



## TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND

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April 26, 2018

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 our Regional Transportation Priorities for inclusion in the FY 2019-2024 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These regional priority projects are a result of collaboration among the Boards of County Commissioners of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties. The projects listed below originated from each County's individual priority letters, which were reviewed and agreed upon by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). The priorities were adopted by the Executive Board of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and subsequently adopted by the membership of the Full Council. We respectfully submit these Regional Transportation Priorities to you for incorporation into the Maryland CTP.

**The Southern Maryland Top Regional Priority Highway Project** continues to be the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement with accompanying improvements to the Route 2/4 corridor and capacity improvements at the MD 235 interchange. This project will relieve commuter congestion and improve safety, properly positioning Naval Air Station Patuxent River for long term support of the Naval Aviation Research, Development, Test and Evaluation mission. Moreover, it will 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 2018 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. Funding for design of the replacement bridge, MD Route 4 dualization, and capacity improvements at MD Route 235 intersection is our highest priority for this project. 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 2019 budget year and beyond. The Council, BIAC and RIAC encourages you to support a separate Bicycle/Pedestrian lane for a multimodal transportation option for the new Thomas Johnson Bridge.

Our **Top Regional Transit Priority** is the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project to provide fixed-route, high-capacity transit service in the MD Route 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 the Southern Maryland Region. 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 urge you to fund this project for the Project Planning Phase in the FY2019-2024 CTP.

The **Southern Maryland Top Regional Bicycle Project** is the Three Notch Trail Completion, Phase 7 Project. This Bicycle Project has been discussed extensively with county representatives, bicycle community representatives and planners from the three counties. The Bicycle Trail Project was put forward by the Bicycle Infrastructure Advisory Committee (BIAC) as the top bicycle/pedestrian trail project for FY2019. This project will continue the multi-step process of completion of the Three Notch Bicycle Trail as previously planned by St. Mary's County. BIAC has initiated a long-term aspirational plan to connect the Indian Head Rail Trail to the Three Notch Rail Trail to create a region wide, mostly rural, multimodal long distance trail. The Phase 7 Project is the next step in that long-term objective.

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

We wish to express our great appreciation for the recent funding allocated for the construction of a new Harry W. Nice Bridge by both you and Governor Larry Hogan. The Council understands the principle funds for construction of 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 and 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 on both sides of the Potomac River, 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 serves as an alternate route when Interstate 95 faces gridlock. The Council would also like to re-emphasize the requests made in previous letters from BIAC and RIAC that you support a separate Bicycle/Pedestrian lane for a multimodal transportation option for this new bridge when the MdTA Board chooses a final design.

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

Creation of a Transportation Hub located on or adjacent to the Hughesville Campus of the College of Southern Maryland. This centrally located hub would serve as a transfer meeting point for the three county bus transportation systems. The hub transfer point will allow citizens to move more freely in the Tri-County Region without the use of an automobile for the purposes of employment, education, healthcare access and tourism.

The Upgrade of MD Route 2/4 in Prince Frederick, 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 and completion.

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.

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 ensure that essential steps are included in the FY 2019-2024 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 Todd Morgan, 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 Peter Murphy, President, Charles County Commissioners  
The Honorable Randy Guy, President, St. Mary's County Commissioners  
The Honorable Evan Slaughenhaupt, Jr., President, Calvert County Commissioners