



**CALVERT COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678
410-535-1600 • 301-855-1243
www.calvertcountymd.gov

Board of Commissioners
Mark C. Cox Sr.
Catherine M. Grasso
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March 19, 2024

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: FY 2025 Consolidated Transportation Program Priorities Consideration

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld,

Thank you for the opportunity to present Calvert County's transportation priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Despite the fiscal constraints of this past year, we value the continued partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Calvert County has made considerable progress in our transportation planning over the past few years. In 2020, the Calvert County Transportation Plan was adopted. Through this process, the County identified potential transportation investments to help shape growth within our Town Centers by utilizing a balanced transportation network both in appropriate corridors and within smaller planning areas. In 2023, Calvert County adopted and updated our Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance criteria which included significant changes to roadway planning requirements and future mitigation efforts.

Last year, we adopted the Calvert County Strategic Roadway Safety Plan. We are committed to working to prevent fatalities and serious injuries on Calvert County roadways. For that reason, we are grateful for the continued funding and resources for the safety and geometric improvements on the MD 231 corridor. Bringing these projects to completion remains a top priority for Calvert County.

As we identify our most critical and highest-priority transportation projects, it is imperative to emphasize Calvert County's unique geographic constraints which limit accessibility to, and through the county. Without critical infrastructure investment to MD 2/4, Calvert's singular and principal arterial roadway, our ability to provide a safe, resilient, and reliable transportation network is severely limited. Calvert County's top transportation priorities acknowledge these limitations. We ask for consideration for the following critical and strategic infrastructure improvements while maintaining consistency with MDOT's goals for our County:

Top Transportation Priorities:

- **MD Route 2/4, Solomons Island Road – Upgrade and Widen MD 2/4 to a Six-Lane Divided Highway (Prince Frederick)**

Calvert County's top local transportation priority is the continuation of the major project to upgrade and widen MD 2/4 through Phases 3A and 3B. **Specifically, in this year's capital budget, Calvert County is requesting funding for the preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisitions for the corridor just north of Fox Run to Auto Dr.**

The purpose of this project is to widen the footprint of MD 2/4 along the entrance to and throughout the northern and southern portion of the Prince Frederick Town Center. Improvements were previously conducted in Phases 1 and 2 from Sherry Lane to Fox Run Boulevard within the center portion of the Town Center. The proposed widening will provide a total of six lanes including access control, turning movement restrictions and will include dedicated bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks. Current traffic volumes generated by the existing commercial and residential development within the Town Center presently result in substantial delays at multiple intersections along the corridor. Anticipated future development in and around the Prince Frederick area is expected to result in increased congestion along the existing roadway unless additional capacity is provided. MD 2/4 is the principal transportation link through, into and out of the county. Congestion on this corridor directly impacts our ability to evacuate or reach the nearest hospital and emergency health facilities in the event of an emergency.

The current lane geometrical alignment, at the completion of Phase 2, provides a tenuous right turn lane drop at an un-signalized intersection. This intersection has been the site of numerous vehicular accidents as the northbound roadway also condenses from three lanes to two at this location. Moving Phases 3A and 3B forward will remove the lane drop element and create a much safer vehicular corridor. By adding additional travel lanes, the project will: increase highway capacity, reduce congestion, and provide a more safe and secure movement of people, goods, and services through the center of Calvert's largest Town Center. Vehicular passage through the previously improved section (Phases 1 and 2) offers a temporary respite from congestion, but the preceding and following segments create significant delays due to the existing geometric differences.

These improvements are located within the Prince Frederick Town Center (PFTC). The PFTC is the county seat, a county-designated growth area (Town Center), a state-designated Priority Funding Area, and a state-designated Sustainable Community. The proposed widening in Phases 3A and 3B will allow future growth and development in and around the Town Center, which will facilitate expanded transportation options such as bikeways, pedestrian accommodations, and a greater capacity for transit. This project remains included in the Highway Needs Inventory (HNI).

- **Thomas Johnson Bridge/MD Route 4**

Calvert County, St. Mary's County and the Tri-County Council have made this project a top priority for decades. We ask that funding be allocated for planning and design to support the much need expansion of the Thomas Johnson Bridge. The updates and benefits to this infrastructure are necessary to our growing Southern Maryland region. This project is critical to national homeland security as well as safety, because it serves a large nuclear power generating facility, a regional natural gas transport facility, and a major U.S. Naval Base. It is also essential to the safety, security, and efficient transportation of Southern Maryland as the bridge serves more than 31,400

vehicles per day, with an estimated increase to 38,275 vehicles per day by 2040, far in excess of its current two-lane capacity.

Widening the Thomas Johnson Bridge (T.J. Bridge) would relieve commuter congestion, enable emergency evacuation, improve safety, and provide greater economic opportunity within the Calvert-Saint Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization Area.; efficiency and security of this corridor is vital to the success of the projected increase of user needs.

Note: Functional efficiency and operational safety of the bridge will continue to be of great importance to Calvert County and we will continue to advocate for the bridge replacement project. Prior to execution of bridge enhancement or replacement, we would like to show support for St. Mary's priority to improve existing traffic conditions; the extension of the northbound merge lane from the intersection of MD 4 and MD 235 to the north end of South Patuxent Beach Road. This project could be performed **concurrently** with the bridge replacement project to alleviate current and future congestion at the MD4/MD 235 intersection but does offer traffic remediation to a portion of the overall transportation corridor function even in anticipation of the bridge modification.

Transit:

- **Transit Transfer Station:**

Calvert County's Public Transportation (CCPT) continues to see an increase in service demand. Currently, the County provides eight fixed routes and five demand-response/para-transit routes to link residents with major shopping, medical and employment areas, as well as with public services available in Prince Frederick.

CCPT received FY23 funding in MDOT's capital budget for a feasibility and needs assessment for a proposed stand-alone Transit Transfer Station. CCPT, in collaboration with the Maryland Transit Administration, started the needs assessment in Mid 2023 with an anticipated completion date in early 2024.

A stand-alone Transit Transfer Station would allow greater efficiency by providing improved driver and pedestrian safety, increased rider accessibility and convenience, increased passenger amenities, improved public image and allow for future growth.

State Highway Administration (SHA):

MD 258 and MD 4 Intersection – Shoulder Upgrades: The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners is requesting safety enhancements along the corridor just north of the Calvert County line, where MD 258 and Talbot Road intersect with MD 4. This portion of the roadway has limited sight distance for stopped traffic and vehicles entering the highway. Along with the significant sight distance issues, MD 4 does not provide shoulders for last minute vehicular corrections when needed.

Crosswalk Installation at MD 4 and Town Center Blvd: The county completed a bikeways feasibility study for the Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Town Center in 2022 and is currently in the process of updating the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan. During these processes, the county has recognized the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross MD 4 in order to achieve our goals of enhancing the Dunkirk Town Center's walkable community. Recently, the Ward Farm Recreation Park was completed just outside of the Dunkirk Town Center

on the west side of MD 4. The Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2019 and amended in 2022 calls for expansion of the Town Center and incorporation of the Dunkirk District Park property. We understand there is hesitancy to place a crosswalk at the subject intersection as it is the first intersection coming into the county. The county is receptive to the installation of multiple potential traffic calming measures upstream of the intersection in order to heighten awareness of motorists well in advance. The ultimate goal served by installation of this crosswalk, is to safely improve accessibility for alternative modes of transportation within the Dunkirk Town Center.

Adaptive Signal Control in Prince Frederick and Dunkirk Town Center: Continue to monitor, assess, and modify the signal timing sequences within the delineated Town Center limits of both Dunkirk and Prince Frederick. Assure the most efficient optimization and function in order to lessen or mitigate peak hour congestion on MD 2/4.

Community Safety & Enhancements:

MD 765 Sidewalk Extensions – Between Old Field Road and Calvert Towne Road: In the historic core of Prince Frederick, traffic operates at lower speeds. There is often significant pedestrian traffic volume along and across MD 765 (Main Street) accessing the Courthouses, and the nearby state and county office buildings. This proposed sidewalk extension shall provide additional pedestrian access from communities within the adjacent Old Town Residential subarea of the Prince Frederick Town Center.

MD 402 Bike Lane/Sidewalk Installation – From Calvert High School to Armory Road: As previously discussed, Calvert County performed a feasibility study for the Dunkirk and Prince Frederick Town Centers; In Prince Frederick, one of the highlighted recommendations was to work with MDOT SHA to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities to both Calvert High School and the surrounding existing and proposed amenities. Future proposed residential and commercial development in the immediate vicinity on the north side of MD 402 will produce a significant amount of pedestrian and bicycle transportation opportunities for the community if safe facilities are provided.

Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry: This project is intended to establish a high-speed and long-range electric ferry (shuttle ship) between numerous ports along the Chesapeake Bay. It would promote tourism and multi-modal connections by allowing visitors to reach multiple destinations by boat without the need for a car, while also demonstrating the benefits of an electrified waterfront. A collaborative effort between several counties and municipalities has occurred to prepare a feasibility study to evaluate the vessel parameters, terminal sites, operational and maintenance needs, tourism and economic strategies, and system partnerships. We are respectfully requesting MDOT's support, continued partnership, and future collaboration as the multiple jurisdictions jointly work to establish a passenger ferry system for the Chesapeake Bay region.

Additional project requests from the Town of Chesapeake Beach:

The following are additional requests from the incorporated town of Chesapeake Beach supported by the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners.

- **Safe Routes to School (SRTS) MD 261:** Complete sidewalk construction from Beach Elementary School to Chesapeake Village and along Old Bayside Rd to "F" Street.

- **Trails and Greenways:** The Town is seeking to extend the Chesapeake Beach Railway trail to E Street, establishing a neighborhood greenway that will connect to the future SRTS project providing safe open access for pedestrians to an elementary school, amenities, recreation, and residential communities.
- **Traffic Calming in front of Bayfront Park:** The Town seeks to install traffic calming devices such as an island on Rt 261 in front of Bayfront Park to slow traffic for pedestrians utilizing the area to access nearby recreational amenities.
- **Boardwalk safe crossing on MD 261:** The Town submitted a feasibility study to MDOT SHA for the inclusion of a boardwalk walkway for safe crossing on the eastern side of MD 261. This walkway would prevent pedestrians from having to cross MD 261 to gain access to the only sidewalk along the highway, currently positioned on the western side of MD 261.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate in the development of this year's upcoming CTP. Calvert County looks forward to continuing to partner with the Maryland Department of Transportation to move transportation projects forward efficiently to best serve the needs of our community.

Our contact is Jessica Gaetano, Planner III in the Department of Planning & Zoning. Jessica can be reached via phone at 410-535-1600, ext. 2338, or via email at Jessica.Gaetano@calvertcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND



Earl F. Hance, President



Catherine M. Grasso, Vice President



Mark C. Cox Sr.



Mike Hart



Todd M. Ireland