



US 219 I-68 (MD) TO MEYERSDALE (PA)

Request for Assistance

The Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 7-1-1. Maryland residents requiring assistance to participate, such as an interpreter for hearing/speech disabilities or assistance with the English language, should contact Ms. Carmelitta Harris, SHA Project Manager.

Pennsylvania residents requiring such assistance should contact Ken Rich, McCormick Taylor Public Involvement Coordinator, at 412-922-6880.

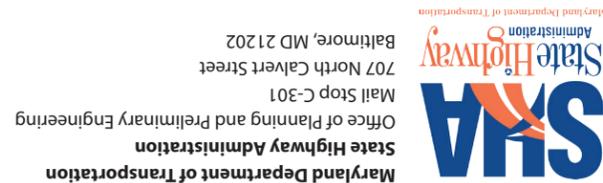
Please make these requests by September 16, 2014.

Next Steps

- Evaluate Comments from 2014 Informational Workshop.....Winter 2014
- Conduct Detailed Engineering for Proposed Alternatives.....Winter 2014/2015
- Develop Environmental Document.....Spring 2015
- Hold Location/Design Public Hearing.....Fall 2015
- Select Preferred Alternative.....Fall 2015
- Record of Decision.....Fall 2016



printed on recycled paper



US 219 I-68 (MD) TO MEYERSDALE (PA)

PROJECT PLANNING STUDY NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2014

Informational Workshop

WHEN

Tuesday, September 23, 2014
5:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Arrive at any time during workshop hours

WHERE

Grantsville Elementary School – Cafeteria
120 Grant Street
Grantsville, MD 21536
There will be no formal presentation.

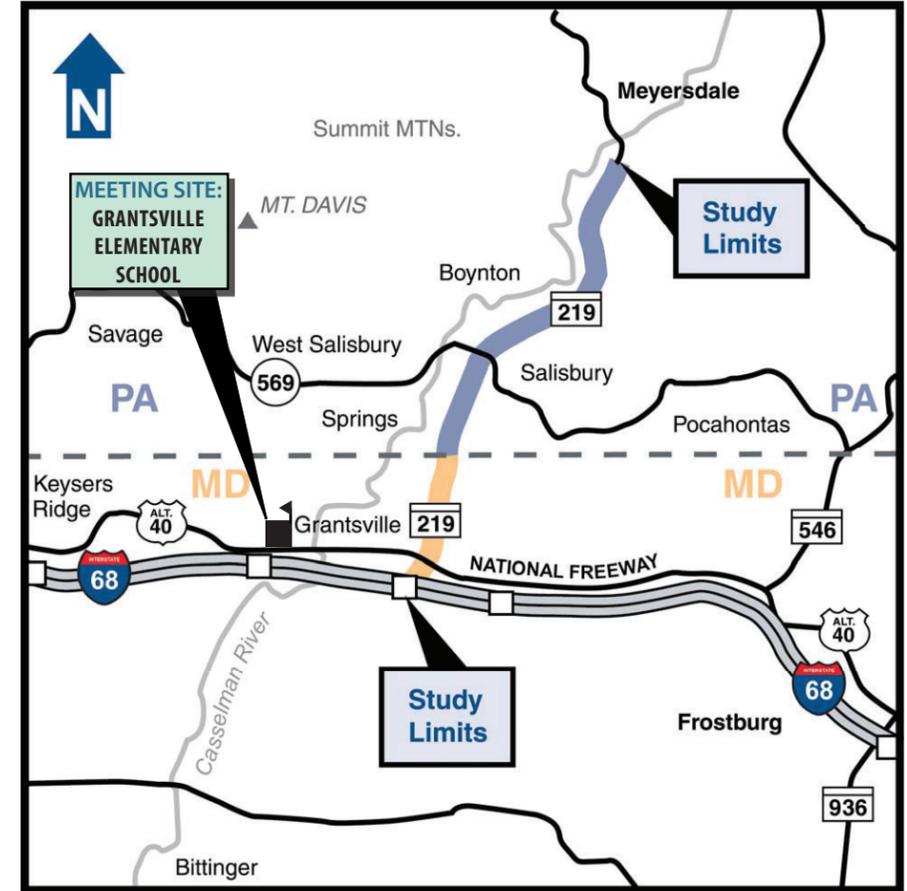
Purpose of the Project

The US 219 Project Planning Study was recently reinitiated after it was put on hold during the economic downturn in 2007. The purpose of the project remains the same as it was in 2007.

The study intends to improve:

- Economic development potential by providing safe and efficient access;
- Roadway system linkage between I-68, the four-lane section of US 219, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike;
- Safety of motorists traveling on US 219; and
- Level of service* on US 219.

* *Level of Service (LOS): A measure of the congestion experienced by drivers. LOS ranges from A (least congested) to F (extremely congested).*



US 219 Project Planning Study Reinitiated; Informational Workshop Scheduled

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), has reinitiated the US 219 (I-68 to Meyersdale) Project Planning Study and has scheduled an Informational Workshop for Tuesday, September 23, 2014, in Grantsville, Maryland.

The workshop will provide information on the study's purpose and need, the alternatives under consideration, and a summary of the environmental, traffic, and other analyses completed to date. Maps and other exhibits will be on display, and project team members will be available to answer project-related questions and receive comments.

Need for the Project

The study identifies a number of needs along the US 219 corridor from I-68 to Meyersdale, while incorporating the project needs from 2007.

The needs include:

- Crash rates on 17 of the 39 roadway segments on US 219 exceed the statewide average crash rate. Crash rates on seven of these roadway segments are more than twice the statewide rate.
- Current traffic volumes result in reduced LOS for most of US 219 and are expected to worsen in the future.
- Many roadway geometric features on US 219, such as lane and shoulder width, vertical grade, horizontal curvature, and sight distance do not meet current design standards.
- Deficient LOS, geometric constraints, and lack of passing zones along US 219 result in increased travel times and delays.
- The two-lane section of US 219 represents a less efficient system linkage for motorists traveling between the four-lane section of US 219 or the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-70/I-76) in Somerset, Pennsylvania, and I-68 in Maryland.
- US 219 lacks adequate access to municipalities and is a significant hindrance to economic development.



Project Status: Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study

Since the November 2004 Informational Workshop, the alternatives recommended for further evaluation have been reduced to five: the No-Build Alternative and Build Alternatives D, E, E Shift, and AE, which will be carried forward as **Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study** (pending concurrence from state and federal resource agencies). Each of the build alternatives has a high-speed and a low-speed interchange connection at I-68.

These alternatives and the **I-68 Interchange Connections** are summarized below:

No-Build – No major improvements are proposed under the No-Build Alternative. Minor short-term improvements would occur as part of routine maintenance and safety operations. The No-Build Alternative does not address the purpose and need for the project. It serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits associated with the build alternatives.

All of the **build alternatives** would start in the same location. The northern tie-in for these alternatives would begin at the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass, at Hunsrick Summit, and continue along the western foot of Meadow Mountain until it reaches Engles Mills.

Alternative D – From the point at which Alternative D reaches Engles Mills, it travels southwest across Piney Creek Valley and crosses US 219 just south of Salisbury, Pennsylvania. Once it crosses US 219, Alternative D proceeds south/southeast to I-68 (See Figure 3).

Alternative E – From the point at which Alternative E reaches Engles Mills, it continues south until it reaches the Maryland/Pennsylvania state line. At that point, Alternative E would change direction to the southwest, staying slightly east of US 219 and tying into I-68, east of the I-68 Interchange. To avoid direct impacts on homes along Old Salisbury Road, Alternative E was designed

Public Involvement

For additional information about the project, please contact the project team members listed below or visit the project website at www.US219MD-PA.com, or use the QR Code provided on the bottom of this page.

Project Team

Mr. Gregory I. Slater, Director
 Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering
 Maryland State Highway Administration
 707 North Calvert Street, MS C-301
 Baltimore, MD 21202

Ms. Carmeletta Harris, SHA Project Manager
 Project Management Division
 Maryland State Highway Administration
 707 North Calvert Street, MS C-301
 Baltimore, MD 21202
 Telephone: (410) 545-8522
 Toll free within Maryland: (800) 548-5026
 E-mail: charris@sha.state.md.us

Ms. Karen Arnold, SHA Environmental Manager
 Environmental Planning Division/NEPA
 Compliance Section
 Maryland State Highway Administration
 707 North Calvert Street, MS C-301
 Baltimore, Maryland 21202
 Telephone: (410) 545-8510
 Toll-free within Maryland: (866) 527-0502
 E-mail: karnold@sha.state.md.us

Mr. Anthony Crawford, District Engineer
 District 6
 Maryland State Highway Administration
 1251 Vocke Road
 LaVale, MD 21502
 Telephone: (301) 729- 8486
 Toll free within Maryland: (800) 760-7138
 E-mail: acrawford@sha.state.md.us

Mr. Gregory Illig, P.E., PennDOT Senior Project Manager
 PennDOT Engineering District 9-0
 1620 North Juniata Street
 Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
 Telephone: (814) 696-7179
 Fax: (814) 696-7173
 E-mail: gillig@pa.gov



Visit the project website to stay up to date on what is going on with the project.
www.US219MD-PA.com

Environmental Summary

Waterways and Land Use

The project area contains wetlands and three waterways: Casselman River, Piney Creek, and Meadow Run. These aquatic resources are regulated by federal and state agencies to protect water quality and support aquatic life. Forest land and agricultural fields make up the dominant land use within the project area. The study team identified 10 full-time farming operations--including dairy farms, maple sugar operations, and crop farms--and a number of reclaimed strip mines and abandoned agricultural fields. Most built-up and commercial lands are found within narrow corridors along US 219, US 40 Alternate, and I-68.

Habitats and Species

Diverse wildlife habitats within the study area support a variety of game and non-game species. Federal and state coordination resulted in the identification of the potential presence of species of concern, including several plant and aquatic species and federal/state endangered bat species.

Endangered Species: The Indiana Bat

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 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Indiana Bats change their habitat throughout 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. The project team will survey the project-area mine to assess potential impacts on the bat. In addition to the location of hibernation sites, the USFWS is concerned with the loss of forested areas and living/dead trees in which the bats give birth and care for their young. For these reasons, the USFWS typically enforces timbering restrictions on tree removal from November 16 to March 31. Coordination continues with the USFWS and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to determine potential impacts.

Cultural Resources

As part of the environmental process for any transportation project, an examination of historic and archeological resources is required. The Lowry Farm, the Miller Farm, and the H. Glotfelty, Jr. Property in Pennsylvania have been identified as resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows (Stone House), the National Road, two sections of Braddock's Road, the Truman J. Maust Farm (Maust Barn), five Mason-Dixon Line Markers, the Jennings Brothers Railroad, and the Stone Arch Bridge are Maryland resources listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP. Assessments of 50 other standing structures are being conducted as part of the current study.

A group of Consulting Parties (persons with special interest in historic properties and archeological finds) will assist FHWA, PennDOT, and SHA in determining the effects that the proposed project will have on these resources and will participate in discussions of mitigation measures for any properties adversely affected. Persons who are interested in becoming a Consulting Party or who would like to share their knowledge of local history may contact the project team members listed in this newsletter.

During the next three to six months, cultural resources crews will be working in the study area to evaluate structures for historic eligibility and to conduct archeological surveys on the proposed alignments from the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass to north of Piney Creek. Other field crews will also be documenting signs of wildlife, evaluating the presence of plant species of special concern, and looking for potential mitigation sites. Staff will contact area farmers to verify ownership, type of farm operation, and other details related to productive farms. Survey crews and engineering teams may also be in the project area to conduct field reviews and other data-gathering efforts.

to use all 124 acres of SHA right-of-way within the Little Meadows Historic Site, adjacent to US 219 and extending from just north of US 40 Alternate to I-68 (See Figure 3).

Alternative E Shift – Alternative E Shift was designed to move the alignment east, away from homes on Old Salisbury Road, and to avoid, as much as possible, impacts beyond those imposed by Alternative E on the Little Meadows Historic Site. The shift uses as much SHA property and right-of-way as possible (See Figure 3).

Alternative AE – At the Maryland/Pennsylvania state line, Alternative AE diverges from Alternative E and heads west, crossing US 219 just south of the Maryland/Pennsylvania state line, and follows Alternative D south to I-68. Following the 2004 Informational Workshop, the project team shifted Alternative AE in Maryland just west of the point at which the alignment crosses US 219. This shift, in conjunction with the alignment's reduced footprint, eliminates the need to acquire any homes in the Windy Acres Lane area (See Figure 3).

Interchange Connections at I-68 – The project team is considering two options for an interchange with I-68 at the project's southern end. A "high-speed" interchange (presented at previous public meetings) consists of ramps that maintain ramp speeds of 45 mph and higher (See Figure 1). The amount of land needed to accommodate the long ramps, and the use of fly-over ramps on bridges to allow high-speed traffic flow, typically result in high costs. As an alternate option, the project team is considering a loop ramp "low-speed" interchange at the project's southern end that would still function as a free-flow interchange which would not require vehicles to stop at the end of the ramps (See Figure 2). Lower ramp speeds would be required and 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 2045 traffic volumes and will be carried forward and presented as options with all of the alternatives.



Figure 1: High Speed Interchange - Option 1

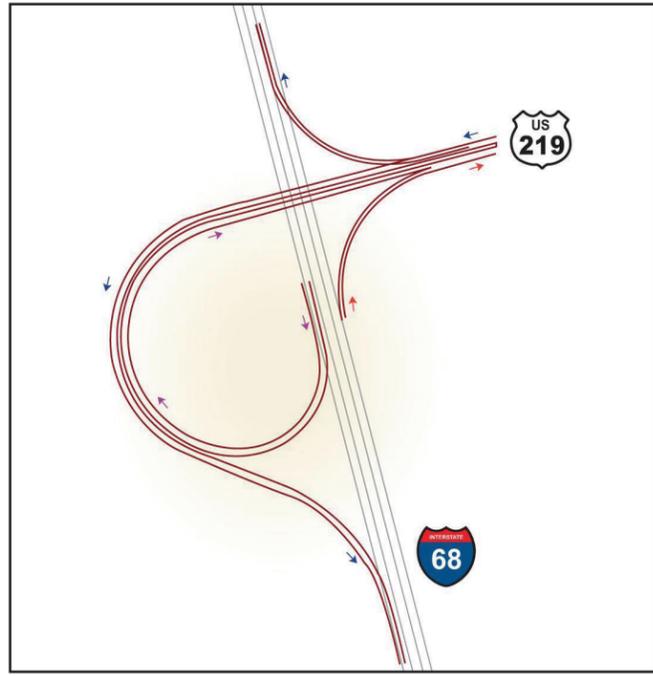
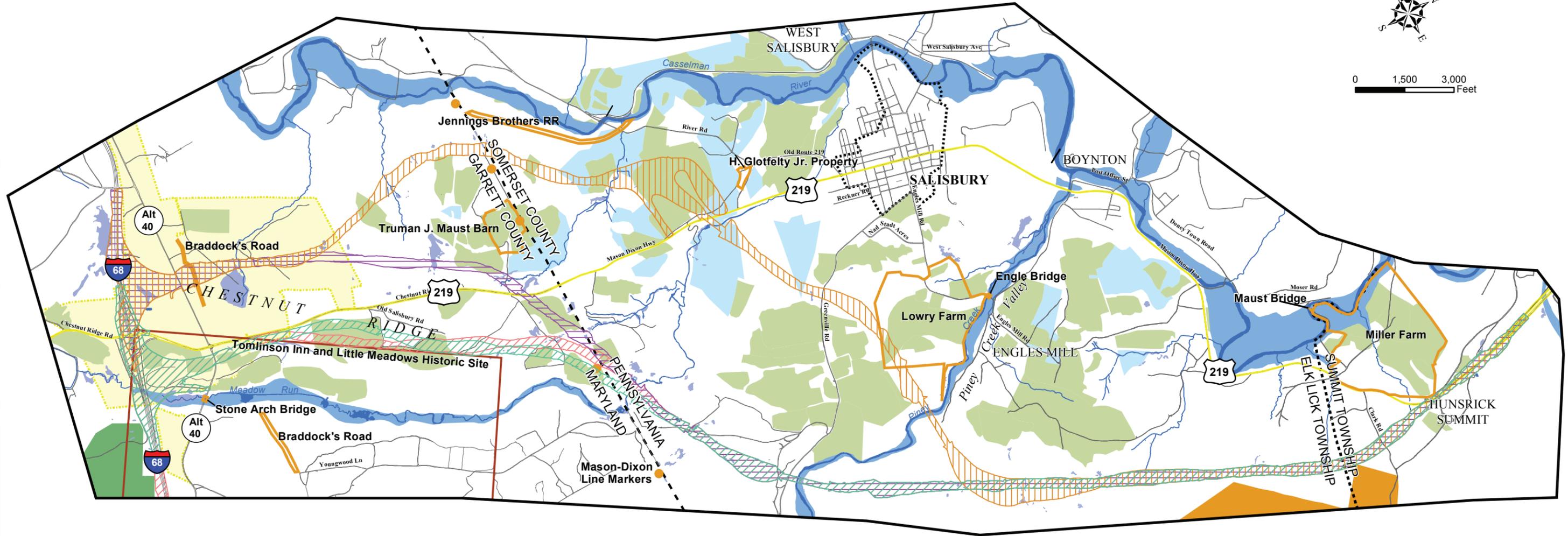


Figure 2: Low Speed Interchange - Option 2



0 1,500 3,000 Feet

Legend

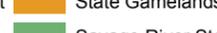
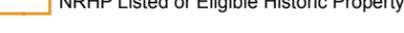
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  Alternative D |  Priority Funding Area |  Wetlands |
|  Alternative E |  Cropland and Pasture |  100 Year Floodplains |
|  Alternative AE |  Maple Sugar Production |  Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows (Stone House) |
|  Alternative E Shift |  State Gamelands |  NRHP Listed or Eligible Historic Property |
| |  Savage River State Forest | |

Figure 3: U.S. 219 Alternatives