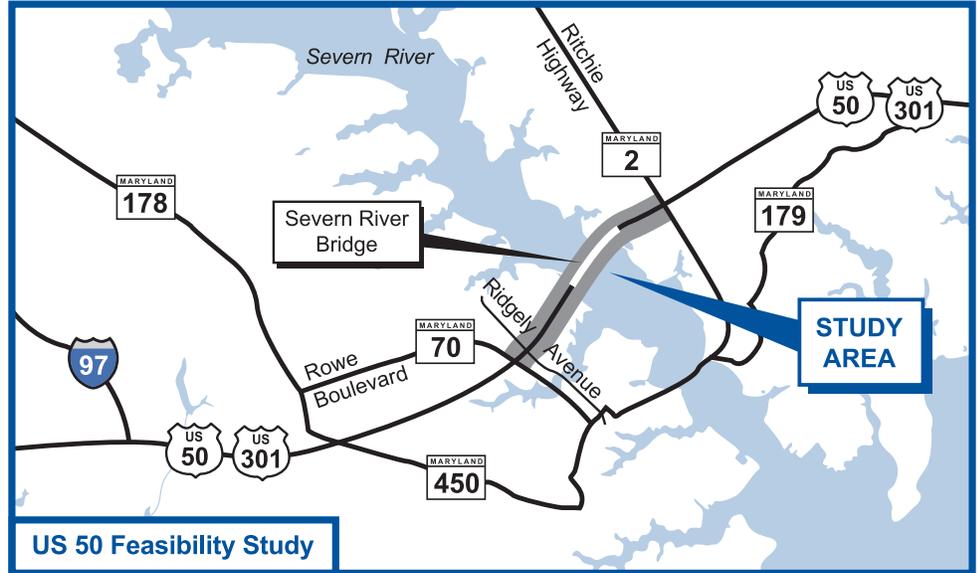


US 50 Improvements Receive Concurrence

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has selected Concept 1B for improvements to US 50 over the Severn River Bridge, from MD 70 (Rowe Boulevard) to MD 2 (Ritchie Highway) in the Annapolis area. On May 5, 2011, the SHA Administrator granted concurrence.

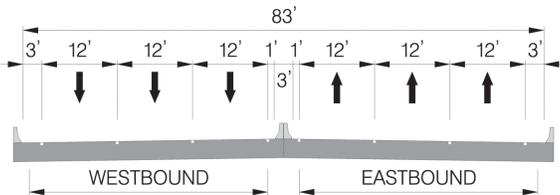
A feasibility study is an initial phase of the Highway Development Process. It precedes SHA's formal Project Planning Process and considers short-term and long-term measures to improve traffic operations. The US 50 Feasibility Study provides a preliminary concept that will alleviate traffic congestion during the morning and evening peak travel periods and the peak summer travel periods along US 50 (John Hanson Highway) and across the Severn River Bridge.



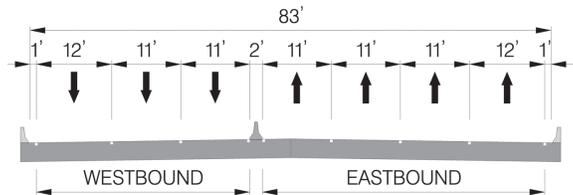
Selected Concept

The Selected Concept, Concept 1B-Additional Eastbound Lane (Shift Existing Median Barrier), includes the following features:

- Removes the existing median barrier between the Ridgely Avenue overpass and the MD 2/MD 450 Interchange
- Restripes US 50 to provide seven through lanes
- Replaces an approximate seven-foot-wide strip of the bridge deck, for the length of the bridge
- Constructs a new, permanent concrete-median traffic barrier to provide four through lanes in the eastbound direction and three through lanes in the westbound direction



Existing - Typical Section



Concept 1B - Typical Section

Next Steps

Although the project is an eligible candidate for future Project Planning activities, funding is not currently available for this phase.

Project Background

The section of US 50 from MD 70 to MD 2 has long been an area of concern for roadway users and the City of Annapolis. SHA has received numerous letters and complaints about eastbound traffic congestion during the evening peak period, and the City of Annapolis has expressed concerns about cut-through traffic resulting from congestion along US 50. In its 2009 Transportation Letter, Anne Arundel County identified improvements along US 50 in the vicinity of the bridge as a top priority.

The project team has concluded that congestion at the Severn River Bridge is caused not only by the sheer volume of traffic, but by a combination of factors, including bridge grade, truck volume, narrow shoulders, the merge from Rowe Boulevard, queue jumpers, drivers slowing to view the scenic Severn River, and other human factors. To address these issues, the project team examined a variety of options, including reversible lanes, express lanes/collector-distributor (CD) roads, ramp metering, variable speed limits, lane speed control, and even a new bridge.

Project Background *(continued from front)*

The following concepts and options were presented at the Open House on December 16, 2009:

- Concept 1A-Reversible Lane with Moveable Barrier (Remove Existing Median Barrier)
- Concept 2A-Reversible Lanes with Moveable Barrier
- Concept 1B-Additional Eastbound Lane (Shift Existing Median Barrier)
- Concept 4-Lane Speed Control/Variable Speed Limits

Summary of Public Comments

Ninety-one people attended the 2009 Open House at Anne Arundel Community College, and SHA received 57 comment cards. Concepts 1A and 1B were preferred by most attendees, with many supporting Concept 1A because it offered the greatest operational benefit for both directions. Views were mixed on the moveable barrier. Some attendees liked the adaptability to various traffic situations offered by the reversible lane, while others expressed concern about the operations of the moveable barrier (potential breakdowns, daily maintenance, associated costs, etc.). The public supported Concept 1B because it adds a continuous lane across the Severn River Bridge instead of a discontinuous lane where drivers have to shift into a new lane adjacent to the median barrier, and then merge back into their original lane after crossing the bridge. The public was not convinced that drivers would effectively use the inside added lane and then merge back out into three lanes under Concept 1A.

Some commented that SHA should address long-term bridge issues, while others expressed concern about trucks encroaching on travel lanes on the east-side curve of the bridge. Suggestions to add a visual barrier to the bridge to eliminate driver rubbernecking, along with general maintenance questions about debris, drainage, and landscaping were also provided. Several people offered traffic and operational comments, including observations that the increase in merge lanes from Rowe Boulevard to the base of the Severn River Bridge has been the major cause of traffic jams along US 50, and that narrow lanes and narrow shoulders on the bridge cause a reduction in speed (braking) and the beginning of traffic congestion along US 50.

After considering all public comments and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each concept, the project team recommended Concept 1B as the most feasible option. Although Concept 1A would provide a system that could adapt to changing traffic needs, there would be long-term operational and maintenance costs associated with a moveable barrier system. The project team believes that the advantages of Concept 1B outweigh its disadvantages and is confident that although this concept will cause a slight reduction in westbound capacity, it will address the most critical movement by delivering the intended benefits in the eastbound direction.

Thank You

SHA and the project team thank everyone who participated in this successful feasibility study. Please direct all questions and requests for information to: **Mrs. Kameel Hall**, Project Manager, Project Management Division
Maryland State Highway Administration, Mailstop C-301, 707 N. Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202
Telephone: (410) 545-8542, Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-548-5026, Email: khall1@sha.state.md.us
The Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 711. For more information on this and other SHA projects, visit www.roads.maryland.gov and click on **Projects & Studies/Anne Arundel County**.

Martin O'Malley, Governor
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