Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering
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US 50 Crossing Study

Project News Letter • Fall 2013

Federal and State approvals are now in place for a new bridge crossing along US 50 over the Sinepuxent Bay in Ocean City, Maryland. The Maryland State Highway Administration’s (SHA) Project Planning Study for the US 50 Crossing considered ways to:

- Develop transportation solutions that improve the structural, operational, and safety deficiencies associated with the existing bridge;
- Address the bridge’s narrow curb-to-curb roadway, which is substandard for its traffic volumes;
- Maintain a safe and efficient crossing to one of only three evacuation routes from the barrier peninsula; and
- Safely accommodate the navigational needs of boaters and the access needs of pedestrians, fishermen, and bicyclists who share the same five-foot-wide sidewalk along the bridge.

Alternative Selected

The Federal Highway Administration has approved SHA’s Preferred Alternative: Alternative 5A – North Parallel Bridge. The selection of Alternative 5A is based on information developed for the study, analysis of the environmental impacts, and recommendations from regulatory agencies and the public. Alternative 5A includes a new parallel bridge just north of US 50 and lies back into Division Street (See Figure 1). The new bridge, which has a 30-foot-high draw span that reduces the number of bridge openings, carries inbound and outbound traffic on four divided lanes. To improve the safety of all bridge users, the new bridge also includes a 7-foot-wide shoulder with a 6-foot-wide median, 12-foot-wide lanes, and a 5-foot 6-inch-wide sidewalk along both sides of the roadway.

Under this alternative, Saint Louis Avenue will be relocated beneath US 50 to continue the north/south connection, and the draw span of the existing bridge will be removed. Future studies are required to determine whether any remaining portions of the existing bridge will be retained or removed after the new bridge is constructed.

Alternative 5A is fully endorsed by the Worcester County Commissioners and the Ocean City Mayor and City Council. At the May 29, 2008 Location/Design Public Hearing, members of the public expressed support for Alternative 5A and for the retention of the west side of the bridge for recreational use.