

15 May 2013

Darrell B. Mobley, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P. O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

RE: Cecil County's FY 2014 Transportation Priorities

Dear Secretary Mobley:

The Cecil County Government would like to take this opportunity to articulate its transportation priorities to your department for FY 2014. Cecil County Government recognizes not only the fiscal challenges that we both face, but significant opportunities to better determine our transportation future, as well. We also remain mindful that ripple effects of employment and population growth in the northeast corridor will affect all modes in our transportation network.

In recognition of the important relationship between transportation and air quality, congestion mitigation, and providing more livable and sustainable communities with better linked land use and transportation, our overall top four priorities are as follows:

- 1) Redesign and construct a new Route 222/I-95 interchange, to include an upgraded bridge over I-95.
- 2) Extend the MARC Penn Line commuter rail service from Perryville to Elkton, Newark, and Wilmington.
- 3) Improve the MD 213/ US 40 intersection, with adequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
- 4) Implement an I-95 and US 40 toll discount for Cecil County residents and, especially, businesses.

We have established four broad categories of actions and improvements, as follows:

- Public Transportation Improvements
- US 40 Corridor and Intersection Improvements
- I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement Improvements
- US 301 Toll Diversion Coordination Actions

Aggregated by those categories, our complete list of transportation priorities is as follows:

Public Transportation Improvements

Our very top modal priority remains public transportation, which has the potential to mitigate congestion more quickly and at lower cost than highway capacity improvements. Our specific public transportation project requests are as follows:

1. The extension of MARC Penn Line commuter rail service from Perryville to Elkton, Newark, and Wilmington. This would be an extension of existing service on existing right of way.
2. The extension of SEPTA R2 regional rail service from Newark (current terminus) to Elkton. This, too, would be an extension of existing service on existing right of way.
3. Limited Amtrak service at the Elkton station.
4. Implementation of bus stops along MD 279 to support Route 65 DART transit service.
5. Implementation of fixed route transit service between Newark and Aberdeen until the commuter rail link is established.

US 40 Corridor and Intersection Improvements

Our second highest categorical priority is intersection upgrades/geometric improvements along the US 40 corridor. US 40 helps provide access to the entire Eastern Shore via MD 213, and it supplies vital system redundancy to I-95 through the County. US 40 and I-95 actually serve as the spine of our network, and they play a key role in the statewide congestion management system. Our specific US 40 corridor intersection improvement project requests are as follows:

1. Improve the MD 213/ US 40 intersection – which is second in importance to access to the Eastern Shore in Maryland only to the Bay Bridge. Were it not for public transportation and the extension of MARC service, this state- and regionally-significant intersection would be our highest priority. Improvements should accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.
2. Improve the MD 222/ US 40 intersection, with adequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
3. Improve the MD 272/ US 40 intersection, with adequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
4. In conjunction with the access management plan, improve all US 40 intersections to include acceleration and deceleration lanes. Safety concerns at those intersections continue, especially with increasing traffic volume, and especially with an increasing mix of motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
5. Road improvements on MD 222 (US 40 – MD 275) in the interest of enhanced access and mobility and better congestion management.

I-95 Corridor Access and Mobility Enhancement Improvements

Our third highest categorical priority this year is access and mobility enhancements along the I-95 corridor. As you are aware, Cecil County is the only Eastern Shore county¹ in the Northeast Corridor, and it is the only Maryland I-95 Northeast Corridor county whose accessibility and economic viability is impeded by a toll. Therefore, inasmuch as every dollar of I-95 toll revenue that goes elsewhere (e.g., the Intercountry Connector) represents an inordinate Cecil County contribution to State transportation priorities, it is eminently reasonable that some of the I-95 toll revenues ought to come back to Cecil County in support of mutual County and State I-95 priorities. Thus, our specific I-95 corridor access and mobility enhancement project requests are as follows:

¹ As defined by the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP).

1. Redesign and construct a new Route 222/I-95 interchange, to include an upgraded bridge over I-95.
2. Implement an I-95 and US 40 toll discount for Cecil County residents and businesses. The EZ Pass toll collection system could serve as the technological platform from which this could be effectuated.
3. Implement a new I-95 interchange between Interchanges 93 (MD 222) and 100 (MD 272).
4. Examine potential improvements to MD 222 between US 40 and MD 275 to enhance vehicular LOS and to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.
5. Widen MD 272 to four lanes, bike lanes and sidewalks between US 40 and I-95.

US 301 Toll Diversion Coordination Actions

Our fourth highest categorical priority is the continuation of coordination with DelDOT regarding its plans to convert US 301 into a limited access toll road in New Castle County. Expected toll and truck weight evasion could threaten the distinctive character and sense of place in Cecilton, Chesapeake City, Elkton, and Warwick, as well as the historic and rural character of the County along the MD 213, MD 285, MD 286, MD 282, and MD 310 corridors. Obviously, it could also shift an undue burden of traffic volume and associated maintenance costs from DelDOT's to the SHA's and the County's roads. In conjunction with this priority, our project requests are as follows:

1. Continued coordination with DelDOT in the planning of US 301 improvements in New Castle County, Delaware.
2. Stepped-up enforcement of truck weight limits.

In summation, as our economy rebounds, we will again face development pressure and growing traffic volumes that will test our efforts to ameliorate air quality, mitigate traffic congestion, and provide more sustainable and viable communities. This will be especially true in the Amtrak/I-95 Northeast Corridor. In the context of that challenge, and the necessity of all of the cited priorities notwithstanding, we want to clearly emphasize that 1) the redesign and construction of a new Route 222/I-95 interchange (including an upgraded bridge over I-95, 2) the extension of the existing MARC Penn Line commuter rail service, 3) the improvement of the US 40 – MD 213 intersection, and 4) the implementation of business-sustaining I-95 and US 40 toll discounts are Cecil County's very top transportation priorities for FY 2013.

Thank you for your consideration of Cecil County's transportation priorities.

Sincerely,

Tari Moore, County Executive

Robert J. Hodge, President, County Council

Cecil County's State of Maryland Delegation

Senator Nancy Jacobs, District 34

Senator E. J. Pipkin, District 36

Delegate Mary-Dulany James, District 34-A

Delegate Glen Glass, District 34-A

Delegate David D. Rudolph, District 34-B

Delegate Michael D. Smigiel, Sr., District 36

Delegate Jay A. Jacobs, District 36

Delegate Stephen Hershey, District 36