



TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND
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April 28, 2017

The Honorable Pete Rahn, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Drive
P.O. Box 548, Mail Stop 200
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Re: Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Rahn:

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is pleased to submit the below list of Regional Transportation Priorities for inclusion in the FY 2018-2023 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These regional priority projects are a result of collaboration among the Boards of County Commissioner of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties to develop our coordinated local transportation priorities. These projects originate from each County's individual priority letter, which were reviewed and considered by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC) and agreed on by Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Priorities. As a result, these priorities were adopted by the Executive Board of the Tri-County Council and subsequently adopted by the Full Council. We respectfully submit them to you for your incorporation into the Maryland CTP.

Our Top Regional Priority Highway Project continues to be the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement with accompanying improvements of the Route 2/4 corridor and capacity improvements at the MD 235 interchange. This project will relieve commuter congestion, improve safety, properly position the Naval Air Station Patuxent River for future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) review expected in Federal FY19, improve emergency evacuation plans and provide bicycle tourism opportunities between the Three Notch Trail and Solomon's Island.

The Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement and accompanying MD 4 / MD 235 interchange improvements have been included in the CTP since FY 2007; and even with the funds allocated in FY 2017 for engineering, the project will continue to be a multi-million dollar capital investment, for which construction funding will need to be appropriated over many more years. We at the Tri-County Council encourage the continued recognition of this vital project to the Southern Maryland Region by programming full project funding for engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction in the FY 2018 budget year and beyond.

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Our **Top Regional Transit Priority** is the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project to provide fixed-route, high-capacity transit service in the MD 5/US 301 corridor from the Branch Avenue Metro Station to Waldorf/White Plains in Charles County. Maryland Transit Administration's continued efforts to work with both Charles County and Prince George's County to advance the planning and development of this critical transit line are greatly appreciated. We look forward to the inclusion of the "Project Planning" funding in the CTP to serve our rapidly growing population in Southern Maryland. This Rapid Transit Investment will have a significant impact on the redevelopment of Downtown Waldorf, and the improvement of air quality of the Region, as well as significantly reducing the congestion within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Not only will this project reduce 24,000 to 28,000 single occupancy vehicle trips on MD 5 (Branch Avenue) each day, but it will significantly enhance the job base in Southern Maryland, and the associated commercial tax base for the Maryland economy. With the limitation of only two highways providing commuters access to the Metropolitan Washington employment areas, and being the only region of the State west of the Chesapeake Bay without access to some form of passenger rail transit, it is imperative that this project continue its progress toward fruition. We strongly urge you to fund this project for the Project Planning Phase in the FY2018-2023 CTP.

Other, Southern Maryland's Regionally Significant Transportation Projects recognized by the Council:

We wish to express our great appreciation of the recent funding allocated for the construction of a new Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge by both you and Governor Larry Hogan. The Council understands the principle funds for building this bridge result from tolls collected by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA). To reduce Maryland's burden, we urge your administration to work with Virginia's state transportation leaders, members of both congressional delegations to seek fair distribution of the costs of this bridge which mutually benefits both states and their local economies. We believe that this new bridge is a crucial component to the region's transportation infrastructure and essential military installations, which are key to the safety and the economic vitality of Southern Maryland, would further bolster the area's position as a distribution hub, and improve the quality of life along the US 301 corridor which already serves as an alternate route when Interstate 95 faces gridlock.

Construction of a controlled access highway option for US 301 in Waldorf that will balance the needs of residential and business communities while minimizing the impacts to cultural, social and natural resources.

Enhancement of Commuter Bus Services within the three counties as well as the development of additional Park & Ride Lots in Charles and St. Mary's Counties location near Leonardtown, MD.

The Upgrade of MD Route 2/4 from the southern intersection of MD 765A (Main Street) at Industry Lane to north Auto Drive that provides widening to six lanes with access controls and turning restrictions. The project was modified and expanded to accommodate a new development project in the immediate area of the project. This year we are urging the project move forward to design build completion.

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It is vitally important that we build on the current progress with funding of the planning, engineering and right-of-way acquisition for these urgently needed and long-standing regional priorities in the coming fiscal year. We continue to be confident that the Maryland Department of Transportation, working with the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, and our local government partners, will do everything possible to make sure that essential steps are included in the FY 2018-2023 CTP to continue making progress on these priorities toward future implementation. We thank you for your support, consideration, and affirmative action with respect to these important Southern Maryland Regional Projects.

Respectfully submitted,



Commissioner Debra Davis, Chair
Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee



Commissioner Steve Weems, Chair
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Cc: The Honorable Steny Hoyer, United States Congressman
The Honorable Ben Cardin, United States Senator
The Honorable Chris VanHollen, United States Senator
The Honorable Elaine Chao, United States Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Peter Murphy, President, Charles County Commissioners
The Honorable Randy Guy, President, St. Mary's County Commissioners
The Honorable Thomas C. Hejl, President, Calvert County Commissioners
The Honorable Edith Patterson, Delegate, Charles County
The Honorable Deborah Rey, Delegate, St. Mary's County
The Honorable Mark Fisher, Delegate, Calvert County