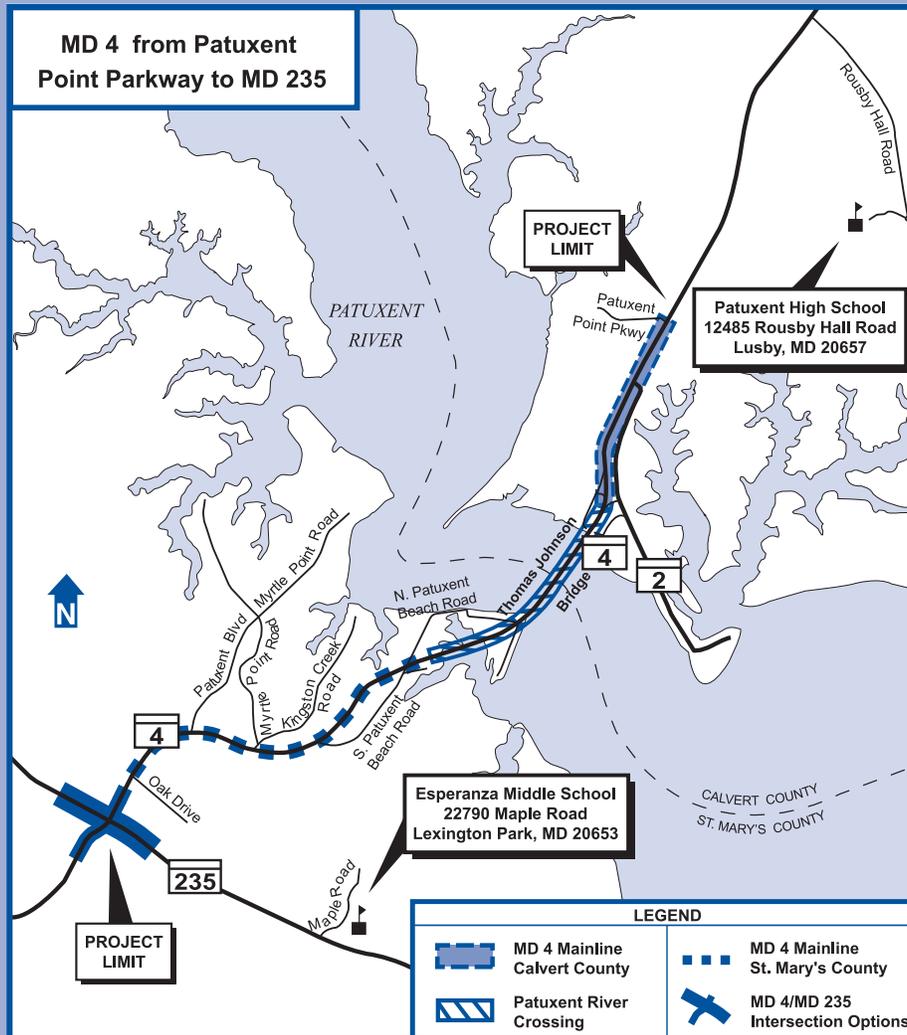


# MD 4 Thomas Johnson Bridge Project Planning Study from Patuxent Point Parkway to MD 235

## LOCATION/DESIGN Public Hearings



### Calvert County

**Tuesday, September 28, 2010**  
5:00 p.m. – Maps/Displays Available  
6:30 p.m. – Presentation/Testimony  
Patuxent High School  
12485 Rousby Hall Road, Lusby, MD 20657

### St. Mary's County

**Wednesday, September 29, 2010**  
5:00 p.m. – Maps/Displays Available  
6:30 p.m. – Presentation/Testimony  
Esperanza Middle School  
22790 Maple Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653



Maryland Department of Transportation  
State Highway Administration

Project No. SM351C11



US Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is conducting a project planning study along MD 4 to evaluate potential improvements to capacity, safety, and traffic operations along the corridor. The project limits extend from the intersection of MD 2/4 and Patuxent Point Parkway in Calvert County to the MD 4/MD 235 intersection in St. Mary's County, including the Thomas Johnson Bridge. The total project length is approximately 4.1 miles.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the project is to improve existing capacity and traffic operations, increase vehicular and pedestrian/bicyclist 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 increase congestion and traffic volumes across the Thomas Johnson Bridge. The bridge presently carries one lane of traffic in each direction and becomes a major bottleneck when crashes occur or repairs are scheduled on or near the bridge. The bridge lacks shoulders and dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

## **PURPOSE OF THE HEARINGS**

The purpose of the Location/Design Public Hearings is to formally present the results of the detailed engineering and environmental studies that have been conducted for this project. The public hearings will provide an opportunity for interested individuals, associations, citizen groups, or government agencies to offer spoken or written comments on the project information presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA) before

a Preferred Alternative is selected. The document will be on display at the locations listed on page 13 of this brochure.

## **HEARING FORMAT**

Maps and exhibits depicting the alternatives under consideration and other project information will be on display for public viewing beginning at 5:00 p.m. Representatives from the project team will be available to answer your project-related questions. A formal presentation lasting approximately 30 minutes will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will be followed by public testimony, which may be limited to three minutes per speaker, depending on the number of persons on the speakers' list. Testimony may also be given privately to a court reporter. To add your name to the speakers' list, please contact the Project Manager, Mr. Jeremy Beck, until September 22, 2010, at the address/telephone/email listed on page 2. You may also sign up to provide public testimony at the registration desk on the days of the hearings. All proceedings will be recorded and a transcript will be prepared. The transcript will be available for public review approximately eight weeks after the public hearings, at the locations listed on page 13.

## **HOW TO COMMENT ON THE STUDY**

We encourage you to review the EA, read this brochure, participate in the public hearings, and/or provide written comments. SHA will consider all comments, whether written or spoken, when we select the Preferred Alternative.

You may provide your comments by:

- Using the postage-paid return mailer included in this brochure
- Giving testimony publicly during the hearings
- Giving testimony privately to a court reporter

- Mailing or e-mailing written comments to:

Mr. Jeremy Beck, Project Manager  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
Project Management Division  
707 North Calvert Street  
Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Telephone: (410) 545-8518  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-548-5026  
Email: jbeck@sha.state.md.us

Additional copies of this brochure will be available at the receptionist's desk during the public hearings. Following the hearings, SHA will continue to accept additional comments until November 1, 2010, and will include them in the project record and the final environmental document.

## **PROJECT MAILING LIST**

To add your name to the project mailing list, just complete the enclosed mailer or give your mailing information to the receptionist at the hearings. If you have previously submitted your name and address by postcard, through the website, or by other means, or if you have received this brochure in the mail, you are already included on the project mailing list.

## **PROGRAM STATUS**

Improvements within the project study area are included in the Maryland Department of Transportation's FY 2010-2015 Consolidated Transportation Plan, and in the Highway Needs Inventory, SHA's long-range plan. This project is currently funded for Project Planning only. If a build alternative is selected and the project's location and design are approved, the project may become eligible for funding for the Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Construction stages.

## **PROJECT HISTORY**

The MD 4 Project Planning Study was initiated in December 2006. The study limits extend

from the MD 2/4 intersection with Patuxent Point Parkway in Calvert County to the MD 4/ MD 235 intersection in St. Mary's County. The study corridor is approximately 4.1 miles long and includes the Thomas Johnson Bridge.

SHA held informational open house sessions in Calvert County at Dowell Elementary School on October 2, 2007, and in St. Mary's County at Town Creek Elementary School on October 9, 2007. During these sessions, we introduced the project to the public, presented the project purpose and need, and received public comments, which were considered when we developed the preliminary alternatives.

On June 16 and 17, 2008, SHA held Alternatives Public Workshops at the locations mentioned above. The project team presented preliminary alternatives with their respective environmental impacts, existing traffic and roadway conditions, and planning-level cost estimates. Following the workshop, the team reviewed the public comments and recommended that one alternative and one intersection option be dropped from further study (see page 7). The Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) and their associated environmental impacts are shown on pages 5 and 8.

SHA published a newsletter in March 2010 updating the public about the project, presenting the ARDS, encouraging citizen involvement in the planning process, and soliciting comments on the proposed bridge height.

In 2010, the Maryland Department of the Environment implemented new Environmental Site Design (ESD) regulations for treating stormwater runoff from roadways. As a result, the potential impacts to private property along MD 4 and MD 235 in the project area have increased. At the hearing, the team will present mapping that shows the latest design for the stormwater management concepts for the project.

Although the project is currently funded for Project Planning only, SHA has divided

## **TRAFFIC OPERATIONS AND CONGESTION**

the study corridor into four segments that could be constructed independently, as funding becomes available. These segments include the MD 4 mainline in Calvert County, the Thomas Johnson Bridge, the MD 4 mainline in St. Mary's County, and the MD 4/MD 235 intersection. The project team is identifying short-term improvements that could be implemented in advance of the build alternatives to help improve traffic operations at several locations along the project corridor.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

MD 4 is a four-lane divided roadway from the northern project limit until the junction with MD 2 at Solomon's Island in Calvert County, where it transitions to a two-lane undivided roadway to the Thomas Johnson Bridge. MD 4 remains two lanes across the Thomas Johnson Bridge, which has a typical section of two 12-foot lanes with two-foot shoulders. Once across the bridge in St. Mary's County, MD 4 is a two-lane undivided roadway with 10-foot shoulders until it reaches the MD 235 intersection.

In March 2010, SHA implemented a short-term improvement for left-turning vehicles from southbound MD 4 to southbound MD 235 toward the Patuxent Naval Air Station by converting the existing through lane to a through-left. Figure 1 in the mapping packet depicts the cross-sections of the existing Thomas Johnson Bridge and the MD 4 mainline.

The 7,207-foot-long Thomas Johnson Bridge, built in 1977, has a roadway that is 28-feet wide, with no sidewalks. The highest point at which boats may pass beneath the bridge is 140 feet. The depth of the river in the channel is approximately 130 feet. SHA completed the last underwater and superstructure (above water) inspections in September 2009 and November 2009 and rated the bridge "satisfactory." A public boat ramp is located beneath the Thomas Johnson Bridge within the existing SHA right-of-way on the Calvert County side.

SHA developed AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes and Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for MD 4 within the study limits. Table 1 shows the 2007 (existing) and the 2030 (projected) No-Build and Build ADT. The highest weekday peak-period volumes along MD 4 occur between the MD 235 intersection and the Patuxent Boulevard intersection. By 2030, the same section of MD 4 will experience a 24-percent increase in ADT, and the study corridor will experience an 18-percent increase.

SHA conducted a Level of Service (LOS) analysis for existing (2007) and forecasted (2030) No-Build and Build conditions for the study-area segments. LOS is a measure of the congestion experienced by drivers, and ranges from "A" (free flow, with little or no congestion) to "F" (failure, with stop-and-go conditions). LOS is normally computed for the peak periods of a typical weekday, with LOS D (approaching unstable flow) or better generally considered acceptable for intersections or highways in urban and suburban areas. At LOS E, volumes are near or at capacity. Once a segment exceeds capacity, extensive delay begins. LOS F represents conditions where demand exceeds capacity and where there are operational breakdowns with stop-and-go traffic and extremely long delays at signalized intersections.

Currently, both the morning (6 AM to 9 AM) and evening (4 PM to 7 PM) peak hours for the MD 4 corridor between MD 2 and MD 235 have a failing LOS (see Table 2). By 2030, the LOS will continue to fail during morning and evening peak hours if a build alternative is not selected. If a build alternative is selected, LOS would improve to "C." The MD 4/Patuxent Parkway and MD 4/Kingston Creek Road intersections currently have failing LOS in the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour, which will become LOS F by 2030 if a build alternative is not selected. If a build alternative is selected, LOS at these intersections will improve to "D" in the AM peak hour and "C" in the PM peak hour.

**Table 1 - Average Daily Traffic**

Limits	2007 Existing	2030 No-Build	2030 Build
	Average Daily Traffic (Vehicles/Day)		
MD 235 north of MD 4	40,300	52,400	62,000
MD 235 south of MD 4	55,800	64,600	71,700
MD 4 south of MD 235	17,000	18,600	19,300
MD 4 - MD 235 to Patuxent Boulevard	28,300	35,200	41,500
MD 4 - Patuxent Boulevard to Kingston Creek Road	27,900	33,600	40,000
MD 4 - Kingston Creek Road to MD 2*	27,000	32,500	39,000
MD 4 - MD 2 to Patuxent Point Parkway	24,500	29,500	34,500

\* Limits include the Thomas Johnson Bridge.

**Table 2 - MD 4 Mainline Levels of Service (AM/PM)**

Limits	2007 Existing AM/PM	2030 No-Build AM/PM	2030 Build AM/PM
MD 4 – MD 235 to Kingston Creek Road	F/F	F/F	C/C
MD 4/Patuxent Boulevard intersection	F/E	F/F	D/C
MD 4/Kingston Creek Road intersection	F/E	F/F	D/C
MD 4 – Kingston Creek Road to MD 2*	F/F	F/F	C/C
MD 4 – MD 2 to Patuxent Point Parkway	B/B	B/C	C/C

\* Limits include the Thomas Johnson Bridge.

**Table 3 - MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Level of Service**

	LOS (AM/PM)
2007 Existing	F/E
2030 No-Build	F/F
Option A – Continuous Flow Intersection	D/D
Option B – One-Directional Flyover *	C/E
Option D – Single-Point Urban Interchange **	C/D

\*Uninterrupted flow from southbound MD 4 left-turn to southbound MD 235

\*\* Uninterrupted flow northbound and southbound MD 235

The MD 4 intersection with MD 235 currently experiences failing LOS during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour, which will become LOS F by 2030 if a build alternative is not selected. Table 3 shows the improvements in LOS for the MD 4/MD 235 intersection options.

## **SAFETY**

SHA completed a crash analysis for the study corridor for 2003 through 2005. During that three-year period, 123 crashes were reported, including one fatal crash, 56 injury crashes, and 66 property-damage crashes. The crash rate on MD 4 from FDR Boulevard to MD 235 is greater than the statewide average and the rear-end collision rate across the Thomas Johnson Bridge is higher than the statewide rate for similar types of roadways.

## **CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS**

Context Sensitive Solutions is a collaborative, interdisciplinary process that involves all stakeholders in developing a transportation project that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. SHA will continue to coordinate with Calvert and St. Mary's counties to incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions into the alternatives, as they are further developed or refined.

Examples of Context Sensitive Solutions may include, but are not limited to:

- Pedestrian circulation and safety
- Local residential and business traffic circulation
- Right-of-way impact reduction
- Impacts on response times of police, fire, and other emergency-services providers
- Bicycle access
- Aesthetic/landscape/streetscape opportunities
- Other specific community issues

To ensure that alternatives for improvements to MD 4 reflect the community's local character and aesthetic preferences, please use the comment card included in the brochure to provide your comments and suggestions about Context Sensitive Solutions.

## **ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY**

Four Patuxent River crossing alternatives, several MD 4 access options in Calvert County, two MD 4 mainline options in St. Mary's County, and three MD 4/MD 235 intersection options have been retained for detailed study. The study corridor has been divided into four segments that could be built independently (see Site Location Map on cover) as funding becomes available. Alternatives currently under consideration are presented below. Maps and typical sections of the alternatives are included in the mapping packet.

### **Alternative 1: No-Build Alternative**

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

### **Alternative 2: Transportation Systems Management (TSM)**

The TSM Alternative consists of spot improvements and access management along the corridor to address short-term safety, operational, and public concerns at specific locations. Although TSM improvements generally involve lower costs and few environmental impacts, they provide no substantial improvements to address future concerns. TSM strategies considered for this corridor include modifying existing ramps and access points on the Calvert County side and

improving intersections along the remaining study corridor. The TSM alternative does not include improvements to the existing bridge.

### *Patuxent River Crossings* **Alternative 3: Two-Lane Parallel Span** *(see Figures 1, 2 in the mapping packet)*

Alternative 3 is a new, two-lane bridge that would be built parallel and to the south of the existing Thomas Johnson Bridge. With this alternative, the existing bridge would remain open and be converted to carry traffic in the southbound direction. The new span would carry traffic in the northbound direction and would consist of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes, a four-foot-wide inside shoulder, and a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder. In addition, the bridge would have a 10-foot-wide shared-use bicycle/pedestrian path separated by a concrete barrier.

### **Alternative 4: Four-Lane Parallel Span** *(see Figures 1,3)*

Alternative 4 is a new four-lane bridge that would be built parallel and to the south of the existing Thomas Johnson Bridge. In each direction, the bridge would consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes, a four-foot-wide inside shoulder, and a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder. In addition, there would be a 10-foot-wide shared-use bicycle/pedestrian path on the south side of the bridge, separated from the shoulder by a concrete barrier. Upon completion of the new bridge, the existing bridge would be removed.

SHA conducted mast height surveys for the Thomas Johnson Bridge in June 2008 and June 2009 to determine the minimum vertical clearance required for the proposed Patuxent River Crossing alternatives. Coordination with area marinas and the US Navy to determine navigational requirements for the Patuxent River resulted in information that has led the team to consider two options for the bridge alternatives. **Option A** would lower the proposed vertical clearance to approximately 70 feet. **Option B** would maintain the existing 140-foot vertical clearance over the Patuxent River shipping channel. Option A or B can be applied to Alternatives 3 and 4. The two bridge

alternatives are shown in the following sections and will be presented at the public hearings.

### *MD 4 Mainline Options,* *Calvert County (see Figures 1, 4-9)*

From north of the MD 4/Patuxent Point Parkway intersection to the Patuxent River crossing, several options have been developed to improve traffic operations along the Calvert County portion of MD 4. Bicyclists and pedestrians would continue to use MD 765, the service road that parallels MD 2/4.

With any of the build alternatives, the existing ramp at the base of the bridge from northbound MD 4 to Solomons Island Road will need to be relocated. The team is currently proposing several options for relocating this ramp, including:

- Shifting the ramp approximately 1100 feet north and creating a "T" intersection with the parallel service road (*Figure 4*);
- Shifting the ramp approximately 900 feet north and creating a four-way intersection with the service road and retail-center entrance (*Figure 5*);
- Removing the right-turn access and creating a left-turn access onto the existing off-ramp from southbound MD 4 toward the Solomons Island boat launch (*Figure 6*).

SHA has developed several additional options for access to and from the parallel service road for Solomons Island in response to feedback from citizens, business owners, and elected officials. These options include:

- A "no change" option that maintains the access points as they exist today, with the exception of the ramp from northbound MD 4 to Solomons Island at the base of the bridge (*Figure 7*);
- A "median widening" option that adds four-foot-wide shoulders to the inside of MD 4, reducing the width of the open grass median to 22 feet (*Figures 1,8*).
- An "access control" option that consolidates the access points to and from the service road between the base of the bridge and Patuxent Point Parkway (*Figures 1,9*).

## *MD 4 Mainline Widening Option, St. Mary's County*

*(see Figures 1,10)*

MD 4 would be widened to a four-lane divided roadway from Patuxent Beach Road to just beyond Patuxent Boulevard in St. Mary's County. The typical section would consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes, a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder, and a four-foot-wide inside shoulder in each direction, with a 30-foot-wide open grass median. Turn lanes could be added to intersections where needed along MD 4. An optional 10-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian path could be constructed to the south side of MD 4, separated by a 10-foot-wide grass buffer.

### *MD 4/MD 235*

#### *Intersection Options*

##### **Option A: Continuous Flow Intersection** *(see Figure 11)*

This option would modify the existing traffic signal and add two new signals on the north and west legs of the intersection. The three traffic signals would be used to disperse traffic through the intersection. This option takes the primary left-turning traffic at the intersection of MD 4 and MD 235 and moves it to the left of oncoming traffic, allowing left turns to be made at the same time as through movements. MD 4 would carry two through lanes in each direction, and MD 235 would maintain three through lanes in each direction. A bicycle and pedestrian path would be provided through the intersections and connect with St. Mary's County's proposed Three Notch Trail.

##### **Option B: At-Grade Intersection with One-Directional Flyover** *(see Figure 12)*

This option takes traffic turning left from southbound MD 4 to southbound MD 235 and moves it onto a single-lane flyover ramp to bypass the MD 4/MD 235 intersection. The traffic signal would remain for all other intersection movements. A left-turn lane would be provided as a redundant movement to the flyover ramp for local access to businesses.

MD 4 would carry two through lanes in each direction, and MD 235 would maintain three through lanes in each direction. MD 235 would have two left-turn lanes in each direction, and northbound MD 4 would have two left-turn lanes. Northbound MD 235 would have a free-flowing right turn onto northbound MD 4, and northbound MD 4 would have a free-flowing right turn onto southbound MD 235. A bicycle and pedestrian path would be provided through the intersections and connect with St. Mary's County's proposed Three Notch Trail.

##### **Option D: Single-Point Urban Interchange** *(see Figure 13)*

This option is a grade-separated interchange, with MD 4 crossing under MD 235 below ground level. Option D keeps all through traffic on MD 235 flowing (without a traffic signal) with two lanes southbound and three lanes northbound. All left turns would be regulated at a single signalized intersection on the lower level, and would use ramps to get to-and-from each roadway. Through traffic along MD 4 would also cross through the signal, with two through lanes in each direction. Right turns would be made on ramps that do not pass through the signal. A bicycle and pedestrian path would be provided through the intersection and connect with St. Mary's County's proposed Three Notch Trail.

## **ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION**

Following the workshops, the project team dismissed Alternative 5 – Myrtle Point Crossing, and MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Option C – Partial Cloverleaf from further study. Based on comments received from the public, agencies, and elected officials, and the increased cost and environmental impacts, SHA determined that these options did not provide increased transportation benefits when compared to the others.

**Table 4 - Summary of Impacts**

RESOURCE CATEGORY	Mainline Alternatives <sup>1</sup>						MD 4/MD 235 Intersection Improvements <sup>1</sup>		
	Alternative 1: No-Build	Alternative 2: TSM	Patuxent River Crossing		MD 4 Mainline		Option A: Continuous Flow Intersection	Option B: At-Grade Intersection with One-Directional Flyover	Option D: Single-Point Urban Interchange
			Alternative 3: 2-Lane Parallel Span	Alternative 4: 4-Lane Parallel Span	Mainline - Calvert County	Mainline - St. Mary's County			
<b>Community</b>									
Residential Relocations (number)	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	4
Business Displacements (number)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Properties Impacted	0	13	4	22	1	19	59	53	56
ROW Impacts (acre)	0	4.5	1.1	6.2	0.2	15.6	12	10.8	14.1
<b>Natural Environment</b>									
Stream Impacts (linear feet)	0	0	187 l.f. / 59,548 s.f.*	187 l.f. / 70,965 s.f.*	0	440	90	90	90
Floodplain (acre)	0	0	0.4	0.6	0	0	0	0	0
Woodland (acre)	0	2.7	2.6	3.4	0.4	24.6	14.5	11.3	14.1
Wetlands (acre)	0	0.001	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.2	0.03	0.01	0.06
Critical Area Impacted (acre)	0	3.9	15.3	18.5	2.5	8.3	0	0	0
<b>Total Cost (in millions)<sup>2</sup></b>	N/A	N/A	\$305 - 325	\$475 - 500	\$2.4 - 3.0	\$96 - 100	\$67 - 73	\$77 - 83	\$137 - 143

\* Impacts from bridge alternatives to Patuxent River in square feet. The impacts are associated with the footers for the piers to the proposed bridge.

<sup>1</sup> Note: A complete build alternative for the study will include Mainline – Calvert County, one Patuxent River Crossing alternative, Mainline – St. Mary's County and one MD 4 / MD 235 Intersection Improvement option. The total impacts will be the summation of the four segments.

<sup>2</sup> Cost is based on 2010 dollars.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY

The Alternatives and Options Retained for Detailed Study were evaluated to determine the extent of potential impacts to natural, cultural, and socio-economic resources within the study area. A comparison of potential impacts for each alternative and associated interchange/intersection options is included in Table 4.

## Land Use

The proposed improvements to MD 4 are consistent with the 2004 Comprehensive Plan for Calvert County (December 2004), St. Mary's County Growth Management Plan (2001), St. Mary's County Transportation Plan (August 2006), and 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan. The project is located entirely within county-designated Priority Funding Areas and is consistent with Maryland's Smart Growth legislation.

Four parks and/or recreational facilities are located in whole, or in part, in the study area: Solomons Island Boat Launch and Fishing Pier, Myrtle Point Park, Town Creek Park, and Three Notch Trail. The proposed build alternatives would improve accessibility for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists to all park and recreational facilities within the study area. Access to one recreational area, the Solomons Island Boat Launch and Fishing Pier, would be modified by Alternatives 3 and 4 (Patuxent River Crossings), shifting the current access road south approximately 30 feet to avoid the bridge piers. The construction impacts and access modification would not affect normal operations of the boat ramp and fishing pier.

## Socio-Economic Resources

All TSM and build alternatives would require the acquisition of up to 36.1 acres of right-of-way. The No-Build Alternative, MD 4 Mainline, and Alternative 3 (two-lane bridge span) would displace no residences or businesses. Alternative 4 (four-lane

bridge span) would require three residential relocations. Intersection Option A would displace one business property and relocate two residential properties, Option B would relocate one residential property, and Option D would relocate four residential properties and displace four business properties. Displacements would be accomplished in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

In compliance with Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations," SHA will avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income communities throughout the project area. Based on field reviews, a review of census data, and coordination with churches and schools in the vicinity of the study area, no Environmental Justice populations were identified within the MD 4 study area.

Coordination with Calvert County and St. Mary's County emergency-management services (police, fire, and ambulance) confirmed that the proposed improvements would increase commuter and pedestrian safety and decrease emergency-response times.

## Cultural Resources

SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other consulting parties, identified seven historic structures in the area of potential effects that are listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): Patuxent River Quarters A (Point Patience), Avondale Historic District (including Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church), St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Calvert Marine Museum (Solomons High School), Drum Point Lighthouse, William Tennison Boat House, and J.C. Lore Oyster House. The MHT has determined that the project will have no impact on historic standing structures. Five archeological sites that are potentially eligible for the NRHP have also been identified. A Programmatic Agreement is being developed to address archeological

site significance determinations and outline future Section 106 coordination as the project progresses. The final results of additional archeological investigations will be presented in the final environmental document. In accordance with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act, these public hearings provide the opportunity for public input regarding historic properties.

## Natural Environmental

Wetland impacts up to 0.31 acre and impacts to Waters of the US (streams or other bodies of water) up to 717 linear feet are anticipated, depending on the build alternative and option. Up to 0.6 acre of the 100-year floodplain associated with the Patuxent River could be impacted with Alternatives 3 and 4 (Patuxent River Crossings). Permits would be required from the US Army Corps of Engineers and/or the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for wetland and stream impacts. Adverse impacts to water quality during construction would be minimized through strict adherence to SHA sediment and erosion control procedures. Plans for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control will be developed in accordance with MDE criteria.

The Patuxent River is recognized as a scenic river under the Maryland Scenic and Wild Rivers Program. SHA will continue to coordinate with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) during the project-planning phase to ensure that all measures are taken to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the Patuxent River.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has indicated that the study area contains Essential Fish Habitat (environment necessary to federally managed fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity) for summer flounder, bluefish, and red drum. There would be no project-related impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) with Alternatives 1, 2, MD 4 Mainline (both Calvert and St. Mary's counties), and the intersection options. Project-related construction impacts expected under Alternatives 3 and 4 would be

associated with the excavation of unsuitable foundation material where bridge footings would be placed, construction of bridge footings, and driving of bridge piles. Potential time-of-year restrictions may preclude construction activities during the warmer months, when EFH species are present. Other potential time-of-year restrictions may involve the American oyster (June 1 to September 30 and December 15 to March 1), anadromous fish (February 15 to June 15), and submerged aquatic vegetation (April 1 to October 30). SHA will continue to coordinate with NMFS regarding the EFH in the study area and will continue coordination with both NMFS and DNR regarding time-of-year restrictions.

Coordination with the DNR indicates that there is a breeding record for the American Peregrine Falcon known to nest underneath the middle of the Thomas Johnson Bridge. The Peregrine Falcon has been identified as "In Need of Conservation" status in Maryland. DNR has requested that a survey be performed near the time of construction to confirm the falcon's presence. If the falcon is identified, a restriction of work conducted within 0.25 mile of the nest site during the nesting season (February to August) may be required. There are no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species within the project area.

Up to 42.9 acres of woodland impacts are anticipated if a build alternative is selected. Consistent with the State Reforestation Law, trees will be replaced at a 1:1 acre ratio within the project limits or off-site, within the same watershed. Twelve significant trees (greater than or equal to 30 inches diameter at breast height) were identified within the study area.

Two main Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) habitats within the study area are associated with the Lower Patuxent River floodplain and stream buffer and the contiguous upland forest west of MD 4. MD 4 Mainline Widening in St. Mary's County would permanently impact 1.3 acres of FIDS habitat, while the intersection options have

the potential to permanently impact between 0.7 and 1.3 acres of FIDS habitat. Option A would have the greatest impact. Coordination with DNR will continue throughout the project-planning process to further identify/confirm FIDS habitat within the study area.

Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area (CACBCA) impacts range from 3.9 to 29.3 acres. Impacts are expected to result from earth disturbance, removal of vegetation, placement of fill, and increased impervious area. SHA will continue to coordinate with the Critical Area Commission regarding impacts to the CACBCA and potential mitigation measures.

### **Air and Noise Impacts**

A project-level air quality analysis was conducted in accordance with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and FHWA guidelines. The results of the analysis indicated that State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards would not be exceeded by the build alternatives. A detailed discussion of the air quality analysis is available in the Environmental Assessment.

SHA also conducted a detailed noise analysis for this project and identified 14 Noise Sensitive Areas (NSAs) for field monitoring. The analysis determined that five NSAs would be impacted by the build alternatives (meaning that noise levels would equal or exceed federal and state criteria). Based on an evaluation of SHA's feasibility and reasonableness criteria, the requirements for noise walls would not be met at any of these NSAs. A final determination of the feasibility and reasonableness of abatement measures at impacted NSAs will be included in the final environmental document.

### **Hazardous Materials**

SHA conducted an Initial Site Assessment for the MD 4 study area to identify locations with a likely presence of hazardous materials, wastes, or petroleum products. One-hundred and ninety-three (193) sites were identified within the study area that vary in the severity of their potential environmental concern. Of the 193 sites, 53 would be impacted by the build

alternatives. A Preliminary Site Investigation Screening is recommended for 26 of the 53 potentially impacted sites to gather additional information about potential contamination.

## **REMAINING STEPS IN THE PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS**

- Evaluate and address public and agency comments from the Location/Design Public Hearings (Fall 2010)
- Obtain Administrator Concurrence on Preferred Alternative (Spring 2011)
- Receive Location Approval from FHWA and Design Approval from the SHA Administrator for the Selected Alternative (Fall 2011)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How high would the new bridge be?**

The current bridge height options across the Patuxent River are 70 feet and 140 feet; however, the heights may change if the alternatives are modified. We are coordinating with the US Navy, US Coast Guard, upstream marinas, river users, and property owners to determine the height requirements for a new bridge. We are seeking your comments to determine whether modifications to these options are necessary.

### **Will the project identify short-term improvements for the area?**

Short-term improvements are possible, including modifying ramps and access points and improving intersections along the MD 4 corridor. As the project moves forward, we will decide which of these short-term improvements can be "broken out" of the larger study and completed independently.

### **Can the existing bridge be widened to add another lane for traffic?**

The bridge cannot be widened to accommodate another lane of traffic because of its design.

### **Will this project accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians?**

Yes. Both of the bridge alternatives include a 10-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path separated from the rest of the roadway by a concrete barrier. There will also be a 10-foot-wide shoulder along the outside lane, which will accommodate bicyclists.

In St. Mary's County, MD 4 would include 10-foot-wide shoulders along the outside of the roadway which will accommodate bicyclists, and an optional 10-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path. All MD 4/MD 235 intersection options accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, and include improved sidewalks along MD 235 within the limits of the construction.

### **What is the current condition of the bridge?**

When the bridge was last inspected in Fall 2009, it received a rating of 6 for each of the three main rating elements: substructure (portion below the water), superstructure (portion above the water), and deck (roadway surface). A rating of 6 indicates that the bridge is in satisfactory condition, showing only some minor deterioration. This rating shows no change from the bridge's 2007 inspection.

Bridges are rated on a scale of 0 to 9: 9 represents a new bridge, and 0 represents a bridge that is closed. A bridge would have to have one of its main elements rated as 4 to be classified as structurally deficient.

### **Why have the project impacts increased since the Alternatives Public Workshop?**

New Environmental Site Design (ESD) regulations took effect in 2010 as part of the Stormwater Management Act of 2007. Because of the changed requirements, more property along the roadway will be needed for stormwater management. The new ESD regulations call for the use of several smaller water-treatment

facilities that mimic the conditions found in the area before any development, instead of the large water-retention ponds commonly used in the past. Because a greater number of small facilities are required, the new treatment areas usually require more roadside space over greater distances and result in an overall increase in the amount of right-of-way needed to satisfy the new regulations.

### **What would the new bridge look like?**

The design of the bridge has not been decided at this stage of project development. If a build alternative is selected, the "look" of the bridge will be determined in the Final Design stage and will be coordinated with project stakeholders.

### **Why would the new bridge be built on the south side of the existing bridge, not the north side?**

Preliminary findings indicated that building a new span to the north of the existing bridge would result in greater property and environmental impacts, a larger number of potential displacements, and higher costs than building a similar span to the south.

## ***NON-DISCRIMINATION IN FEDERALLY ASSISTED AND STATE-AID PROGRAMS***

For information concerning non-discrimination in federally assisted and State-Aid programs, please contact:

Mr. Troy Parham  
Office of Equal Opportunity  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
Telephone: (410) 545-0325  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-888-545-0098  
Email: tparham1@sha.state.md.us

## **RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATION**

The proposed project may require additional right-of-way. Residential and commercial relocations may also be required. For information regarding right-of-way and relocation assistance, please contact:

Ms. Susan K. Stevens, Chief  
District 5, Office of Real Estate  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
138 Defense Highway  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: (410) 841-1057  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-331-5603  
Email: sbauer@sha.state.md.us

## **DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW**

The Location/Design Public Hearing Transcript will be available by late November 2010. Beginning on August 27, the Environmental Assessment will be available for inspection and copying during normal business hours at the following locations. To confirm availability of these documents, please call ahead at:

Calvert County Library  
Southern Branch  
20 Appeal Lane  
Lusby, MD 20657  
Telephone: (410) 326-5289

St. Mary's County Library  
Lexington Park Branch  
21677 FDR Boulevard  
Lexington Park, MD 20653  
Telephone: (301) 863-8188

Calvert County Department of  
Planning and Zoning  
150 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Telephone: (410) 535-2348

St. Mary's County Department of  
Public Works and Transportation  
44825 St. Andrew's Church Road  
California, MD 20619  
Telephone: (301) 863-8400

### **State Highway Administration:**

District 5 Office  
138 Defense Highway  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: (410) 841-1000  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-331-5603

Project Management Division  
707 North Calvert Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Telephone: (410) 545-8521  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-548-5026

Prince Frederick Shop  
100 Hallowing Point Road  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Telephone: (410) 535-1748

Leonardtwn Shop  
26720 Point Lookout Road  
Leonardtwn, MD 20650  
Telephone: (301) 475-8035

## **MEDIA USED FOR MEETING NOTIFICATION**

An advertisement appeared in the following newspapers to announce the Location/Design Public Hearings:

- The Calvert Recorder
- Calvert Independent
- St. Mary's Today
- Enterprise (St. Mary's)
- The Tester (Patuxent Naval Air Station)
- Washington Post

## **YOUR OPINION MATTERS**

SHA's hearings provide an opportunity for the public to offer written and spoken comments that the project team will carefully review and consider. You may use the postage-paid mailer for your comments or provide them to team members at the addresses and telephone numbers listed in this brochure.

## **PROJECT PLANNING TEAM**

Please address your post-hearing questions or comments to any of the following team members:

Mr. Gregory Slater, Director  
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-411  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Mr. Jeremy Beck, Project Manager  
Project Management Division  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Telephone: (410) 545-8518  
Toll Free within Maryland: 1-800-548-5026  
MD Relay Service for teletype users: 711  
Email: [jbeck@sha.state.md.us](mailto:jbeck@sha.state.md.us)

Ms. Christina Sheckells, Environmental Manager  
Environmental Planning Division  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Telephone: (410) 545-2874  
Toll Free within Maryland: 1-866-527-0502  
MD Relay Service for teletype users: 711  
Email: [csheckells@sha.state.md.us](mailto:csheckells@sha.state.md.us)

Mr. Lee Starkloff, District Engineer, District 5  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
138 Defense Highway  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: (410) 841-1001  
Toll-free within Maryland: 1-800-331-5603  
MD Relay Service for teletype users: 711  
Email: [lstarkloff@sha.state.md.us](mailto:lstarkloff@sha.state.md.us)

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you for participating in the MD 4 Thomas Johnson Bridge Project Planning Study. Your opinions are important to us. The project team is available to meet with community groups, homeowners associations, business groups, and other interested stakeholders. Please contact the Project Manager to schedule a presentation. For information about this project, visit our website at [www.roads.maryland.gov](http://www.roads.maryland.gov), and click on **Projects and Studies/Public Meetings**.

# MD 4 Thomas Johnson Bridge Project Planning Study from Patuxent Point Parkway to MD 235

Tuesday, September 28, 2010  
Patuxent High School  
12485 Rousby Hall Road  
Lusby, MD 20657

Wednesday, September 29, 2010  
Esperanza Middle School  
22790 Maple Road  
Lexington Park, MD 20653

Please take the time to answer the following questions and provide us with your thoughts on the alternatives presented at the Location/Design Public Hearings. Your comments will be used to help us evaluate the alternatives. The completed form can be mailed or brought to one of the hearings.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### Which River Crossing Alternative do you prefer? (select one)

Alternative 1 – No Build                       Alternative 2 – Transportation System Management  
 Alternative 3 – Two-Lane Parallel Bridge     Alternative 4 – Four-Lane Bridge Replacement  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Do you support a separate bicycle/pedestrian path along MD 4 in St. Mary's County?

Yes     No

### Which MD 4/MD 235 intersection option do you like most? (select one)

Option A - Continuous Flow Intersection                       Option B – Flyover  
 Option D – Single-Point Urban Interchange                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

### What is your preference for access modifications in Calvert County?

- **The ramp from MD 4 northbound to Solomons Island: (select one)**

No Build (available only with Alternatives 1 and 2)  
 Move ramp 1100 feet north to form a "T" intersection  
 Move ramp 900 feet north to form a four-way intersection  
 Create a left-turn access from southbound MD 4 onto the existing off-ramp towards the Solomons boat ramp

- **Access control along the MD 4 Corridor: (select one)**

No change                       Median widening                       Access consolidation

### What are your feelings regarding bridge height? (select one)

Keep existing height (140 feet)     Lower bridge (70 feet)     Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Comments:

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Please add my name to the project mailing list                       Please remove my name from the project mailing list

\* Persons who have received a copy of this brochure through the mail are already on the project mailing list

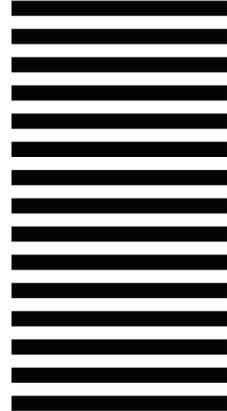
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BALTIMORE MD 21298-8317

**ATTN: Jeremy Beck**  
**SHA Project Manager**



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# Help Us Improve

To help us improve our public involvement program, we would appreciate your thoughts on this project brochure.

*Please circle the most appropriate number.*

Poor

Excellent

Overall, was the brochure useful and informative?

1

2

3

4

Was each part of the brochure easy to understand?

Purpose of the Study

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Purpose of the Meeting

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Public Comments

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Project Status

1

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4

Project Need

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4

Project History

1

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4

Description of Alternatives

1

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4

Maps of Alternatives

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4

Tables and Charts

1

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Environmental Summary

1

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4

Remaining Steps in Planning Process

1

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3

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*Which part of the brochure was most valuable?*

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*Which part of the brochure was least valuable?*

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*How can we improve the brochure?*

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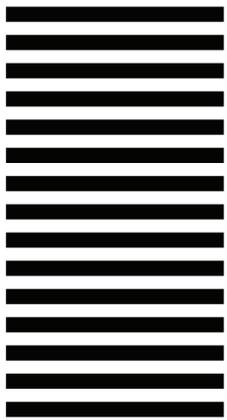
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BALTIMORE MD 21298-8317

**ATTN: Jeremy Beck**  
**Public Involvement Section**



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Maryland Department of Transportation  
**STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**  
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering  
707 North Calvert Street  
Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**Martin O'Malley,**  
*Governor*

**Anthony Brown,**  
*Lieutenant Governor*

**Beverley K. Swaim-Staley,**  
*Secretary*

**Neil J. Pedersen,**  
*Administrator*

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