



TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND

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Gerald W. Clark, Chairman

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OFFICE OF PLANNING &
CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

June 28, 2011

The Honorable Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P. O. Box 548, Mail Stop 200
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Subject: Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Swaim-Staley:

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is pleased to submit the attached list of regional transportation priorities for the 2012 Consolidated Transportation Program. Our 2012 priorities reflect consistency, continuity and regional consensus. Once again, our regional transportation priorities have the endorsement of the boards of county commissioners of all three Southern Maryland counties—Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's—and were adopted by the membership of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland on June 28, 2011.

Our top regional priorities and regionally significant projects were all recommended in the 2008 final report of the Commission to Study Southern Maryland Transportation Needs and our Transit Priority was called out in the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study (August 2010). The Commission's report is a strategic plan or "road map" for meeting the transportation needs of Southern Maryland's citizens and for maintaining the competitiveness of our regional economy for the next generation. We are pleased that the goals and analysis in the regional report reflect the needs of each of our counties and the region as a whole and provide a foundation for State transportation policy and infrastructure investment in Southern Maryland. As well, the Council recognizes the need to fund the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund adequately to address these needs and the additional \$80 million estimated for the Thomas Johnson bridge design and \$10 million for the light rail / bus rapid transit alignment alternates study. Our regional priorities are provided in the attached.

Our Top Regional Priority Highway Project is the Thomas Johnson Bridge/Route 2/4 upgrade to Route 235. This project will relieve commuter congestion, improve safety, help position the Patuxent

River Naval Base for future BRAC realignments, improve emergency evacuations, and provide bicycle tourism opportunities between the Three Notch Trail and Solomon's Island.

Our top Regional Priority Transit Project is the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor: This year the Council has taken a new approach of naming our top transit regional priority transit project in addition to the above top regional highway project. With regard to mass transit, we appreciate the significant progress that was completed in 2010 by the Maryland Transit Administration on the transit corridor study, which defined a high-capacity transit alignment in the U.S. 301/MD 5 corridor from White Plains and Waldorf to the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station. We are pleased that both Charles County and Prince George's Counties governments support the results of the study. While Charles County continues to address the necessary comprehensive plan revisions to reflect the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor, we look forward to MTA's assistance in undertaking the follow-on analysis in FY 2012 that will be required to advance the planning phase for the corridor so the project can advance in the future to right of way preservation. As you know, we have the fastest growing commuter bus ridership in the State, serving the State's fastest growing region for the 3rd decade running.

It is vitally important that progress continue on the planning, engineering and right of way acquisition for these long-standing and urgently needed regional priorities during the coming year, in spite of the funding limitations which continue to be imposed by current revenue shortfalls. We are confident that the Maryland Department of Transportation will do everything possible to make sure that essential steps are included in the 2012 CTP that will position these priorities for future implementation when federal and state funds become available.

With sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald W. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "C".

Gerald W. Clark, Chairman

CC: Delegate Sally Jameson, Chair, Southern Maryland Delegation

Delegate John Bohannon, Vice Chairman, Tri-County Council

Commissioner Susan Shaw, President, Calvert County Commissioners

Commissioner Candace Quinn-Kelly, President, Charles County Commissioners

Commissioner Jack Russell, President, St. Mary's County Commissioners

Wayne E. Clark, Executive Director, Tri-County Council

Attachment

Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities (CTP 2012-2017) Final for Council Adoption 6.23.2011

Recommendations: The Tri-County Council's Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC), met to review the three letters of recommendations from the three Boards of County Commissioners for regional transportation priorities. The RIAC has developed the below revised priorities which are based on project status, next steps in the funding process, and considerations shared in the Board's requests. The Council asked for County Delegations and Commissioners' Boards responses in writing for consideration of the Council Executive Board at the May 19th meeting and full Council action at the June 21 meeting. These priorities have been approved by the executive board for approval of the full council.

Southern Maryland's Top Two Regional Priorities:

1. Highway Priority: Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge and Maryland Route 4 – Initiate the detailed design of the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement and highway corridor widening, including the upgrade of MD Route 4 and MD Route 235. Request includes construction funding for short-term intersection improvements.¹ This project will relieve commuter congestion, improve safety, help position the Patuxent River Naval Base for future BRAC realignments, improve emergency evacuations, and provide bicycle tourism opportunities between the Three Notch Trail and Solomon's Island.

2. Transit Priority: Southern Maryland Transit Corridor – Initiate preliminary engineering to perform a detailed alternate analysis to select Light Rail/Bus Rapid Transit alignment alternatives along the MD 5/US 301 Transit Corridor, from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to Waldorf/White Plains.² As called for in both the Southern Maryland Transportation Needs Assessment (2008) and the Southern Maryland Transit Corridor Preservation Study (August 2010), we must preserve rights of way in the face of continuing residential and commercial development pressure along the transit corridor to maintain the feasibility of this option. The project will assist in implementation of county and town comprehensive plans, as well as sector and transportation plans including facilitating Priority Funding Area (PFA) conformity. When constructed, this project will improve the mobility and accessibility of people, facilitate the movement of goods within the region, and complete the missing link for transit oriented development. The project will also improve efficiency, ensuring the best use of existing and future transportation networks, resources and infrastructure.

Southern Maryland's Regionally Significant Projects:

1. Construction of a controlled access highway option for US 301 in Waldorf, which balances the needs of the residential and business communities, while minimizing the impacts to cultural, social, and natural resources; and,
2. Enhanced Commuter Bus Services and further Park & Ride development in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties.
3. The widening of MD Route 2/4 from the southern intersection of MD 765 (Main Street) at Industry Lane, to north of Auto Drive, widening to six lanes, with access controls and turning restrictions and an underpass in the vicinity of Fox Run Boulevard

¹ Detailed design cost for Thomas Johnson project is \$85 million; cost for intersection ramp for Route 2/4/Route 235 estimates requested from SHA.

² Alternate analysis cost for Light Rail/Bus Rapid Transit alignments study is \$10 million.