



# Charles County Government

## CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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*County Administrator*

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Pete K. Rahn  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Thank you for the opportunity to present Charles County's transportation priorities for fiscal year 2019, in anticipation of our annual tour meeting with you in the fall. Throughout the past year, we have been working closely with the individual modal administrations of the Maryland Department of Transportation, with our elected colleagues in neighboring jurisdictions, and with the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, to address our significant local and regional priorities.

First, the County Commissioners wish to express our sincere appreciation for the funding commitment to construct the replacement of the Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge, which is slated to begin this Fiscal Year (FY2018). The new bridge will dramatically improve the significant safety concerns and associated congestion from the aging and antiquated structure, while affording the State and County an improved access to interstate commerce. We continue to encourage the Governors of Maryland and Virginia to work together with the federal government to develop a joint funding plan for this mutually beneficial interstate and regional highway infrastructure, which will lessen the burden on Maryland residents at the toll facilities.

We wish to express our continued appreciation to staff of the Maryland Transit Administration and the Maryland State Highway Administration for their sustained efforts to assist Charles and Prince George's counties in planning for fixed-route, high-capacity transit (Light Rail) service in the MD 5/U.S. 301 corridor from the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station to Waldorf and White Plains. Light Rail continues to be the transit mode preferred by the elected officials of Charles and Prince George's counties, and by the public, as expressed in numerous meetings and in comments received by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) on the draft Final Report during the public forum and comment period. Both Counties submitted official comments to MTA

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during the public comment period that state the local preferences for Alignment Alternative 4, and Beltway (I-495) Crossing Option 8A, which is recommended in the Final Report.

As you know from our previous meetings and discussions, Charles County's highest transportation priority is the completion of "project planning" for new Light Rail Transit service from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to Waldorf and White Plains. While the current Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) does not include any further funding for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project, we strongly urge you to continue the progress of both the 2010 Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study and the 2017 Alternatives Analysis document. As you know, the recently completed Alternatives Analysis for the SMRT study evaluated the merits of alternative transit modes, subjecting the proposed transit alignment and station locations to detailed analysis, updating ridership projections, and estimating the potential economic impact of the project. We have been briefed by our staff on the recommendations in the recently-edited draft which now states that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is the preferred transit mode, based on a lower initial capital cost and slightly faster estimated travel time for riders. However, upon review of the December 15, 2016 SMRT Draft Alternatives Report which was released for the public comment period, we have found that there are significant findings that support Light Rail Transit (LRT) over BRT. These findings include higher ridership numbers on nearly all LRT alignments considered, significantly higher private sector investment and property value enhancements, greater longevity of vehicles and equipment, and a lower annual operating cost. The December 15th Public Draft further highlights this disparity by stating: "As shown, all of the LRT Scenarios can be accommodated with the proposed 6-minute frequencies. However, the BRT scenarios do not have sufficient capacity to carry the peak hour loads using a single vehicle. The peak hour loads in 2040 require BRT to operate in three-bus platoons, resulting in significantly higher operating costs than LRT."

As we have mentioned on previous occasions, this is the fifth study of rapid transit service in the MD 5/U.S. 301 corridor between the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station and Charles County that has been completed in the 29 years since the elected officials of the Southern Maryland region presented their first request for State action on this priority to Governor William Donald Schaefer in 1988. While the decision in the 2017 Alternatives Report to recommend Bus Rapid Transit based on a lower initial capital cost is disappointing, we hope and expect the Project Planning phase to re-evaluate these recommendations to be consistent with the findings of the experts who were commissioned by the State to carry out this comprehensive analysis.

With regard to funding, and as stated in our April 25, 2017 letter to you, we are very concerned that MDOT's new Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) proposes that work on this project be suspended for six years, until FY 2023. After nearly 30 years of successive studies have proven the feasibility and benefit of implementing this project, work has been repeatedly suspended and progress halted, until local and regional political pressure compelled further action—in the form of another study.

As stated in our May 2017 Transportation Priority Letter, right-of-way and corridor preservation is critical to the future vitality of the SMRT project. Not only are transit needs in this congested and rapidly growing highway corridor steadily increasing, it is vitally important that a 70-foot, grade-separated transit way for future high-capacity, fixed-route transit service be preserved and integrated with improvements that the State Highway Administration is planning. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) had been waiting for the results of the SMRT Alternatives Report before finalizing their own recommendations for MD 5. A six-year delay in beginning the formal "Project Planning/NEPA" phase of the SMRT project could result in a corresponding delay in the preservation of the transit way. Without prompt State action, additional growth and development could close the door on this project forever.

Charles County has stayed on course to redevelop Downtown Waldorf as the future light rail corridor for transit-oriented, mixed-use development. Concurrent with MTA's 2010 Transit Corridor Study, Charles County

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completed the Waldorf Urban Design Study, which resulted in the re-zoning of 300 acres of downtown Waldorf as higher-density, transit supportive mixed-use development. Building on the momentum of both initiatives, the County followed the re-zoning with a “Phase One” development plan and an implementation strategy to launch the Waldorf urban redevelopment effort, and is making a \$30 million investment in water, sewer, stormwater and road infrastructure improvements in the future transit corridor.

In order to secure a “Record of Decision” and complete 30 percent of the required engineering for the project, our project team estimates that \$27 million in additional State funds will be required. This cost can be offset by the cost savings incurred by MTA during the SMRT Alternatives Study. It will be necessary for us to complete “Project Planning” in order to position this project for future consideration in the federal “New Starts” program. Our goal is to complete this formal planning phase within the next five years. In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary to expand the scope of the project. We need MDOT to include this project in the new CTP and commit additional funding for its completion. Our funding request represents a small fraction of the revenue that the gas tax is expected to generate for projects all over the State of Maryland. We recommend starting the “Project Planning” phase immediately while the work of the SMRT Alternatives Report is still fresh, so the project can move seamlessly into the next phase of work without loss of momentum.

Throughout the transit planning process we have worked closely with Prince George's County's elected and appointed officials, including the Prince George's County Executive and Council, the staff of the Prince George's County Planning Department (the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission), and the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation. On November 15, 2011, the Prince George's County Council unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Maryland Department of Transportation to include the Southern Maryland high-capacity, fixed-route transit project (preferably light rail) in the CTP and designate it the State's next major transit priority. In this resolution Prince George's County makes a commitment to work in partnership with Charles County, urges State and federal officials to support this initiative, and agrees to promote transit-oriented development around proposed transit stations in the corridor.

As an expression of regional support, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has consistently designated this project as the number one regional transit priority for Southern Maryland. The project has also received the support of United States Senator Benjamin Cardin in correspondence with previous MDOT Secretaries and the Federal Transit Administration, strongly supporting the allocation of federal transit planning funds for this greatly needed project. Accommodating future high-capacity transit service in the vitally important MD 5/U.S. 301 corridor from Charles County to Branch Avenue will help preserve highway capacity, manage congestion, enhance local mobility, facilitate shorter commutes, and focus job opportunities, economic development and investment opportunities near transit.

Our second highest priority for consideration in Maryland's CTP is the construction of a controlled access highway option for U.S. 301 through Waldorf and White Plains, which balances the needs of the residential and business communities, while minimizing the impacts to cultural, social, and natural resources. We appreciate MDOT's inclusion of planning for new interchanges at U.S. 301 and MD 228/MD 5 Business, and at the intersection of U.S. 301 and Mattawoman-Beantown Road (MD 5) in the CTP. We have begun working with the Maryland State Highway Administration staff to help these projects quickly progress into the engineering phase.

We believe it is important to maintain the roadway mobility of our inter-state and inter-county highway system. The U.S. 301 and MD 5 corridor through Charles and Prince George's Counties remains one of the most congested in the State. We fully support the efforts of Prince George's County to improve the segment of MD 5 (Branch Avenue) from Surratt's Road to the junction with U.S. 301, which will help

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alleviate the severe delays experienced along this corridor. We are also grateful for the Maryland State Highway Administration's commitment to make sure that the recommendations and design plans for highway improvements in the MD 5 corridor will provide for future fixed-route high-capacity transit. As mentioned above, it is imperative that the alternative selected for the MD 5 corridor accommodates this transitway, including two-way traffic for the fixed guideway and grade separations where necessary. In the interim, we specifically request that the Maryland State Highway Administration accelerate potential break-out projects to alleviate roadway congestion within this corridor. These projects are listed in "Attachment 1" under SHA Project Planning Project number "1" and District Special Project number "1." We look forward to working with the SHA staff on these projects which are of great importance to our citizens.

The Charles County Commissioners support a comprehensive approach that integrates transportation and land use policy. Through the implementation of the Waldorf Sub-Area Plan and associated Zoning and Design Guidelines, the County has made major strides to create higher density, transit-oriented development in the urban core of the County's Development District which will significantly reduce vehicle trips by providing the necessary mix of land uses in a walkable-bicycle friendly environment. These actions will enable us to focus future growth in Waldorf and White Plains, while reducing sprawl and suburban development pressures in the County's rural areas. These policies will also support future investment in high capacity public transit, help to create a reverse commute, and reduce the peak volumes on state roadways to preserve existing and planned capacity. Our planned residential and commercial development densities have been designed to support future rail transit, alternative modes, pedestrians and bicycles. These densities are consistent with the Federal Transit Administration's Guidelines and Standards for Transit Supportive Land Uses and are intended to qualify our transit project for future "New Starts" funds. We believe that only by coordinating our transportation priorities with land use decisions in a comprehensive and integrated strategy can we successfully meet our transportation needs for the next generation.

In addition to our top priorities, we have attached a list of the County's additional priorities (Attachment 1) for the upcoming year, which are presented in categories that correspond to the divisions of MDOT that oversee these activities. These projects are needed to facilitate the ongoing implementation of our long-range Comprehensive Plan and Sub-Area Plans. We request your commitment to these transportation system improvements.

In closing, we would also like to share our continued appreciation for the outstanding final report produced by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and their consultants regarding the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study. Our staff has worked closely with MTA and Prince George's County to ensure that we have the tools we need to bring high-capacity rapid transit service to Waldorf and White Plains, and preserve the right-of-way needed within the corridor. To codify this action, we have integrated the Study's preferred alignment into the Charles County Comprehensive Plan as well as the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor master plan.

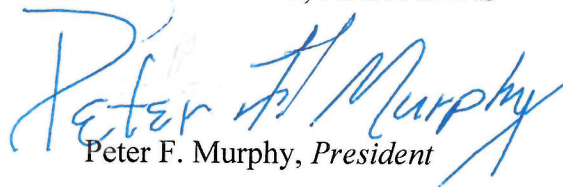
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We thank you for your continued cooperation and support, and we look forward to working with you and your staff on these priorities. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Steve Kaii-Ziegler, AICP, Director of the Department of Planning & Growth Management by calling (301) 645-0595, or by E-Mail to KaiiZieS@CharlesCountyMD.gov.

Sincerely,


COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND




Peter F. Murphy, *President*



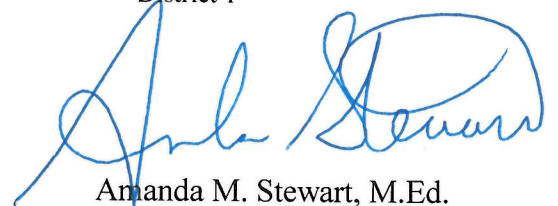
Bobby Rucci, *Vice President*  
District 4



Ken Robinson  
District 1



Debra M. Davis, Esq.  
District 2



Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.  
District 3

Attachment (1)

cc: Mr. Gregory Slater, SHA  
Mr. Kevin Quinn, MTA  
Mr. William Pines, MdTA  
Mr. Michael Mallinoff, Charles County  
Mr. Steve Kaii-Ziegler, Charles County  
Mr. William Shreve, Charles County  
Mr. John Stevens, Charles County  
Mr. Stephen Staples, Charles County

Mayor Jeannine James, Town of La Plata  
Ms. Danielle Mandley, Town of La Plata  
Mayor Brandon Paulin, Town of Indian Head  
Mr. Ryan Hicks, Town of Indian Head  
Mr. John Hartline, Tri-County Council  
Mr. Jason Groth, Charles County  
Mr. Jeffry Barnett, Charles County

## ATTACHMENT 1

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### Top Priority Transportation Improvement Projects

#### MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

##### *Fixed-route, high-capacity transit service from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to Waldorf/White Plains*

As mentioned above the highest transportation priority for Charles County is the appropriation of funding to initiate and complete the Project Planning Phase of the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project. The Alternatives Report for this project was complete in March of 2017 by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) which sought to formalize alignments, determine ridership estimates, and select a transit mode (Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit) from the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station to Waldorf/White Plains. We are seeking a commitment to this transit project in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) for “Project Planning,” so that we may continue the momentum of the 2010 Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study, and the recent SMRT Alternatives Report, toward achieving a “Record of Decision,” followed by detailed engineering and future construction. This project is the transit component of the transit-oriented, mixed-use, walkable new urban center planned for downtown Waldorf in the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC). The collective goal of this integrated transportation and land use strategy is to increase mobility for our citizens, including 92,350 daily commuter trips from Charles and St. Mary’s Counties, and helping to ease congestion in the MD 5/US 301 corridor and the Southern Maryland region.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Project is consistent with the goals of the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan. Specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals include: Goal 8.7 Concentrate 75% of residential development in the Development District which includes development density and intensity in mixed use districts in the Transit Corridor to help limit and manage the spread of traffic congestion and encourage and support alternate modes of transportation; Goal 8.9 Where possible, encourage and promote Transit Oriented Development within the established Waldorf Transit Corridor in order to support the planned fixed-route, high-capacity transit service from the Branch Avenue Metro-rail station to Waldorf-White Plains, as well as support the urbanization of Waldorf; and, Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve roadway congestion, including park and ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This project is consistent with several of the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan. Specifically, the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Project seeks to improve *Community Vitality* by integrating a new high-capacity transit system with a new high-density land use pattern centered around transit-based activity centers. This project will also improve the *Quality of Service* by enhancing access to transit service for citizens of both our County, and the surrounding Counties. The expansion of transit service to our region will respond to the rapid growth of our workforce, as reflected in our commuter bus ridership numbers. This investment will ensure major strides in Maryland’s efforts toward *Environmental Stewardship*. Not only would this high capacity transit project have the greatest impact in improving air quality by dramatically reducing vehicle emissions, it is also considered to be the best transportation initiative for creating high-density, compact development that promotes the State’s Smart Growth Policies. Finally, this project is also a catalyst for the creation and support of economic growth through “strategic investment in a balanced multi-modal transportation system for people and goods.” Studies have shown that fixed route transit service provides

a strong incentive for private business investment, contributing to the *Economic Prosperity* that the Maryland Transportation Plan seeks to promote.

## STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

### US 301 Corridor Waldorf Improvements

As previously stated in this letter, the US 301 Corridor Improvements in Waldorf remain a top priority for Charles County. 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 project is high capacity transit, it is understood that transit services do not serve all destinations. This corridor is also experiencing substantial increases in truck traffic as an alternate route to Interstate 95, further contributing to the congestion. Therefore, Charles County continues to seek the needed corridor improvements along US 301 in Waldorf and White Plains. The County Commissioners are eager to accelerate the implementation of the breakout projects (listed below as Item 3) to design full interchanges at MD 5 (Mattawoman-Beantown Road) as well as MD 228 Berry Road, as recently funded in the FY14 CTP.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The US 301 Corridor Waldorf Improvement Project is consistent with the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan and is listed in Table 8-5 as State Project "S-1." Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; Goal 8.4 Provide the public with adequate transportation facilities while simultaneously providing the opportunity for new development in appropriate locations to continue in the County; Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic; and, Goal 8.6 Create greater circulation through road network connectivity, both in redevelopment areas as well as in new development areas between new and existing neighborhoods.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The US 301 Corridor Improvements would significantly improve the *Safety & Security* of the Southern Maryland Highway System. As the Harry W. Nice Bridge is the southern-most crossing of the Potomac River to points south, US 301 is a primary route for evacuation of Washington D.C. and the surrounding area. As truck traffic and commuter traffic has continued to increase, the requested capacity and enhancement improvements will greatly assist in moving people out of the area in the event of a national security incident. These roadway improvements are also consistent with MDOT's strategy for *System Preservation* goals and objectives by maximizing the use of the existing roadway infrastructure and improving the overall performance of the facilities. Finally, the requested corridor enhancements will further Maryland's efforts toward *Environmental Stewardship*, by having a positive effect on air quality through easing congestion and substantially reducing vehicle idle time in traffic. This becomes especially important as the truck traffic increases and further compounds the issues of non-attainment of air quality standards in the Washington D.C. region.

## MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MdTA)

### Gov. Harry Nice Bridge Replacement

An expansion of the Governor Harry Nice Bridge to 4 lanes, consistent with the southbound and northbound approaches of U.S. 301 to the bridge, is necessary to reduce traffic congestion. This bridge is also a major limiting factor in the path of evacuation from Washington D.C. to points south. Should a

natural disaster or an issue of Homeland Security arise, this bridge would create a major bottleneck, with the current two-lane capacity limitation. The County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan recommends increasing the capacity of the bridge to address this issue. Increased traffic capacity of the bridge would improve traffic flow, alleviate congestion, and provide an evacuation route of greater capacity.

We appreciate the coordination efforts of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) staff through the Project Planning Phase and the NEPA process for the bridge improvements which ultimately resulted in a Record of Decision by the Federal Highway Administration. We strongly encourage MdTA to prioritize this crucial infrastructure replacement project to ensure public safety and continued regional mobility.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Governor Harry Nice Bridge Replacement project is listed in the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan in Table 8-5 as Project "S-20." Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; and, Goal 8.3 Support regional roadway projects to reduce congestion, and promote commerce and economic development.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This project is consistent with MDOT's *Safety and Security* Goals: "To reduce the number and rate of transportation related fatalities and injuries" by replacing this bridge facility that frequent closures due to vehicle accidents due to antiquated and substandard design; and, to "Secure transportation assets for the movement of people and goods" by replacing this bridge that currently serves as the most limiting factor for safe and efficient travel within Charles County. This project is also consistent with MDOT's *System Preservation* Goals: "To preserve and maintain the existing transportation network" and "Maximize operational performance and efficiency of existing systems" through replacement of this aging infrastructure to not only maintain, but improve performance of the facility.

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**Additional Priority Transportation Improvement Projects – The following projects are listed under responsible state agencies and their divisions, and are not necessarily listed in priority order:**

## **STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

### **Project Planning Priorities**

US 301 Interim Improvements – The purpose of this project would be to provide interim improvements to the US 301 Corridor in Waldorf and White Plains to alleviate congestion while the US 301 Corridor Study is being completed in the longer term. This would include the construction of an interchange along US 301 at MD 228/MD 5 Business and US 301 at MD 5 (Mattawoman-Beantown Road). These intersections carry the highest volume of traffic in Charles County. We also request that SHA extend an additional travel lane in each direction of US 301 from Smallwood Drive to MD 227 to relieve morning and evening peak hour congestion. Cumulatively, these improvements will greatly improve the traffic flow in the areas of highest volume and provide needed highway capacity.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* As with the complete US 301 Corridor Waldorf Improvement Project listed earlier in this Priority Letter, the interim US 301 Improvement Projects are consistent with the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan and is listed in Table 8-5 as State Project



“S-1.” Specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals showing the project’s consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; Goal 8.3 Support regional roadway projects to reduce congestion, and promote commerce and economic development; and, Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The US 301 Corridor Improvements would be consistent with MDOT’s strategy for *System Preservation* and *Quality of Service* goals and objectives by maximizing the use of the existing roadway infrastructure and improving the overall performance of the facilities. Further, the requested corridor enhancements will further Maryland’s efforts toward *Environmental Stewardship*, by having a positive effect on air quality through easing congestion and substantially reducing vehicle idle time in traffic. As with the full US 301 Corridor improvement project, these improvement are of increasing importance as the truck traffic increases and continues to impact the issues of non-attainment of air quality standards in the Washington D.C. region.

MD 5 Business/MD 925 Corridor Improvements – As a direct action to improve mobility, and in concert with implementation of the County’s Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC), we have requested the construction of roadway improvements along MD 5 Business and MD 925 within the new Urban Zoning District for mixed-use Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Consistent with the Waldorf Urban Design Guidelines and the County’s Urban Road Standards, we seek to reconstruct these roadways as Urban Arterials with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to assist the County in creating the planned walkable, transit-oriented community. We are grateful for the partial improvements along MD 5 Business which were completed in 2014. The project included intersection improvements at MD 925/Old Washington Road, including ADA compliant crosswalks and sidewalks, the addition of a short bike lane along a new northbound right-turn lane, signal reconstruction, and minor stormwater management improvements. These improvements dovetail with the County’s planned improvements along Old Washington Road to the north. To augment these improvements, we request that the State provide additional turn lane and pedestrian improvements on the east-bound approach of MD 5 Business, to further complete the reconstruction of the intersection consistent with the Waldorf Urban Design. We further request that SHA work with the County to improve the MD 5 Business corridor within these same limits to reconstruct the roadway to the Urban Design Standards as outlined in the Waldorf Urban Design Guidelines. These improvements will help create the urban landscape of downtown Waldorf, consistent with the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor and “Phase One” development plan, while improving safety, mobility, and access management within the corridor. As always, the County is willing to work with the State on property acquisition as needed.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 5 Bus./MD 925 Corridor Improvements project is consistent with the following specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals: Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic; Goal 8.9 Where possible, encourage and promote Transit Oriented Development within the established Waldorf Transit Corridor in order to support the planned fixed-route, high-capacity transit service from the Branch Avenue Metro-rail station to Waldorf-White Plains, as well as support the urbanization of Waldorf; Goal 8.11 Require development to reserve and dedicate to the County the right-of-way for roads, park and ride facilities, and the planned fixed-route high-capacity transit service within the established Waldorf Transit Corridor; and, Goal 8.13 Support and promote the preservation of the locally preferred high-capacity fixed-route transit alignment as designated in the Maryland Transit Administration’s Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study. Ensure that facilities for pedestrian, bicycle and daily parking are considered and included in capital and development projects as appropriate, particularly in the vicinity of proposed transit station locations.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 5 Business/MD 925 Corridor Improvements would be consistent with MDOT's strategy for *System Preservation* goals and objectives by maximizing the use of the existing roadway infrastructure and improving the overall performance of the facilities. This project also seeks to further enhance Maryland's efforts to create and support economic growth through the "strategic investment in a balanced multi-modal transportation system for people and goods." This project is a key part of the Waldorf Sub-Area and new urban high-density zoning which strives to provide *Community Vitality* that the Maryland Transportation Plan seeks to promote.

*MD 6 Connector* - Initiate a project planning study for the Maryland Route 6 Connector in the Town of La Plata, consistent with the completed SHA feasibility study for this project. This roadway would connect existing MD 6 at Willow Lane to U.S. 301, providing additional congestion relief within the Town of La Plata. This project is identified in the U.S. 301 Transportation Study Task Force's Final Report, supported by the U.S. 301 Policy Oversight Committee and included in the ongoing U.S. 301 South Corridor Study. The MD 6 Connector project is not listed in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) as there is no funding for the project at the present time, and we are requesting those funds from MDOT for the Project Planning phase.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 6 Connector is consistent with the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan and listed in Table 8-5 as Town of La Plata Project "LP-1." Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; and, Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 6 Connector project seeks to provide greater circulation in the La Plata area of Charles County. As MD 6 has become increasingly congested in downtown La Plata, this project would provide a bypass for travelers seeking access to US 301 north of the town. This project is consistent with MDOT's goal to provide *Community Vitality and Economic Prosperity* which supports La Plata's continuing economic growth, with significant recent investment by private corporations. By relieving congestion in the La Plata area, this area may continue its revitalization efforts and create an economic base to encourage a reverse commute pattern and balance the jobs to households.

*Foster Lane Extended (CSM Hughesville)* – As a result of the College of Southern Maryland/Hughesville Transportation Study conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Transportation-Land Use Connections program, we are requesting that Foster Lane (MD 625-A) be extended to MD 231 (Prince Frederick Road). The study evaluated the recently constructed College Campus as a transfer point for the locally-operated transit services of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties in one central location. The study found that the current single access to the college was a limited and circuitous route, significantly impacting the travel time for all 3 counties. To make this desired inter-county transfer station feasible for the counties, the study recommended the extension of Foster Lane to MD 231, paralleling the Hughesville Bypass. This roadway extension will provide significantly improved access to the College, which has planned growth of this newly established regional campus.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* Foster Lane Extended is consistent with the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan under: Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic; Goal 8.6 Create greater circulation through road network

connectivity, both in redevelopment areas as well as in new development areas between new and existing neighborhoods; and, Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve roadway congestion, including park-and-ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The Foster Lane Extended project seeks to provide greater circulation in the Hughesville area of Charles County. This project would provide a significant time savings for commuter traffic and enable the connection of all three locally operated transit services which greatly extends the coverage of public transit services in Southern Maryland. This project is consistent with MDOT's goal to provide *Community Vitality and Economic Prosperity* which supports the County's continuing economic growth, with significant recent investment by the state of Maryland via the College.

*MD 231 Corridor Improvements* - In coordination with Calvert County, we seek the enhancement of capacity and associated corridor improvements of MD 231 to ease increasing levels of congestion. The need for this project is identified in the SHA Highway Needs Inventory and as a recommended State highway project in the County's 2006 Comprehensive Plan (Page 5-18). Also, the MD 231 project is on the regional transportation priority list prepared by the Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. We understand that MD 231 is in the National Highway System. It is the only highway linking Charles County with Calvert County.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 231 Corridor Improvement project is listed in the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan in Table 8-5 as Project "S-17." Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; and, Goal 8.3 Support regional roadway projects to reduce congestion, and promote commerce and economic development.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 231 Corridor Improvements support several aspects of the MDOT Transportation Plan. As MD 231 provides a crossing of the Patuxent River, it serves as an evacuation route for eastern Charles County and northern St. Mary's County. The requested corridor improvements will enable safe and efficient movement of people as well as goods and services (MDOT Goal of *Safety and Security*). These improvements will also greatly improve congestion issues due to roadway design. For example, the addition of auxiliary and bypass lanes will enable the heavy peak-hour traffic to continue moving with competing turn movements.

*Bryans Road Town Common Enhancement Project* - One of the implementation strategies for the 2001 Bryans Road/Indian Head Sub-Area Plan is the development of a new "Town Common" in the vicinity of MD Route 227 and Matthews Road to serve as the centerpiece of a proposed pedestrian-friendly town center for the Bryans Road community. Additional improvements include streetscape enhancements to MD Route 210 within the proposed Town Center. The County is seeking assistance from the State with planning and implementation for this project, both in terms of technical design assistance and project funding.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Bryans Road Town Common is an Enhancement Project listed in the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan in Table 8-5, as project "C-19." Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.10 Ensure new development and redevelopment projects do not degrade the adequacy of receiving transportation facilities, or provide the appropriate improvements to mitigate for their impacts.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The Bryans Road Town Common project is consistent with the MDOT Transportation Plan goals to enhance *Community Vitality* and *Economic Prosperity* by supporting the planned redevelopment and economic growth of the Bryans Road Town Center. The state investment in this crossroads will help continue the momentum needed to invigorate the jobs-housing balance in this planned mixed-use area. These roadway improvements will also provide safety enhancements for pedestrians seeking to access both shopping and local transit stops.

## **SHA District 5 Priorities**

*US 301/White Plains Corridor Improvements* - An additional travel lane is needed, in each direction of US 301, to relieve increasing congestion from south of Smallwood Drive to south of MD 227. The taper of the 6-lane section of U.S. 301 to 4 lanes south of Smallwood Drive creates increasing back-ups during peak and certain off-peak hours. A continued effort to monitor and evaluate the synchronization of the four U.S. 301 traffic signals in White Plains may also reduce congestion and keep traffic flowing. These intersections are Billingsley Road, DeMarr Road, Theodore Green Boulevard, and MD 227.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The US 301/White Plains Corridor Improvement Project is a capacity improvement project that was originally envisioned to be part of the US 301 Southern Corridor Study. This break-out project request is consistent with the following specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; and, Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This project is consistent with the MDOT Transportation Plan goals to maximize the efficient use of resources and infrastructure through *System Preservation* projects. By improving and enhancing existing US 301 in the White Plains area, it will reduce the need for new alternative roadways and minimize any impacts to the environment. This minimally invasive project promotes the State’s goal of achieving greater *Environmental Stewardship* by enhancing this long-standing transportation infrastructure.

*Hughesville Improvement Project* - Complete planning and design for a streetscape on MD 625 (formerly known as MD 5 Business) in Hughesville, inside the limits of the Hughesville Bypass. The County has completed a Revitalization Plan and subsequent re-zoning for the Village of Hughesville and the streetscape is a key element of the revitalization strategy. This streetscape will enhance the revitalization of the village and provide roadway and pedestrian enhancements. As part of this project, or as a separate project, the County seeks the redesign of the intersections of the MD 5 (Leonardtown Road) with Gallant Green Road and with MD 625 (MD 5 Business). This project would include the relocation of the planned Gallant Green Road/MD 5 traffic signal to the northern MD 625 terminus with MD 5. The Gallant Green Road traffic will utilize MD 625A (Foster Lane) to access MD 5. This project will eliminate the need for two traffic signals in the future, and has received overwhelming support from both local and state elected officials and government agencies. It should be noted that the County has begun construction of a new training center and regional campus of the College of Southern Maryland adjacent to the village of Hughesville. It is expected that much of this traffic will be served by Foster Lane/MD 625A and will need to coordinate this projected traffic with SHA to ensure an appropriate traffic control design.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Hughesville Improvement Project is an Enhancement Project listed in the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan in Table 8-5, as project “S-2.” Specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals showing the project’s consistency include: Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation

system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic; and, Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The Hughesville Improvement Project is comprised of two components: the streetscape of MD 625 (formerly known as MD 5 Business) through the village of Hughesville and the intersection improvements at MD 5 (Leonardtwn Road) at MD 625 (northern terminus). The streetscape project is consistent with MDOT's goal of providing *Community Vitality*, by creating the catalyst to revitalize the village of Hughesville. As the through traffic have been diverted outside of the village by the construction of the Hughesville Bypass, MD 625, Hughesville's Main Street is now able to better serve the community. This project will help bring a rejuvenation of economic growth to a once thriving commerce center. In addition to the streetscape, the relocation of the planned MD 5/Gallant Green traffic signal to the MD 625 North intersection will provide the needed safety improvements for the Gallant Green Road travelers trying to access MD 5, while eliminating the future need for a second traffic signal and keeping travelers moving. This project is consistent with MDOT's goals of providing increased *Safety and Security* for travelers in this high collision activity area and provides the desired System Preservation and Performance of the Maryland Highway System. Finally, this project also provides the *Economic Prosperity* by promoting the state investment in economic growth that will spur investment by the private business community that is greatly needed in the village of Hughesville.

*MD 488/Radio Station Road Intersection Improvements/Traffic Control* – As a related component of the local upgrade of Radio Station Road to a 4-lane boulevard design, the County is seeking to address the intersection with MD 488 (La Plata Road). With the completion of St. Charles Parkway/Rosewick Road a few years ago, traffic has been increasing on Radio Station Road. Together with traffic from the adjacent educational facility campuses along Radio Station Road, driver safety has become an increasing concern, and may require additional traffic control. Therefore, we have been seeking State funds to assist in the design and installation of a traffic signal. We greatly appreciate the coordination efforts of the Maryland State Highway Administration to bring this project to fruition. However, we request greater consideration be given to the cost implications and property impacts with regard to the currently mandated round-about option. While we certainly understand the benefits of a round-about in general, the application of this solution at this location is cost prohibitive. This project is also being impacted by surrounding development activity, which may require additional alignment alternatives to be considered. We look forward to further discussions on this important safety and mobility project.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 488/Radio Station Road Intersection Improvements are part of the transportation improvements for the Radio Station Road Improvement Project, also known as Project C-17. Specific 'Comp Plan' goals showing the project's consistency include: Goal 8.2 Maintain and enhance the existing quality of the road system to assure an acceptable level of service; and, Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 488/Radio Station Road Intersection Improvement project is consistent with the MDOT Transportation Plan goals to enhance *System Preservation* Goals: "To preserve and maintain the existing transportation network" and "Maximize operational performance and efficiency of existing systems" through intersection improvements to this growing area that improve performance of the facility. These roadway improvements will also provide safety enhancements for a busy intersection that includes school busses and student drivers.

MD 6 (Charles Street) Pedestrian Safety Improvements & Community Enhancements – The Town of La Plata and the La Plata Business Association are seeking various roadway corridor improvements within the business district along MD 6 (Charles Street) in order to improve pedestrian safety and create a more walkable environment. As traffic congestion has increased, the La Plata Town Council and the business community have raised concerns over the public being able to safely cross the roadway to homes, businesses, and the local hospital and associated facilities. We urge you to work with the Town and community members to investigate various improvements to make a safe and business friendly roadway corridor.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 6 (Charles Street) Pedestrian Safety Improvements & Community Enhancements Project is within the corporate limits of the Town of La Plata and is mentioned in support of our mutual goals of improving traffic safety and creating a business friendly, walkable environment for our communities. Specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals showing the project’s consistency include: Goal 8.5 Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through and local traffic; Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County; and, Goal 8.16 Ensure development projects provide sidewalk, shared-use path, and trail connections to promote the expansion of the bicycle and pedestrian facility network.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 6 (Charles Street) Pedestrian Safety Improvements & Community Enhancements Project is consistent with MDOT’s goal of providing *Community Vitality*, by limiting the obstacles to economic growth with one of our significant commerce centers in the County. The needed safety improvements for the MD 6 Corridor will greatly assist local citizens and visitors to gain safe and effective access to businesses and services while keeping travelers moving. This project is consistent with MDOT’s goals of providing increased *Safety and Security* for travelers in this high traffic area and provides the desired System Preservation and Performance of the Maryland Highway System. Finally, this project also provides the *Economic Prosperity* by promoting the state investment in economic growth that will spur investment by the private business community that continues to be sought within the Town of La Plata.

MD 210 - Indian Head Highway Streetscape Project – This streetscape project is a critical component of the Indian Head Economic Revitalization Strategy developed by the Town of Indian Head. Charles County and the Town of Indian Head are requesting SHA’s assistance in implementing a plan for the visual enhancement of Indian Head Highway with trees and landscaping, median improvements, bicycle paths, sidewalks and pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, attractive and easily-maintained pavers, and other amenities, creating a boulevard effect along the two miles of MD 210 within the Town of Indian Head. As the gateway to the Naval Support Facility-Indian Head, the County’s largest employer, Indian Head Highway’s visual appearance creates a “first impression” of the Town and the Naval base. Combined with the implementation of the other 15 priorities in this strategy, a streetscape project equal to those implemented on other Maryland highways would dramatically improve the perception of the Town and its prospects as a location for new private sector investment.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The MD 210 – Indian Head Highway Streetscape Project is within the corporate limits of the Town of Indian Head and is mentioned in support of our mutual goals of improving traffic safety and creating a business friendly, walkable environment for our communities. Specific ‘Comp Plan’ goals showing the project’s consistency include: Goal 8.4 Provide the public with adequate transportation facilities while simultaneously providing the opportunity for new

development in appropriate locations to continue in the County; and, Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* The MD 210 – Indian Head Highway Streetscape Project is consistent with MDOT’s goal of providing *Community Vitality*, by limiting obstacles to economic growth in one of the County’s significant commerce centers. The improvements needed in the MD 210 Corridor will greatly assist local citizens and visitors to gain safe and effective access to businesses and services while supporting a much needed component of the Town’s Economic Revitalization Strategy. This project is consistent with MDOT’s goals of providing increased *Safety and Security* for travelers in this high traffic area and provides the desired System Preservation and Performance of the Maryland Highway System. Finally, this project also provides *Economic Prosperity* by promoting State investment in economic growth that will spur investment by the private sector business community sought by the Town of Indian Head.

## **MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

*Increased service in the Waldorf/St. Charles urban area* – We request funding to allow expanded operations within Charles County’s urban area that will increase the frequency of service on high capacity routes during the peak periods of the operating day. As population has increased, many of the routes are operating at capacity. Adding additional buses to existing high capacity routes will increase the frequency of service, reducing the high passenger loads and improving the convenience of public transit. Also, Charles County is experiencing rapidly escalating demand for Americans With Disabilities specialized transportation and additional funding is critical to meeting this important mode of public transit.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* Our Locally Operated Transit Service known as VanGo, has seen dramatic increases in ridership, and has become the primary mode of transportation for many individuals and families. Our request for funding to increase service in the Waldorf/St. Charles Area is consistent with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan goals. Specific goals include: Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County; Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve roadway congestion, including park and ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This request is consistent with the 2014 Maryland Transportation Plan regarding development of public transportation alternatives, integration of transportation programs and increasing the capacity of public transportation. Further this project is consistent with MDOT’s Quality of Service Goals: Maintain and enhance customer satisfaction; Seek to maintain or improve travel time reliability for key transportation corridors and services.

*Local Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility* – The Charles County Department of Planning & Growth Management has nearly completed Phase II of a project that will ultimately result in the construction of a local transit operations and maintenance facility. This County owned facility, once operational, will provide a turnkey facility from which a transit contractor will house their operations and maintenance functions. The establishment of such a facility will enhance competition when transit services are put out to bid and will significantly reduce the real estate costs reflected in contracted operational rates. Over time, operational savings will more than offset the capital costs of this project. We request funding following this phase to begin engineering in FY2020 and construction in FY2023.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Local Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility request is consistent with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan to reduce vehicle trips, relieve congestion and increase transit use. The following specific County Transportation Goals illustrate the compliance and consistency of this project: Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County; Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve roadway congestion, including park and ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This project is consistent with the Maryland Transportation Plan as it is a primary project to promote *Community Vitality, System Preservation, and Environmental Stewardship*. This accomplished by providing multi-modal transportation options, preserving existing roadway capacity and improving air quality by reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles.

*Park & Ride Implementation* - Continue to implement the recommendations of the “MD 5/ US301/ MD228 Corridors Park and Ride Feasibility Study-Site Identification Report,” October 2001. This report identifies locations for new park and ride facilities. New facilities in proximity to proposed transit stations and existing rail lines within Charles County are necessary to meet the growing demand for VanGO and commuter bus service parking. As part of the urban re-development of Waldorf, the County will be seeking future park and ride locations within the Old Washington Road Corridor that are oriented along the planned fixed-route transit corridor, in order to provide new park and ride facilities and support future rail transit. Charles County is also continuing to work with the developers of the “Waldorf Crossing” Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project in the northern portion of Waldorf, in order to secure additional park and ride sites within the property. A portion of this site may also serve as a future light rail station. The County seeks to partner with MTA to site and construct park and ride facilities within the rail corridor.

The “Phase One” development plan for Waldorf Center, in the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC), includes a new 540-space State commuter bus Park & Ride lot, which would function at the transit component of the TOD at this location until Waldorf has a high-capacity, fixed-route transit connection. The County is taking steps to implement the plan and secure the property necessary for the proposed Park & Ride lot. A commitment by MDOT to construct this new Park & Ride lot after the land is secured would help expedite the project.

Charles County eagerly anticipates the construction of the MD 925 (Old Washington Road)/Smallwood Drive Park and Ride facility to alleviate overcrowded conditions at the US 301/Smallwood Drive Park and Ride lot. As the fastest growing commuter bus system in the State, and realizing the escalating price of fuel, we continue to seek additional Park and Ride lots to facilitate the growth of this transit service.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The implementation of MDOT’s Park and Ride Study Report enables the County to integrate land use and transportation infrastructure, focused on transit services. The following Comprehensive Plan goals show this projects consistency: Goal 8.7 Concentrate 75% of residential development in the Development District which includes development density and intensity in mixed use districts in the Transit Corridor to help limit and manage the spread of traffic congestion and encourage and support alternate modes of transportation; Goal 8.8 Develop and coordinate land use and transportation improvements that focus on reducing the imbalance of jobs/housing in Charles County; Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve



roadway congestion, including park and ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This request is consistent with the 2009 Maryland Transportation Plan regarding enhancements to *Quality of Service* as it has facilitated coordination and collaboration with agency partners and stakeholders. The project also seeks to promote *System Preservation* through maximizing the operational performance and efficiency of the existing highway system through reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the highway network and improving congestion levels.

*Commuter Bus Enhancements* – The Southern Maryland region and Charles County specifically continue to have the fastest growing commuter bus ridership in the State of Maryland. As a result of the growth of the MTA Commuter Bus System and the associated issues raised by the riders, the Charles County Commissioners formed a Commuter Bus Advisory Group in early 2007, and submitted their report and recommendations to MTA in 2008. While many of the issues have been resolved by MTA, the service is still unable to keep pace with the demand. We strongly urge the state to fund the additional buses needed to keep pace with demand for this rapidly growing service. Additional measures are also needed to improve route efficiency, links to other forms of transit, and service periods (additional hours of operation). The County will continue to work collaboratively with MTA staff to locate new Park and Ride lots, plan route enhancements, and provide any other technical assistance.

*Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan:* The Commuter Bus Enhancements request is consistent with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan to reduce vehicle trips, relieve congestion and increase transit use. The following specific County Transportation Goals illustrate the compliance and consistency of this project: Goal 8.7 Concentrate 75% of residential development in the Development District which includes development density and intensity in mixed use districts in the Transit Corridor to help limit and manage the spread of traffic congestion and encourage and support alternate modes of transportation; and, Goal 8.12 Support local, regional and commuter transit trips to improve roadway congestion, including park and ride facilities.

*Consistency with the 2014 MDOT Transportation Plan:* This project is consistent with the Maryland Transportation Plan as it is a primary project to promote *Community Vitality*, *System Preservation*, and *Environmental Stewardship*. This accomplished by providing multi-modal transportation options, preserving existing roadway capacity and improving air quality by reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles.