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Comments: Comprehensive outline of the Transportation priorities for Queen Annes County



**Queen
Anne's
County**

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December 18, 2007

The Honorable John D. Porcari, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Post Office Box 548
Hanover, Maryland 21078

Re: Queen Anne's County Transportation Priority Letter

Dear Secretary Porcari:

Attached is an eight page comprehensive outline of Transportation priorities for Queen Anne's County. This is the same document that was distributed to you and your staff as part of this year's annual tour presentation. Please consider this list as the overall transportation priorities for our County.

Thank you for your continuing support on these projects. We look forward to working with you and your staff as we move ahead.

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY
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Maryland Department of Transportation - Annual Tour 2007 Project Priorities for Queen Anne's County

Overview

This document serves to summarize the Transportation projects that are of priority importance to Queen Anne's County. The County continues to stress "**safety and convenience for our local citizens**" as the major driving factor towards setting transportation priorities. In addition, this outline identifies all of the major projects that are currently included in the 2006 Highway Needs Inventory and the Consolidated Transportation Program as prepared by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

I. Highways

A. US 301 & MD 304 Interchange

Description

A full movement **interchange** is needed to provide safety improvements to this congested and high-speed at-grade crossing. The project is in the HNI as a part of the US 301 corridor and has been allocated project planning and design funding. **The project remains ranked as the highest local priority to Queen Anne's County citizens.** This current at-grade intersection is utilized daily by school busses, public safety dispatchers, EMS providers from the local Department of Emergency Services, and State Highway and County Public Works Maintenance personnel. It also is the central fueling station site for Transit Busses, Police vehicles, and other Departmental fleets. This traffic is mixed with an increasing volume of trucks on US 301 and a truck stop situated at the southeast quadrant of this at-grade intersection. These conditions continue to increase congestion and compromise safety.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Full construction funding for the selected interchange concept option is requested as part of this year's CTP.
- 2) This interchange will also allow for closure of the adjacent at-grade cross over at US 301 & Rolling Bridge Road converting it to a right-idright-out intersection.
- 3) Consideration for the inclusion of service roads north to MD 305 in order to permanently close this adjacent at-grade crossing should be evaluated.
- 4) The project design should include a pedestrian access/mobility.

B. US 50 Ocean Gateway

Description

This is a multi-phased project to widen existing US 50 from US 301 (at the US 50/301 split in Queenstown) to MD 404 from four to six lanes. In addition, the project includes

acquisition of access controls and replacement of at-grade intersections with interchanges and service road connections. It is planned for shoulders to accommodate bicycles. The majority of the right-of-way has been purchased and design of the five interchanges is underway. This project is in the HNI and the CTP.

Project Components (listed in order of construction priority)

Phase 1: Carmichael Road Interchange— This interchange includes a service road connection to Bloomingdale Road on the north side of US 50.

Phase 2: Sportsman Neck Road Interchange- This interchange connects Sportsman Neck Road to MD 456 and Greenspring Road on the north side of US 50. A service road connection is provided on the south side of US 50 to private lands.

Phase 3: MD 404 Interchange— This interchange is designed with signalized intersections on the east and west sides of US 50 (similar to the US 301 and MD 213 interchange) with service road connections to Lake Drive (on the west side) and to private lands (on the east side). The current park and ride lot will be relocated from the northeast quadrant of this at-grade intersection to the northwest quadrant of the proposed interchange.

Phase 4: MD 213 Interchange— This interchange is designed with round-a-bouts along MD 213 on the north and south sides of US 50 and a service road to Scottown Road and Rustic Acres Lane. A partial realignment of Grange Hall Road is included to provide better intersection spacing along the north (MD 213) leg of the interchange.

Phase 5: RT 18 Interchange— Preliminary designs were initiated by the Developer of the Queenstown Outlet Center and never implemented. Updated plans have not been submitted for review.

Phase 6 to 8: US 50 Widening—Widening of US 50 from four to six lanes. Plans have not been submitted for review of this phase.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) A free flow left turn from US 50 onto MD 404 or “flyover” is not included in the design of the MD 404 Interchange and must be considered for this location. This will eliminate possible backups on the off ramp for the heavy US 50 to eastbound MD 404 left turn movement.
- 2) The MD 404 interchange should be combined with the MD 404 dualization project.
- 3) Additional options for the overpass at US 50 and MD 18 in the vicinity of the Queenstown Outlet Stores are needed. The current design seems overly restrictive for purposes of ingress and egress as the current design could negatively impact the Outlet Center.

- 4) The Board supports the original design proposal for the US 50 Overpass just east of Sportsman's Neck Road. It is our understanding that the design for this option is already 40 percent complete and this option is the most cost effective and has the least environmental impact.
- 5) Pedestrian sidewalks/bike lanes have yet to be incorporated into the overall project design and must be considered.

C. RT 50 / 301 Kent Island Corridor

Description

The RT 50/301 corridor bisects Kent Island which has created numerous transportation challenges. Several key transportation system enhancements are needed to overcome the limitations posed by the increasing quantity and frequency of through traffic along this corridor.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) The Cox Creek Connector linking Thompson Creek Road and Cox Neck Road facilitating access to downtown Chester. This connection is necessary to link south Stevensville with south Chester, and can serve as an important "relief valve" and emergency route when Route 50/301 is closed for emergencies or maintenance. When this occurs, Route 18 through Stevensville is the sole east/west connection on Kent Island. Local emergency vehicles such as fire equipment, ambulances and police become gridlocked, creating an extreme public safety hazard. This important road link could also prove essential in any emergency evacuation planning for Kent Island.
- 2) Construction of the US 50 and Shamrock/Dundee Overpass with ramps to both eastbound and westbound Route 50 and associated service roads would provide another vital link between north and south Chester. This overpass will connect Piney Creek Road on the north side of Route 50 to Shamrock Road on the south side. The Shamrock Road Overpass will offer alternative routes for local traffic and will alleviate some of the traffic congestion at the intersection of Routes 18 and 552 (Dominion Road) by providing another way to access the eastbound lanes of Route 50, especially for traffic that originates in north Chester.

D. RT 8 / 18 Corridor

Description

A Corridor Plan and Purpose and Need Study were completed in October 2001 to evaluate this roadway link. The limits of this study extend from the Kent Island High School to Chesapeake Estates. The plan focused on ultimate roadway improvements and right-of-way needs as predicated by traffic growth in the region. Traffic growth was determined from forecasted development of the Stevensville and Chester Growth Areas, buildout of the Chesapeake Bay Business Park and infill development from Southern Kent Island (based on extension of public sewer service). A traffic model was developed based on these projections and the associated roadway improvements

required to meet these demands were identified. As a result of this effort, a segment of this roadway from the MD 8 interchange south to the new Matapeake School Complex was added to the HNI in 2002. The remainder of the corridor is not in the HNI. The project has not been added to the CTP.

Planned Project Components

- 1) Widening of MD 8 from the Kent Island High School to a point just south of Chesapeake Estates Drive from two to four lanes.
- 2) Access controls and intersection improvements with identification of future right-of-way reservations along the corridor.
- 3) Includes a new connector road connecting MD 8 to the Thompson Creek Service Road.
- 4) Identification of future signalized intersection locations.
- 5) Preliminary MD 8 and US 50 Interchange ramp upgrades.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Further evaluation of the MD 8 interchange is needed to address traffic capacity issues, including reversible lane technology to provide a double left for westbound traffic.
- 2) A traffic signal warrant study at Route 18 and the entrance to the Kent Island High School and Terrapin Grove/Percy Thomas Center should be conducted. A signal at this intersection is consistent with the MD 8 Corridor Plan and would improve safety for both school and senior center related traffic.
- 3) Design and construction funding is needed to implement this project.
- 4) MdTA is currently conducting a feasibility study to widen MD 8 in the vicinity of the overpass.

E. MD 404 Dualization

Description

This is a multi-phased project to upgrade MD 404 to a four lane divided highway with access controls. The project limits are from US 50 to the Denton Bypass or 11.83 miles. It is planned for shoulders to accommodate bicycles. This project has been proposed to eliminate traffic congestion caused by high seasonal peaks associated with summer resort traffic and to improve safety and service.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) This is a regional traffic need associated with peak season resort traffic and should be considered a statewide priority rather than a local priority.
- 2) This project should also be expanded to include the **US 50 & MD 404** Overpass.
- 3) A full movement intersection must be maintained at the MD 309 & MD **404** crossover.

F. MD 213 Corridor

Description

The State Highway Administration has chaired two meetings to discuss and plan for the long term (20 year) needed improvements to the MD 213 Corridor in Kent & Queen Anne's County.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Continue with planning efforts to evaluate long term capacity needs around Centreville and Chestertown, including the potential for a bypass around each town.
- 2) Address the identified short term safety and maintenance improvements including pavement overlays, congestion at MD 213/544, shoulder widening over Hambleton Creek, access into Church Hill, congestion at MD 213/Wexford Drive, pedestrian access in Centreville, truck traffic in Centreville and other towns, MD 213/304 alignment, congestion at MD 213/Coursevall Drive and congestion on MD 213 between Centreville and **US 301**.

II. Transit

A. Transportation Services

Description

Continue to offer transportation services to its constituents by providing a fixed route and demand response transit service.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Public Transportation – The annual operating grant funding for the total County Ride Transit System remains level for **FY 2008**. Continue to support incremental annual increases (no net funding decreases) for these programs.
- 2) Demand Response - The State level of funding for SSTAP (Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program) has not increased for several years while the number of elderly and disabled passengers utilizing this service

has continued to increase. Support increased funding for this program that serves the frailest citizens.

- 3) Support the Transportation Development Plan now underway in order to evaluate the need for improved coordination of Human Services Transportation and the inter-county MUST system and as well as expanded Transit facilities.
- 4) Public Transportation – Continue to support grant funding to complete the Transit Garage and wash bay areas, along with centralizing County Ride administration and storage at the DPW/Transit Facility.
- 5) Public Transportation – Continue to support the safety and efficiency of the fleet by following regular replacement of vehicles according to MTA standards.

III. Other Modal Priorities

A. Chesapeake Bay Bridge

Description

There are currently four planning, maintenance and construction contracts ongoing for the Chesapeake Bay Bridge as follows:

1. Rehabilitation of the westbound bridge deck. This is the first renovation of the bridge deck since its opening in 1973. Construction is ongoing.
2. Selective painting of the westbound bridge. This contract commenced in 2006.
3. Planning for commercial vehicle inspection facilities along US 50/301 adjacent to the Bay Bridge.
4. Study of traffic capacity needs across the Chesapeake Bay (completed).

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Continue to plan for the third Bay crossing in the future. This future crossing should not be situated along US 50 or at other points in either Queen Anne's or Kent Counties.
- 2) Continue to maximize traffic management coordination and communications due to current and pending maintenance activities.
- 3) Continue with strong communications between SHA, MdTA Bridge Authority, QAC and AA County Officials to assist with communications for incident management.
- 4) Continue aggressive public outreach and notification to motorists concerning construction activities.

- 5) Bridge Toll increases are not supported.
- 6) Discuss adding more dedicated EZ-pass lanes.

B. Rail Service

Description

Enhance rail service to existing business parks and to major commercial facilities.

Project Specific Concerns

- 1) Provide improvements to the Rail Service line to Tidewater Direct, LLC. and potential future business park east of Centreville.

IV. Transportation Related Concerns

A. Safety Related Projects

- 1) Posting of "50 is the Swiftest" signs has been completed to provide for improved local traffic circulation on Kent Island's adjacent secondary road system. Continuing efforts must be discussed and evaluated to provide additional alternatives for improved local traffic circulation and effective delivery of emergency response service. Options for evaluation and discussion include, extension of the Thompson Creek service road to Cox Neck Road and providing new ramps from MD 50 to the existing MD 18 overpass.
- 2) Complete design and implement safety improvements at the US 50 off-ramp at Thompson Creek Service Road. Queen Anne's County has allocated \$100,000 of local funding for this project.
- 3) Discuss making US 301 a toll road coming into Maryland to assist with funding for the minimization of at-grade intersections along this corridor.
- 4) Support a program to upgrade all traffic signals with LED lighting technology.
- 5) Conduct a signal warrant study for the MD 213 & Coursevall Drive intersection at the Centreville Business Park.
- 6) A traffic signal study on MD 304 at the entrance to Queen Anne's High School should be conducted.
- 7) Continue to assist with local Emergency Management Objectives by identifying and improving potential problem areas along primary and secondary evacuation routes through the County.
- 8) Local citizens have been experiencing long traffic queuing at the MD 213/US 50 signalized intersection. This intersection should be evaluated for signal timing and interim geometric improvements to minimize this concern.

B. Preservation related Projects

- 1) 301 Corridor to the North - Plan for highway beautification and preservation by keeping this scenic highway free from power poles and bill-boards.
- 2) Support the revival of the sidewalk retrofit program for improved pedestrian mobility in town centers and growth areas.

C. Community Enhancement Projects

- 1) Support allocation of design funding for the Centreville Neighborhood Conservation Project.
- 2) Continue to investigate and discuss efforts to reduce truck traffic on MD 213 (Liberty and Commerce Streets) in Centreville.
- 3) Continue to support funding for the Stevensville Road Improvements Project.
- 4) Initiate a Community Enhancement streetscape project for the Chester Area.
- 5) Continue to support the corridor management plan for the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway.
- 6) Support the siting of additional County entrance signs within SHA right-of-way. MD 404 & US 50 is the next planned site along with improvements to the current MD 404 park and ride that includes landscaping and aesthetics.
- 7) Initiate a sidewalk upgrade/retrofit project in Crumpton.