



**TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND**  
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April 28, 2022

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

**Re: FY 2023 Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities**

Secretary Ports:

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is pleased to submit our Regional Transportation Priorities for inclusion in the FY 2023-2028 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The projects listed below were incorporated into this priority letter based on consensus reached by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). Subsequently, this consensus was presented to the Executive Board of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and ultimately adopted by members of Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Full Council. The priorities are an inclusive representation of the various transportation issues facing the three counties and are a result of significant collaboration amongst them.

The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) apportions a significant amount of funding towards the State of Maryland over the course of five years starting in FY22, and we feel compelled to spell out our urgent regional needs given its historical nature. IIJA includes a disbursement to Maryland of approximately \$340 million in FY22, and more than \$7 billion total over five years. This funding can significantly contribute to Southern Maryland's top two priorities:

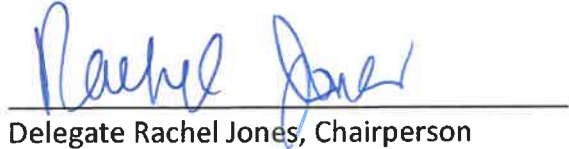
- **The Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge, and**
- **Southern Maryland Rapid Transit**

We would like to thank MDOT for having funded projects in recent years throughout the region including: the new Nice-Middleton Bridge, the planned extension of Three Notch Trail in St Mary's County which will encourage more non-motorized connectivity resulting in fewer greenhouse gases as supported in the Maryland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act, and MD2/4 widening in Prince Frederick.

It is vitally important that we build on current progress with funding of the planning, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition for our 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 2023-2028 CTP to continue making progress on these priorities toward future implementation. We thank you for your support, consideration, and affirmative action with respect to these important Southern Maryland Regional Projects.

Respectfully,

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Delegate Rachel Jones, Chairperson  
Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd Morgan", written over a horizontal line.

Commissioner Todd Morgan, Chairperson  
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

### ROADWAY PRIORITIES

(1a) Top priority – Thomas Johnson Bridge: For around 20 years, the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement has been a top regional priority. This project has been included in the CTP since FY 2007 and improvements will relieve commuter congestion, assist safety/emergency evacuation, and better aid major employers in the area such as Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, and Cove Point LNG. It currently carries over 31,000 vehicles per day, and that is projected to significantly increase over the years. While it is currently two lanes, it is planned to be a four-lane bridge with shoulders and an elevation between 70 and 140 feet. Additionally, a planned shared use path on the bridge will allow pedestrian and bicycle travelers to cross the bridge. Within the fiscal year 2022 omnibus funding legislation, \$1 million was received, but it is estimated that to replace the bridge will ultimately cost upwards of \$500 million.

(1b) Extension of northbound merge lane from intersection of MD4 & MD235 to north end of South Patuxent Beach Rd: This project would happen concurrently with the bridge replacement project and is planned to alleviate congestion at the MD4/MD235 intersection. The north end of South Patuxent Beach Rd would be turned into a cul-de-sac to prevent traffic entering MD4 from that side road. The objective is to facilitate the continuous flow of traffic from the MD235/MD4 intersection to the bridge as part of this project.

(2) MD5 from MD246 (Great Mills Rd) to MD249 (Piney Point Rd): This segment of roadway has historically been susceptible to flooding due to its proximity to the St. Mary's River. Traffic during the AM and PM peak hours is also highly congested due to military base commuting. Furthermore, some of the driveway entrances adjoining this roadway are skewed. MDOT SHA is currently finalizing a design for the facility to become a four-lane roadway with a new bridge across St. Mary's River with a pedestrian walkway across the bridge. For FY 2019, it was proposed to take two additional years to design the project (through 2022). While project design and right-of-way is being finished, we request that this happens such that construction can begin no later than FY 2024. Ideally, we would like construction to begin as soon as property is acquired, and utility agreements are established.

(3) Completion of MD2/4 widening between the south end of MD765 northwards to Auto Dr: MD2/4 through Prince Frederick in Calvert County is very congested during the AM and PM peak hours. Widening from the Holiday Inn area to Fox Run Blvd has been completed, but other segments remain. Widening from slightly south of the southern end of Rt 765 going north to Holiday Inn near the rescue squad needs to be completed. The next segment that needs to be completed is from Fox Run Blvd north to Stoakley Rd, and the last section is from Stoakley Rd north to Auto Dr (Bayside Toyota). Widening of these segments will further reduce congestion during the peak hours and help move traffic through the town center. This project will significantly improve traffic flow as this roadway currently carries more than 45,000 vehicles per day.

(4) MD236 Shoulders and Sight Distance Improvements: MD236 is major connector between MD5 and MD234 with poor vertical and horizontal geometry and no paved shoulders and thus dangerous for bikes, pedestrians, and horse drawn buggies. It is an important farm to market connection for the agricultural, Amish, and Mennonite communities in the northern part of St. Mary's County and access

to the Maryland International Raceway at the intersection of MD236 and MD234. To support all these needs, Tri-County Council requests the installation of paved shoulders or a side path to allow for safe travel of buggies, bicycles, and pedestrians. 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.

(5) US301 Corridor Improvements in Waldorf: This project is to provide corridor improvements along US301 in the Waldorf area. As congestion in the region continues to increase, the MD5 (Branch Avenue) and US301 corridors continue to carry the largest volume of vehicles in Southern Maryland. Furthermore, the alignment of Southern Maryland Rapid Transit will not serve all areas of Waldorf. This corridor also experiences significant increases in truck traffic as an alternate route to I-95 further contributing to congestion. This project would also include design improvements at Mattawoman-Beantown Road as well as at MD228 (Berry Road), as previously funded in the FY 2019-2024 CTP. However, these two areas have been put on hold in the CTP since then.

(6) MD 231 Corridor Assessment Study: As a major inter-county connector, Tri-County Council would like funding for a MD 231 Corridor Assessment Study from MD2/4 in Prince Frederick to MD5 in Hughesville. MD231 is a major roadway linking Calvert County to Charles County. This corridor facilitates both economic and educational purposes with businesses along the corridor as well as access to the College of Southern Maryland. However, this two-lane corridor has both traffic delays and accidents caused by left-turning vehicles into neighborhoods. Also, if someone wants to bicycle from Charles to Calvert, they must use Benedict Bridge which has no shoulders. Therefore, we highly recommend a holistic corridor study that studies congestion, mobility, access, and safety throughout the corridor.

### TRANSIT PRIORITIES

(1) Top Priority - Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT): This project is an 18.8-mile, fixed-route, high-capacity transit service that follows the MD Route 5/US 301 corridor from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to White Plains in Charles County. SMRT project is estimated to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips on MD 5 (Branch Avenue) by 24,000 to 28,000 vehicles each day. In addition, the project will support jobs and economic investment throughout the corridor. In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 414 and SB 81 which grants funding for design. At the federal level as part of the fiscal year 2022 omnibus funding legislation, Senators Cardin and Van Hollen appropriated \$5m for the project so that would mean that MDOT would need to appropriate an equal amount.

(2a) Service expansion with transit transfer station in Calvert County: In order to increase ridership and expand service, we would like to coordinate with MTA to determine optimal route expansion. This expanded service would also entail a transfer station.

(2b) Bus stop improvements in St. Mary's County: We would like funding for bus stop signs, pads, and shelters along Great Mills Rd. This would make passengers flagging buses unnecessary thus improving safety. Another location would be along MD235 from Hollywood Rd to Hermanville Rd. We would also like to relocate the Tulagi Pl terminal - one or two alternative locations had been identified and communications are ongoing with property owners.

(2c) Funding for expansion of both general and specialized transit in Charles County: Funding is also needed for increased VanGo operations in urban areas during peak hours, for specialized transportation compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act, for construction of a local transit operations and maintenance facility, for a new park & ride facility in the Downtown Waldorf area, and for an additional park & ride lot for overflow at Accokeek Park & Ride Lot on MD210.

(3) Foster Ln extension / College of Southern Maryland Hughesville Campus transportation hub: This project could be done concurrently with the MD231 corridor study. Tri-County Council highly recommends the creation of a transit hub at the College of Southern Maryland Hughesville campus. Currently, access to CSM is very circuitous and done via Foster Lane after exiting MD5. For this reason, Calvert and St. Mary's counties are not provided bus service to this location. To solve this problem, we would like Foster Ln to be extended southward until it intersects with MD231, and create a transit hub at CSM, which would be moved from its current location in Charlotte Hall, MD. This would provide not only access to CSM, but also greater interconnectivity between transit in the three counties of Southern Maryland.

#### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PRIORITIES**

(1) Three Notch Trail (Phase VIII & IX): While design and engineering is underway for Phase VII of the trail from the Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad (HVRS) property 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. Ultimately, this project will connect with the Indian Head Rail Trail in Charles County and has the potential to be a significant recreational, commute, and tourism facility for the Tri-County area. We highly recommend continued funding for this non-motorized facility.

(2) Fill gaps in Calvert County designated Town Centers (Calvert)- The Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan update along with the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan call for improved pedestrian mobility. Funding is needed to provide continuous sidewalks in both downtown areas.

(3) Retrofit crossings with free flow turn lanes, along Rt 235 in California (St. Mary's)- There are several intersections that were identified for improvements starting at Buck Hewitt Road in California and ending near the Patuxent Naval Air Museum. Other intersections include Buse Drive and Expedition Road. These intersections have opposing left turn only channels and free flow right turn lanes, without markings or protection for pedestrians.

(4) Controlled crosswalk at US 301 and Smallwood Drive (Charles)- The nearby "Park and Ride" facility creates high peak hour use due to its role as a hub for Charles County's local transit service, VanGo. The concentration of commercial destinations adjacent to this location, combined with nearby residential communities, has resulted in high pedestrian volumes despite the lack of a dedicated and safe crossing for pedestrians. We would like funding to extend crosswalks from the existing sidewalks and provide protected signal phases for pedestrians.