

Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge Replacement Project – Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation

Summary of Findings

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Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge Project



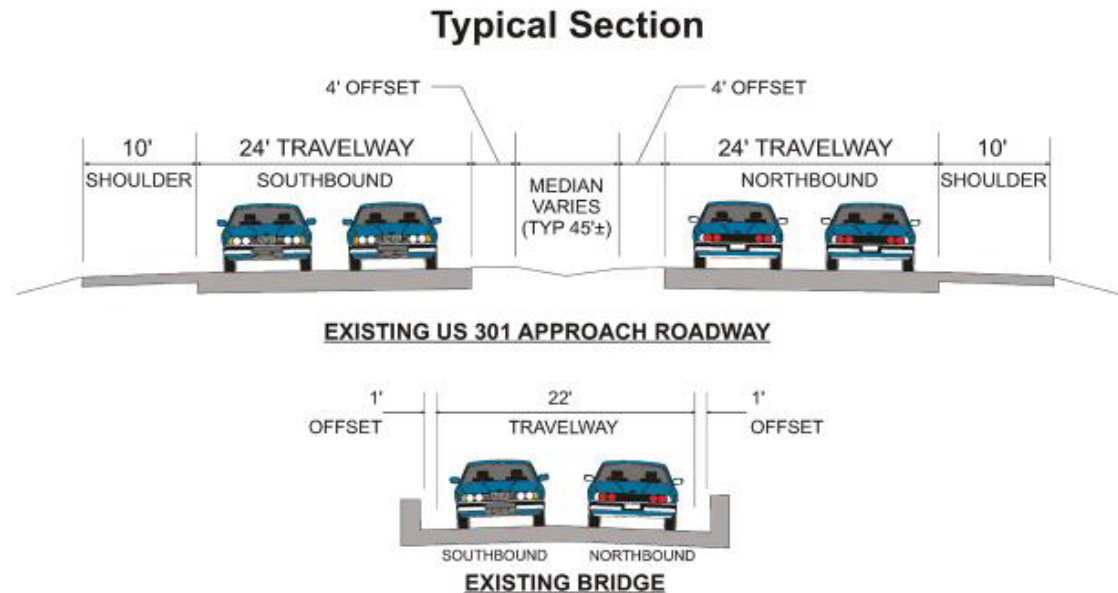
Nice Bridge – Existing Structure

- Toll Bridge run by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)
- Built March 1938 – December 1940
- Length of entire facility : 2.2 miles
 - Bridge length: 1.7 miles
 - Two 11-foot lanes; no shoulders
- No bike or pedestrian access
 - Minimum speed 40 mph, max 50 mph
- CY 2015 traffic volume: 6.6 million vehicles (average annual daily traffic: 18,600)
- FY 2016 toll revenue: \$21.0 million



Project Need

- Aging structure; needs major rehab
 - Rising maintenance costs, closures
- 105 mile detour if fully closed
- Two 11' lanes, no median barrier
 - Not consistent with the rest of US 301
- Capacity Issues
 - Summer week-end back-ups
 - Incident Impacts
 - Maintenance closures
 - Wide loads
- Safety



Project Schedule

- The MDTA will be delivering this project through a design-build process
- MDTA will issue an RFP in October 2018 for two design alternatives:
 1. A 61-foot wide design with a shared lane and
 2. A 71-foot wide design with a barrier-separated 8-foot wide shared use path
- Bidders will develop detailed design plans and cost estimates for the two alternatives
- MDTA Board will make a final alternative selection in the Fall of 2019
- Construction start in FY 2020
- Existing bridge to remain open during construction



TPB Discussion

- At the October 2017 TPB meeting, several questions and concerns were raised regarding aspects of the Nice Bridge project design, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodation
- TPB sent a letter in November 2017 requesting that MDTA present more detailed information
- In response to that request, Will Pines, the MDTA Director of Project Development, presented to the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee on May 15, 2018



TPB Discussion

- A memo summarizing the May 15 presentation was sent to the TPB as part of the Director's Report for the June 20 meeting
 - The board expressed concern about the safety of the shared lane alternative, and the precedent that the Nice Bridge might set for other interjurisdictional bridges
 - The TPB Chair suggested that the board work to develop consensus and have comment ready before October
- TPB staff worked with the Director of Transportation Planning to develop an informational memo on the proposed bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the Nice Bridge, which was sent to the TPB on September 19
- Informational memo contents are summarized below, slides 8-11



Memo: Safety and Access

- Safety and Best Practices Concerns for the Shared Lane Alternative
 - Steep grades (4%), high truck volumes, and operating speeds likely to exceed the 50 mph limit
 - Maryland prohibits shared lane use on roads with speed limits greater than 50 mph
 - High speed differences mean more fatal crashes
 - National design guidance calls for barrier-separation on longer bridges
- Access Issues for the Shared Lane Alternative
 - No pedestrian access
 - Only “fit and fearless” bicyclists will dare use it
 - Safety concerns, and traffic growth, may lead to restrictions on days and hours of access



Memo: Need and Potential Use

- Projected Need and Possible Use for a Separated Facility
 - MDTA projects no pedestrian use, and 50 bicyclists per day, based on population living near the bridge
 - Non-DOT facilities such as the planned Dahlgren Trail in Virginia were not considered
 - Long-distance bicycle tourists and non-DOT bike trails may add users
 - Given its proximity to Washington, there is development potential for the area near the bridge within its design life
- Tourism and Economic Development
 - Allegheny Passage Trail studies show substantial economic development benefits from long-distance bicycle tourism
 - Overnight visitors spend \$125/person/day
 - Southern Maryland and the Northern Neck in Virginia have considerable potential as a bicycle tourism destination

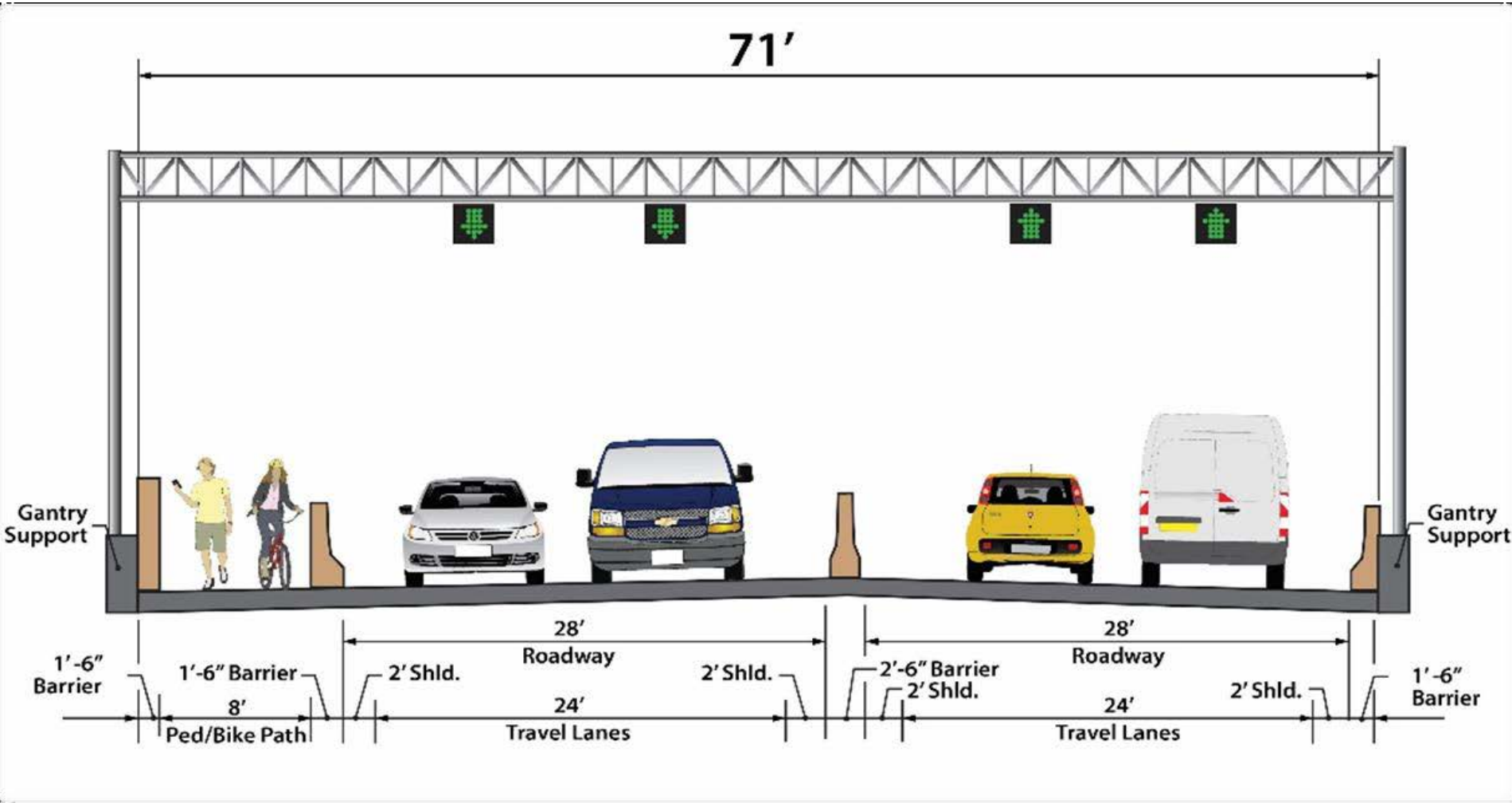


Memo: Policies and Precedents

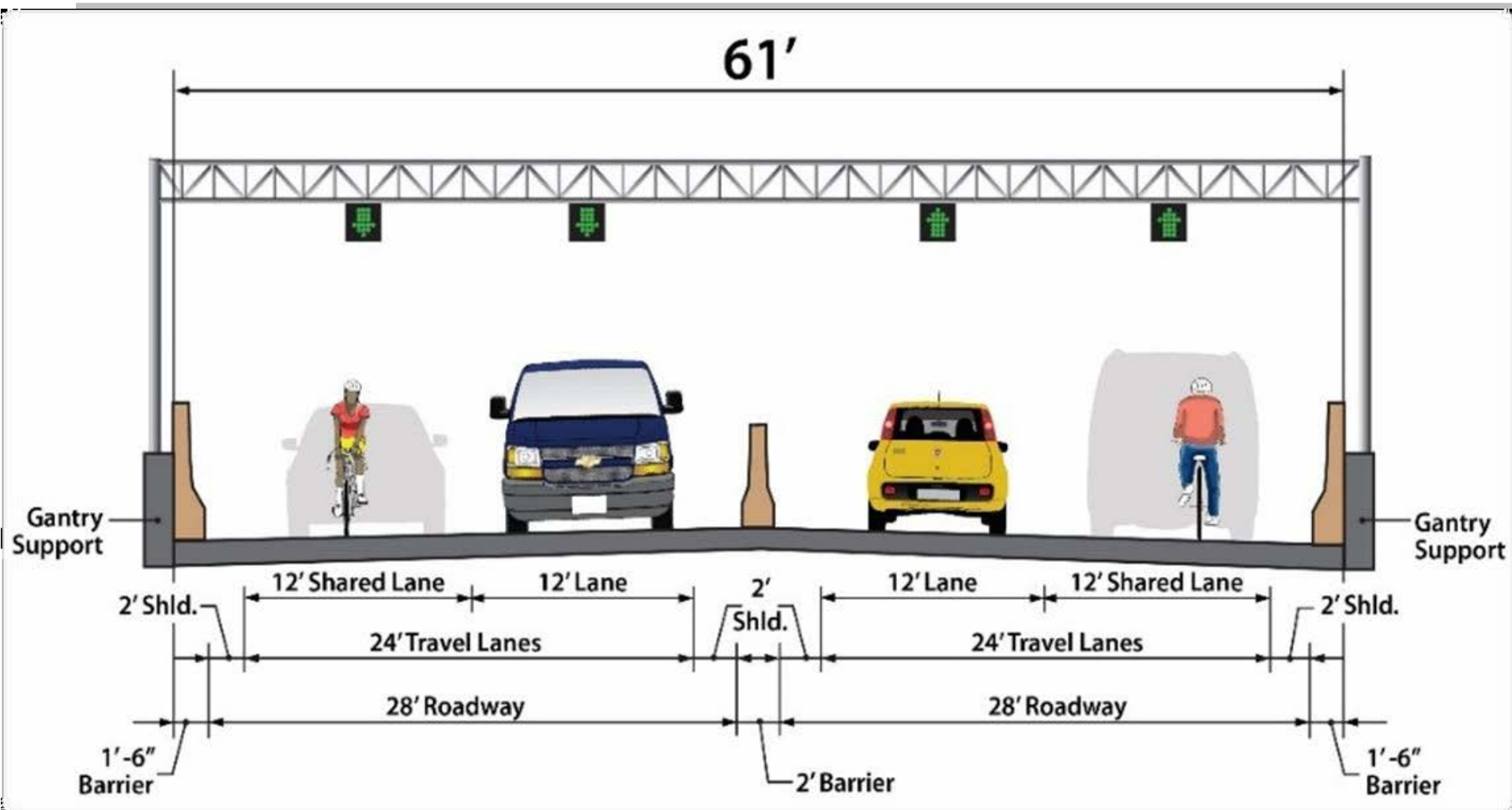
- The Vision, Regional Transportation Priorities Plan and Region Forward documents all encourage walking and bicycling
- The TPB's **Complete Streets** policy calls for safe and adequate accommodation of all users
- The TPB's **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan** calls for the use of **current best practices** and **design standards**
- TPB helped secure a separated bicycle and pedestrian path on the **Woodrow Wilson Bridge**
- Charles County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2012) calls for **barrier-separated** bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the Nice Bridge
- In a November 21, 2016 press release announcing funding for the bridge, Governor Hogan stated that "The new bridge will be built north of and parallel to the existing 1.7-mile bridge and will include two lanes of traffic in each direction and a **barrier-separated bicycle and pedestrian path.**"



Barrier-Separated Alternative



Shared Lane Alternative



Francis Scott Key Bridge, MD



Four lanes, similar to the new Nice Bridge proposal



Next Steps

- A letter is being drafted for consideration by the officers
 - Stated preference for a barrier-separated bicycle and pedestrian accommodation
- TPB will discuss at October 17 meeting
 - Based on discussion, TPB may endorse the letter for transmittal



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