

Wicomico County, Maryland

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October 20, 2009

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 548
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Re: Wicomico County - Recommended Transportation Improvements

Dear Ms. Swaim-Staley:

As the Wicomico County Executive, I'd like to share with you a number of recommended transportation improvements in Wicomico County that we would request assistance from the State. We have always had an excellent working relationship with the State, and we look forward to future cooperation as we strive to meet the needs of our citizens. As such, I submit the following for your consideration:

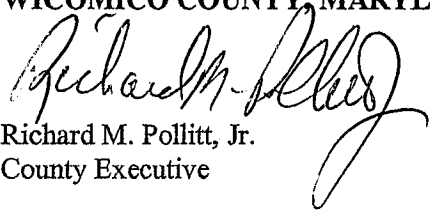
- 1. Multi-lane reconstruction of State Route 349 from U.S. Route 50 to North Upper Ferry Road:** This is listed in the current Highway Needs Inventory but has a different boundary, extending to Crooked Oak Lane instead of the County-recommended North Upper Ferry Road. We would like to request that this extended boundary be considered by MDOT. This project would alleviate congestion on the County's west side, an area that has experienced extensive residential development over the last 20 years. Previously, planning funds were included in Fiscal Year 2008 for this project, as listed in MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Program, but the focus since then has been for SHA to conduct a corridor feasibility study as opposed to a project planning study. We understand that funding for this study is now uncertain.
- 2. Multi-lane reconstruction of State Route 12 from Johnson Road to the Salisbury Bypass:** This portion of the Salisbury Metro Core is experiencing rapid development, providing justification for future widening. The re-alignment of Johnson Road with Robins Avenue is currently in the design phase.
- 3. East Side Corridor Study:** The Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) funded this corridor study which extends from South Division Street Extended in the City of Fruitland north to Zion Road near the Salisbury Bypass. This corridor extends through the City of Salisbury and is heavily-traveled, with several large development projects being proposed. A number of intersection improvements were recommended in this study, several of which affect State-maintained roads (i.e., Business U.S. Route 13, MD 12, Business U.S. Route 50 and the Salisbury Bypass). A copy of this report has been provided to the local District Engineer for your Department's consideration.

4. **Replacement of the Zion Road bridge at the Salisbury Bypass:** This would provide a direct link between Kelly Road and Naylor Mill Road and will help relieve congestion on U.S. Route 13 Business through Salisbury.
5. **Construction of an additional bridge across the Wicomico River:** This would provide an alternate route thereby reducing traffic delays caused by the drawbridge at U.S. Route 50. A feasibility study would be necessary to determine the best location for this bridge as well as the possibility of converting the existing drawbridge to a stationary bridge. The MPO, as part of a corridor study it's undertaking, is exploring issues involved with a crossing on a very preliminary basis which could serve as background information for a more comprehensive study. Concerning the drawbridge on U.S. Route 50, the County has had discussions with MDOT in the past about this, as it was recognized that the removal of the drawbridge would have benefits from a regional standpoint by eliminating a traffic chokepoint for travelers using this major roadway.
6. **Construction of an additional lane from U.S. Route 50 onto the Salisbury Bypass:** This would be provided for westbound traffic on U.S. Route 50 to relieve traffic congestion near Hobbs Road.
7. **Funding for a New Shore Transit Facility:** Shore Transit provides an invaluable service to segments of our population that don't currently have adequate transportation choices. As fuel costs potentially increase, we anticipate that Shore Transit will become even more valuable to our area. We understand that funding is in place for a new facility that will serve not only Shore Transit, but also other agencies that serve the Lower Eastern Shore region. We commend the State for supporting this project, and request that adequate funding be provided to ensure that the facility continues to become a reality.
8. **Support for Maryland Safe Routes to School Program:** The County is interested in seeking funding through this program to ensure the safety of our children as they attend school. One project that the County plans to pursue is the installation of sidewalks along a section of East College Avenue between the new James M. Bennett High School and Snow Hill Road. This portion of this heavily-traveled road is the only section between the new high school and existing Parkside High School farther east that does not have sidewalks. We would appreciate your support when we apply for these funds.
9. **Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport:** The airport provides a vital service to our region. Continued funding for this essential facility, including the funding for the Maryland Aviation Administration's Office of Regional Aviation Assistance and its Airport Improvement Grant Program, the creation of an MDOT state-funded "routine" airport maintenance program, and the re-introduction of a possible intrastate airline subsidy to fund scheduled airline service between the commercial service airports located in Hagerstown, Salisbury and Baltimore is requested.
10. **Support for Freight Water Transport:** Salisbury has the second busiest port in Maryland, and with fuel costs anticipated to continue to rise, water transport of freight will become even more economically viable. We respectfully request supplemental funding support for the Delmarva Water Transport Committee to help sustain water transportation and commerce in the County, and also support State assistance that can be provided for the acquisition of dredge material placement sites, especially for dredge material from the Wicomico River.
11. **Continued Support of the MPO:** Although the MPO has been in existence for only a few years, much has been accomplished. The MPO has provided a framework for bringing representatives together from the various local member jurisdictions to help plan for an effective, coordinated transportation system. The completion of our corridor studies is just one example of this coordinated effort. These accomplishments would not have been possible without MDOT's assistance, and we look forward to a continuation of these efforts.

October 20, 2009

Any assistance from the Maryland Department of Transportation towards the accomplishment of these improvements will be greatly appreciated. Should you need any additional information regarding these improvements, please contact Ted Shea, our Director of Administration at (410) 548-4801.

Sincerely,
WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND


Richard M. Pollitt, Jr.
County Executive

cc: Ted Shea, Director of Administration
John Redden, Public Works Acting Director
Bob Bryant, Airport Manager
Becky Robinson, DWTC Executive Director
Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council
Gary Pusey, MPO