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## **CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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## **CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Division of Planning and Zoning  
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elkton, MD 21921

April 1, 2023

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

### **RE: Cecil County Transportation Priorities**

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld:

Cecil County submits this letter to articulate its transportation priorities for inclusion and funding by the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) FY2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). We continue to recognize our mutual challenges and opportunities to better determine our transportation future here in the northeast transportation corridor.

*Cecil County has established five broad transportation improvement categories. The categories represent important relationships among transportation and air quality, traffic congestion mitigation, and livable and sustainable communities, they are as follows:*

- *I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement*
- *Toll Coordination and Freight Transportation*
- *Public Transportation*
- *US Route 40 Corridor and Intersections*
- *Municipal Improvements*

Cecil County's priority improvements are as follows:

- 1) Implementation of Belvidere Road Interstate 95 Interchange and Belvidere Road Improvements.
- 2) Bainbridge State Highway Road and Intersection Improvements
- 3) Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study
- 4) Elkton Eastern Bypass Study
- 5) Mid-County Multi-modal Transportation Hub

## **Belvidere Road Interstate 95 Interchange and Belvidere Road Improvements**

This Belvidere Road Interstate 95 interchange is currently under construction. The project includes a shifted modified partial cloverleaf onto Belvidere Road from Interstate 95. Traffic on Belvidere Road is expected to increase from 2,400 to 18,400 vehicles per day when the interchange opens in 2025. Additionally, Belvidere Road proposed improvements are currently being designed. The proposed road improvements will extend from the intersection of US Route 40 to the southern limits of the CSX Bridge replacement project. The project will support existing and continued development of businesses on Belvidere Road and US Route 40.

This project is consistent with Cecil County's 2010 Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) objectives; specifically, expanding the road network within the growth corridor and providing alternate north-south route options between Interstate 95 and US Route 40. The Comprehensive Plan identified a "...potential new Interstate 95 interchange between MD 222 and MD 272" with the implementation of the change corresponding to "redevelopment of the Mineral Extraction Area". This area is currently being redeveloped into the Principio Business Park. The interchange and road improvements will improve the secure movement of people and goods and emergency response to one of the County's largest employment centers. Additionally, it will minimize travel delays on Maryland's transportation system by reducing freight traffic in the towns of North East and Perryville. This has the added benefit of improving air quality by reducing traffic idle time within Cecil County's municipalities.

## **Bainbridge State Highway Road and Intersection Improvements**

The maintenance of an acceptable level-of-service (LOS) at the intersection of Perryln Road (MD Route 275) is of the utmost importance as the Bainbridge campus matures. The road intersection improvements propose an extension of Commodore Boulevard from Phase I to Bainbridge Road (MD Route 222) in order to provide access from the campus to the state-owned 50-acre parcel known for the historical Tome Sool for Boys. The school is currently inaccessible by public infrastructure. Additional improvements at the intersections of Diamond Jim Road and MD Route 275 will provide service to Powers Road which is the employee entrance.

The redevelopment and proposed road improvements of the former Bainbridge Navy Base, west of MD Route 275, south of MD Route 276, north and east of MD Route 222 in Port Deposit are identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Approximately 400 acres or one-third of the site is set aside for uses that revolve around employment. These improvements began in 2021. These capital improvements to the transportation system will improve access to jobs and tourism while leveraging economic growth. Additionally it will improve logistics within and through Maryland by reducing freight bottlenecks. The project meets the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by improving freight transportation and traffic mitigation.

## **Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study**

The widening of North East Road (MD Route 272), between the Town of North East and the intersection of Joseph Biggs Memorial Highway (MD Route 274) is vital to Cecil County's growth corridor. Road and intersection improvements in recent years; such as, the reconstruction of the bridge over Amtrak, intersection improvements at US Route 40 and Gateway Drive have changed how the corridor is utilized. This area is targeted for further growth; however, accessibility to and through it is becoming more and more difficult. While the incremental improvements have provided some relief it has fallen short of providing for the planned growth within the corridor. This corridor needs a comprehensive review to ascertain current conditions, projected growth, and to evaluate transportation improvement alternatives. The result of the study will determine future transportation improvements for the corridor.

The study supports the Comprehensive Plan objective to expand the road network in the growth corridor to increase connectivity and provide alternate routes, especially through and around the towns and north-south between the US Route 40 and Interstate 95 corridors including nonmotorized transportation facilities and a potential connection to the East Coast Greenway. A route that includes downtown North East to US Route 40.

This study will provide the initial steps towards a resilient multi-modal system by anticipating and planning for changing conditions and hazards (natural and man-made). Cecil County emergency response is of the utmost importance and this study will ensure road improvements address roadway clearance times and facilitate efficient and coordinated responses to emergency and disaster events throughout the transportation system. It is a strategic investment in operational improvements with the added benefit of reducing transportation delays overall. The results of the study will assist in mitigating traffic congestion, allows for the movement of freight, and reduces vehicle emissions.

### **Elkton Eastern Bypass Study**

This study supports the Comprehensive Plan's goal of creating a loop road around the easterly side of Elkton in the vicinity of Muddy Lane. This study will support sustainable economic development and good movement by evaluating the road system that maximizes an investment in the area. The current situation is a barrier to encouraging growth in the County's Growth Corridor. It supports the examination of additional sources of funding and supports a local municipality. This study would identify ways to manage and mitigate congestion in this area. Opportunities to integrate low stress nonmotorized transportation facilities would be identified, including a potential connection of the East Coast Greenway from where it enters Maryland along route 279 to a new route to downtown Elkton. The corridor is currently estimated to have over 5,000 average daily trips that mixes multiple kinds of travelers from residential, commuter, and commercial. Opportunities for safety improvements would also be identified.

### **Mid-County Multi-modal Transportation Hub**

A Mid-County Multi-Modal Transportation Hub ("Mid-County Transit Hub") in the North East area has been a priority of Cecil County since 2017. Cecil County has pursued a Mid-County Transit Hub to support the growth of Cecil Transit. The Mid-County Transit Hub will enhance ridership, reduce stem miles and provide additional office space. The Mid-County Transit Hub will look to contain: 1) a multi-modal public transit center to accommodate transfers and layovers, 2) a kiss-and-ride facility, 3) a covered area for customer que, 4) pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and bicycle parking and 5) a stand-alone Transit Administration facility containing Transit offices. Cecil County is also exploring an onsite vehicle wash bay or reduced-capacity maintenance facility depending on future cost considerations. This facility will provide linkages between employment and commercial centers as well as more densely developed residential areas. Additionally, the Mid-County Transit Hub will be strategically centered within the County's growth area and the County's municipalities.

The project strategically invests in improvements that expand ridership and operational improvements that reduce congestion along Cecil County's multi-modal transportation system. This is accomplished by prioritizing the movement of people to and from employment centers, implementing initiatives to reduce fossil fuel consumption and reducing greenhouse gas through mitigation, and improvements to air quality. Implementation of the Mid-County Transit Hub provides transportation services and solutions that maximize value through local, state, and federal funding partnership that provide efficiency by reducing "dead head" bus mileage as the facility will provide space for onsite maintenance and the administration of Cecil Transit. The project meets the States's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan by expanding transit service, providing for traffic congestion mitigation, and enhancing fuel quality standards.

**Additional Priorities**

These priorities do not reflect all the needs within Cecil County but are included to reflect potential funding availability. Each of these projects are consistent with the County's land use plan and the goals of the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP); including, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act. Summary sheets of these projects are available upon request.

As traffic volumes increase and our economy continues to grow, we will continue efforts to improving air quality, mitigate traffic congestion, and provide for sustainable communities.

Thank you for your consideration of Cecil County's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,



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Danielle Hornberger, County Executive

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Jackie Gregory, President, County Council

Cecil County's State of Maryland Delegation

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Senator Jason C. Gallion, District 35

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Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr. District 36

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Delegate Kevin B. Hornberger, District 35-B

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Delegate Jay A. Jacobs, District 36

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Delegate Teresa Reilly, District 35-A

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Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist, District 36

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Delegate Mike Griffith, District 35-A

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Delegate Steven J Arentz, District 36