



US 219 REVIEW

Meyersdale to I-68



Contact Us

Stay involved in the US 219 Meyersdale to I-68 project. To learn more, visit us online at www.us219.com or contact:

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I-68 Interchange Options Considered

The US 219 Project Team is considering two different options for an interchange with I-68 at the project's southern terminus (see Figure 1.1). A "high-speed" interchange was designed and presented at the previous public meetings.

This high-speed interchange consists of ramps that maintain ramp speeds of 45 mph and higher. These types of interchanges are typically expensive due to the land needed to accommodate the long ramps and the use of fly-over ramps on bridge structures, which are typically needed to allow for high-speed traffic flow. As an alternate, the project team is considering a loop ramp "low-speed" interchange at the southern terminus. This interchange would still function as a free-flow interchange, meaning that a stop condition would not be required at the end of the ramps. This type of interchange would require lower ramp speeds and the curves at the end of the ramps would be tighter. This option would be less expensive than the high-speed interchange. Both interchanges would satisfy the projected traffic volumes to year 2030. Both the high-speed and low-speed interchanges will be carried forward and presented as options with all of the alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Based on an analysis of the access provided by the interchange types, a decision will be made by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as to which interchange type will be constructed. This decision will be presented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Local Access Interchanges in Maryland Removed

Local interchanges with existing US 219 in Maryland have been removed from Alternatives E and AE. With Alternative D, a local interchange approximately 1/2 mile south of Salisbury in Pennsylvania remains a part of Alternative D. This interchange is the same as presented at the November 2004 public meeting.

The local interchange with Alternative E was proposed to the east of existing US 219 and would have required a 1,500 foot access road to existing US 219. The local interchange with AE was located where the alternative would have crossed existing US 219. Both of these interchanges would have been approximately two miles north of the I-68 interchange. There was concern regarding the high cost of the interchanges and the benefit they would have had to the traveling public because the I-68 interchange is only two miles south. The cost of the local interchange with Alternative AE is approximately \$6 million and the interchange associated with Alternative E is approximately \$14 million. The elimination of the interchanges would result in reduced environmental and community impacts, along with construction and maintenance cost savings.

It was also determined that the interchanges would have been outside of a Maryland Priority Funding Area (PFA). Priority Funding Areas (PFA) are locations where the state and local governments want to target their efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth. Projects in PFA's receive priority for state funding, and growth inducing projects outside of a PFA are discouraged. Any development outside of a PFA would not be consistent with Maryland's Smart Growth Policy. Access to existing US 219 and US 40 Alternate will be provided with Alternatives D, E and AE with or without local access interchanges. The proposed interchanges at I-68 along with a modified version of the existing US 219/I-68 interchange will provide the same access as currently exists or somewhat improved access to existing US 219 and US 40 Alternate.

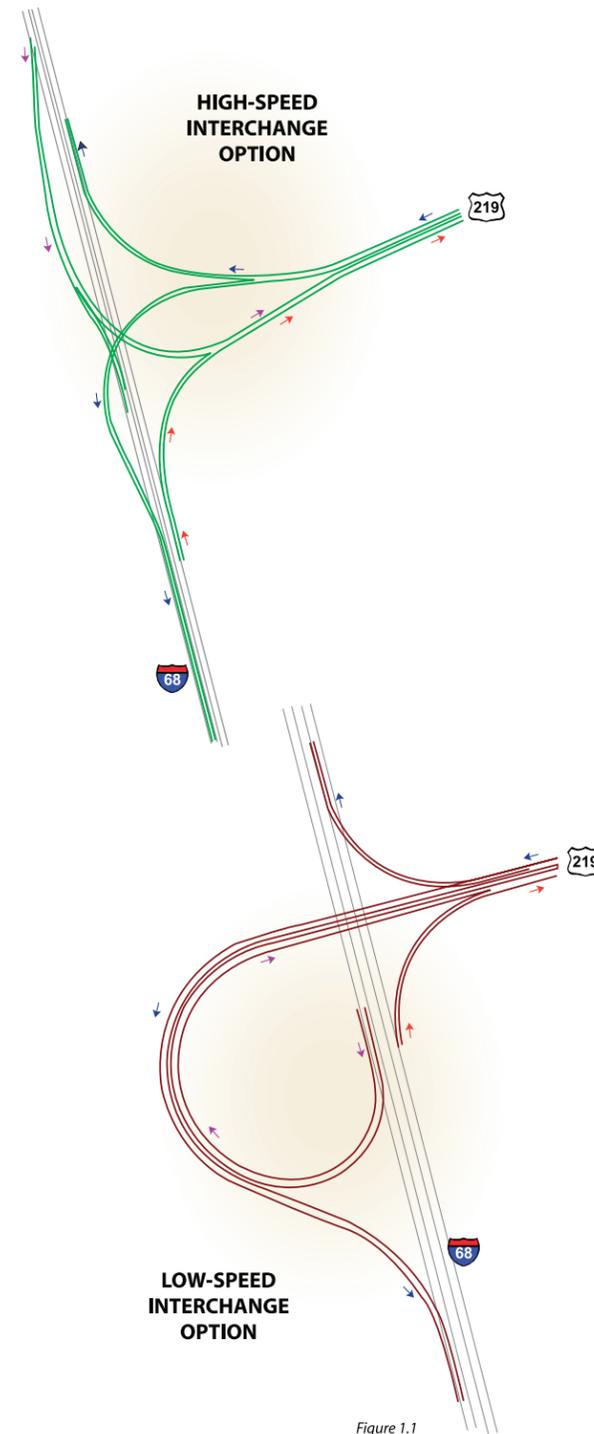


Figure 1.1

US 219 Meyersdale to I-68
c/o McCormick Taylor, Inc.
3133 New Germany Road, Suite 64
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Minimizing Impacts

The Project Team is considering several ways to reduce impacts to communities and the surrounding environment.

As part of those efforts, the team will use Mountainous Terrain Design Criteria which is standard in Garrett County (MD). Use of this criteria would permit steeper grades on the proposed roadway, which reduces cut and fill slopes, thereby minimizing impacts. Rolling Terrain Design Criteria is the standard and will continue to be used in Pennsylvania.

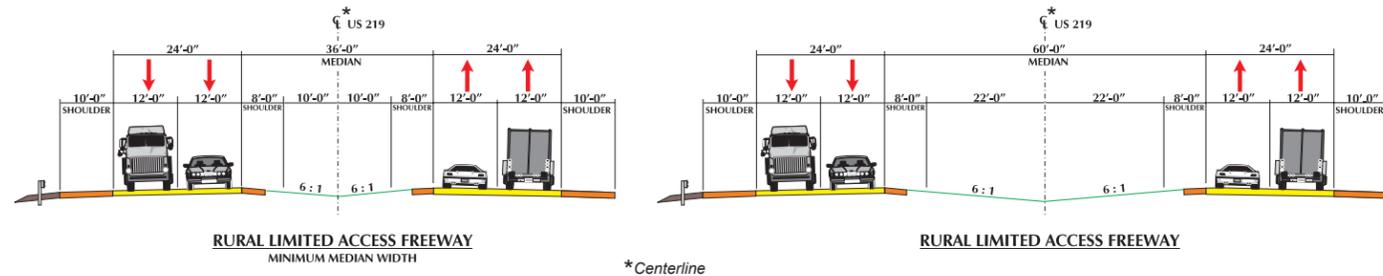
A second change is a reduction in the median width in Maryland from 60 feet to 36 feet. Although PennDOT will still use a 60 feet wide median in most places in Pennsylvania, a reduced median width will be used in certain areas including Hunsrick Summit and at bridge structures to reduce impacts to homes, existing roadways, and streams.

Another change involves a slight westward shift at the southern terminus

to Alternative E in Maryland, which allows for better use of existing Maryland State Highway Administration (MD SHA) right-of-way east of existing US 219. This shift was possible due to a reduced highway footprint caused by the reduced median width. Use of most of MD SHA's existing right-of-way would reduce the amount of new right-of-way required for Alternative E. Alternative E was modified to avoid taking homes along Old Salisbury Road in Maryland.

A slight shift in Alternative AE was also made in Maryland just west of where the alignment crosses existing US 219. This shift, along with the reduced footprint, eliminates the need to acquire any homes in the area of Windy Acres Lane.

Additional drilling activities will be conducted, as described in the article "More Drilling Planned" (Page 3), to further investigate impact reductions.



Project Area Group Proposes Ridge Option

A project area group, the "Route 219 Citizens' Impact Group," presented the Project Team earlier this year with an idea for a Ridge Option that extends eastward from Hunsrick Summit, crosses Meadow Mountain, and connects with I-68 in the area of the Piney Grove interchange. The Project Team responded to this idea with an analysis of this option, which included preliminary engineering design of two potential routes and an impact assessment through background research and limited field views. The group's goal for the route was to reduce property acquisitions and to utilize areas that they felt had been previously disturbed by timbering and tornadoes.

After a presentation by the "Route 219 Citizens' Impact Group" at the May 19, 2005 Community Advisory Committee meeting, Project Team members presented their results of the preliminary analysis on the route. The purpose of the analysis was to determine if it warranted further consideration. The Project Team preliminarily developed two Ridge Options (see map on Pages 4&5) based on the original alignment provided by the "Route 219 Citizens' Impact Group." Both options involve crossing over Meadow Mountain and traversing the steep ravine adjacent to the ridge top. The project team utilized grades steeper than the 4% grades used on Alternatives D, E, and AE, to help reduce the required earthwork. The construction cost of this option is approximately \$100 million more than Alternatives E and AE and about \$50 million more than Alternative D. The other issue associated with this option is earthwork and extensive waste of

excavated materials. There would be over 16 million cubic yards (cy) of earthwork with 11 million cy of waste, equal to the volume held by over 740,000 twenty-ton coal trucks. Disposal of this volume of material would be extremely expensive and could cause additional environmental impacts in the waste area. Additionally, due to its location east of the mountain, this option would have no opportunity to provide local access interchanges within the project area. A new interchange with I-68 near Piney Grove would be provided; however, MD SHA has concerns that the interchange would not be in a PFA (see page 1) as established by the Maryland Smart Growth Law.

The environmental analysis indicated early that the Ridge Options are located outside of the coal seams so there is less concern for impacting deep mines. Both options are outside of the Little Meadows Historic Site but would impact a well preserved section of Braddock's Road. There is also the potential to impact State and Federal rare, threatened or endangered species. Based on information from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, this option would "very likely" impact two rare plant species. Investigations of Alternatives D, E, and AE have identified no confirmed impacts to any threatened, endangered, or rare plant species. The Ridge Options would also potentially affect the population and dispersal of the Indiana Bat, which is a federally listed endangered species, as do Alternatives D, E, and AE. However, because the Ridge Options are located on the ridge, through primarily undeveloped areas, more forested areas would be disturbed, potentially impacting

Involving the Community in Project Development

In the interest of providing a project that meets community needs, the Project Team is conducting extensive public involvement activities for this project. These activities have included public meetings, newsletters, media involvement and a project specific website, www.us219.com. Additionally, the Project Team has attended various project area special events and provided project information in the form of displays and handouts. Events have included the Meyersdale Maple Festival and the Somerset County Fair.

Four Public Officials Meetings and four Public Meetings have been held since June 17, 2002 to collect public comment during project development. Nearly 300 residents attended the first public meeting and over 200 residents have been present at each of the subsequent public meetings. Public meetings have been advertised through a variety of means including postcards mailed to all addresses in the project area zip codes, flyers sent to the project mailing list members, local newspaper advertisements, project website announcements, and press releases.

This is the fifth newsletter mailed to the project's 900+ member mailing list. The purpose of the newsletters is to provide an update on the project status and a summary of public meetings.

Numerous Special Interest Group Meetings have been held throughout the project area in Pennsylvania and Maryland including the state and local elected officials, chambers of commerce and local community members. Community outreach also included special meetings with members of the Highlands Community; "Windy Acres Lane residents" in Maryland; and with individual farmers. During October 2005, the Project Team met with the Consulting Parties for the second time to collect information on potential effects to cultural resources.

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed early in 2003 to provide an additional method of communication between the Project Team and local communities. The CAC provides community input and serves as an advisory group to the Project Team so that important local interests and concerns are identified and considered. Twenty-six members and alternates representing various interests from the community serve on the CAC. Five CAC meetings were held to date. The purpose of the most recent CAC meeting in May 2005 was to provide a project update, solicit input regarding local access interchanges with existing US 219, and present the analysis of Ridge Options proposed by the "Route 219 Citizens' Impact Group". The results of the meeting indicated that the CAC does not favor the Ridge Options primarily due to cost and project delay; the CAC appears to favor Alternatives AE and E, with AE having the most support at this time. The CAC also feels more consideration is needed for a local access interchange near Salisbury.

The Project Team is always interested in hearing your comments and concerns. Please feel free to contact anyone of our Project Team members listed on the back page of this newsletter either by phone or mail or by visiting the project website: www.us219.com.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Draft EIS/Public Hearing**	Fall 2006
Final EIS**	Fall 2007
Record of Decision (R.O.D.)	Fall 2008
Complete Final Design	Fall 2010
Right-of-Way Acquisition*	Fall 2010
Construction*	Summer 2011-Winter 2013

*Pending funding availability

**Opportunities for public review & comment on the decision making document

Check Your Mailboxes: Intent to Enter Letters Mailed to Residents

PennDOT requires that Notice of Intent to Enter Letters be mailed out periodically while a project is being studied. The purpose of these letters is to advise homeowners that employees of PennDOT or their consultants may need to enter their property to conduct surveys, engineering studies, soil explorations, tests and/or soundings. This entry is authorized by the Pennsylvania Eminent Domain Code. By now, any property owners whose property is within 500 feet of any proposed alternative including D, E and AE should have received a letter.

If you have not received a letter recently and think that you are within 500 feet of Alternative D, E or AE within Pennsylvania, please contact McCormick Taylor's Project Manager Deborah Hoover at (717) 540-6040.

MD SHA has a similar process of notifying property owners when entry is required. A one year update of the letters is required.

If entry is required onto your property, whether in Pennsylvania or Maryland, you will be personally notified, if possible, in advance. Entry onto your property for studies DOES NOT mean your property will be acquired for transportation improvements. In the event that a transportation improvement would affect your property, a PennDOT or MD SHA representative, or their consultants, would personally contact you.



Tomlinson Inn (Little Meadows Historic Site - MD)

Historic Properties in the Project Area

As part of the environmental process for any transportation project, an examination of historic and archaeological resources is required. To date, the Project Team has been identifying potential historic resources including all above ground resources such as structures, railroads, bridges, and markers. These resources are evaluated based on a set of criteria established by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. If the professional conducting the evaluation feels that a resource meets one or more of the criteria, they then recommend it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will provide an opinion on whether they agree the property is eligible for the NRHP.

Based on the evaluation conducted to date, three properties in Pennsylvania have been determined eligible for the NRHP including the Miller Farm, Lowry Farm and Henry Glotfelty, Jr. Property.



Lowry Farm (PA)

In Maryland, two properties are already listed on the NRHP, including the Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows Historic Site, and the Stone Arch Bridge along US 40 Alternate. Nine additional properties have been determined eligible for the NRHP, including a portion of Braddock's Road just north

of US 40 Alternate and east of existing US 219, the Jennings Brothers Railroad, Maust Barn on the Truman J. Maust Farm just south of the Maryland/Pennsylvania state line, the National Road (US 40 Alternate), and five Mason-Dixon Line milestone markers 190 through 194.

In addition to coordinating with the SHPOs, a group with special interest in historic properties and archaeological finds will be aiding FHWA, PennDOT, and MD SHA in making decisions on the effects of the proposed project to these resources. This group, known as the Consulting Parties, will have a hand in designing mitigation for any properties adversely affected. If you are interested in becoming a Consulting Party, or have knowledge of local history that you would like to share, please contact one of the Project Team members listed on the back page of this newsletter.

The Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)

The US 219 Project Area is home to a variety of bat species including the Indiana Bat, a federally listed endangered species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Indiana Bats are three to four inches in length with a nine to ten inch wingspan. The small chestnut-gray mammal has an average life span of 15 to 30 years. Like most species of bats, the Indiana Bat eats insects.

Indiana Bats utilize a variety of habitats during different parts of the year and spend the cold months hibernating in caves or abandoned mines. A mine with hibernating bats, including Indiana Bats, is known to exist near the US 219 Project Area. Caves and mines such as the one near the project area provide the ideal constant temperature range between 37°F to 46°F, and are unique. The mine in the project area is one of only 13 known Indiana Bat hibernation sites in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For this reason, the Project Team will be surveying the project area mine to determine the extent of passageways and locations of openings to help with assessing potential impacts to the bat.

Mines and caves, including the one being investigated, are located on private property and are dangerous to enter, even for those with proper training. The Project Team includes experts that are highly trained and experienced at investigating mine openings.

Additional work to be conducted in the project area for the bat involves investigating mine openings to identify hibernation sites. Beyond hibernation sites, the USFWS is concerned with loss of forested areas, which the bats use for feeding, roosting and rearing their young. Loss of both living and dead trees is of concern, as the bats give birth in hollow and cracked trees and under loose bark. They also feed within the forested areas. For these reasons the USFWS enforces timbering restrictions typically from November 16 to March 31 for areas within five miles of a known hibernation site.

Coordination with the USFWS and the Pennsylvania Game Commission is ongoing to help determine potential impacts.



The Indiana Bat

Ridge Option...

(continued from page 2)

Indiana Bat habitat. Although most of the trees along the Ridge Options are small due to previous disturbances, much of the forested area contains trees greater than six inches in diameter that are suitable for Indiana Bat habitat.

In Maryland, impacted forest areas would have to be replaced acre for acre. Alternatives D, E, and AE also impact forestland, but to a lesser degree than the Ridge Options. Lastly, given the location of these options situated upslope from Findley Spring, there would be greater potential, than with Alternatives D, E, or AE, to impact Salisbury's water supply.

Given the cost differences and potential impacts, including possible displacements of homes and a business along US 40 Alternate, the Ridge Options do not compare favorably with Alternatives D, E, and AE. As a result, no further study of the Ridge Options will be conducted.

More Drilling Planned

To facilitate completion of the alternatives analysis and preliminary mitigation design, PennDOT will drill additional roadway borings along a section of the proposed roadway alternatives extending six miles from Hunsrick Summit to the Pennsylvania/Maryland state line. This area includes 3.4 miles that are common to Alternatives D, E and AE and an additional 2.6 miles that are common to Alternatives AE and E. Additional spot location borings are proposed along the remaining portion of Alternative D in Pennsylvania.

The additional borings will provide needed information about mining, acid-forming potential of excavated bedrock, slope stability, groundwater, and the potential for stream/surface water pollution. This geological information will potentially allow for reduced excavation and associated tree clearing along the lengths of Alternatives AE and E in the vicinity of the Indiana Bat hibernation site. Reduction of tree cutting will help address United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Pennsylvania Game Commission concerns about a loss of bat habitat.

Additional geological information along Alternatives AE and E will also help to further analyze and identify potential concerns due to acid bearing rock formations. The eastern portion of the project area in Pennsylvania has been more heavily surface mined, which increases the potential for encountering an acid rock formation/discharge that could affect groundwater quality.

Additional boring work along Alternative D is proposed in deep cut areas to help reduce excavation and associated costs along Alternative D. Currently, Alternative D would produce approximately 8 million cubic yards of waste (equal to about 540,000 twenty-ton coal trucks).

No additional drilling work is being proposed in Maryland at this time as the alignments south of the state line are predominantly in fill conditions; therefore, cut slope stability, impacts to groundwater, potential for encountering acid rock, and potential for mining impacts are less of a concern. Geotechnical information obtained earlier in the project in Maryland has been found to be sufficient at this stage of the project.

Three Alternatives to be Carried into the DEIS Evaluation (see map on next page)

Since the November 2004 public meeting, the number of alternatives for further evaluation was reduced. Of the four alternatives presented at the public meeting, Alternatives D, E and Alternative AE will be carried into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Section 4(f) Evaluation. Alternative A will not be considered any further due to impacts to farming operations, homes, municipal tax base and historic resources.

Alternative D:

Alternative D has remained in the same location since its presentation at the November 2004 public meeting. Alternative D begins at Hunsrick Summit and follows along the western foot of Meadow Mountain until near Engles Mills, where it travels in a southwesterly direction across the Piney Creek Valley and crosses over US 219 just to the south of Salisbury. Once it crosses over US 219, it proceeds in a south – south-easterly direction to I-68.

Alternative E:

Since the 2004 public meeting, the project team refined Alternative E to reduce impacts to homes along Old Salisbury Road and to the Little Meadows Historic Site, a resource listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The MD SHA owns approximately 124 acres of Right-of-Way within the Little Meadows Historic Site, adjacent to existing US 219 extending from just north of US 40 Alternate to I-68. The alternative was shifted to utilize as much of MD SHA's property as possible and minimize impact to the Little Meadows Historic Site. With other measures discussed in the "Minimizing Impacts" article, direct impact to the homes along Old Salisbury Road would also be avoided.

Alternative E is still in the same location in Pennsylvania and starts at Hunsrick Summit and follows along the western foot of Meadow Mountain in Pennsylvania. At the Pennsylvania/Maryland border, Alternative E travels in a southwesterly direction east of existing US 219. Alternative E ties into I-68 just east of the existing interchange with US 219.

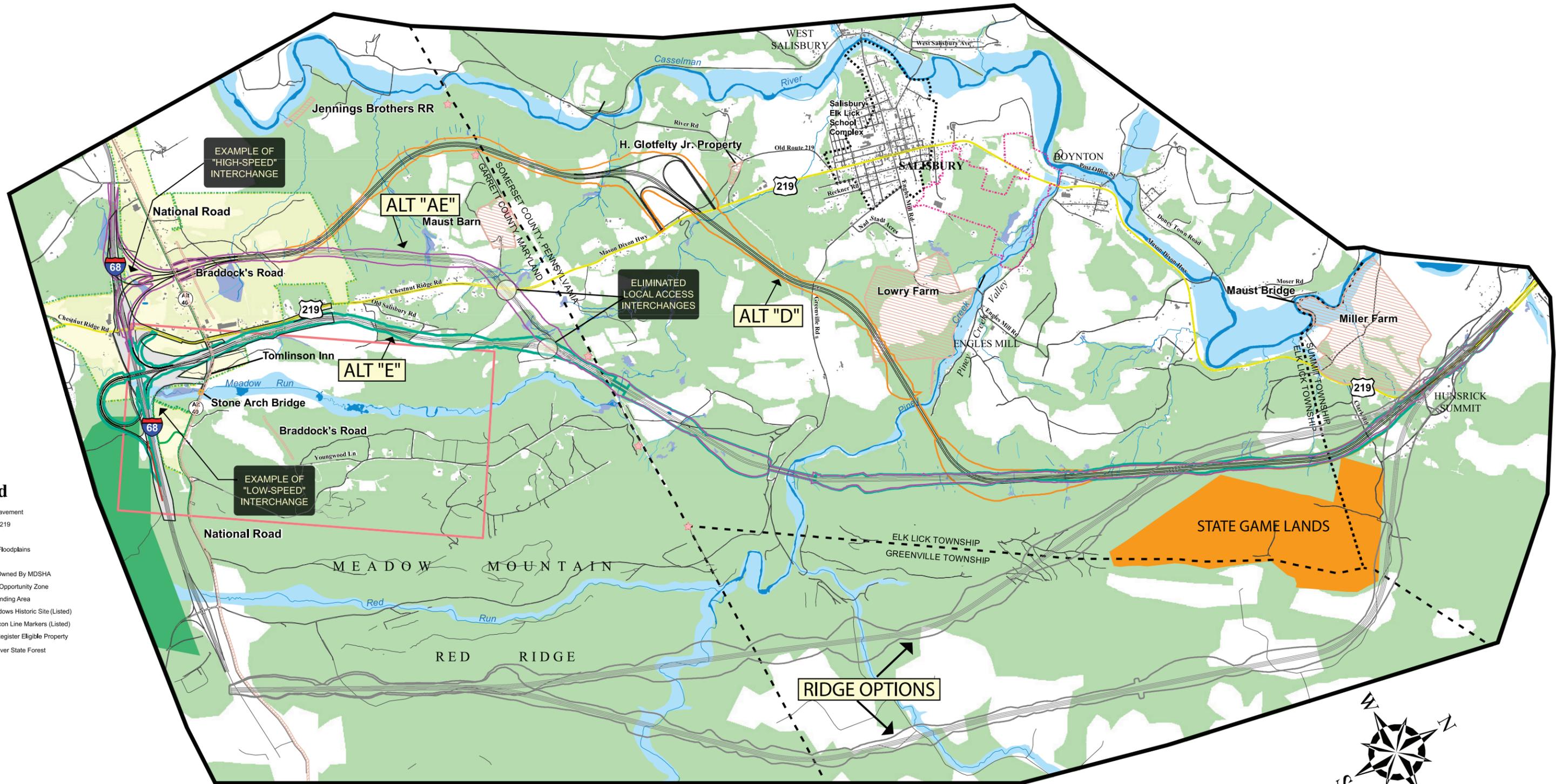
Alternative AE:

Alternative AE follows the same alignment as the northern section of Alternative E from Hunsrick Summit to approximately the state line. This section of the alignment has the least amount of environmental and community impacts. At the state line, Alternative AE diverges from Alternative E and heads westward, crossing existing US 219 just south of the state line. The alignment then follows Alternative D south to I-68.

Since the public meeting, a slight shift in Alternative AE was made in Maryland just west of where the alignment crosses existing US 219. This shift, along with the reduced footprint, eliminates the need to acquire any homes in the area of Windy Acres Lane.



Project Area Map



Legend

- Edge of Pavement
- US Route 219
- Streams
- 100 Year Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Property Owned By MDSA
- Keystone Opportunity Zone
- Priority Funding Area
- Little Meadows Historic Site (Listed)
- Mason-Dixon Line Markers (Listed)
- National Register Eligible Property
- Savage River State Forest
- Forest



MAP NOT TO SCALE