

A range of 4.4 to 5.4 acres of 100-year floodplains associated with Tuscarora Creek will also be impacted. No wetlands will be impacted with any of the project alternatives. There are no current records of any state- or federal-listed rare, threatened, or endangered species. However, the state-listed endangered brook floater mussel is known to occur within the vicinity of the project site. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources recommends strict enforcement of all appropriate Best Management Practices and avoidance of in-stream work during the appropriate time of year work restriction period to adequately protect the brook floater, as well as fish species. There will be less than one acre of woodland impacts for the Build Alternatives.

A detailed air quality analysis is currently underway for PM 2.5 conformity and Mobile Source Air Toxins. No noise receptors are located within the project area.

Next Steps

- **Hold Informational Public Meeting to gather public comments - June 7, 2007**
- Recommend preferred alternative to SHA Administrator - **Summer 2007**
- Receive approval on environmental documentation - **Winter 2007/2008**
- Obtain Location/Design Approval - **Winter 2008**
- Complete Project Planning and begin Final Design - **Spring 2008**

Questions?

If you have questions or need additional information about this project, or if your community would like the project team to present information at local neighborhood meetings, please contact:

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Questions and/or comments may also be mailed to: Maryland State Highway Administration
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P.O. Box 717, Mail Stop C-301
Baltimore, Maryland 21203-0717
ATTN: Leo Sawada

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
John D. Porcari, Secretary
Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator



US15/Monocacy Boulevard Project Planning Study



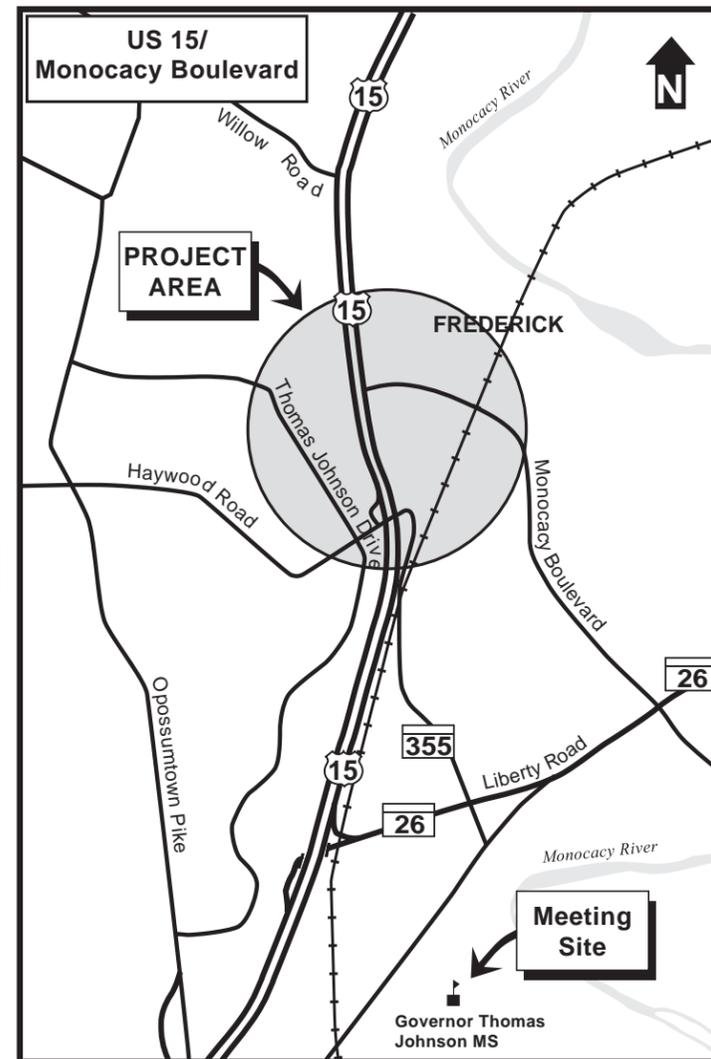
PROJECT NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2007

SHA Studies Safety and Capacity Improvements, Schedules Public Meeting

Progress continues on the US 15/Monocacy Boulevard Project Planning Study. Since the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) initiated the study in 2005, the team has gathered all environmental inventory and traffic data, drafted and received concurrence on the purpose and need statement from environmental regulatory agencies and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and conducted more detailed design and study of the alternatives. This newsletter summarizes key project findings, analysis results and next steps. Public input provided at the June informational meeting (details below) will be used in the selection of a preferred alternative.

Project Background

The I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study, initiated in the mid-1990's, is considering capacity and safety improvements along I-270 and US 15, from Gaithersburg through the City of Frederick and northward to Biggs Ford Road. The I-270/US15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study's 2002 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) included a diamond interchange at the US 15/Monocacy Boulevard intersection to improve safety conditions along US 15 and provide an east-west connection for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. This proposed interchange was also presented at the I-270/US 15 public hearings in 2002. In November 2005, FHWA granted approval for SHA to conduct a separate study for the Monocacy Boulevard area, breaking it out from the larger I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study.



Attend the Public Meeting!

WHAT: SHA invites you to attend an Informational Public Meeting at which transportation improvement alternatives and corresponding impacts for the US15/Monocacy Boulevard Project Planning Study will be presented. This open house forum will allow attendees to conduct a self-paced review of important project information and meet with SHA, Frederick County and Frederick City representatives who will be available to receive comments and answer questions. There will be no formal presentation.

WHEN:

Thursday, June 7, 2007
5:30 to 8:30 PM

WHERE:

Governor Thomas Johnson Middle School
1799 Schifferstadt Boulevard
Frederick, Maryland



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND
PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING
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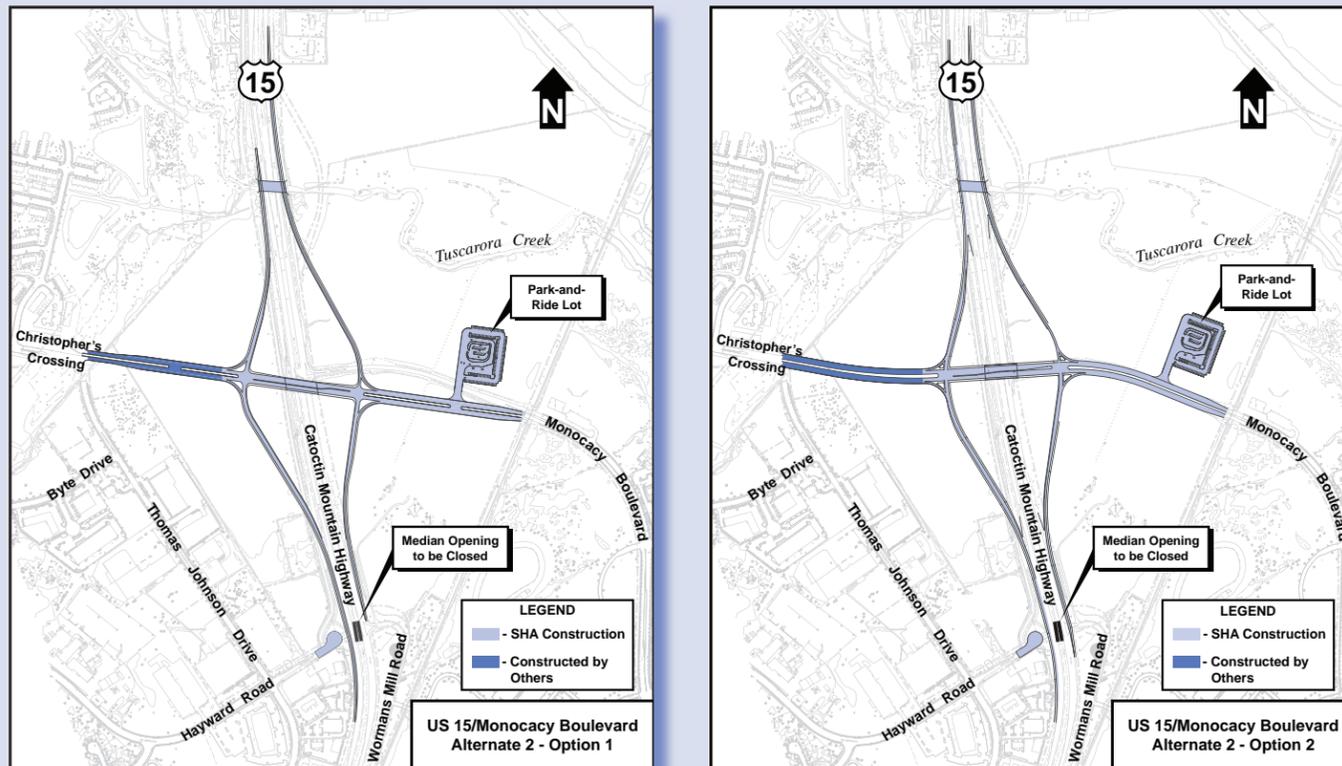
Two Alternatives Retained for Additional Study

The study team has looked at three alternatives and several accompanying options, including the No-Build and the diamond interchange included in the DEIS. These include:

Alternative 1 - No-Build - Includes minor short-term improvements along US 15 as part of routine maintenance and safety operations. No major improvements would be considered; however, this alternative provides a baseline for comparison with the other alternatives.

Alternative 2 - Option 1 - Proposes a grade-separated diamond interchange as shown in the DEIS and at the public hearings. Monocacy Boulevard is extended west of US 15 to connect with Thomas Johnson Drive. The interchange includes the bridge structure, ramps with acceleration/deceleration lanes along US 15, and signalized intersections on Monocacy Boulevard at the on/off ramps access locations. The access from Hayward Road to US 15 will be closed and modified as a cul-de-sac.

Alternative 2 - Option 2 - This is an identical concept to Option 1, but the Monocacy Boulevard approach road from the east side of the intersection would be built on top of the existing Monocacy Boulevard alignment, thereby modifying the skew of the interchange crossing (as shown in Alternative 2 - Option 1).



Park-and-Ride Lot - In the DEIS, it was recommended that a park-and-ride lot be built within the northern suburbs of the City of Frederick; specifically, within the vicinity of either the US 15/MD 26 interchange, the US 15/Monocacy Boulevard intersection, or the US 15/Biggs Ford Road intersection. All Build Alternatives contained in this study include a park-and-ride lot along Monocacy Boulevard east of US 15, in close proximity to the interchange.

Alternative Dropped from Consideration

Alternative 3 - A Single-Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) was evaluated in an attempt to reduce potential right-of-way acquisition and avoid environmental impacts along US 15 at Tuscarora Creek. Results revealed much higher construction costs, marginal right-of-way reduction, and impacts to the Tuscarora Creek crossing similar to those of the other Build Alternatives. In addition, the SPUI design constrains the interchange for future capacity widening and limits pedestrian/bicyclist mobility. For these reasons, Alternative 3 has been dropped from further consideration.

Project Purpose and Need

The US 15/Monocacy Boulevard Project Planning Study addresses safety and capacity improvements consistent with proposed economic development and traffic growth. The study's top priorities include improving vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian safety, as well as mobility of the US 15 corridor. In addition, since neither Monocacy Boulevard nor MD 26 currently extends west of US 15, the study proposes to improve local mobility by providing a much needed east-west connection across US 15.

*Note: Crash rates are calculated per 100 million vehicle miles of travel and are comparable to the statewide average accident rate for all similarly designed highways under state maintenance.

Safety is the top priority for this study. Between 2001 and 2005, there have been a total of 72 accidents within the project area. The accident rate for fatal crashes in this area is considerably higher than the State average. Further investigation revealed that the number of angle collisions and truck-related accidents are also higher than the statewide average.

Table 1 - Crash Data Summary 2001-2005

Severity	Total	Study Rate	Statewide Average Rate
US 15 from Hayward Road to Willow Road			
Fatal	4	5.9*	1.25
Injury	40	58.55	57.25
Property Damage	28	43.15	69.55
Total	72	107.6	154.7

Environmental Summary

A detailed analysis of the Build Alternatives was conducted to determine the potential for impacts to socio-economic and natural environmental resources. A comparison and summary of these impacts are provided in Table 2.

The intent of the Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas Act (1997) is to limit sprawl and direct state funding for growth-related projects toward County-designated Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). The project is located within a PFA. 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 on minority and low-income communities throughout the study area. Depending upon the alternative, between 34-35 acres of additional right-of-way will be required. There will be no business or residential displacements. No property from any publicly owned parks or associated recreational facilities would be required by the proposed improvements.

Table 2 - Alternatives Analysis Comparison Summary

	Alt. 1 No-Build	Alt. 2 - Opt. 1 DEIS Diamond	Alt. 2 - Opt. 2 Realigned Diamond
Displacements	0	0	0
Properties Affected	Residential	0	3
	Business/Commercial/Industrial	0	3
Right-of-Way Required (acres)	0	35	34
Number of Stream Crossings	0	2	3
Woodland Impact (acres)	0	<1	<1
Stream Impact (linear feet)	0	173	190
100-Year Floodplain Affected (acres)	0	1	1.1
Wetlands Affected (Acres)	0	0	0
Total Project Cost (Millions)	<\$1	\$70 - 84	\$74 - 88

SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other consulting parties, has determined that there are no historic standing resources that are on or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in the project area. Archeological survey is underway. Coordination has been undertaken with the MHT to determine effects to any significant cultural resources within the project area. In accordance with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Informational Public Meeting provides the opportunity for public input regarding effects to historic properties.

The northern limit of the project crosses Tuscarora Creek with associated 100-year floodplains and is designated as Use III waters (Natural Trout Waters) by the Maryland Department of the Environment, with an in-stream construction restriction of October 1 through April 30, inclusive. Stream impacts range from approximately 173 linear feet to 190 linear feet.

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