

# COUNTY COMMISSIONERS *of* CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND

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COUNTY ATTORNEY

May 22, 2012

Mr. Donald A. Halligan, Director  
Office of Planning and Capital Programming  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: Caroline County Transportation Priority Projects

Dear Mr. Halligan:

The County Commissioners of Caroline County submit to the Maryland Department of Transportation the following priority capital projects:

## Replacement of Dover Bridge on MD 331

The current bridge is nearly 80 years old and has been rated as functionally obsolete. Dover Bridge serves as a major thoroughfare between Southern Caroline and Northern Dorchester Counties and Talbot County. The bridge has well documented mechanical problems which negatively affect emergency and commercial services between the counties. When the bridge becomes stuck in the open position, it creates a delay for commuters and a lengthy, very dangerous detour for emergency vehicles. Dover Bridge also does not meet National Highway Standard, which require 12 foot lanes. Dover Bridge has only 10 foot lanes, which makes it difficult for large vehicles, trucks, and emergency vehicles to safely pass. The replacement of the bridge is consistent with the transportation element of the 2010 Caroline County Comprehensive Plan.

The replacement of Dover Bridge addresses several of the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan:

1. **Quality of Service:** The replacement of Dover Bridge is of primary concern to residents in three counties and its replacement would greatly increase their confidence in the safety and reliability of the bridge, which in turn creates a much more positive view of MDOT and its services.
2. **Safety and Security:** As noted above, Dover Bridge connects the significant population centers of Preston, Federalsburg, and northern Dorchester County to the hospital and other medical facilities in Easton. Wider lanes will also permit large vehicles to pass safely and provide shoulders for cyclists and pedestrians, reducing accidents and risk to travelers.

**Courthouse**  
Telephone 410.479.0660

109 Market Street, Rm. 123  
[www.carolinemd.org](http://www.carolinemd.org)

Denton, Maryland 21629  
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3. **Connectivity to Daily Life:** Route 331 is a significant connector for the towns and industrial parks located in southern Caroline County. Its replacement will allow goods and commuters to travel more easily between our county and Easton, which is the major economic hub of the Mid-Shore.

#### Dualization of Route 404


Maryland Route 404 is the major cross corridor in the county that carries traffic between State Route 50 and Delaware State Route 13. Both route 50 and 13 are dual lane corridors that carry high volumes of traffic to large population centers. Route 404 is used to connect these urban centers to beaches on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware. The expansion of this roadway is consistent with the transportation element of the 2010 Caroline County Comprehensive Plan.

The dualization of Route 404 addresses several of the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan:

1. **Quality of Service:** Widening of the roadway will decrease travel time and the frustration associated with congestion for both routine commuters and beachgoers, thereby creating a more positive experience.
2. **Safety and Security:** Route 404 has high traffic volume and a high rate of accidents. The recently dedicated Memorial Garden outside of Denton pays tribute to the more than 90 people who have lost their lives on this roadway. Many of these deaths, and countless serious injuries, could have been avoided by a dualized, safer highway.
3. **Environmental Stewardship:** Reduced congestion on this roadway will also help to reduce the amount of air pollution caused by idling cars and trucks, thereby increasing the quality of life for area residents.

The Commissioners recognize that transportation funds are limited and the Department must carefully weigh the priority projects of each jurisdiction. However, both of the projects we have identified have been on the County's priority list for years and have significant safety impacts. Therefore, we respectfully request the Department's support for the replacement of the Dover Bridge on MD 331 between Caroline and Talbot County and the full dualization of Route 404. These improvements will greatly benefit the state transit system as well as enhance the transportation of Caroline County.

Sincerely,



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND  
Larry C. Porter, President

C: Caroline County State & Federal Legislative Delegations