



*Queen
Anne's
County*

**THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY**

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March 26, 2019

Mr. Pete K. Rahn, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 548
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076-0548

**Re: Queen Anne's County Transportation Priority Letter
2020 – 2025 Consolidated Transportation Plan**

Dear Secretary Rahn:

The “*safety and mobility for our citizens*” is the driving factor towards the establishment of our local transportation priorities. Attached is a listing of the Transportation priorities for Queen Anne's County for inclusion in the 2020-2025 Consolidated Transportation Plan.

Specifically we wish to call your attention to our highest priorities which include funding for additional capacity for the Bay Bridge, critical transportation improvements on Kent Island due to Bay Bridge congestion, funding final engineering and construction of the US Route 50 & 213 interchange, Access controls along US 301, improvements for local transit and support for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

William Preston Lane, Jr. Memorial Bay Bridge

As projected in the Bay Bridge Life Cycle Cost Analysis, completed by MDOT in December 2015, traffic impacts and congestion within the Bay Bridge corridor will continue to deteriorate. The increase in traffic and limited capacity of the Bay Bridge as the single crossing of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland will result in continued and consistent delays if not addressed now. The delays on this primary transportation and freight corridor impacts the daily operations of many Maryland residents and businesses but impacts a disproportionate number of Queen Anne's County residents making it a top priority. It is vital to the safety and mobility of Queen Anne's County Citizens that steps be taken now to accelerate the NEPA process, design and funding of Bay Bridge improvements. Due to both the local and regional significance of this facility it is essential that the planning and funding for additional safety and capacity improvements continue and remain on schedule. To assist with planning efforts, Queen Anne's County has contracted with a local transportation engineering firm to begin capturing critical traffic volumes that enter the US 50/301 “congestion zone” across Kent Island. This is beginning the second year of a three-year traffic counting and classification project that will provide 24/7 volumes every single day. Our goal is to document base traffic information at strategic locations which will provide a basis to evaluate current and future changes in traffic patterns. We have discussed this project with your District Staff and we request logistical support and any financial assistance that MDOT can provide.



Maryland Route 18

Recognizing that the NEPA study, design and funding improvements to the Bay Bridge will take time, Queen Anne's County has identified vital interim improvements in the Kent Island Transportation Plan to improve the movement of traffic on Kent Island. The top priority of the many improvements identified in the Kent Island Transportation Plan is to enhance the safety and capacity of Maryland Route 18. The specific project is to initiate comprehensive roadway and pedestrian improvements from Castle Marina Road to the Kent Narrows. As the only alternative route to using Route 50/301 this project will serve to increase mobility and eliminate routine congestion as well as seasonal traffic gridlock. By providing comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian improvements it will also provide residents an alternative to driving. The Kent Island Transportation Plan is posted on our website at www.qac.org/DocumentCenter/View/4460.

US Route 50 & 213 Interchange

Construction of an interchange at US Route 50 & 213 is a long standing priority for Queen Anne's County. Over the last 20 years land acquisition and design work has occurred clearing the way for final engineering and construction of the project. As Route 404 is now dualized and thru traffic on Route 50 continues to increase, this overpass becomes essential to safely move traffic between Route 50 & 213 as well as providing safe access to Chesapeake College, our regional Community College serving five counties. This project is the number one component of the long-range US 50 Ocean Gateway project.

US 301

We applaud the new US 301/ Route 304 interchange which eliminated a very hazardous high speed at-grade crossing along the US 301 corridor. Construction of this project also facilitated access control modifications to the US 301 and Rolling Bridge Road at-grade crossing to a much safer right-in, right-out intersection. There are many more at-grade crossings along the US 301 corridor which are identified in our Highway Needs Inventory for access control improvements and interchanges. We anticipate major traffic increases using the US 301 corridor now that DELDOT has completed highway upgrades bypassing Middletown, DE. These increases will likely have a high percentage of trucks. Therefore, we urge MDOT to move more of these projects forward in the very near future.

Transit

The Transit Division requests continued support of County Ride, our Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS). Demand continues to increase as we are providing almost 30,000 one way passenger trips over 300,000 miles per year. Additional funding is imperative to meet the public demand. The Annual Transportation Plan for FY2020 includes capital funding for Preventative Maintenance and Vehicles to repair and replace our aging fleet. We are also requesting a Transit Bus Canopy to provide a secure and safe area for bus parking. Finally, we would like to thank MTA for the recent approval of the Statewide Transit Innovation Grant (STIG) to purchase a routing software system to create a faster and easier process for demand response and deviated fixed routes. The system will provide efficiency for dispatchers, drivers, routing, scheduling, reporting and billing. All funding provided through MTA is greatly appreciated as we continue to provide safe and reliable transportation to the citizens of Queen Anne's County.

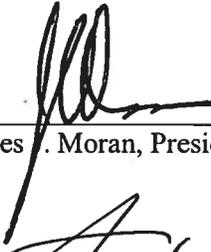
Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvements

The County is requesting continued support of our efforts to expand the Queen Anne's County bicycle and pedestrian network. The County is planning to continue our successful partnership with MDOT by providing local funds to leverage the support of State and Federal grants towards development of capital trail improvements. The Queen Anne's County Trail system provides for an environmentally friendly alternative mode of transportation to connect our citizens to jobs, commercial areas, schools, parks and other services. Making vital connections in our trail system promotes a healthy alternative to driving, creates recreational opportunities, and promotes tourism opportunities for visitors as well as an everyday transportation alternative for our residents.



The Board of Queen Anne's County Commissioners appreciates your consideration of our priorities and inclusion of them in the Consolidated Transportation Plan. We would look forward to working with MDOT to implement these priority transportation projects.

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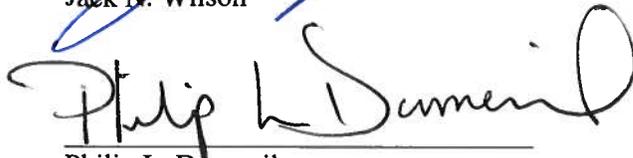
James J. Moran, President



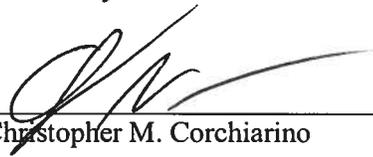
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