

Town Commissioners of Perryville

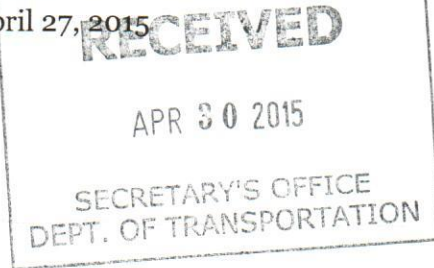
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April 27, 2015



Pete K. Rahn, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

RE: FY2016 Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Rahn,

The Town of Perryville would like to take this opportunity to convey our transportation priorities to your department for FY2016. As fiscal challenges continue and State policies and regulations increase for Smart Growth principles and sustainable futures, transportation becomes a top priority for all of us.

To recognize the important relationship between transportation, air quality, congestion mitigation, and providing more livable and sustainable communities with better linked land use and transportation, the Town's overall top priorities are as follows:

1. Implement an I-95 and US 40 toll discount for Cecil County residents and especially businesses.
2. Redesign and construct a new Route 222/I-95 interchange, to include an upgraded bridge over I-95.
3. Install sidewalks on MD222 from Clayton Street to the intersection with St. Marks Church Road (the entrance to the Perryville High School).
4. Increase MARC Penn Line service to include mid-day and weekend service for the entire line (D.C. to Perryville) and special event trains.
5. Designate Perryville as a Transit Oriented Development project area.

Complete descriptions of these priorities are as follows:

Toll Discount for local residents and businesses

Suppressed economic development in Perryville and the region continues as the nation struggles to create jobs and help workers achieve independence from unemployment benefits. The workforce in and around the area struggle to balance low wages and rising transportation costs, in addition to increased tolls, when trying to access opportunities available on the other side of the river. Many residents travel back and forth as part of their daily living and working routine.

Toll increases have had significant impact on both Cecil County and Harford County with a serious impediment to our efforts to promote regional tourism and business development. Reducing or providing discounts for local residents and businesses provide incentives to invest in the local community and create opportunities for the future.

I-95 Interchange Improvements

The existing interchange from I-95 was constructed in 1963 and the area combines toll collections and truck weigh stations with the continued increase of traffic, by both vehicles and trucks. MD222 crosses the highway and is the only 2-lane bridge that hasn't been upgraded in the State. The area is the location of the first State casino and a prime location for economic development that could include a range of retail stores, business offices, hotel, and conference facilities, thereby adding needed jobs for a range of skills and talents.

Numerous studies have been conducted by various agencies to evaluate traffic conditions in the surrounding area. Project development for both commercial and residential is limited due to the failing grade of traffic movement by both vehicles and trucks. The recession and recent downturn in our economy has allowed conditions to remain stagnant but is a deterrent to economic development in the area by all surrounding municipalities and Cecil County.

Upgrading the bridge at this key interchange is crucial to our Town to develop projects such as the proposed commercial entertainment mixed use development where Hollywood Casino Perryville is located. In addition, it is essential for Cecil County to be able to encourage and continue planning of area economic developments such as the Bainbridge project.

Sidewalks on MD222 from Clayton Street to St. Marks Church Road to Perryville High School

Sidewalks in this vicinity would provide a safe walkable access to the local High School and help reduce vehicle traffic along MD222. It is a goal of the Town to provide connecting sidewalks to local schools when development occurs. This road section is owned and maintained by SHA and sidewalks should be incorporated in any road improvements scheduled for MD222.

Extend the MARC commuter rail service

Perryville's Train Station was built in 1905 and still used on a daily basis. Ridership continues to increase as many realize the benefit of regional transportation. Riders come from all over the local area, not only from Maryland, but Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, as evidenced throughout public parking areas in our Town. The Train Station is a unique characteristic of our Town that we want to enhance for our future growth and development. Businesses make site selection decisions with a high value placed on access to regional transportation, thereby putting Perryville at that strategic location to utilize these transportation options.

Increased MARC service to include mid-day, weekend and special event trains for the entire line provides alternative transportation that is critical for access to jobs, increased educational, work opportunities, and tourism-related activities in our region.

Designate Perryville as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Project Area.

Perryville is strategically located as a Transit Oriented Development project area serviced in combination by the existing rail station, I-95 and US40, with close proximity to some of the busiest cities. The Town has worked with WILMAPCO and completed a design plan that combines workforce housing, public transportation, and business revitalization at the waterfront. Providing greater travel choices to this rapidly growing area is a critical component of our plans to further economic development and reach the goals of developing transit oriented/mixed use projects. Perryville's compact mix of housing, businesses and institutions offers a unique opportunity to bring together all the characteristics that comprise a Transit-Oriented community and is supported in our Sustainable Communities application.

Designation as a TOD would provide numerous opportunities to promote opportunities for transit supportive redevelopment, local and regional accessibility, and help support improvements to regional ambient air quality through the reduction of vehicle travel and traffic congestion in and around Perryville. Being the northern terminus of the MARC line is an important economic advantage, and we would like to be part of Maryland's commuter rail initiatives at the Eastern part of the state.

In summary, as the economy recovers, the Town continues to encourage both residential and commercial development as we protect the environment and natural resources of the area. Our priority remains high in our plans to offer as many opportunities to alternative transportation options and achieve less gas consumption. We hope our plans for a more sustainable and viable community in the future will continue with support from the State.

Thank you for your consideration of these items and your interest in our Town's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,



James L. Eberhardt
Mayor

Copy: Tari Moore, County Executive, Cecil County
County Council of Cecil County