box 548, Mail Stop 200
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Re: FY 2022 Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Slater:

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is pleased to submit our Regional Transportation Priorities for inclusion in the FY 2022-2027 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These regional priority projects are a result of collaboration among the Boards of County Commissioners and staff of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties. The projects listed below originated from each County's individual priority letters, which were reviewed and agreed upon by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). The top priorities were unanimously adopted by the Executive Board of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland at the April 15, 2021 meeting of the Board and subsequently unanimously adopted by the membership of the Full Council at the Full Council meeting on the same day.

Looking into the future and building on this collaboration, we would like to present our top two Regional Priorities. While we understand there is very limited funding for completion, we are compelled to acknowledge our urgent regional needs as they relate to current county projects and annual CTP. In addition, we provided several Significant Regional Long-Term projects that are based on enduring regional priorities such as planning, pedestrian safety and bicycling interconnecting the region.

Top Regional Priority: *The TCCSMD continues to recommend the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement as the top regional highway bridge project and the Long-term Top Regional Priority. This project has been included in the CTP since FY 2007 and will relieve commuter congestion, improve safety/emergency evacuation, and will properly position the Naval Air Station Patuxent River for future BRAC activities and other mobilizations. In FY2019, the project received \$750,000, but, since that date, there has been little to no visible progress and the subsequent MDOT budget removed future spending.*

Regional Priority: *The Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project provides fixed-route, high-capacity transit service in the MD Route 5/US 301 corridor from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to Waldorf/White Plains in Charles County. The SMRT project is estimated to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips on MD 5 (Branch Avenue) by 24,000 to 28,000 vehicles each day and will enhance the Southern Maryland job base. Support for funding the SMRT extends back decades. Recently, in 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 414 and SB 81 which grants funding for design.*

In addition to these top long-term priorities, the Council also supports several significant regional long-term priorities. These projects are enduring, regionwide and support multi-modal transportation connections.

A summary list of all prioritized projects is provided below, and more complete description of each project is provided under the Attachment:

Urban Reconstruction Priority:

- MD Route 4 Merge Lane Extension to North End of South Patuxent Beach Road- Design & Engineering Phase (***Regional Priority***)
- MD Route 5 from MD Route 246 (Great Mills Road) to MD Route 249- Design & Engineering (Piney Point Road) (***Regional Priority***)
- MD 2/4 Widening Phase IIIA and IIIB

Traffic Management Priority:

- Regional Transit Support

Planning Priority:

- US 301 Corridor Waldorf Improvements (***Regional Priority***)
- MD 231 Corridor Assessment Study (***Regional Priority***)

Safety Priority:

- Controlled crosswalk at US 301 and Smallwood Drive (***Regional Priority***)
- MD 236 Shoulders and Sight Distance Corrections (***Regional Priority***)

Transportation Alternatives Program

- Indian Head Trail-Three Notch Trail Interconnection Extension Feasibility
- Three Notch Trail Phases VIII and IX

Finally, we would like to thank the Secretary and his staff for funding several important projects in each of the Counties. Rapid construction progress is continuing on the new Nice-Middleton bridge and we are excited about the 2022 opening. The planned extension of the Three Notch Trail in St Mary's county will encourage more non-motorized connectivity resulting in fewer greenhouse gasses as supported in the Maryland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act. The recently funded Route 2/4 widening project in Prince Frederick is encouraging more commercial development in our Town Centers, such as the proposed Armory Square site.

Because of MDOT's inclusive CTP process, we believe these projects are more valued by southern Maryland citizens. It is vitally important that we build on the current progress with funding of the planning, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition for these urgently needed and long-standing regional priorities in the coming fiscal year. We continue to be confident that the Maryland Department of Transportation, working with the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and our local government partners, will do everything possible to ensure that essential steps are included in the FY 2022-2027 CTP to continue making progress on these

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priorities toward future implementation. We thank you for your support, consideration, and affirmative action with respect to these important Southern Maryland Regional Projects.

Respectfully submitted,



Commissioner Steve Weems
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Chair
Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee, Chair

Cc: The Honorable Steny Hoyer, United States Congressman
The Honorable Ben Cardin, United States Senator
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, United States Senator
The Honorable Rubin Collins II, President, Charles County Commissioners
The Honorable Randy Guy, President, St. Mary's County Commissioners
The Honorable Earl F. "Buddy" Hance, President, Calvert County Commissioners

ATTACHMENT
TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND PRIORITY PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Long-term Regional Priority

- **MD Route 4 Merge Lane Extension to North End of South Patuxent Beach Road:** Funding requested 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. This would shift the congestion away from the MD 235/MD 4 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 to allow for continuous flow from MD235/MD4 intersection to the bridge as part of this project. In support of the Top Regional Priority Project, this project is already part of the overall bridge project concept. **(Urban Reconstruction- Design & Engineering Priority)**

- **MD Route 5 from MD Route 246 (Great Mills Road) to MD Route 249 (Piney Point Road):** Proposal to design and acquire right-of-way to include a pavement section with 4 lanes and a new bridge and bike/pedestrian facilities. The full project design funding had been previously provided through FY 2020. For FY 2019, it was proposed to take two additional years to design the project (through 2022). We are concerned with this two-year delay, and request that this project design and right-of-way acquisition be expedited. 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. **(Urban Reconstruction- Design & Engineering Priority)**

- **MD 236 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 and thus dangerous for bikes, pedestrians, and horse drawn buggies. It 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. To support all of 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 **(Safety/Spot Improvement)**.

- **MD 5 Business/MD 925 Corridor Improvements-** Recommended implementing the County Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC) by supporting proposed reconstruction improvements. The proposed improvements are consistent with the longer-term Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Reconstruction should result in Urban Arterial with barrier-separated bicycle lanes, expanded sidewalks and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations at

intersections to assist the County in creating the planned walkable transit-oriented community. **(Urban Reconstruction-Construction Priority)**.

- **US 301 Corridor Waldorf Improvements:** Provide needed corridor improvements along US 301 in Waldorf and White Plains. As congestion in the region continues to increase, the MD 5 (Branch Avenue) and US 301 corridors continue to carry the largest volume of vehicles in Southern Maryland. While our primary priority is delivering high-capacity transit in the region, it is understood that such transit service would not serve all destinations. This corridor also experiences significant increases in truck traffic as an alternate route to Interstate 95 further contributing to congestion. This project would also include the design improvements at MD 5 (Mattawoman-Beantown Road) as well as MD 228 (Berry Road), as previously funded in the FY 2019-2024 CTP. **(Planning Priority)**
- **Controlled crosswalk at US 301 and Smallwood Drive:** The nearby Park and Ride facility creates high peak hour use. There is a large residential community located nearby which generates significant pedestrian traffic at this intersection. We request the extension of crosswalks from the existing sidewalks and provides signal phases for pedestrians. **(Safety/Spot Improvement Priority)**

Significant Regional Long-Term Priorities

Planning Priority:

- **MD 231 Corridor Assessment Study:** As the top regional state highway project, the TCCSMD recommends the CTP budget include funding for the MD Route 231 Corridor Assessment Study. MD 231 highway is a major artery that strategically links with other regional arterials such as MD 2/4, MD 235 and MD 5. This commerce/education corridor will encourage economic development as well as increasing access to the College of Southern Maryland. These connections allow inter-county mobility without leaving the region. The roadway serves the entire region by increasing access improving security and emergency preparedness. **(Planning Priority)**
- **MD 2/4 Widening Phase IIIA and IIIB:** Completion of the MD 2/4 widening from the southern end of MD 765 in Prince Frederick beginning at Industry Lane and ending north of Auto Drive, with access control and turning movement restrictions **(Urban Reconstruction-construction Priority)**.

Transit Priority:

- **Regional Transit Support:** Enhanced Commuter bus services, signage and additional Park and Rides in the three counties **(Traffic Management Priority)**.

- **Hughesville Campus Transportation Hub:** Development of a Transportation Hub located on or adjacent to the Hughesville Campus of the College of Southern Maryland, including the extension of MD 625-A (Foster Lane) to MD 231 (**Urban Reconstruction Priority**).

Regional bicycle trail and pedestrian safety priority:

- **Three Notch Trail (Phase VIII & IX):** Design and engineering is underway for Phase VII of the trail from the Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad (HVRS) property, near MD Route 245 to the Wildwood Community along Three Notch Road. Phases VIII & IX are in the planning stages. The design and construction phases will connect this 7-mile portion from the HVRS to Baggett Park (**Transportation Alternatives Program Priority**).
- **Indian Head Trail-Three Notch Trail Interconnection Extension Feasibility:** Complete the feasibility study and initiate design and engineering for the extension of the Indian Head Trail to connect to the Three Notch Trail in the Hughesville area (via MD Bikeways Grant). This extension would permit possible future connection with the National Capital Trail system. This study has the lone-term objective of making bicycle trips from the Town of Indian Head to Lexington Park possible and safe (**Transportation Alternatives Program Priority**).
- **Nice Middleton Bridge:** The Bridge replacement has been finalized and is under construction. We request that MDOT continues to seek alternative designs such as van shuttles to provide separated bicycle and pedestrian accommodation at the Nice Middleton Bridge.
- **Dunkirk & Prince Frederick Bikeways Feasibility Studies:** In September 2020, the project was previously awarded funds to determine the feasibility and design of shared use path alignments serving important commercial, recreational, and residential destinations in the Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Town Centers. (**Transportation Alternatives Program Priority**)