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For Immediate Release

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MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY BOARD TO VOTE ON RECOMMENDED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR FUTURE CHESAPEAKE BAY CROSSING

BALTIMORE (December 16, 2025) – The Maryland Transportation Authority Board will vote on Thursday, December 18, at 9 a.m. on a recommended preferred alternative for the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act. Noted as “Alternative C,” the staff recommendation includes the construction of two new, four-lane bridge spans; and removal of the existing Bay Bridge spans.

“This recommendation is an exciting step that moves us closer to a Bay crossing that provides a smoother travel experience for those who drive over the bridge and the Marylanders who live by it,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Acting Secretary Samantha J. Biddle. “Alternative C is the option that best supports Marylanders’ current and future daily travel needs with the least environmental impact on our treasured Chesapeake Bay.”

Based on the agency’s ongoing engineering review, environmental study, public feedback and extensive coordination with local, state and federal partners, Alternative C includes:

- **Two new four-lane bridge spans** with full shoulders across the Chesapeake Bay, enhancing safety while providing additional transportation capacity, reliability and mobility;
- **Removal of the existing Bay Bridge spans**, addressing existing roadway deficiencies including narrow lanes and lack of shoulders, eliminating the need for major rehabilitation projects and associated lane closures and delays, and increasing navigational clearance to meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements. The navigational clearance will match that of the new Key Bridge, allowing larger ships to access the Port of Baltimore;
- **Widening of US 50/301 to eight lanes** (four per direction) from west of Oceanic Drive to east of Cox Creek to accommodate transitions to the new crossing;
- **Financial commitments for transit-related improvements**; and
- **An optional bicycle and pedestrian shared-use path**, which the MDTA will further evaluate to determine if it should be included.

“Alternative C best fulfills the study’s purpose and need while considering environmental and financial responsibility,” said MDTA Executive Director Bruce Gartner. “Of the build alternatives, it is the most cost-effective, impacts the least amount of natural, socio-economic and cultural resources. It would enhance safety with full shoulders and wider lanes, bring between \$17 to \$23 billion into the local economy, and create 61,300 to 75,600 jobs with 76% direct employment of construction workers.”

Alternative C will be evaluated by the public and resource and regulatory agencies as part of the ongoing National Environmental Policy Act process. Both the general public and agencies will have the opportunity to comment on the recommendation and on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement beginning in late January 2026, with public hearings planned for February 2026.

The Federal Highway Administration and other resource and regulatory agencies have not yet concurred on a Preferred Alternative per the National Environmental Policy Act process. The Maryland Transportation Authority will continue to analyze its recommendation following public comment. After the public comment period, state and federal agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of the Environment, among others, will be invited to concur on the preferred alternative in Spring 2026. Final Federal Highway Administration concurrence, in conjunction with the Maryland Transportation Authority, will be rendered via a combined Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, anticipated in November 2026.

The Tier 2 Study aims to address existing and future transportation capacity needs across the Chesapeake Bay and at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge approaches along the US 50/301 corridor. NEPA review is required for major federal actions, including federal funding or approvals.

The Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 National Environmental Policy Act began in June 2022. Following the development of the purpose and need, the study team considered and analyzed many preliminary alternatives, which they narrowed to seven retained alternatives and presented to the public in December 2024. Pending funding, procurement for design will begin after the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, with final design starting in Spring 2028 and construction anticipated to begin in Summer 2032.

Please see www.baycrossingstudy.com for upcoming announcements regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement availability and public hearing dates and locations. The MDTA Board meeting can be accessed at www.mdtamaryland.gov/Meeting_Schedules/MDTA_Board_Meeting_Schedule.html.

The MDTA finances, owns, operates, secures, and improves the state's eight toll facilities. The MDTA is financed by toll revenue without relying on state tax dollars.

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