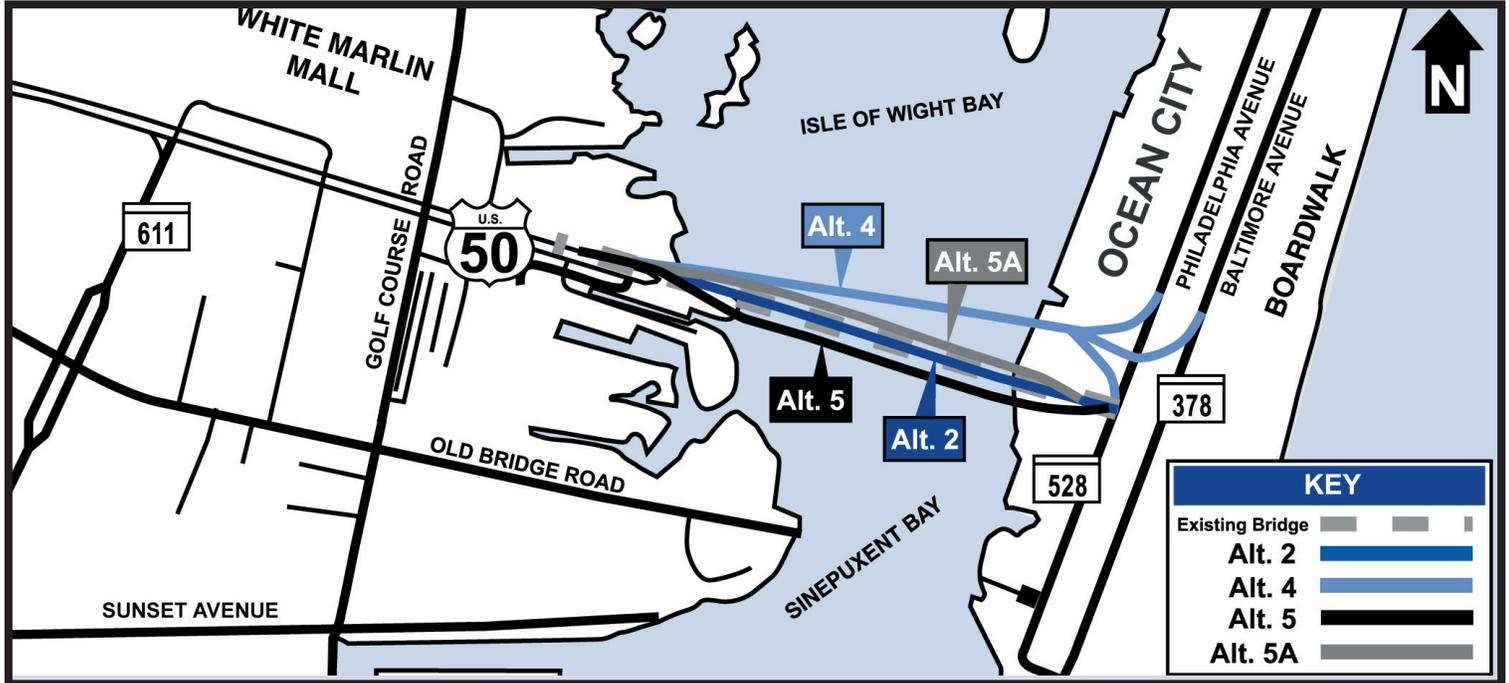


# US 50 CROSSING PROJECT MOVES FORWARD



The US 50 Crossing Project Planning Study has passed an important milestone, with the decision to do detailed analysis of five alternatives and to drop three others from further consideration.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) selected the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) after considering a number of issues, including environmental and community impacts, traffic operation, project costs, and comments from regulatory agencies and the public. The project team wishes to thank everyone who participated in the Alternates Public Workshops held at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in June 2006.

Detailed engineering and environmental studies are now underway. Another meeting is planned for the spring to update the public on the project.

## WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED?

The US 50 bridge over Sinepuxent Bay was built in 1942. The existing bridge, known as the Harry W. Kelley Memorial Bridge, has an operating life expectancy of 15-40 years, depending on the amount of repair work done in the future. The bridge has been placed on Maryland's Historic Bridge Inventory and is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The purpose of this study is to develop a transportation solution that improves upon the structural, operational and safety deficiencies associated with the existing bridge.

The study will address how to better accommodate the variety of users of the crossing, including car and truck drivers, pedestrians, fishermen, boaters, cyclists, and public transit passengers. The need to establish a more attractive gateway representative of a major coastal resort has also been identified.

## FIVE ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY

Four "build" alternatives and the "no-build" alternative are currently under consideration. After evaluating all of the issues and comments, the project team made refinements to each of the build alternatives. Alternative 2 no longer contains the aerial tram, due to cost and lack of support. For Alternatives 4, 5 and 5A, the proposed bridge has been reduced from six lanes to four lanes, which the team believes will be sufficient to meet future travel demand.

Here is a brief summary of the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study:

**Alternative 1: No-Build** – Includes minor short-term improvements as part of routine maintenance and safety operations. No major improvements are proposed. However, it provides a baseline for the other alternatives under consideration.

**Alternative 2 Modified: Rehabilitation** – Involves the rehabilitation of the existing bridge, a separate fishing pier, wider sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists, and such aesthetics as lighting and archways. No property displacements would be required.

*continued on back*

continued from front

**Alternative 4: 1st Street Connection** – Proposes a new 45 foot high, fixed-span parallel bridge beginning just west of the existing bridge and connecting near 1st Street in Ocean City. The new four-lane bridge would carry inbound and outbound traffic: inbound traffic could continue northbound one-way onto Baltimore Avenue, while a new connection would continue the inbound right-turn movement for traffic heading south. This alternative would require the taking of as many as 18 homes and 35 businesses. In addition, the greater height demands of a fixed span would result in a steep entrance into the resort. The existing bridge would be retained and possibly used for pedestrians, bikes, and fishing.

**Alternative 5: South Parallel Bridge** – Proposes a new parallel bridge beginning just south of US 50 and tying back into Division Street. The new four-lane bridge, which will not change traffic flow, would have a higher draw span and carry inbound and outbound traffic. The higher draw span will help reduce congestion by requiring fewer openings. This alternative could displace as many as eight homes and eight businesses in Ocean City. The existing bridge would be retained and possibly used for pedestrians, bikes, and fishing.

**Alternative 5A: North Parallel Bridge** – Proposes a new parallel bridge beginning just north of US 50 and tying back into Division Street—a mirror concept of Alternative 5. The new four-lane bridge, which will not change traffic flow, would have a higher draw span and carry inbound and outbound traffic. The higher draw span will help reduce congestion by requiring fewer openings. This alternative could displace as many as six homes and nine businesses in Ocean City. The existing bridge would be retained and possibly used for pedestrians, bikes, and fishing.

## ALTERNATIVE 6, TWO OTHERS DROPPED

Three alternatives have been dropped because of such factors as significant environmental and property impacts, high cost, lack of public support, removal of the existing bridge, and traffic maintenance demands.

The following are no longer under consideration:

**Alternative 3:** One-Way Pair

**Alternative 6:** 9th Street Connection

**Alternative 7:** Remove and Replace

In particular, Alternative 6 drew strong opposition from residents and businesses in West Ocean City.

## NEXT STEPS

Over the next several years, SHA will pursue the following tasks and milestones:

- Receive concurrence from environmental resource agencies on the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) – **Winter 2006-2007**
- Hold Informational Public Workshop – **Spring 2007**
- Complete detailed engineering and environmental analyses – **Summer 2007**
- Prepare draft environmental document – **Fall 2007**
- Conduct Location/Design Public Hearing – **Winter 2007-2008**
- Complete final environmental document – **Spring 2009**
- Obtain Location/Design approval – **Summer 2009**

## CONTINUING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

SHA is committed to keeping the public involved throughout the US 50 Project Planning Study and welcomes all questions and comments. For more information or to be added to or removed from the project mailing list, interested persons should contact the Project Manager: Ms. R. Suseela Rajan, 410-545-8514 or 1-800-548-5026, email: [srajan@sha.state.md.us](mailto:srajan@sha.state.md.us). Information on this and other SHA projects can be found on our web site: [www.marylandroads.com](http://www.marylandroads.com).

 printed on recycled paper

Standard Rate  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Owings Mills, MD  
Permit No. 167

Maryland Department of Transportation  
**SHA**  
State Highway Administration  
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering  
P.O. Box 717, Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, Maryland 21203-0717