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VIEW FROM THE ROAD — Routes 50 and 301 beyond the split in Queen Anne’s County

The official overarching vision for the County, as expressed the County Commissioners and embraced many residents, begins:

“The vision for the future of Queen Anne’s County has remained constant with emphasis on maintaining and enhancing

— a predominantly rural county with small towns connected by creeks and county roads through fields and forests – ***a great place to live***; . . . ”¹

In order to accomplish this vision, under the considerable growth pressures’ confronting the County, is to cleverly and dogmatically design and control the views from the County’s major Roads.² This is, after all, how visitors and residents alike form their impression of the place. (For example: revisit your vision of New Jersey after traveling the northern section of the New Jersey Turnpike). Substitute in your minds eye the Taconic Parkway on the east side of the Hudson River in New York State. What a difference that makes!

The 2010 Comp Plan Draft discusses the need for a Rt. 50/301 corridor study for the segment from the Bay Bridge to the “Split”. Such a study is desirable to address the corridor’s many access deficiencies; the unending experience of strip commercial development; current excessive supply of vacant retail space; and development standards appropriate for the remaining undeveloped frontage parcels. But, this paper addresses what lies beyond and how to maintain the rural impression experienced after passing through the marvelous woodland that now encapsulates the roadway to define the “Split”.

This specific woodland must be preserved somehow along with other significant woodland areas shaping the landscape along these routes. It is woodland, unplowed because it grows on wetland soils that don’t support conventional row crop farming, that provides character in the Eastern Shore landscape. Every effort should be made to preserve this margin along these routes. See Attachment B for a creative solution to this criterion at Almshouse Road along Route 50 in Talbot County.

The Comprehensive must also incorporate the May 25, 2010 Route 50 Corridor Committee proposal (See Attachment A) and adjust all applicable sections of the Plan before issuing it for public hearings and recommendation to the QAC Commissioners.

¹ Queen Anne’s County Comprehensive Plan Update: Draft Visioning Report, March 26, 2009, page 2

² Foremost, this applies to the expressways Routes 50 and 301; but could should also apply to the major arterial roads Route 404 and 213.

A comparable study for the Route 301 Corridor from the Split to the Delaware line should follow.

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