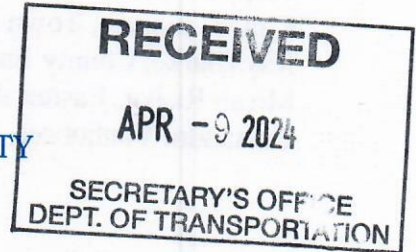




COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

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April 1, 2024

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

RE: Talbot County – 2024 Priority Listing

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

The Talbot County Council endorsed the attached list of priority projects for Talbot County at our meeting on March 26, 2024. Please note that this year's listing includes information not only on roads infrastructure, but Easton Airport safety improvements, and incorporated municipalities' projects.

The Council looks forward to meeting with you and representatives from the Maryland Department of Transportation this fall for the annual Consolidated Transportation Plan meeting. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please contact Ray Clarke, County Engineer, at (410) 770-8170 or Micah Risher, Airport Manager, at (410) 770-8055.

Sincerely,
COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

Chuck F. Callahan, President

CFC/jkm
Attachment

Cc: Heather R. Murphy, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, MDOT
The Honorable Johnny Mautz
The Honorable Christopher Adams
The Honorable Tom Hutchinson

Mayor and Town Council, Town of Easton
Commissioners, Town of Oxford
Mayor and Commissioners, Town of Queen Anne
Trappe Town Council
Commissioners, Town of St. Michaels
Ray Clarke, County Engineer
Micah Risher, Easton Airport Manager
Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Economic Development and Tourism

2024 Priority Listing for MDOT

PRIORITY RANKING	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
1	<p><u>MD Route 322/US 50 Intersection – North</u></p> <p>This intersection includes cross traffic vehicle maneuvers between two high-volume, high-speed roadways, and merging of vehicles in the fast lane of traffic in the eastbound lane of US Route 50. In the past couple of years there has consistently been, and continues to be, a significant number of personal injury and property damage crashes, including an unacceptable number of fatalities. Consistent with the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the highway infrastructure at this location should be evaluated and improved as soon as possible in an effort to rectify this public infrastructure deficiency.</p>
2	<p><u>MD Route 33 Capacity, Safety and Evacuation Improvements</u></p> <p>During weather-related emergencies such as Tropical Storm Isabel and Hurricane Irene, this corridor experienced areas of significant flooding, limiting ingress and egress from this portion of the county. <i>The MD Route 33 corridor is the sole evacuation route for this populated neck or peninsula.</i> Accordingly, elevation modification to eliminate or minimize storm surge road flooding, as well as capacity improvements, should be pursued to protect the lives and safety of citizens in this area. Also, portions of this corridor between the Town of St. Michaels and the Town of Easton experience some weekday capacity issues which are anticipated to increase in the future. Traffic counts show that portions of MD Route 33 have heavy traffic volume, particularly near its intersection with MD Route 322. As an interim measure, the MD Route 33 corridor should be evaluated for any issues or problems that would need to be resolved with future improvements, along with completing a study related to safety issues that could be addressed through traffic signals.</p>
3	<p><u>MD Route 333, Oxford Causeway</u></p> <p>This area of MD Route 333 within the Town of Oxford (near intersection with South Morris Street) continues to flood during storm events and even during many high tides. This problem will only continue to expand with sea level rise and increasing extreme storm events. As the only access to the historic portion of the town, these flooding events have become a safety concern, not only for emergency vehicle access, but also evacuation of town residents and visitors during severe storms. The State should work with the Town of Oxford to elevate this roadway segment to eliminate or minimize flooding restrictions to this sole means of access to the Town of Oxford.</p>
4	<p><u>MD Route 329 (Royal Oak Road) Safety Improvements</u></p> <p>This roadway serves as the primary means of ingress and egress for the communities in and around the villages of Royal Oak and Bellevue, in addition to being a significant tourism corridor for these communities and beyond. Paralleling MD Route 33, this roadway provides an alternative route for MD Route 33 (see priority number 1 above, evacuation corridor). The importance</p>

2024 Priority Listing for MDOT

	of this alternative route is compounded, considering the aging status of the bridge carrying MD Route 33 traffic over Oak Creek.
<u>Address Safety Issues for Cross Street Traffic on Route 50</u>	
5-A	<p><u>US Route 50/MD Route 328 – Goldsborough Street Intersection Improvements</u></p> <p>This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes at all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Goldsborough Street, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection.</p>
5-B	<p><u>MD Route 50/MD Route 331 – Dover Street Intersection Improvements</u></p> <p>This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes for all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Dover Street, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection.</p>
5-C	<p><u>US Route 50/Chapel Road - Intersection Improvements</u></p> <p>This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes for all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Chapel Road, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection.</p> <p><i>An overpass should be planned as a long-term solution for Priority Rankings 5-A through 5-C.</i></p>
6	<p><u>US Route 50/MD Route 309/MD Route 662 Intersection Capacity Improvements</u></p> <p>As a result of increasing traffic for the growing Easton Airport, Talbot County Community Center and the likely relocation of the UMMS – Regional Medical Center to Longwoods Road (MD Route 662), one of our top priorities would be the construction of an expanded intersection to allow for increased crossover traffic.</p>
7	<p><u>Airport Road/MD 662/US Route 50 Intersection</u></p> <p>Airport Road, west of this intersection, has become a significant “bypass” route around Easton to and from the Bay Hundred peninsula (St. Michaels area), in addition to the aforementioned growth in Priority Ranking #6. Talbot County is in the process of pursuing reconstruction of this roadway. The Talbot County Community Center facility ties into the MD 662/US Route 50 intersections, which currently possess poor intersection spacing/geometry. In the short term, analysis, design and reconstruction of this area should be pursued to facilitate</p>

2024 Priority Listing for MDOT

	capacity and safe flow of vehicles through these intersections and to/from the County road.
8	<p><u>Frederick Douglass Recreational Trail from the Town of Easton to the Town of Queen Anne</u></p> <p>Talbot County has been working with the Maryland Department of Transportation agencies, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and other State and local stakeholders on preliminary planning for the Frederick Douglass Recreational Trail. This effort has been underway for five years. The alignment of this alternative transportation/recreational trail is the former Pennsylvania Railroad and Maryland & Delaware Railroad rights-of-way from the Town of Easton to the Town of Queen Anne. Talbot County seeks continued support for this project including funding for the design and construction of this beneficial alternative transportation and recreational facility.</p>

Easton Airport – Airfield Modernization Program

The Airfield Modernization Program – Construction Phase 2 is planned to begin in January 2025. This phase includes the demolition of the former Black & Decker commercial building on Glebe Road, utility relocation and site grading. Phase 2 will improve the Runway Safety Area (RSA) of the primary Runway 4/22 ahead of the shift in operations by 1,900 ft. southwest of the current location.

These safety improvements will bring the runway into full compliance with FAA design standards. This is critical for the long-term financial sustainability of the airport and economic benefits derived by the County. Classified as a “National” general aviation airport by the FAA, Easton Airport supports the national and state system by providing communities with access to national and international markets in multiple states and throughout the country.

Town of Easton

- **MD-322/Glenwood Avenue Intersection - Crosswalks**
The Town of Easton is working with SHA to improve the intersection with a dedicated Center Turn Lane, Traffic Signal, and Crosswalk. The Town’s Trail system includes a proposed at-grade crossing using a crosswalk at this intersection.
- **US-50/Goldsborough and US-50/Dover Road Intersections – Crosswalks**
The Town of Easton has heard presentations from SHA and their consultants over the past several years about proposed US-50 improvements from Lomax Street to Dutchmans Lane. The Town would like to ensure crosswalks at these intersections are included in the final design.
- **US-50/Norris Taylor Drive - Traffic Signal**
The Town of Easton is working with SHA to design/permit/install a Traffic Signal at this intersection to improve safety. Norris Taylor Drive provides access to Royal Farms, a proposed Burger King, the undeveloped Lepidus property, and the Town’s John F. Ford Park.

2024 Priority Listing for MDOT

- **US-50 (Chapel Road - High Street) - Dedicated Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes**
The Town of Easton has heard presentations from SHA and their consultants over the past several years about proposed US-50 improvements from Lomax Street to Dutchmans Lane. The Town has expressed a desire for the design to include dedicated acceleration/deceleration lanes to improve safety and benefit emergency responders traveling on US-50.
- **US-50 - Improved Cross Traffic for Summertime Traffic**
The Town of Easton would like to work with SHA to discuss alternatives to improve cross traffic in the summertime. A significant percentage of our residential community is located on the east side of US-50, and a significant percentage of our commercial properties, as well as our downtown, is on the west side of US-50. We would like to explore alternatives to improve cross traffic, especially in the summertime.
- **US-50/Goldsborough & US-50/Dover - Additional Through Traffic Lanes for Stacking**
The Town of Easton would like to work with SHA to discuss additional through lanes. These streets see significant backups, especially in the summertime.
- **MD-328 (Matthewstown Road) - Sidewalks**
The Town of Easton is working with SHA to design sidewalks from US-50 to the eastern Town boundary near Hunter's Mill. This project will improve pedestrian safety and connect the residential neighborhoods to the commercial businesses in the area.
- **Rails To Trails - East-West Trail (Aurora Street - Over US-50 - Easton Club East)**
The Town has discussed with SHA our plans to design/permit/construct a trail from our existing "T" intersection of our North-South Trail and new East-West Trail near Aurora Street/Maryland Avenue, east toward US-50, install a pedestrian bridge over US-50, and for the trail to extend to Easton Club East.
- **Chapel Road (West Side of US-50) - Dedicated Right Turn Lane**
The Town is working with SHA to design/permit/install a dedicated right turn lane and make necessary traffic signal adjustments.

Town of Oxford

- **Bikeway Project**
The Town of Oxford is working with Talbot Thrive and seeking funding from MDOT Bikeways regarding a Shared Trail through town with the hope of connection at some point to the Oxford Conservation Park. This would be a rails to trails concept, as the railroad did leave Oxford (basically where Pier Street is now located) and travel to Easton.

Town of Queen Anne

- Efforts were made to contact the Town of Queen Anne requesting any SHA projects that the Town would like to add to the CTP.
- If SHA has any projects planned in or around the Town of Queen Anne, the County requests that SHA contact Town Officials.

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Town of Trappe

- Town of Trappe has no projects at this time.
- If SHA has any projects planned in or around the Town of Trappe, the County requests that SHA contact Town Officials.

Town of St. Michaels

- **St. Michaels Nature Trail Extension**

The Town has recently received an MDOT grant to study the feasibility of extending the ever-popular St. Michaels Nature Trail (Rails-to-Trails) 1.2 miles north to Perry Cabin Park. The location of the future trail extension is proposed to be along a MDOT right-of-way that was planned for a downtown highway detour but was never implemented. The current 1.1-mile trail is used extensively by both visitors and residents in St. Michaels, allowing for safe and pleasant passage for walkers and bikers alike. The proposed eight-foot-wide trail would serve as another great tourist attraction for St. Michaels and greater Talbot County. Once the feasibility study is completed in late summer of 2023, total project costs will be better defined, allowing the Town to pursue trail grant monies to construct this expanded recreational amenity.

- **Inn at Perry Cabin Sidewalk Construction**

Currently, there is no pedestrian sidewalk connection between the Inn at Perry Cabin and the Town of St. Michaels, requiring hotel guests to walk on MD Rt. 33 to access the many St. Michaels businesses and restaurants. This is a very unsafe situation with motorists travelling in excess of 50 m.p.h. a few feet away from pedestrians. Grant monies would be used to design and construct a detached sidewalk on MDOT right-of-way. The project is estimated to be 900 l.f. and a high priority for both the Town and the Inn at Perry Cabin, a major economic driver for our region.

State Transportation Improvement Projects (STIP) Talbot County Road Projects to be added to the STIP

1. **Black Dog Alley**

Black Dog Alley has become a collector road in the eastern portion of Talbot County, with increased traffic using a narrow roadway with drainage ditches serving as the shoulders of this roadway. In 2005/2006, the section of Black Dog Alley between Chapel Road and Matthewstown Road (Maryland Route 328) was widened with two 11-foot wide vehicle travel lanes and paved shoulders having a width of about 4-feet. To complete the road and drainage improvements, Talbot County had to secure rights-of-way from property owners prior to receiving construction bids. With increased traffic in the county and along US Route 50, Black Dog Alley currently has significant truck traffic and when there are backups on US Route 50; a lot of beach traffic will then use Black Dog Alley. The section of Black Dog Alley between Dover Road (Maryland Route 331) and Matthewstown Road (Maryland Route 328) has a pavement width between 18 to 20 feet with no shoulders and deep ditches. With this section of Black Dog Alley being an

2024 Priority Listing for MDOT

old "farm to market" road, the County only has a prescriptive easement for the road, thus right-of-way via a fee simple interest is needed to construct road widening improvements and improved drainage. This section of roadway also has a stream crossing that will probably require a bottomless culvert, and the road section will consist of two 11-foot-wide vehicle travel lanes, paved shoulders 4-8 feet wide, improved drainage ditches, and possibly off-line stormwater best management practices. To complete nearly \$10.0 to \$14.0 million worth of road improvements, Talbot County will be seeking federal aid through the USDOT.

2. Airport Road

Airport Road has become the eastern end of the St. Michaels Bypass linking St. Michaels Road (Maryland Route 33) to US Route 50. With the proposed Regional Medical Center/Hospital to be located near the Talbot County Community Center with US Route 50 access, improvements to Airport Road are needed for increased traffic along with establishing a major roadway to be used by emergency vehicles attempting to get to the new Regional Medical Center/Hospital. To improve Airport Road, Talbot County is working to secure land to establish a right-of-way that will allow for a new, two-lane road with 11-foot wide travel lanes and wide paved shoulders to provide 39-40 feet of pavement that will accommodate left turn lanes and modified accel/decel lanes. In addition to the road improvements, drainage improvements are needed along with a bottomless culvert. With the Runway Protection Zones impacting Airport Road, the proposed road improvements need to accommodate FAA requirements, and at the intersection of Maryland Route 662 and Airport Road and the intersection of US Route 50 and Airport Road, Talbot County will need to work with SHA to develop intersection improvements that will more than likely require that the US Route 50 intersection be synchronized with Maryland Route 662. The total cost of road and drainage improvements of Airport Road are estimated to be \$10.0 million, and Talbot County will be seeking federal aid to assist with this project.

3. Goldsborough Neck Road

Goldsborough Neck Road connects Airport Road to Glebe Road that assists in the conveyance of St. Michaels Bypass traffic to US Route 50. In addition, improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road will assist emergency vehicles attempting to get to the new Region Medial Center/Hospital that will be near the Talbot County Community Center on US Route 50. Talbot County has completed improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road in phases, but with the proposed new Regional Medial Center/Hospital, road and drainage improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road need to be completed at the same time Airport Road improvements are being completed. Talbot County has completed a major culvert replacement at the intersection of Glebe Road and Goldsborough Neck Road, and the design and permitting of widening another culvert under Goldsborough Neck Road is expected to start in mid to late 2024. To complete all the road and drainage improvements for Goldsborough Neck Road from Glebe Road to Airport Road is estimated to cost approximately \$8.0 million. Again, Talbot County seeks to add this project to the STIP to allow Talbot County to seek federal aid for completing the road and drainage improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road.