

left-turning traffic will then wait for a green signal and cross over the oncoming traffic where they will then have a green signal when they reach the intersection. MD 4 will carry two through lanes in each direction, and MD 235 will maintain three through lanes in each direction.

Option B - At-Grade Intersection with One-Directional Flyover:

This option takes traffic turning left from southbound MD 4 to southbound MD 235 and uses a single-lane exit ramp to bypass and “fly over” the MD 4/ MD 235 intersection. The traffic signal will remain for all other intersection movements. MD 4 will carry two through lanes in each direction and MD 235 will maintain three through lanes in each direction. MD 235 will have two left-turn lanes in each direction and northbound MD 4 will have one left-turn lane. Northbound MD 235 will have a free-flowing right turn onto northbound MD 4, and northbound MD 4 will have a free-flowing right turn onto southbound MD 235.

Option D - Single Point Urban Interchange:

This option is a grade-separated interchange option, with MD 4 crossing under MD 235. Option D keeps all through traffic on MD 235 flowing (without a traffic signal) and directs all left turns through a signalized intersection below MD 235. Right turns “yield” to traffic on MD 4. Through traffic along MD 4 will also cross through the signalized intersection, with two through lanes in each direction.

Other SHA Projects Near the MD 4 Study Area

- MD 237 Widening from MD 235 to Pegg Road
- MD 765 – ADA Improvements
- MD 246 (Great Mills Road) Community Enhancement - from west of Saratoga Drive to MD 235

We Want Your Feedback!

The MD 4 Project Team wants to hear your comments about the proposed alternatives, the proposed bridge height, and any other comments you may have regarding the project. The extent of the needed improvements will require right-of-way acquisitions, some potential displacements, and some environmental impacts. We are currently trying to balance the transportation needs while minimizing impacts. SHA is in the process of evaluating, in coordination with cooperating and participating agencies, the best solution for the corridor that accommodates all users.

SHA is committed to maintaining public involvement throughout the MD 4 project planning process and welcomes your questions and comments. SHA is also available to meet with community groups, business associations, and other organizations. To request a meeting, receive project information, submit a comment, or add your name to the MD 4 Planning Study mailing list, please contact:

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Next Steps

- Complete Environmental Assessment - **Spring 2010**
- Conduct Location/Design Public Hearings - **Summer/Fall 2010**
- Address Public Hearing Comments - **Fall 2010**
- Identify the SHA Preferred Alternative - **Winter 2010/2011**
- Receive Location/Design Approval - **Summer 2011**

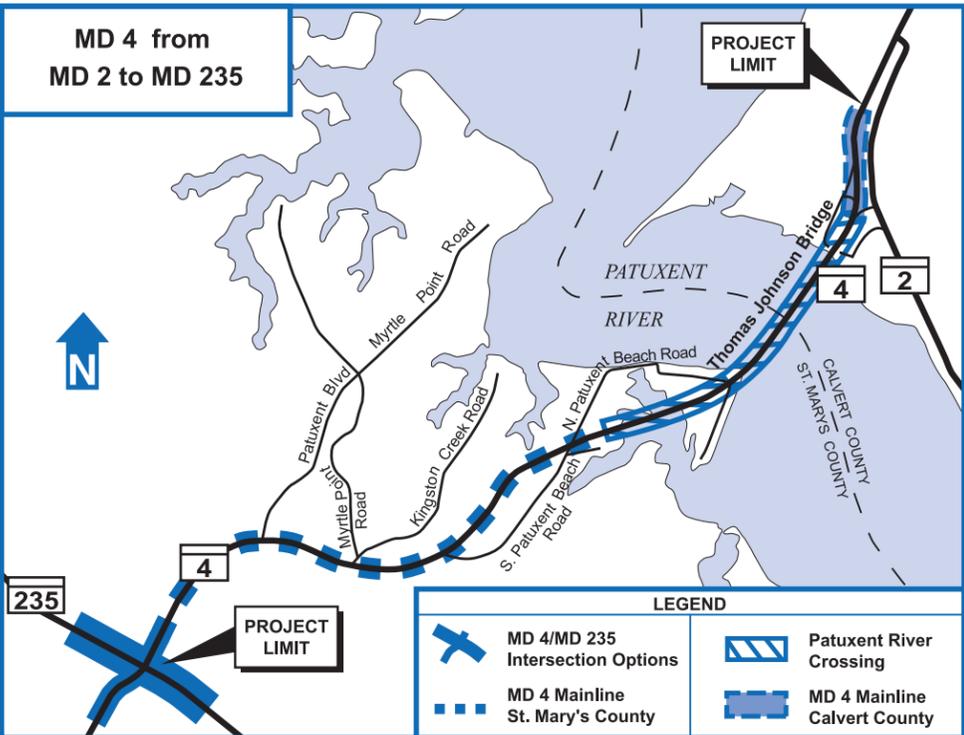
Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
Beverly K. Swaim-Staley, Secretary
Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator



PROJECT NEWSLETTER • WINTER 2010

Purpose of the Newsletter

- To provide a project update
- To present the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS)
- To encourage citizen involvement and input in the planning process
- To solicit feedback regarding the proposed reduction of the bridge height from waterfront property and business owners throughout the navigable portion of the Patuxent River



MD 4 - Thomas Johnson Bridge Planning Study is Moving Forward

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and local partners are continuing to work on the MD 4 Project Planning Study between the MD 4/MD 235 intersection in St. Mary's County and the MD 2/MD 4 and Patuxent Point Parkway intersection in Calvert County, Maryland.

This project planning study is advancing, with several alternatives under consideration. One alternative and one interchange option were not retained for further study. The current alternatives, known as the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS), are undergoing preliminary engineering and environmental analyses. These findings will be presented in the Environmental Assessment, which will be available for public and agency review prior to the public hearings. There will be two hearings, one each in Calvert and St. Mary's counties, which are expected to be held in Summer/Fall 2010. Information about the hearings will be provided once dates and locations have been confirmed. This project is currently funded for project planning only. It is not funded for design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the project is to improve existing capacity and traffic operations, increase vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle safety along MD 4, and support existing and planned development in Calvert and St. Mary's counties. The need for the project is a result of existing and projected traffic volumes generated by rapid growth, which will result in increased congestion and increased traffic volumes across the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge. The bridge presently carries one lane in each direction with no shoulders and becomes a major traffic jam when crashes occur or repairs are scheduled near or on the bridge. Additionally, there are no dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facilities on the bridge.

Existing Conditions

The MD 4 Project Planning Study corridor is just over four miles long. The typical section of the existing paved roadway is one lane in each direction with 10-foot shoulders over most of the project length. The existing bridge has one 12-foot lane in each direction with only two-foot shoulders. The proposed improvements consist of upgrading and/or replacing the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge, expanding MD 4 from a two-lane to a four-lane roadway between the bridge and MD 235, and improving the MD 4/MD 235 intersection.

Previous Public Outreach Activities

Open house meetings were held in October 2007 at Dowell Elementary School in Calvert County and Town Creek

Elementary School in St. Mary's County. A total of 230 people attended the open houses. Alternatives Public Workshops were held at these same locations in June 2008. Over 340 people attended, including local residents, community leaders, elected officials, and county representatives.

The project team received comments on the alternatives presented, as well as their potential impacts. Additional information about the project, including past meeting brochures, can be found at www.roads.maryland.gov under **Projects and Studies/ St. Mary's County**.

What is New?

Following the workshops, the project team did not retain Alternative 5 – Myrtle Point Crossing and MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Option C – Partial Cloverleaf for further study. This was based on comments received from the public, agencies, and elected officials, as well as the increased cost and environmental impacts of these options, while not providing any increased transportation benefits when compared to the others.

Several of the intersection designs at MD 4 and MD 235 are being modified as described below to further minimize impacts.

- **Option A** – Continuous Flow Intersection has been modified to have continuous flow on only two legs instead of all four legs of the intersection.
- **Option B** – One-Directional Flyover has been designed such that the ramp from MD 4 will tie-in to the median of southbound MD 4 instead of the outside of the roadway.
- **Option D** – Single Point Urban Interchange has been modified such that MD 4 crosses under MD 235 instead of over as initially proposed.

New mapping of the intersection concepts will be available at the upcoming hearings.

The project team is also developing intersection improvement concepts at various locations along the study corridor that may alleviate traffic congestion on a short-term basis. Details of these concepts will be available at the hearings as well.

The project team is also looking at the possibility of reducing the height of the bridge over the main channel of the Patuxent River. The existing bridge has a 140-foot clearance over the river channel. The team has developed an option that maintains the 140-foot clearance and an option that has a reduced clearance of approximately 70 feet. *The team has coordinated with the U.S. Navy regarding their navigational requirements and would like to hear from all river users and property owners upstream about their thoughts of a lower bridge.*

There are new regulations in place for treating stormwater runoff from the roadway; therefore, as a result the potential

impacts to private property along MD 4 and MD 235 in the project area have increased. The team will be presenting mapping that shows the latest design for the stormwater management concepts at the hearings.

SHA Cultural Resources staff will be performing archeological tests within the corridor in the coming months. Some of the tests – primarily those taken near the river – will require excavating six to eight foot deep trenches using heavy equipment. SHA will request permission from property owners to do the work via certified mail. Ground disturbed during testing will be returned to its original state to the fullest extent possible.

Alternatives and Options Retained for Detailed Study

Maps of alternatives and options can be viewed at www.roads.maryland.gov. Click on **Projects and Studies/ St. Mary's County**. Copies may also be obtained by contacting the Project Manager at **1-800-548-5026** or by e-mail at randerson2@sha.state.md.us.

The study area has been divided into four distinct areas: MD 4 Mainline, Calvert County; Patuxent River Crossing; MD 4 Mainline, St. Mary's County; and MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Options. The proposed alternatives within each area can mix and match with adjacent areas (see map on front page).

Alternative 1 - No-Build: This alternative serves as the baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits associated with the build alternatives that have been retained for detailed study. It does not address future traffic concerns or the purpose and need for the project. Only minor short-term improvements would occur as part of routine maintenance and safety operations.

Build Alternatives

Alternative 2 - Transportation Systems Management (TSM): This alternative consists of spot improvements and access management along the entire corridor to address short-term safety, operational, and public concerns at specific locations. TSM improvements could generally be constructed with relatively low costs and environmental impacts, but would provide no substantial improvements to address future concerns. TSM strategies being considered for this corridor include, but are not limited, to consolidating access points along the corridor and modifying existing intersections. This alternative does not include a new or modified Patuxent River crossing.

MD 4 Mainline, Calvert County: The team is looking at potentially consolidating existing access points along MD 4 for enhanced safety and operations, modifications to the existing ramps to Solomons

Island, widening the median shoulders, and pedestrian/bicycle improvements. An option with minimal changes to existing access is also proposed along this section. These improvements can be combined with either Alternative 3 or 4.

Patuxent River Crossings

Alternative 3 - Two-Lane Parallel Span: This alternative keeps the existing Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge in place. The existing bridge will be converted to carry traffic in the southbound direction, and a new two-lane bridge will be built approximately 50 to 75 feet south of the existing bridge to carry traffic in the northbound direction. The new bridge will feature two 12-foot-wide travel lanes, a four-foot-wide inside shoulder, and a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder.

Alternative 4 - Four-Lane Parallel Span: This alternative involves constructing a new four-lane bridge about 75 to 100 feet south of the existing Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge. Upon completion of the new bridge, the existing bridge will be demolished. The bridge will feature two 12-foot-wide lanes, a four-foot-wide inside shoulder, and a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder in each direction.

Both Alternatives 3 and 4 will have a 10-foot-wide shared-use bicycle/pedestrian path separated by a concrete barrier on the south side of the bridge.

MD 4 Mainline Widening, St. Mary's County: MD 4 is proposed to be widened to a four-lane divided roadway from the base of the bridge to just south of the MD 235 intersection. The two lanes in each direction would be 12 feet wide, with a 10-foot-wide bicycle-compatible shoulder on the outside edge of the roadway and a four-foot wide shoulder on the inside. A 30-foot-wide open grass median would separate the travel lanes. Intersection improvements will be provided at all locations. An option to include a 10-foot separated pedestrian/bicycle facility is under consideration. These improvements can be combined with either Alternative 3 or 4.

MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Options

All three options include bicycle and pedestrian crossings through the intersection that will connect with the Three Notch Trail proposed by St. Mary's County as well as existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These options can also be combined with either river crossing alternative.

Option A - Continuous Flow Intersection: This option will take the single traffic signal and disperse traffic through three traffic signals. The timing of the three signals allows the intersection to operate better. Under this option, left-turning traffic at the intersection from MD 4 southbound as well as MD 235 westbound will be stored in two turn lanes prior to the intersection. The