

***The Commission to Study
Southern Maryland
Transportation Needs***

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Veolia Transportation

Staffed by:



June 27, 2008

The Honorable Thomas V. "Mike" Miller
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee
H-107 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Co-Chair, Legislative Policy Committee
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear Chairmen:

The Commission to Study Southern Maryland Transportation Needs has completed the Assessment report as required in Senate Bill 281 and which reporting date was extended to June 30, 2008 by Senate Bill 200/House Bill 507, Chapters 27 and 28, Acts of 2008. We thank you for your support of the legislation to create the Commission, your appointment of representatives who ably served you on the Commission and for your kind consideration of the findings as you lead the General Assembly's deliberations on future funding and policy priorities for Maryland.

The report identified between \$6.0 and \$7.3 billion in current highway transportation needs in the region, and additional funds would be needed for a light rail transit line from the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station to Waldorf and White Plains. This compares to \$40 billion dollars of unmet transportation needs statewide. Of that total, \$2.1 to \$2.4 billion would be invested in projects of top regional importance and \$3.3 to \$4.1 billion would go to county projects of regional importance. Current financial forecasting for Transportation Trust Fund dollars suggests that between \$640 and \$770 million dollars might be reasonably expected to flow to Southern Maryland between 2012 and 2020. The Commission has evaluated the transportation needs of the region, identified a number of multi-modal approaches to address the challenges, and evaluated the planned and proposed transportation projects. This analysis will provide local, state and federal policy makers with the facts needed to begin to address the challenge of meeting the region's future transportation needs.

The Honorable Mike Miller
The Honorable Michael Busch
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From 1970-2000, Southern Maryland's population grew by 143%, which was higher than any other region in the State. Though the rate has slowed, the region is still experiencing significant growth pressures. The Maryland Department of Planning estimates that the region will grow by an additional 65% between 2000 and 2030. The recommended transportation improvements are needed to meet the present and future needs of our citizens and sustain Southern Maryland's growing economy.

Southern Maryland is unique in having a long history of regional cooperation in a unified local, State and federal partnership to achieve the successful implementation of transportation priorities. The report notes that this partnership will be critical to meeting the challenges that the Commission was created to address. Top priorities include the construction of a western bypass of Waldorf and the limited upgrade of US 301, and construction of a dual span of the Thomas Johnson Bridge. The Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Lexington Park continues to expand in job production, generating significant dollars for the Maryland economy. This job engine for the region has impacted commuter patterns, driving the need for a second span of the Thomas Johnson Bridge. In our region, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act is a focus of our attention every day as we continue to support the needs of our military bases with improved access and support services. The report recognizes the need for innovative approaches for funding, policy changes, and sustaining partnerships between all levels of government to advance priority projects in Southern Maryland, balanced with the needs of the rest of the State. This report is a strategic plan to serve as a foundation for future decisions on vital transportation matters.

The Legislation establishing the Commission directs that:

"The Commission shall:

- (1) review the study prepared by the Maryland Department of Transportation regarding mass transit in Southern Maryland under Chapter 594, Acts of 1998, the Southern Maryland Regional Transportation Strategy, the MD 5/U.S. 301 Transit Service Staging Plan, and any other relevant mass transit studies and plans;*
- (2) study the Southern Maryland rail transit alternatives, including a light rail transit system in the Maryland Route 5 corridor from White Plains to Branch Avenue;*
- (3) study the current and future impact of traffic congestion in Southern Maryland, including traffic levels on roads including U.S. Route 301 and Maryland Routes 2/4, 4, 5, 210, 228, 231, 235, and 260;*
- (4) make recommendations on potential strategies, including roadway improvements and mass transit, including light rail transit to reduce traffic congestion on the roads specified in item (3) of this subsection and throughout the Southern Maryland region;*
- (5) study and make recommendations regarding the amount of funding necessary to implement traffic congestion reduction strategies in Southern Maryland;*

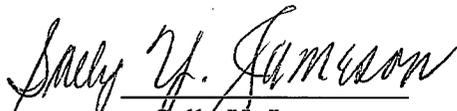
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The Honorable Michael Busch
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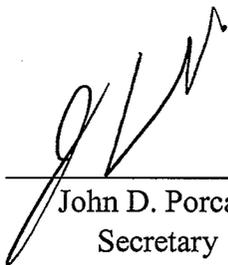
- (6) *assess the barriers to implementing roadway improvements and mass transit, including light rail service, in Southern Maryland and make recommendations to address those barriers; and*
- (7) *make recommendations for potential funding mechanisms to implement traffic congestion reduction strategies in Southern Maryland.*

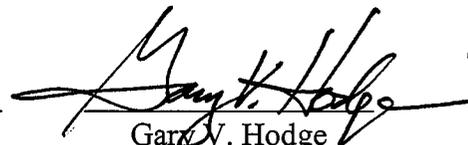
The Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, subject to §2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2008."

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Wayne Clark, Executive Director of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland at (301) 274-1922 or Ms. Michelle Martin, Assistant Director, Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Planning and Capital Programming, at (410) 865-1285. Of course, you should always feel free to contact any of us directly.

Sincerely,


Sally Y. Jameson
Commission Chair


John D. Porcari
Secretary
Maryland Department of
Transportation


Gary V. Hodge
Chairman
Tri-County Council for
Southern Maryland

Attachment

cc: Members of the Legislative Policy Committee
Mr. Wayne Clark, Executive Director, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
Ms. Michelle D. Martin, Assistant Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming,
Maryland Department of Transportation