

Mayor  
James L. Eberhardt  
Town Administrator  
Denise Breder



# Perryville

Grounded in the past. Focused on the future.

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March 17, 2017

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



Re: Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Rahn:

The Town of Perryville would like to take this opportunity to convey our transportation priorities to your department for FY2018. As fiscal challenges continue and State policies and regulations increase for Smart Growth principles and sustainable futures, transportation becomes a top priority for all of us.

To recognize the important relationship between transportation and air quality, congestion mitigation, and providing more livable and sustainable communities with better linked land use and transportation, the Town's overall top priorities are as follows:

1. Enhance the I-95 and Route 40 toll discounts for Cecil County residents and businesses, by allowing the Hatem Bridge passes to be used on I-95 during rush hours to alleviate traffic backups along MD222 in Perryville and Ohio Street in Havre de Grace.
2. Redesign and construct a new MD 222/I-95 interchange, to include an upgraded bridge over I-95.
3. Accept maintenance responsibility for the southern end of MD 327 (the last 900' +/-).
4. Install sidewalks on MD222 from Clayton Street to the intersection with St. Marks Church Road (the entrance to the Perryville High School).
5. Increase MARC Penn Line service to include mid-day and weekend service for the entire line (D.C. to Perryville) and special event trains.
6. Replace the bridge over the Amtrak line on MD327, but ensure maintenance of traffic during construction.

A complete description of these priorities follows:

### Enhance Toll Discounts for Cecil County Residents and Businesses

Headed north-east from Baltimore, there are two ways to enter Perryville, via the Hatem Bridge and via the Tydings Bridge, both of which require tolls. The toll creates an economic barrier, effectively separating Perryville and all of Cecil County from the rest of the State, thus impeding the economic vitality of the region. The economic impact is inordinately large to Perryville as the first town that drivers enter after the toll. This is evidenced by higher unemployment rates in Perryville relative to the rest of Cecil County as well as relative to the State of Maryland as a whole. Additionally, according to a study done by Sage Policy Group, Inc. that was prepared for Cecil County in May of 2015<sup>1</sup>, the presence of the toll results in "diseconomies of scale and higher transaction costs continue to manifest themselves in various ways, including the ongoing economic underperformance of Perryville and Port Deposit." Further, the funds collected at the Tydings Bridge (I-95) toll are used to maintain I-95 from Baltimore to the Delaware Line as well as other Maryland Transportation Authority highways. Therefore, Perryville suffers from the largest impact of the toll, but most of those funds do not flow back into the community.

In addition to an economic burden, the toll creates a traffic congestion problem for both Havre de Grace and Perryville due to toll diversion. Commuters avoid the I-95 toll in favor of using the Hatem EZ Pass plan causing traffic to stack up on Ohio Street in Havre de Grace and on MD222 northbound in Perryville during rush hour. This situation creates unnecessary traffic backups in both communities, which likely has some measurable effect on air pollution as well. By creating a commuter-friendly toll structure on I-95 at the Tydings Bridge, diversion will be reduced, if not eliminated and the traffic congestion and resulting air pollution would be alleviated.

Perryville is poised to grow, smartly and sustainably, which would only benefit the State of Maryland. By removing the barriers to growth (i.e. inordinately expensive tolls), we would expect an increase in both residential and business development resulting in the creation of new jobs and increased revenues to the State.

### I-95 Interchange Improvements

The existing I-95 interchange in Perryville was constructed in 1963 and the interchange combines toll collections and truck weigh stations with the continued increase of traffic, by both vehicles and trucks. MD222 crosses the highway and is the only 2-lane bridge that hasn't been upgraded in the State. The area is the location of the first State casino and a prime location for economic development that could include a range of retail stores, business offices, hotel and conference facilities, thereby adding needed jobs or a range of skills and talents.

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<sup>1</sup> Sage Policy Group, Inc. *The Ongoing Economic Impact of Highway Tolls in Cecil County*. March 2015 pg. 2.

Numerous studies have been conducted by various agencies to evaluate traffic conditions in the surrounding area. Project development for both commercial and residential is limited due to the failing grade of traffic movement by both vehicles and trucks. Though some of the restrictions have been lifted by the State Highway Administration, which is much appreciated by the Town of Perryville, the bridge is still in need of replacement.

Upgrading the bridge at this key interchange is crucial to our Town to develop projects such as the proposed commercial entertainment mixed use development where Hollywood Casino Perryville is located. In addition, it is essential for Cecil County to be able to encourage and continue planning of area economic developments such as the Bainbridge project.

Accept maintenance responsibility for the southern end of MD 327 (the last 900' +/-)

MD327 is one of the shortest roads in the State Highway inventory at approximately 0.36 miles. Though short in distance, the road, which includes a bridge over the Amtrak rail line, leads to some very important facilities to include the Town of Perryville wastewater plant, the Town of Perryville Community Park, the V.A. Maryland Healthcare System at Perry Point (truck access only) and to one of the largest buildings under one roof in the State of Maryland, the Perryville IKEA Distribution Center. The last 900' +/- at the south end of the road leads to the entrance of the IKEA Distribution Center. It is this 900' +/- section of road that is the subject of Perryville's transportation priority.

When IKEA began development of the distribution center in 2002 the road was extended by roughly 900' and there was apparently some intent of the State to turn over that newly created section of roadway to IKEA for maintenance. Though, to the best of our knowledge, no formal agreement was ever reached and that end of the road is owned, and should be maintained, by the State of Maryland. IKEA has brought a tremendous amount of business and employment to the State to include stores in Baltimore and College Park and the distribution center in Perryville that also brings in a significant amount of business through the Port of Baltimore. The State of Maryland is working to become more business friendly thus encouraging more business to locate here. Therefore, Perryville is asking the Maryland Department of Transportation to take maintenance responsibility for the final section of roadway, which is a miniscule percentage of the 17.824 miles of road that MDOT maintains, removing any "gray area" over who should maintain the road and helping to restore the business-friendly reputation for the State of Maryland.

Sidewalks on MD222 from Clayton Street to St. Marks Church Road to Perryville High School

Sidewalks in this vicinity would provide a safe walkable access to the local High School. It is a goal of the Town to provide connecting sidewalks to local schools when development occurs.

### Extend the MARC commuter rail service

Perryville's Train Station was built in 1905 and is still used on a daily basis. Ridership continues to increase as many realize the benefit of regional transportation. Riders come from all over the local area, not only from Maryland, but Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, as evidenced throughout public parking areas in our Town. The Train Station is a unique characteristic of our Town that we want to enhance for our future growth and development. Businesses make site selection decisions with a high value placed on access to regional transportation, thereby putting Perryville at that strategic location to utilize these transportation options.

There is a big push to extend MARC service to Delaware, which is a worthy goal. However, the service already extends to Perryville, and should be utilized to the fullest extent possible. Increased MARC service to include mid-day, weekend and special event trains for the entire line provides alternative transportation that is critical for access to jobs, increased educational, work opportunities, and tourism-related activities in our region. We would like MDOT to work with the Town for parking to accommodate increased ridership.

### Replace the bridge over the Amtrak line on MD327 and ensure maintenance of traffic during construction

Preserving transportation system investments is an overarching goal of the State CTP. Replacing the bridge over Amtrak on MD327 fits well with this goal. The bridge, constructed in 1968 is heavily used and in need of replacement. It provides access to a 1.7 million square foot Ikea East Coast Distribution facility, the Perryville Wastewater Plant, the Perryville Community Park and truck access to the VA Medical Center campus at Perry Point. Further, MD327 is the only access for Ikea, the wastewater plant and park and it is the only truck access to Perry Point. Therefore, it is vitally important that traffic access is maintained when the bridge is replaced.

Perryville recognizes and supports Sustainability, and that support follows through in our Comprehensive Plan, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan, Greenway Plan and annual budget. Our priority is to offer as many opportunities to alternative transportation options and achieve less gas consumption, while recognizing the importance of maintenance of the existing system supports State goals of preserving transportation system investments, enhancing transportation services and expanding transportation opportunities. We hope our plans for a more sustainable and viable community in the future will continue with support from the State.

Thank you for your consideration of these items and your interest in our Town's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,



James L. Eberhardt  
Mayor

CC: Dr. Alan McCarthy, County Executive, Cecil County  
County Council of Cecil County  
David Glenn, Council Member, City of Havre De Grace