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May 5, 2021

Heather Murphy, Director
Office of Planning and Capital Programming
Maryland Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

RE: Talbot County – 2021 Priority Listing

Dear Ms. Murphy:

The Talbot County Council endorsed the attached list of priority projects for Talbot County at our meeting on May 4, 2021. Please note that this year's listing includes information not only on roads infrastructure, but Easton Airport safety improvements as well.

The Council looks forward to meeting with you and representatives from the Maryland Department of Transportation this fall for the annual Consolidated Transportation Plan meeting. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please contact Ray Clarke, County Engineer, at (410) 770-8170 or Micah Risher, Airport Manager, at (410) 770-8055.

Sincerely,
COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

Chuck F. Callahan
President

CFC/jkm
Attachment

Cc: Ian Beam – Rural Area Regional Planner, MDOT
The Honorable Adelaide Eckardt
The Honorable Christopher Adams
The Honorable John Mautz
Ray Clarke, County Engineer
Micah Risher, Easton Airport Manager

TALBOT COUNTY PROJECT PRIORITY LISTING
FOR THE CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
2021

PRIORITY RANKING	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
1-A	**MD Route 322/US 50 Intersection - South** This intersection includes merging and cross traffic vehicle maneuvers between two high volume, high speed roadways. Currently there is a blinking traffic control signal. The State should consider changing the programming to a solid red light and cycling traffic control signal without an interim blinking signal. Thus far in 2021, there have been two serious motor vehicle collisions at this intersection resulting in fatalities (4/2/21 and 4/8/21). Consistent with the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan the **highway infrastructure** at this location should be improved as soon as possible in an effort to rectify this public infrastructure deficiency.
1-B	**MD Route 322/US 50 Intersection – North** This intersection includes cross traffic vehicle maneuvers between two high volume, high speed roadways, and merging of vehicle in the fast lane of traffic in the eastbound lane of US Route 50. In the past couple of years there has consistently been, and continues to be, a significant number of personal injury and property damage crashes including an unacceptable number of fatalities. Consistent with the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan the **highway infrastructure** at this location should be evaluated and improved as soon as possible in an effort to rectify this public infrastructure deficiency.
2	**MD Route 33 Capacity and Evacuation Improvements** During weather-related emergencies such as Tropical Storm Isabel and Hurricane Irene, this corridor experienced areas of significant flooding, limiting ingress and egress from this portion of the county. *The MD Route 33 corridor is the sole evacuation route for this populated neck or peninsula.* Accordingly, elevation modification to eliminate or minimize storm surge road flooding, as well as capacity improvements, should be pursued to protect the lives and safety of citizens in this area. Also, portions of this corridor between the Town of St. Michaels and the Town of Easton experience some weekday capacity issues which are anticipated to increase in the future. Traffic counts show that portions of MD Route 33 have heavy traffic volume, particularly near its intersection with MD Route 322. As an interim measure, the MD Route 33 corridor should be evaluated for any issues or problems that would need to be resolved in future improvements.
3-A	**US Route 50/MD Route 328 – Goldsborough Street Intersection Improvements** This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes for all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Goldsborough Street, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection.
3-B	**MD Route 50/MD Route 331 – Dover Street Intersection Improvements** This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes for all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Dover Street, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection.
3-C	**US Route 50/Chapel Road - Intersection Improvements** This intersection currently experiences significant traffic volumes for all approaches. The geometric configuration of this intersection possesses many shortcomings on Chapel Road, west of US Route 50. The State should work with the Town of Easton to improve the geometric configuration of this intersection approach and/or provide technical assistance to the Town for diversion of east – west traffic from this intersection. *An overpass should be planned as a long term solution for Priority Rankings 3-A through 3-C.*

4	**US Route 50/MD Route 309/MD Route 662 Intersection Capacity Improvements** As a result of increasing traffic for the growing Easton Airport, Talbot County Community Center and the likely relocation of the Easton Memorial Hospital to Longwoods Road (MD Route 662), one of our top priorities would be the construction of an overpass that meets FAA requirements and serves these facilities. Airport Road, west of this intersection, has become a significant "bypass" route around Easton to and from the Bay Hundred peninsula (St. Michaels area), in addition to the aforementioned growth. Talbot County is in the process of pursuing reconstruction of this roadway. This County facility ties into the MD 662/US Route 50 intersections, which currently possess poor intersection spacing/geometry. In the short term, analysis, design and reconstruction of this area should be pursued to facilitate capacity and safe flow of vehicles through these intersections and to/from the County road.
5	**MD Route 329 (Royal Oak Road) Safety Improvements** This roadway serves as the primary means of ingress and egress for the communities in and around the villages of Royal Oak and Bellevue, in addition to a significant tourism corridor for these communities and beyond. Paralleling MD Route 33, this roadway provides an alternative route for MD Route 33 (see priority number 1 above, evacuation corridor). The importance of this alternative route is compounded considering the aging status of the bridge carrying MD Route 33 over Oak Creek.

Easton Airport - Runway Safety Improvements

- Easton Airport has completed an environmental assessment to improve the Runway Safety Area (RSA) of the primary Runway 4/22 and shift the runway 1,900 ft. southwest of the current location. This safety improvement will bring the runway into full compliance with FAA design standards. This is critical for the long term financial sustainability of the airport and economic benefits derived by the County. The airport completed the first phase of the Obstruction Removal Program in the fall of 2020, successfully bringing many adjacent properties into compliance with State & Federal airspace regulations and clearing more than 10 acres of trees to prepare for the future runway safety area. The airport is now seeking to implement the construction solution for Phase 2 of the Obstruction Removal Program in FY2022.

- Classified as a "National" general aviation airport by the FAA, Easton Airport supports the national and state system by providing communities with access to national and international markets in multiple states and throughout the country.

- Talbot County is requesting MDOT - Maryland Aviation Administration maximize grant funding for Phase 2 Construction of Easton Airport's Obstruction Removal Program, with an estimated project total cost of $500,000 in FY2022.