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COMMISSIONERS FOR SOMERSET COUNTY

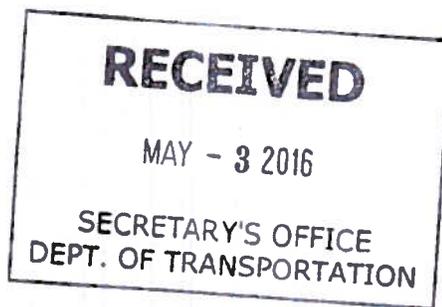
11916 SOMERSET AVENUE, ROOM 111
PRINCESS ANNE, MARYLAND 21853
TELEPHONE 410-651-0320, FAX 410-651-0366

COMMISSIONERS
RANDY LAIRD, PRESIDENT
CHARLES F. FISHER, VICE-PRESIDENT
CRAIG N. MATHIES, SR.
REFX SIMPKINS
JERRY S. BOSTON



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RALPH D. TAYLOR

COUNTY ATTORNEY
KIRK G. SIMPKINS



April 26, 2016

Pete K. Rahn, Secretary of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 548
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Re: Somerset County – Priority Letter for Recommended Transportation Improvements

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Each year, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) asks counties to submit letters prioritizing transportation projects for possible inclusion in the upcoming Consolidated Transportation Program prepared by MDOT.

In response to this request, the Somerset County Commissioners have met and prepared a list of proposed transportation improvements in the County for your consideration. We would be happy to discuss these with you and your staff in further detail during the Annual Tour, or at any other time at your convenience. They are listed as follows:

ENHANCEMENTS

1. Westover to Crisfield Bike Trail (adjacent to MD 413)

Description:

This project consists of utilizing a 60 foot-wide right-of-way located between the County's regional recreational complex at Westover and extending to the outskirts of Crisfield for a bike trail. This right-of-way was formerly a rail line and is 13.5 miles in length. Once the trail approaches Crisfield, it would transition into a dedicated bike lane along MD 413. We understand there are issues with ownership of the right-of-way but believe if these can be resolved the trail would be beneficial to the County.

Need:

This bike trail will encourage tourism and provide an economic benefit to local businesses, and will supplement the County's recreational opportunities. It can also be utilized as an educational resource by providing signage that details the historic importance of the railway as it was used extensively by the agricultural and seafood industries of the County in previous times.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project is identified for development in the County's 2012 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. In addition to complying with that Plan's recommendations, this project would meet a number of Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goals – in particular those that address Quality of Service by enhancing users' access to MDOT's transportation services and Environmental Stewardship by developing an initiative that protects a community's natural and historic resources.

2. Acceleration Lane Needed at U.S. Rte. 13 North/Jones Road Intersection:

Description:

Several years ago, the U.S. Route 13/Stockyard Road intersection in neighboring Wicomico County to the north was redesigned to restrict certain turning movements in order to improve safety. Part of this redesign caused traffic to be redirected from this intersection in Wicomico County to the U.S. Route 13/Jones Road intersection in Somerset County. As a result, an acceleration lane is needed on the west side of U.S. Route 13 North at Jones Road to accommodate traffic travelling south on U.S. Route 13 and making u-turns and attempting to merge on to U.S. Route 13 North. Our understanding is this project has been funded for construction.

Need:

This proposal would improve safety at the U.S. Route 13/Jones Road intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

3. Deceleration Lane Needed at MD 413 North at Marion:

Description:

There is no deceleration lane for vehicles travelling north on MD 413 to make a safe turn on to Tulls Corner Road. Given the speed limit along MD 413, a deceleration lane would be beneficial for safety reasons. The Commissioners recognize that the right-of-way width along this section of MD 413 is limited, and the SHA District Office made a choice to provide a dedicated left-turn lane at this intersection as opposed to providing the deceleration lane described here, as there was not enough ROW to do both. The Commissioners are not taking issue with this choice, only that perhaps at some future date perhaps the ROW can be increased to accommodate both improvements. Our understanding is this project is funded for design but is not yet funded for construction.

Need:

This proposal would improve safety at the MD 413/Tulls Corner Road intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

4. Widening of Intersection at West Post Office Road/Somerset Avenue:

Description:

Located within the Town of Princess Anne, this intersection has seen a significant increase in truck traffic on West Post Office Road.

Need:

The widening of West Post Office Road at its intersection with MD 675 will allow for safer ingress and egress of trucks. This proposal would improve safety at this intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at this intersection.

5. Acceleration Lane Needed at U.S. Rte. 13 North and South/King Miller Intersection:

Description:

The Mountaire Farms Hatchery is located near this intersection and large trucks leaving the Mountaire complex are frequently unable to easily access Route 13 North/South because of the lack of an acceleration lane, causing an unsafe situation. Acceleration lanes at North and South U.S. Route 13 at King Miller Road is suggested.

Need:

This proposal would improve safety at the U.S. Route 13/King Miller Road intersection.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) goal that addresses Safety and Security by improving safety at this intersection.

6. MD Route 413 Dualization

Description:

MD Rte. 413 (Crisfield Highway) is the main access to Crisfield and consists of a single lane north and south-bound for its entire length of approximately 15 miles. For safety reasons and to accommodate future growth, dualization is recommended.

Need:

Given the length of this road and because it's a direct connection between Crisfield and U.S. Route 13, traffic is fairly heavy at times. A number of accidents have occurred on this road which would be avoided if dualization were to occur.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would improve safety and over time would also increase capacity as future growth occurs.

SYSTEM PRESERVATION

1. Widening of Deal Island Road (MD 363):

Description:

Deal Island Road (MD 363) extends from Princess Anne westward to the villages of Deal Island and Wenona located along the Chesapeake Bay. Its length is approximately 20 miles and it serves as a collector route for residents traveling to Princess Anne and to other destinations via MD Route 13. This two lane road is narrow and although increasing its width in some places may be restricted by environmental factors, there are areas where widening is possible and would improve safety.

Need:

Where possible, the widening of Deal Island Road would improve the safety of travelers.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by providing transportation assets that maximize personal safety and security in all situations.

2. Oriole Road (MD 627) Shoulder Repair:

Description:

MD 627 is in need of shoulder repair due to severe drop-offs from the travel portion of the road to virtually a non-existent shoulder.

Need:

Shoulder repairs would improve the safety of this road.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Safety and Security by potentially reducing collision and injury rates for motorized users.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

1. Smith Island Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study:

Description:

Currently residents and visitors to Smith Island are served by private passenger ferries operated by several independent local boat captains. The "Smith Island Vision Plan" identified a reliable and sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of residents and tourists as one of the Plan's five overall goals. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has indicated funding may be available for a study to determine the most feasible way to develop an effective passenger ferry system while incorporating the existing system. Included would be an analysis of operating and capital needs, ridership, and possible funding sources for a successful passenger ferry operation.

Need:

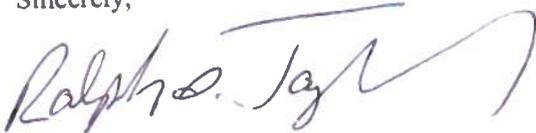
A coordinated passenger ferry system could better serve residents and visitors to the Island and provide economic benefits to the Island and its residents.

Relationship to MTP Goals:

This project would meet the MTP goal that addresses Quality of Service by providing options to improve the existing passenger ferry system.

Any assistance from the Maryland Department of Transportation towards the accomplishment of these improvements would be greatly appreciated. Should you need any additional information regarding these improvements, please feel free to contact me at (410) 651-0320. Thank you for your attention, and again, we appreciate any consideration you can give to these projects.

Sincerely,



Ralph D. Taylor
County Administrator

Cc: Donnie Drewer, District 1 Engineer, SHA
Peter Sotherland, Regional Planner, SHIA