

GOV. HARRY W. NICE MEMORIAL BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MODIFIED ALTERNATE 7 IS SELECTED ALTERNATE

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) has identified Modified Alternate 7 as the Selected Alternate for improvements to the 1.7 mile long Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge. The Nice Bridge runs along US 301, connecting Charles County, MD and King George County, VA (see Study Area below). Modified Alternate 7 consists of constructing a new four-lane bridge parallel to, and north of, the existing bridge with a barrier-separated bicycle/pedestrian path.

MDTA's decision follows detailed engineering and environmental analysis, as well as public and agency review of each of the seven proposed alternates. Public Hearings were held in Maryland and Virginia, with a 60-day public comment period in 2009. The Federal Highway Administration and Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board have also approved the location and selection of Modified Alternate 7.

MDTA designated Modified Alternate 7 as the Selected Alternate for the project, subject to the availability of funding. Currently, no funding is available to implement final design, right-of-way or construction of the project.



SELECTION CRITERIA

MDTA performed environmental investigations and engineering for seven alternates (including the No-Build Alternate) in the Environmental Assessment. The No-Build Alternate was eliminated because the minor improvements provided would not offer sufficient capacity or substantially improve traffic safety on the Nice Bridge.

The MDTA then compared the six "build alternates" based on the following criteria:

- Meets purpose and need
- Avoids impacts to Naval Support Facility (NSF) Dahlgren
- Addresses public, federal, state, and local agency input
- Minimizes environmental impacts
- Provides fiscal responsibility

The results of this comparison demonstrate Modified Alternate 7 will best meet these criteria.

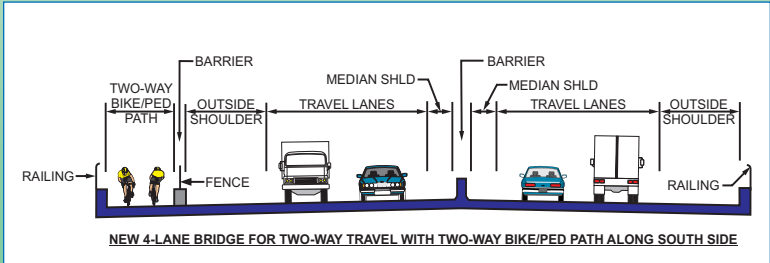
DETAILS ABOUT THE SELECTED ALTERNATE

Modified Alternate 7 consists of constructing a new four-lane bridge parallel to, and north of, the existing bridge to provide:

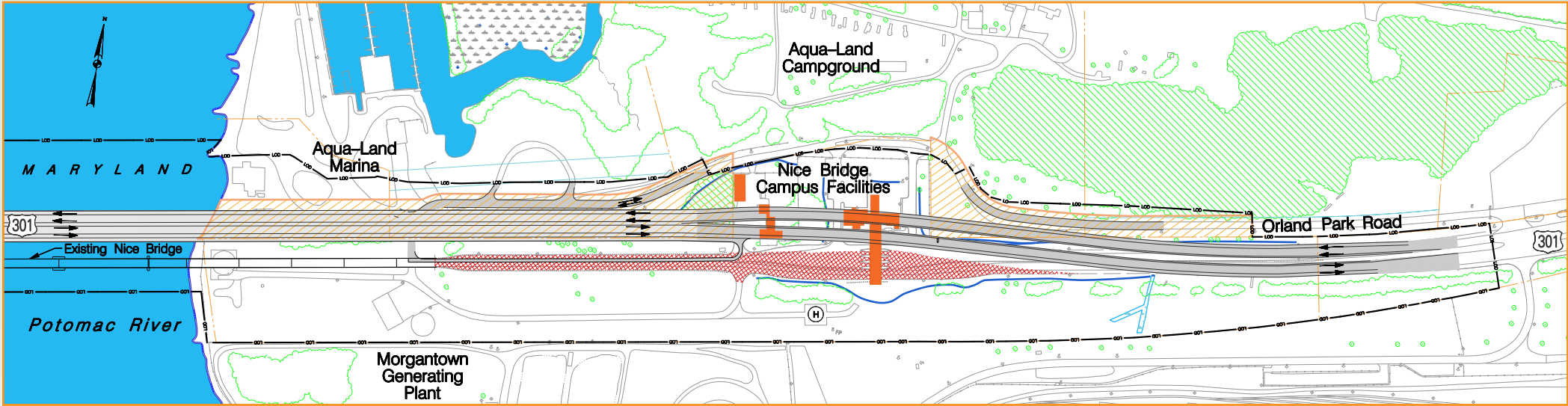
- Four 12-foot travel lanes, two in each direction
- Four-foot inside shoulders
- Twelve-foot outside shoulders
- A median barrier to separate opposing traffic flow
- A single, 10-foot barrier-separated, two-way bicycle/pedestrian (bike/ped) path along the south side of the bridge.
- All-electronic toll collection to eliminate stopping at the toll plaza

With construction of the new bridge and two-way bike/ped path, there would no longer be a transportation need for the existing bridge. Therefore, Modified Alternate 7 includes removal of the existing bridge immediately following the opening of the new four-lane bridge to traffic.

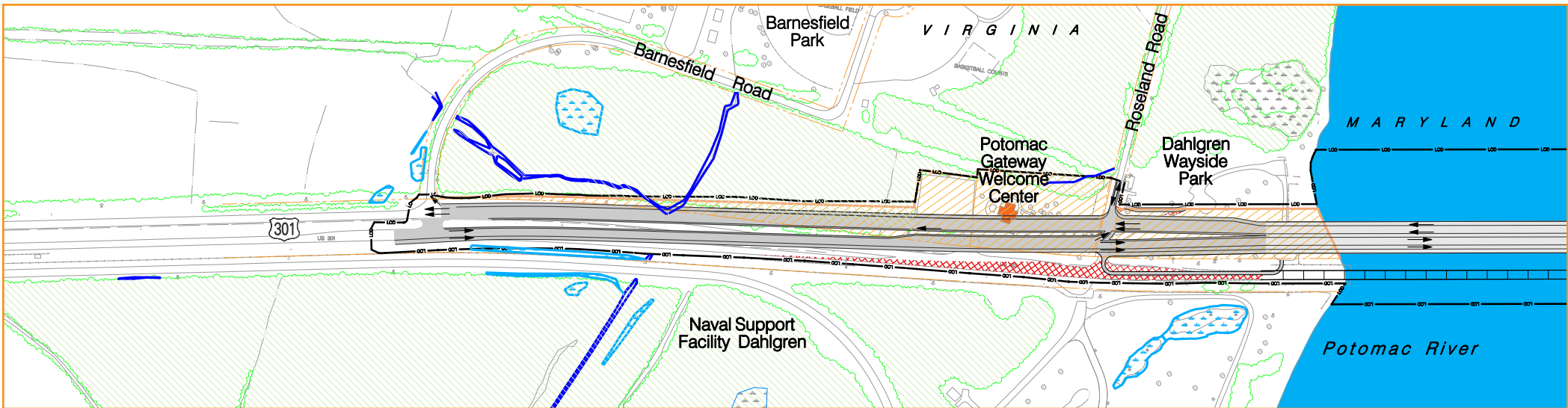
The proposed bike/ped path crosses beneath the bridge on each shore to enable bicyclists and pedestrians to transition to the appropriate shoulder of US 301 without crossing the highway. The bike/ped path allows users direct access to parkland in Virginia (i.e., Dahlgren Wayside Park and Barnesfield Park) and to the AquaLand Campground and Marina in Maryland.



MARYLAND SHORE



VIRGINIA SHORE



Legend

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| New Roadway | Limit of Disturbance | Forest Stand |
| Pavement Removal | Existing Property Line | Jurisdictional Wetland |
| Proposed Acquisition | Jurisdictional Water of U.S. | Potential Displacement |

MODIFIED ALTERNATE 7 FULFILLS THE STUDY'S EVALUATION CRITERIA

Meets Purpose and Need

This alternate fulfills the project's purpose and need by:

- Providing a Potomac River Crossing that is geometrically compatible with the US 301 approach roadways, including widened shoulders and decreased grade
- Providing sufficient capacity to carry vehicular traffic across the Potomac River in design year 2030 with two travel lanes in each direction for vehicles
- Improving traffic safety on US 301 approaches and on the bridge by maintaining separation of vehicles travelling in opposing directions
- Providing the ability to maintain two-way traffic flow along US 301 during incidents and maintenance with additional lanes and wider shoulders

Minimizes Impacts to Environmental Resources

Impacts to environmental resources will be reduced by limiting construction activity periods in the Potomac River. One four-lane bridge will be constructed – as compared to a process which would have involved the installation of one two-lane bridge, removal of the existing bridge and finally constructing the second two-lane bridge.

Provides Fiscal Responsibility

Project cost was minimized by reducing the number of times that crews, materials and equipment would be remobilized, and by eliminating maintenance costs associated with keeping the existing bridge in service for the long term.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

Please visit the project website (www.nicebridge.maryland.gov) to view or download the final environmental document (Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/ Final Section 4(f) Evaluation). Hard copies of the document may be viewed at the MDTA's Division of Capital Planning. To schedule an appointment to view the document, please call Mr. Glen Smith, Project Manager, at 410-537-5665 or toll-free at 866-713-1596.

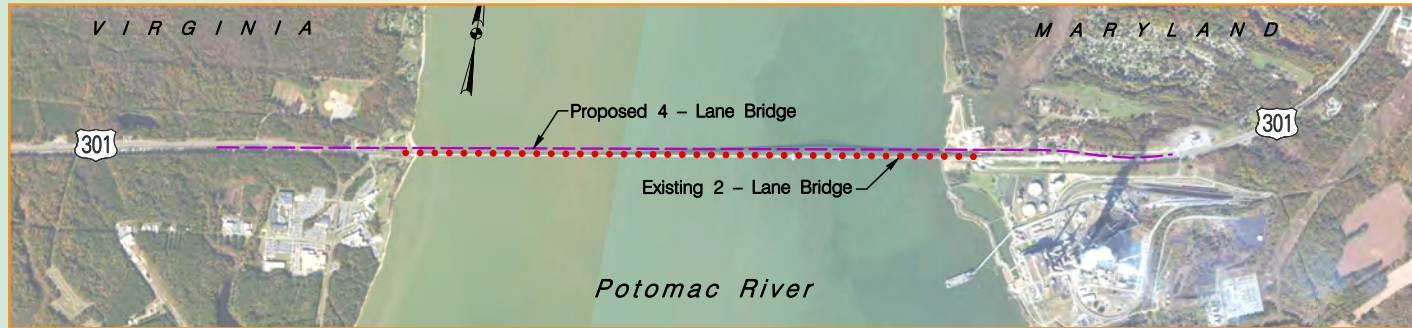
Avoids Impacts to Naval Support Facility (NSF) Dahlgren

Modified Alternate 7 expands public safety buffers required for research missions at NSF Dahlgren by constructing the new bridge north of the existing bridge.

Addresses Stakeholder Concerns

Modified Alternate 7 addresses stakeholder comments, including:

- Support for inclusion of bicycle/pedestrian path
- Support for a build alternate
- Concern for reducing traffic congestion
- Concern for increased safety
- Improved emergency evacuation route



Aerial view of existing and proposed alignments of the Nice Bridge over the Potomac River.



THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who attended a public meeting or provided the MDTA with comments or suggestions during this important planning study.

COMMITMENT TO NATURAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The MDTA recognizes the importance of natural, cultural and socio-economic resources in the Nice Bridge project area. In developing the Selected Alternate, avoidance and minimization measures were included to eliminate or reduce impacts to these resources where possible. The MDTA went through an extensive process to find appropriate mitigation for unavoidable impacts, which the MDTA is committed to implementing during future design and construction phases of the project. All mitigation strategies have been approved by state and federal resource regulatory agencies.

These mitigation commitments are documented for water resources, the Finding of No Significant Impact, the draft Compensatory Mitigation Plan for Natural Resources, a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) for effects to historic properties, and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for effects to parkland.

NEXT STEPS

With the identification of the Selected Alternate, the project planning phase is complete. If funding becomes available, the next steps will include final engineering/design and construction. Currently, the MDTA has programmed approximately \$15 million through FY 2015 to conduct cleaning, painting, and structural repair work that will extend the useful life of the bridge.

Maryland Transportation Authority
Division of Capital Planning
2310 Broening Highway, Suite 125
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

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**NICE BRIDGE
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
SELECTED ALTERNATE
ANNOUNCED!**
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FOR PROJECT INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Mr. Glen Smith, Project Manager
Maryland Transportation Authority
Division of Capital Planning
2310 Broening Highway, Suite 125
Baltimore, MD 21224
Phone: 410-537-5665
Fax: 410-537-5653
Toll Free: 1-866-713-1596
Email: nicebridgestudy@mdta.state.md.us

