



Queen Anne's County

THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

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Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
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March 22, 2022

Mr. James F. Ports, Jr. 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
FY 2023 – 2028 Consolidated Transportation Plan**

Dear Secretary Ports:

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 2023-2028 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 and the Bay Crossing Study, 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 continued steps be taken now to quickly complete the Bay Crossing Study Tier I NEPA process and fund an accelerated Tier II NEPA process.

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.

The NEPA process, design and construction of a future bay crossing will take years to complete, therefore, we must continue to evaluate and implement all possible options to actively manage congestion during peak travel times and future construction projects.

To assist with planning efforts, Queen Anne's County has contracted with a local transportation engineering firm to monitor and document critical traffic volumes that enter the US 50/301 "congestion zone" across Kent Island. The County is beginning the fifth year of this traffic counting and classification project that will provide 24/7 traffic counts within the corridor. 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. Any financial assistance that MDOT can provide to support this effort is greatly appreciated.

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 plan specifically identifies the need 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 to widen US 50 from Queenstown to Wye Mills.

US 301

There are many at-grade crossings along the US 301 corridor which are identified in our Highway Needs Inventory for access control improvements and interchanges. As traffic continues to increase on US 301 these improvements are essential to improve safety and reduce accidents. We urge MDOT to move these projects forward by funding the design and construction of the necessary improvements.

US 301 Repair and Repaving

The road segment of US 301 Southbound from the US 301 & MD 213 interchange to Queenstown has had significant patching and repair in recent years. This patching and repair work has impacted the drivability of the road and we would ask MDOT to consider a comprehensive repaving project to repair the road.

Transit

The Transit Division requests continued support of County Ride, our Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS). Citizen response to the Covid Pandemic recovery has significantly increased. All fixed routes and the door-to-door vehicle service levels are currently operating at 100%. Full service was necessary as we saw a significant increase in passenger trips, mileage, and revenue hours post Pandemic. County Ride provided 11,700 rides (8,000 previous), 17,700 hours (16,000 previous) and 322,000 miles (225,000 previous).

Additional funding is imperative to meet the increase in the demographic that notes the age shift that indicates that services of the older adult and disabled citizens will continue to increase. The Annual Transportation Plan for FY2023 includes capital funding for Preventative Maintenance. ARPA funding will provide for our vehicle replacement needs due at this time.

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 Kent Island Transportation Plan identifies a pedestrian overpass crossing US 50/301 on Kent Island near the US 50 and MD 8 interchange. This pedestrian overpass would be a key link in connecting the Cross Island Trail with the South Island Trail on MD 8. The County is requesting MDOT assistance to review and approve a crossing location and fund the design of the pedestrian overpass or suggest an alternative location.

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.

Regional Cooperation & Coordination

As a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, we are very invested in cost effective, systematic, and regionally integrated approaches to addressing multimodal congestion, mobility, and safety in the Baltimore region. Therefore, we have identified several regional priorities:

- We strongly support funding and implementing the regional transit corridors in the State’s Regional Transit Plan and request MDOT advance planning, design, and operational funding, in coordination with our local and regional transit systems, to meet the goals and priorities in the Regional Transit Plan.
- Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies offer cost effective and considered approaches that leverage our investments in the existing transportation system. We strongly support funding and implementing TSMO strategies, particularly in MDOT SHA TSMO System corridors 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 13, and are particularly interested in how these strategies can address the region’s freight bottlenecks.
- We strongly support funding and implementing bike and pedestrian projects, in the region.
- To facilitate this interjurisdictional coordination, we would prioritize the Bay Bridge Corridor of US 50/30 from MD 404 in Queen Anne’s County to I-97 in Anne Arundel County as a multi-jurisdiction corridor of State and Regional significance.

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.

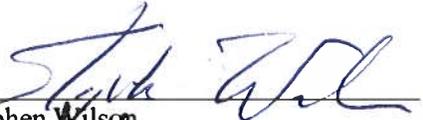
**THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
QUEEN ANNE’S COUNTY**



Christopher M. Corchiarino, President



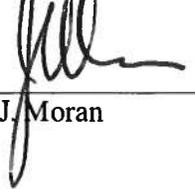
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