



Bay Crossing Study Public Comments
March 10, 2026 – March 31, 2025



Date	Medium	Comment
3/10/2026	Website	<p>I urge MDTA to include a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian bridge as a core element of the Preferred Alternative for the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge crossing.</p> <p>The Recommended Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) proposes significant investments to improve safety, reliability, and mobility along the Chesapeake Bay crossing and the U.S. Route 50/301 Corridor. Two new four-lane spans, widened approaches, and improved navigational clearance will modernize this critical regional link. However, the project should also ensure that the crossing serves all users, not only motor vehicles.</p> <p>Including a permanent bicycle and pedestrian shared-use path would provide substantial public benefits:</p> <p>Expanded transportation access: A safe, dedicated facility would create the first continuous non-motorized crossing of the Chesapeake Bay in this location, opening opportunities for bicycle travel, tourism, and regional connectivity that do not currently exist.</p> <p>Economic and tourism benefits: Bicycle tourism is a growing industry. A world-class bridge crossing would attract visitors and support local businesses on both sides of the Bay.</p> <p>Equity and multimodal transportation: Major public infrastructure projects should support a range of travel options. A shared-use path would ensure that the new crossing reflects modern multimodal transportation goals.</p> <p>Long-term cost effectiveness: Constructing the bicycle and pedestrian facility as part of the initial bridge project will be significantly more cost-effective than attempting to retrofit such a facility in the future.</p> <p>MDTA’s current proposal lists the bicycle and pedestrian shared-use path only as an optional element for further evaluation. Given the once-in-a-generation nature and scale of this investment, the project should incorporate the shared-use path as a guaranteed component of the final design, not a future possibility.</p> <p>This project will shape transportation across the Chesapeake Bay for decades to come. Including a bicycle and pedestrian bridge will ensure that the new crossing is forward-looking, inclusive, and maximizes the public value of this major investment.</p> <p>Thank you for considering this comment.</p>
3/10/2026	Email	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I’m concerned that, while we need a safe crossing of the Chesapeake Bay, the current plan will drastically increase the roadway capacity and put additional development pressure on the Eastern Shore to become even more of a commuter area for the Annapolis, Washington, and Baltimore areas at a time when sea level rise is likely to have devastating impacts on much of the Eastern Shore.</p> <p>However it is clear that the MDTA intends to move forward with this project and so I think it is essential that bicycle and pedestrian capacity be added as well. This will comply with existing recommendations from several local, regional, and state plans and also provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve connectivity. There are existing trails at either end of the bridge and they should be connected via a safe and accessible path across the bridge.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>[Name and Address Redacted]</p>
3/10/2026	Email	<p>Did they ever consider a double-decker bridge, like the Golden Gate? Probably not. I say NO to having bikes crossing.</p> <p>[Name Redacted] REALTOR® BHHS Homesale Realty</p>



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		[Address and Phone Number Redacted] Licensed in Maryland and Pennsylvania
3/10/2026	Website	The Authority needs to make the optional shared use path mandatory, revise the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate the benefits of a shared use path, including economic tourism, educational, and health wise. MdTA has missed the mark regarding active transportation users in the past by not including a shared use path on the Nice Bridge replacement, not providing a complete shared use path along MD 200, and severely limiting bicycle access over the Thomas Hatem Bridge. In building the replacement Chesapeake Bay Bridge, MdTA should not leave any active transportation users behind!
3/10/2026	Website	Your logic for preferring to put the SUP on the westbound bridge makes sense in the long run. But the Eastbound bridge should have at least a temporary trail when it opens. Most people would rather have the trail 6 or more years sooner even if it is on the south side, than wait years. By putting at least an interim trail on the Eastbound bridge, you not only deliver that service sooner (by having one less traffic lane which is still one more than we have now) but you will get valuable experience in operating a trail on the bridge which can be considered to refine plans for the final trail on the Westbound bridge.
3/10/2026	Website	Adding to my last comment. By including an interim trail (e.g. jersey barrier, moveable or otherwise) on the Eastbound Bridge when it opens, you will have a better sense of the expected ridership for a permanent trail on the Westbound bridge (though the SUP for that bridge may be nicer and attract more use). Information is valuable! Also: Fall protection is needed for all the shoulders given the problems the bridge has even now with no shoulders. So fall protection is not an incremental cost of the trail.
3/10/2026	Website	Consider this article by Eric Brenner if he did not already submit it. The Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) has recommended that the design for the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge include the “option” of a separated bike and pedestrian shared-use path on one of the spans. MdTA is receiving comments supporting the inclusion of the sidepath that document the economic impacts of non-motorized bridge crossings where the benefits have far surpassed the construction costs. MdTA can count construction costs, but it should include a rigorous analysis from the state agencies skilled at developing economic impact assessments: the tourism staff at the Department of Business and Economic Development, and the outdoor recreation experts at the Department of Natural Resources. The majority of our tourism appeal is tied to things that happened a very long time ago; both geological (beach and mountain visits) and historical (C&O Canal, Revolutionary and Civil War sites). Our top tourist attraction (going back to John Smith?) is the Chesapeake Bay. A 4.3 mile, protected path across the Chesapeake Bay as a feature of the new bridge will be unique; a once-in-a-century opportunity. Tourists will come from all over the world to see this facility, though Marylanders will always make up the majority of users. Nothing engenders more support for the Chesapeake Bay than personal experience. This path will deliver. In the hyper-competitive race for “outdoor recreation” dollars, Maryland rarely comes out on top. Here’s a chance to flip that script. Others will address the many health and environmental benefits, and the importance of connecting existing trails, but this path would be a spectacular rebuttal to everyone who doubts the resiliency of our state, and our ability to do more than just scrape by in terms of infrastructure improvements. A well-coordinated, legacy-building governor would use all relevant agencies (not just Transportation) to help make this important decision. Past MdTA projects (Nice-Middleton bridge and the Intercounty Connector) included mandatory shared-use paths as part of their design, only to have these eliminated farther along in the process, once all regulatory hurdles had been cleared. When DBED and DNR objected to being excluded from these policy reversals, past governors chose to only look at the cost side of the equation, as provided by MdTA.



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		<p>Almost all major U.S. bridge projects being designed and constructed now include safe, separated accommodations for non-motorized users. Recent U.S. bridges with a shared-use path include the Tappan Zee, Gordie Howe, and Pensacola Bay bridges; locally, the Woodrow Wilson and Frederick Douglass bridges. Historic bridges with sidepaths central to the visitor experience are thriving in San Francisco (Golden Gate), New York (Brooklyn and George Washington), and Philadelphia (Ben Franklin).</p> <p>MdTA history indicates that leaving this as an “option to be considered,” at this early stage, will result in it never being included. The current governor and the Transportation Department leadership are aware of the short-sightedness (and occasional vindictiveness) of past gubernatorial administrations on similar projects and might like to leave a better legacy.</p> <p>Understanding mistakes that were made is important, but so is recognizing that our federalist system (the power balance between states and the federal government) is being upended.</p> <p>We live in a state with a Democratic governor in the presidential candidate discussion (see also California and Minnesota). Because of this, we have suffered politically targeted, and disproportionate, federal funding cuts (see Key Bridge rebuild, FBI headquarters, Western Maryland disaster declaration ... the list is longer). This complicates developing a strategy of how best to include the sidepath once DBED and DNR have shown that the economic benefits easily surpass the cost (which will be a small fraction of the overall project cost).</p> <p>One strategy might be to lie low, and avoid anything that, however irrationally, could find its way onto the president’s list of grievances, while keeping the design/build process open to amending the sidepath back onto the bridge in 34 months ... just as past administrations have amended sidepaths OUT at the last minute.</p> <p>A different strategy might be to fight for what’s right now, and what’s in the long-term interest of the state, by embedding the sidepath in the project, and removing the “optional” tag.</p> <p>There is nothing more central to Maryland’s identity, nor more threatened environmentally, than the Chesapeake Bay. Let’s use this once-in-a-century opportunity to draw more people to a personal connection with our signature landmark.</p> <p>The state deserves it, and the legacy of resilience, creativity and economic benefit would be something that the governor will always have, whatever his future may hold.</p> <p>Creative Commons License Republish Our stories may be republished online or in print under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. We ask that you edit only for style or to shorten, provide proper attribution and link to our website. AP and Getty images may not be republished. Please see our republishing guidelines for use of any other photos and graphics.</p> <p>Eric Brenner Eric Brenner Eric Brenner is the former chair of the Maryland Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He has worked for five governors in three states, founding the Governor's Grants Office for Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich and continuing under Gov. Martin O'Malley.</p> <p>Your opinion matters Maryland Matters welcomes guest commentary submissions at editor@marylandmatters.org.</p>
3/10/2026	Website	<p>Another example of how to reduce the cost of a shared-use path compared to the design assumed would be the approach of the design study of the Verrazano Bridge, at https://harboring.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Verrazano-Narrows-Bridge-Shared-Use-Access-Study-Final-Report-Aug-2018.pdf</p> <p>They may not build it due to low demand, but they thought through all the options the way a good Alternatives Analysis should. I'll paste the abstract and part on the section looking at alternatives</p> <p>SHARED-USE ACCESS ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED Based on established goals, design standards and engineering feasibility considerations, and extensive feedback from bridge users, residents of Brooklyn and Staten Island, transportation advocacy groups, elected representatives, Community Boards, and agencies, the Project Team evaluated eight concepts to provide access for bicyclists and pedestrians between Brooklyn and Staten Island.</p>

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		<p>Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>These concepts (Table ES-1) are broadly defined as:</p> <p>Separate paths that would be constructed outboard of the superstructure (six concepts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts that would not affect the bridge's suspended span (two concepts) <p>The table below lists the concepts and the results of an extensive evaluation process. Fact sheets with further detail were prepared for several concepts and are shown on pages IV to VIII.</p> <p>Table ES-1: Shared-Use Access Concepts</p> <p>CATEGORY/DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT EVALUATION RESULTS (Refer to Fact Sheets)</p> <p>Outboard of Superstructure</p> <p>1 Outboard of Lower Level SUPs attached outboard of the Lower Level suspended span Further evaluation during preliminary design of Lower Level Suspended Span deck to determine engineering feasibility</p> <p>2 Outboard of Lower level-Brooklyn Approach in John J. Carty Park No further evaluation (Approach structures have significant negative environmental impacts to John J. Carty Park)</p> <p>3 Outboard of Upper Level SUPs attached outboard of the Upper Level suspended span Further evaluation during preliminary design of Lower Level Suspended Span deck to determine engineering feasibility</p> <p>4 Reconstructed Brooklyn Upper Level Approach Ramps-Belt Parkway Ramps No further evaluation (Preliminary analysis in Chapter 5; concept is fatally flawed*)</p> <p>5 Reconstructed Brooklyn Upper Level Approach Ramps-Eastbound Gowanus Expressway Approach to 92nd Street No further evaluation (Preliminary analysis in Chapter 5; concept is fatally flawed*)</p> <p>6 Reconstructed Brooklyn Upper Level Approach Ramps-Eastbound Upper Level Exit to Belt Parkway No further evaluation (Preliminary analysis in Chapters; concept is fatally flawed*)</p> <p>Concepts that would not affect the VNB's Suspended Span</p> <p>7 Separate Bicycle/Pedestrian Crossing of the Narrows . No further evaluation-not within MTAB&T's purview</p> <p>8 New Ferry Service No further evaluation-not within MTAB&T's purview</p> <p>*A fatally flawed concept cannot be implemented because of adverse impacts on safety, bridge operations and/or traffic.</p> <p>5 Shared-Use Access Concepts</p> <p>Based on established goals, design standards and engineering feasibility considerations and extensive feedback from stakeholders (described in Chapter 7) the Project Team evaluated eight concepts to provide access for bicyclists and pedestrians between Brooklyn and Staten Island. These concepts are listed in Table 5-1 and are broadly defined as: Separate paths that would be constructed outboard of the superstructure (six concepts) Concepts that would not affect the bridge's suspended span (two concepts).</p> <p>Table 5-1: Shared-Use Access Concepts</p> <p>2</p> <p>. C r t Park</p>



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		<p>3 5-1-3 4 5 Reconstructed Brooklyn Upper Level Approach Ramps- Eastbound Gowanus Expressway Approach to 92nd Street 6 Reconstructed Brooklyn-Upper Level Approach Ramps- Eastbound Upper Level Exit to Belt 5.1.6 Parkway; 7 5.2.1. 8 5.2.2</p> <p>The following sections of this chapter describe the concepts in detail.</p> <p>5.1 CATEGORY: OUTBOARD OF SUPERSTRUCTURE 5.1.1 Outboard of Lower Level The Lower Level Outboard alternative connects Brooklyn and Staten Island with a SUP on each side of the VNB Lower Level. These paths would be adjacent and outboard of the Lower Level VNB structure. They would span the entire length of the structure, which is approximately one mile. For the approaches to meet design standards and meet the elevation of the VNB, the south side of the bridge would be for pedestrians and the north side for bicycles. The north side has the space required to accommodate a bicycle ramp. Figure 5-1 shows a cross-section of the Lower Level Outboard concept. User safety was paramount in developing this alternative. To accommodate an emergency vehicle, a clear width of 14 feet would be provided on both paths. This would allow emergency, maintenance and inspection vehicles, including snow removal vehicles, to access the paths. The paths would be wider around the VNB towers to allow emergency vehicles to navigate the path as it curves around the towers. Additionally, barriers with a curved safety fence would be constructed on both sides of each path to</p> <p>24 August 2018 / VN-84</p> <p>ensure safety of the users and security of the bridge. This would provide protection for users of the bicycle path and the pedestrian path from the adjacent roadway and the open side of the VNB. The bike path would also be striped to designate lanes for each direction of travel and a third small area to allow users that want to walk with their bikes, take a break and enjoy the views, or rest as they cross the lengthy spans of the VNB.</p> <p>Both the bicycle and pedestrian paths would touch grade in Shore Park, near the existing path next to the Denyse Wharf historical site. To abide by AASHTO criteria, the bike path would have a maximum five percent grade, and would loop through John Paul Jones Park to reach grade. The bike path would be approximately 2,800 feet to compensate for the nearly 140 foot elevation difference. Figure 5-2 illustrates a plan view of the Brooklyn approach. On the south side of the bridge, the pedestrian path has vertical switchback ramps (Figure 5-3) in the infield between the eastbound Belt Parkway and the 4th Avenue entrance ramp. To meet in Shore Park, the pedestrian ramp would pass over the 4th Avenue entrance ramp before touching grade. The switchback ramp would be located on NYCDPR property.</p> <p>The VNB Lower Level Staten Island approach is approximately 60 feet above grade. The bike path would turn north to touch grade on the shoulder of New York Avenue in Fort Wadsworth, a National Park. An approximately 1,200-foot long ramp would be required (with a maximum slope of five percent) to compensate for the difference in elevation between the bridge and New York Avenue. The pedestrian side of the path would require a vertical switchback ramp, and pedestrians would then meet grade south of the VNB on New York Avenue. The pedestrian path would also have an emergency/maintenance vehicular access ramp that connects the VNB Lower Level, near the existing toll plaza, to the pedestrian path adjacent to the VNB Lower Level. This connection would allow emergency vehicles to drive on the path since vehicles would not be able to drive up the vertical switchbacks. Figure 5-4 shows a plan view of the Staten Island approach.</p>



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		<p>The estimated capital cost for this alternative is \$320-\$340 Million (\$2015). The details of this cost estimate are described in Chapter 6.</p> <p>Figure 5-1: Lower Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Cross-Section</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-2: Lower Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Plan View (Brooklyn)</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-3: Lower Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Brooklyn Pedestrian Ramp Access</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-4: Lower Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Plan View (Staten Island)</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>5.:1.1.1 Evaluation Summary The evaluation of this concept relative to the Shared-Use Access goals and feasibility considerations is summarized in Table 5-2 (see Appendix B for comparative matrix). Table 5-2: Evaluation of Outboard of Lower Level</p> <p>Goal Assessment Score Provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists between Brooklyn and Staten Island (w=traffic and SUP are on separate structures; 5= traffic and SUP share the same structure with barrier between them; o= traffic and SUP are mixed and in conflict) Bike and pedestrian paths are on separate structures from roadway traffic. J.O Provide connections to existing pedestrian and bike paths in Brooklyn and Staten Island (w=Easily connects to existing paths; s=Can safely access existing paths; o=Does not connect to existing paths) Paths in Brooklyn connect to existing path. Paths in Staten Island must use local street network to reach existing paths. 8 Develop cost-effective solutions Capital Costs (10=low; 5=medium; i=high) High cost to build new structures adjacent to VNB and approaches in Brooklyn and Staten Island. 3 Minimize adverse environmental and community impacts: NEPA/ SEORA Evaluation (Possible EA/EIS); Parkland Impacts, Construction in Floodplain, Water Quality Impacted (w= minimal (temporary) impact; 5=moderate impact; i=high (permanent) impact) Permanent structures would be constructed in parks (John Paul Jones, Shore Park); increase in impervious area. 3 Minimize impacts to bridge operations, traffic capacity and bridge customers: Impacts to traffic congestion on the VNB, impacts to incident response time on VNB, and impacts to access/ safety for maintenance and construction personnel (1.0=improvements to existing/ minor impact; .1=degrades existing/ significant impact) Deductions for difficulty of inspection and maintenance of separated paths adjacent to VNB. 4 Maintains structural integrity (loads, wind, seismic) and functionality of the VNB and its approaches; Compliant with current design criteria (10=improvements to existing/ minor impacts; 5=no change;</p>



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		<p>i=degrades existina/ sicmificant imoacts) Infeasible until load on VNB main cables is reduced; meets design standards (wind impacts not known). 4 Total= 32</p> <p>This concept will lbe further evaluated for feasibility during the preliminary design study of the.VNB Lower Level Suspended Span deck.</p> <p>5.1.2 Outboard of Lower Level-Brooklyn Approach in John J. Carty Park To determine whether _it would be possible to reduce the length and impacts of the -ramps connecting the bridge and Shore Park, the Project Team evaluated an alternative originally presented in the 1997 Bicycle Path Feasibility Study for the City of New York based on the latest standards for an SUP. The bicycle and pedestrian paths across the VNB and the connections in Staten Island would r,emain the same as the Lower Level Outboard conce-pt discussed previously.</p> <p>28 Au ust 2018 / VN-84</p> <p>Figure 5-5 shows the connection in Brooklyn for the approach to the SUP. The combined bicycle and pedestrian path would touch down to grade in John J. Carty Park. To meet AASHTO criteria, the bike path would have a maximum of five percent grade and be approximately 2,200 feet long to compensate for the nearly 110 foot elevation difference. The shared path would have a clear width of 15 feet, and would be striped for three 5 foot lanes. Two are unidirectional bicycle lanes. The third lane is for pedestrians and dismounting bicyclists. The SUP would allow emergency, maintenance and inspection vehicles, including snow removal vehicles, to access the path. A barrier with a curved safety fence would be constructed on both sides of the path. Figure 5-5: Outboard of Lower Level-Brooklyn Approach in John J. Carty Park-Plan View</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>The SUP would split into a separate bicycle and pedestrian path east of the Brooklyn anchorage. The bicycle path would continue on the north side of the VNB, and the pedestrian path would cross under the VNB approach to reach the south side of the VNB. A vertical switchback ramp is required when the paths separate for the pedestrian path to meet clearance requirements under the VNB approach roadway. The switchback system needs to be one-level of a loop to achieve the desired AASHTO vertical clearance of -vehicle SUP structures. Similarly, another one-level vertical switchback ramp would be required between the eastbound Belt Parkway and Belt Parkway entrance ramp to accommodate the change in elevation. The SUP would not connect with the Shore Parkway Greenway bicycle and pedestrian path.</p> <p>The SUP would be supported on columns through both John Paul Jones Park and John J. Carty Park. The SUP would supplant tennis courts and possibly other park facilities in John J. Carty Park. Displacing the tennis courts would likely require compensation to the Parks Department and may be very controversial with the local community. The recreational facilities in John J. Carty Park shown in Figure 5-6 would be</p> <p>impacted on the side that is adjacent to the VNB approach ramp. Depending upon the final configuration, access to this portion of the Park from the adjacent neighborhood would be degraded or even possibly eliminated. Figure 5-6: John J. Carty Park</p> <p>Source: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation</p> <p>The entrance to the SUP would require excavation and re-grading of a portion of John J. Carty Park. A retaining wall to support the VNB approach structure, which is on-grade near the location where the SUP would meet grade, would also likely be required. As discussed in section 7.3, during the public input process residents of the adjacent neighborhood strongly opposed the SUP terminating in the park due to security concerns and adverse impacts.</p> <p>The SUP would also impact the Fort Hamilton Army property. Although the path would not infringe directly upon the facility, part of the elevated path would be over the Fort Hamilton entrance. Due to security concerns, U.S. Army personnel oppose construction over the Fort. Coordination with Fort Hamilton would be necessary to establish an acceptable location.</p> <p>Although the combined length of the bicycle and pedestrian paths for the Outboard Lower Level-Brooklyn Approach in John J. Carty concept is shorter than the combined length of the paths for the Outboard Lower Level concept there would not be significant cost savings. For example, two separate switchback structures would need to be constructed to meet vertical clearance requirements compared to one switchback for the Outboard Lower Level concept. Since both of these switchback structures would be suspended, they would require a significant structural support system that would further</p> <p>Shared-Use Access Study</p>



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		<p>,impact the various facilities below them. In addition, approximately 85 percent of the total cost of the SUP is attributable to the path on the suspended span and the Staten Island approach ramps. These costs would be incurred regardless of the concept for the Brooklyn approach. For these reasons the estimated capital cost for this alternative is approximately the same (\$320-\$340 Million (\$2015)) as the Outboard of Lower Level concept. More details on this cost estimate are described in Chapter 6.</p> <p>5.1.2.1 Evaluation Summary The evaluation of this concept relative to the Shared-Use Access goals and feasibility considerations is summarized in Table 5-3. Table 5-3: Evaluation of Outboard of Lower Level - Brooklyn Approach in John J. Carty Park</p> <p>Goal Assessment Score Provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists between Brooklyn and Staten Island (10=traffic and SUP are on separate structures; 5= traffic and SUP share the same structure with barrier between them; 0= traffic and SUP are mixed and in conflict) Bike and pedestrian paths are on separate structures than roadway traffic. 10 Provide connections to existing pedestrian and bike paths in the local street network to meet existing paths in Brooklyn and Staten Island. 4 Brooklyn and Staten Island (w=Easily connects to existing paths; s=Can safely access existing paths; o=Does not connect to existing paths) Develop cost-effective solutions Capital Costs (10=low; 5=medium; 1=high) High cost to build new structures adjacent to VNB and approaches in Brooklyn and Staten Island. 3 Minimize adverse environmental and community impacts: NEPA/ SEORA Evaluation (Possible EA/EIS); Parkland Impacts, Construction in Floodplain, Water Quality Impacted (10= minimal (temporary) impact; 5=moderate impact; i=high (permanent) impact) Permanent structures would be constructed in parks (John Paul Jones, John J. Carty, Shore Park); increase in impervious area. 1 Minimize impacts to bridge operations, traffic capacity and bridge customers: Impacts to traffic congestion on the VNB, impacts to incident response time on VNB, and impacts to access/ safety for maintenance and construction personnel (w=improvements to existing/ minor impact; i=degrades existing/ significant impact) Deductions for difficulty of inspection and maintenance of separated paths adjacent to VNB. 4 Maintains structural integrity (loads, wind, seismic) and functionality of the VNB and its approaches; Compliant with current design criteria (w=improvements to existing/ minor impacts; 5=110 change; i=degrades existing/ significant impacts) Infeasible until load on VNB main cables is reduced; meets design standards (wind impacts not known). 4 Total= 26</p> <p>Due to the significant adverse impacts on John J. Carty Park and on the adjacent neighborhood this concept will not be considered further.</p> <p>VN-84 / August 2018 31</p> <p>5.1.3 Outboard of Upper Level The Upper Level Outboard alternative connects Brooklyn and Staten Island with a SUP on each side of the VNB Upper Level. Similar to the Lower Level Outboard alternative, the paths would span the VNB, and the north side would be for bicycles while the south side would be for pedestrians. Here again paths of equal size and weight would be needed on both sides of the bridge for weight equilibrium. Placing two paths outboard of the Upper Level would likely create a larger wind load than if they were on the Lower Level. As with the Lower Level Outboard concept, the effects on the bridge structure of an Outboard Upper Level SUP would be evaluated during the design study of the replacement of the Lower Level Suspended Span deck. Figure 5-7 shows the cross-section of the Upper Level Outboard alternative. The same safety features would be implemented on the Upper Level Outboard alternative as for the Lower Level Outboard alternative. A clear path of 14 feet would be provided on both paths to accommodate emergency, maintenance, inspection and snow removal vehicles. Barriers and curved safety fences would also be utilized on both sides of both paths to protect users from the roadway and open side as well as to enhance security. The bike path would be striped to designate lanes for each direction of travel and an area for users that choose to walk with or without their bikes. The major difference between the Upper Level and Lower Level Outboard alternatives is the approach length required to bring both paths from the VNB to grade in Brooklyn and Staten Island. The</p>



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		<p>Upper Level Outboard alternative is approximately 25 feet higher than the Lower Level Outboard alternative. The bike path in Brooklyn has a maximum grade of 5 percent. As a result, 500 feet of additional path for a total Brooklyn ramp length of 3,300 feet would be necessary to compensate for the higher elevation. To accommodate the additional length of the bike path, a complete loop would be added to the structure constructed in John Paul Jones Park.</p> <p>Figure 5-8 shows a plan view of the Brooklyn side approaches. To account for the higher elevation on the south side of the bridge, the pedestrian ramp would require additional switchback levels, although its location would be the same as for the Lower Level option. An extra loop is also required on the bike approach ramp to compensate for the additional height (Figure 5-9). Similar to the Lower Level Outboard alternative, both paths for the Upper Level Outboard alternative would touch grade in Shore Park near the Denyse Wharf historical site.</p> <p>The length of the approaches in Staten Island would also need to be increased to compensate for the higher elevation of the Upper Level Outboard alternative. The bike path would be 500 feet longer for a total Staten Island ramp length of 1,700 feet and would meet grade farther into Fort Wadsworth. The path would turn north along New York Avenue, turn right into Fort Wadsworth and meet grade near an existing roadway in Fort Wadsworth. For the pedestrian path, more vertical switchbacks would be necessary to bring users from the VNB to New York Avenue. The pedestrian path would also have a roadway that connects to the VNB Upper Level approach. This connection would allow emergency vehicles to drive on the path since vehicles would not be able to drive up the vertical switchbacks. Figure 5-10 shows a plan view of the Staten Island approach.</p> <p>The estimated capital cost for this alternative is \$340-\$370 Million (\$2015). More details on this estimate are in Chapter 6.</p> <p>Figure 5-7: Upper Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Cross-Section</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-8: Upper Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Plan View (Brooklyn)</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-9: Upper Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Brooklyn Bicycle Ramp</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-10: Upper Level Outboard Shared-Use Path Plan View (Staten Island)</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>As described in Chapter 4, design standards and requirements for a SUP have evolved since the VNB Pedestrian/Bicycle Path Feasibility Study was prepared in 1997. Table 5-4 compares the Upper Level Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>Outboard concept from this current study to the Upper Level Outboard concept described in the 1997 study.</p> <p>Table 5-4: Comparison of "Between Upper level Suspender Ropes" Concepts from 1997 Pedestrian/Bicycle Path Feasibility Study and Current Outboard Upper Level Concept</p> <p>Between Upper Level Suspender Ropes Characteristic (:1997) Outboard Upper Level Width of Paths The bike and pedestrian paths were not wide enough for the current AASHTO design standards. The widths of the paths were either 8 or 10'. The SUP is designed to current AASHTO standards with a minimum width of 14' to accommodate sight distance, allow for passing and provide adequate room for emergency vehicles or maintenance vehicles.</p>



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		<p>Accommodation of Emergency and Maintenance Vehicles No vehicle access Accommodates emergency .and maintenance vehicles</p> <p>Additional Strengthening Utilized existing framing and stiffening truss chords to support the proposed bikeways. No accommodation for maintenance and emergency vehicles was incorporated into the bikeways. No consideration for additional strengthening due to wind or dynamic loading on the existing structural The Bridge is assumed to be strengthened for wind/dynamic loading. The path is wider and longer, has a deeper and stronger structure and a stronger deck to support emergency vehicles. The result is a much more robust design compared to the 1997 concept.</p> <p>elements was included in the co.st.</p> <p>Connection to Grade The concept had a design that suggested more narrow paths using existing roadways for the approaches and touching down with non-standard grades. The concept connects the paths across the VNB to existing paths .in Brooklyn and Staten Island, resulting in lengthy approaches.</p> <p>Structural Framing Did not account for complex framing at the towers Incorporates necessary complex framing around the towers</p> <p>Fencing and Barriers Assumed simple railings Security fencing and safety barrier are included</p> <p>Security Hardenrng Not considered Includes measures for security hardening</p> <p>VN-84 / August 2018 35</p> <p>Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>5.:1.3.1 Evaluation Summary The evaluation of this concept relative to the Shared-Use Access goals and feasibility considerations is summarized in Table 5-5. Table 5-5: Evaluation of Outboard of Upper level</p> <p>This concept will be further evaluated for feasibility during the preliminary design study <Of the Lower Level Suspended Span deck.</p> <p>36 Au ust 2018 / VN-84</p> <p>5.1.4 Reconstructed Brooklyn Upper Level Approach Belt Parkway Ramps</p> <p>5.1.4.1 Introduction The Upper and Lower Level Outboard SUP options both require a set of independent ramp structures through Shore Park and John Paul Jones Park. As an alternative to these independent ramp structures, the Project Team evaluated three concepts that would utilize the reconstructed Belt Parkway Ramps for bicycle and pedestrian access. The SUP concepts would either: Expand the Belt Parkway Loop Ramps approximately 20 feet to accommodate a separate SUP on the outside of the ramp structure (Alternative 4). Use the shoulder of the Brooklyn Ramps as a SUP to connect the SUP outboard alternatives and 92nd Street (Alternative 5). Use the shoulder of the Brooklyn Ramps as a SUP to connect the SUP outboard alternatives and the Belt Parkway (Alternative 6).</p> <p>5.1.4.2 Belt Parkway Ramps This concept would widen the ramp structure to/from the VNB to connect the Lower or Upper Level outboard SUPs to the existing path along Shore Park. Due to vertical clearance constraints, it is infeasible to widen the Brooklyn Ramps to the inside of the loop ramp. Therefore, all widening of the Brooklyn ramps must be on the outside of the loop ramps. According to AASHTO, the desirable width of a two-way SUP is 15 feet. An additional two feet is required on each side of the path for placement of a concrete barrier and protective fence, for a total widening of approximately 19 feet. The SUP for this option would be nearly 6,000 feet long, approximately double the length of the Lower Level Outboard alternative. This concept is fatally flawed for several reasons: Widening the e -build zone outside of s easement. would also trigger environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) due to impacts to Federal lands. The SUP would encroach into and over Fort Hamilton Parkway, causing adverse visual, air, and noise effects on the adjacent residences, Fort Hamilton Senior Recreation Center, and John J. Carty Park.</p>



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		<p>Additional columns would be necessary to accommodate the widened Belt Parkway ramps structure where the loop ramps cross over the Brooklyn Approach roadways. Additional investigation is required to determine if space exists to construct these columns. It is likely that after more advanced design, space limitations could be deemed a fatal flaw.</p> <p>The piers supporting the elevated Belt Parkway Ramps prevent widening the shoulder where the Brooklyn Ramps cross under the VNB near the anchorage (Figure 5-11). For this reason the SUP cannot connect to the bike path along Shore Park.</p> <p>As noted previously, paths are required on both sides of the bridge for loading symmetry. To reach the single SUP along the Brooklyn Ramps, the paths from each side of the VNB would need to combine into one path elevated above the existing roadways. To maintain the outboard SUPs adjacent to the VNB for the length of the bridge, the connection of two paths to one path must occur after the outboard SUPs past the Brooklyn Anchorage. It would be difficult structurally and geometrically to connect two SUPs coming from both sides of the VNB to a single SUP. The SUP path on the north side of the VNB would need to loop under the structures after the VNB anchorage. The geometric and structural aspects of this structure pose significant design and construction issues due to the numerous piers supporting the adjacent connecting roadways.</p> <p>Figure 5-11: Limited Width Due to Brooklyn Ramps under the VNB near the Anchorage</p> <p>Source: Google Maps</p> <p>5.1.4.3 Evaluation Summary The evaluation of this concept relative to the Shared-Use Access goals and feasibility considerations is summarized in Table 5-6. Goals that were fatally flawed received a score of zero.</p> <p>Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>Table 5-6: Evaluation of Belt Parkway Ramps</p> <p>Goal Assessment Score Provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists between Brooklyn and Staten Island (1=traffic and SUP are on separate structures; 5= traffic and SUP share the same structure with barrier between them; 0= traffic and SUP are mixed and in conflict) Dedicated paths across VNB and in Staten Island; fatal flaw since cannot fit SUP between existing piers which support the VNB near the Brooklyn anchorage. 0</p> <p>Provide connections to existing pedestrian and bike paths in Brooklyn and Staten Island (1= Easily connects to existing paths; 5= Can safely access existing paths; 0= Does not connect to existing paths) Fatally flawed because does not connect to path in Brooklyn due to limited width of Brooklyn Ramps under the VNB near the anchorage. 0</p> <p>Develop cost-effective solutions Capital Costs (w=low; 5=medium; i=high) High cost to build new structures adjacent to VNB and approaches in Brooklyn and Staten Island. 4</p> <p>Minimize adverse environmental and community impacts: NEPA/ S-EORA Evaluation (Possible EA/EIS); Parkland Impacts, Construction in Floodplain, Water Quality Impacted (w= minimal (temporary) impact; 5= moderate impact; 1= high (permanent) impact) Permanent structures would be constructed in John J Carty Park and in Fort Hamilton's no build zone; increase in impervious area. 2</p> <p>Minimize impacts to bridge operations, traffic capacity and bridge customers: Impacts to traffic congestion on the VNB, impacts to incident response time on VNB, and impacts to access/safety for maintenance and construction personnel (w=improvements to existing/ minor impact; 1=degrades existing/significant impact) Reductions for cliff stability of 2</p> <p>inspection and maintenance of separated paths adjacent to VNB and separated paths on Brooklyn approach.</p> <p>Maintains structural integrity (loads, wind, seismic) and functionality of the VNB and its approaches; Compliant with current design criteria</p>



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		<p>(w=improvements to existing/ minor impacts; s=no change; i=degrades existing/ significant impact) Infeasible until load on VNB main cables is reduced; meets design standards except where the Brooklyn ramps cross under the VNB. 3 Total= 11</p> <p>This concept is fatally flawed because of geometry and constructability issues.</p> <p>5.1.5 Eastbound Gowanus Expressway Approach to 92nd Street This concept proposes utilizing the shoulder of the eastbound approach to the Gowanus Expressway to connect the outboard SUPs to 92nd Street (Figure 5-12).</p> <p>VN-84 / August 2018 39</p> <p>Figure 5-12: Brooklyn SUP Approach Alternative 5 (Option 2) and Alternative 6 (Option 3)</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-13: Proposed Belt Parkway-bound Right Hand Exit Ramp-Cross Section A-A</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>Figure 5-14: Proposed Eastbound Ramp to Belt Parkway-Cross Section B-B</p> <p>Source: WSP</p> <p>This concept is fatally flawed for several reasons: There is no continuous shoulder between the Upper Level eastbound approach to the Gowanus Expressway and the Upper Level 92nd Street Exit. Bicyclists would have to cross active traffic to travel from the right shoulder of the proposed Upper Level right-hand exit to the Belt Parkway to the realigned right shoulder of the Gowanus Expressway approach to access the Upper Level 92nd Street Exit. The Lower Level eastbound approach to the Gowanus Expressway does not have a right shoulder because the roadway is within the piers of the Upper Level. Therefore, there is no room for a shoulder to use as an SUP. The Brooklyn Ramps (after VN-84 Phase 2) will adway cannot be widened further. Connecting the SUPs from both sides of the VNB (near the Brooklyn anchorage) and providing a connection to the main span SUPs would have similar structural issues as Alternative 4. Due to the configuration of the westbound Gowanus Expressway approach roadways and absence of shoulders on the 92nd Street entrance ramp to the VNB, a SUP on the westbound approach to the Bridge is not possible without reducing travel lanes. This would create extensive queuing and cause traffic to divert to local roadways and neighborhood streets in Bay Ridge. In meetings and focus groups that the Project Team conducted, residents living near the bridge and VNB customers opposed concepts that adversely affect traffic.</p> <p>Shared-Use Access Study</p> <p>5.1.5.1 Evaluation Summary The evaluation of this concept relative to the Shared-Use Access goals and feasibility considerations is summarized in Table 5-7. Goals that were fatally flawed received a score of zero. Table 5-7: Evaluation of Eastbound Gowanus Expressway Approach</p> <p>Goal Assessment Score Provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists between Brooklyn and Staten Island (w=traffic and SUP are on separate structures; 5= traffic and SUP share the same structure with barrier between them; o= traffic and</p>



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		SUP are mixed and in conflict) Fatally flawed since SUP crosses active traffic while exiting VNB to 92nd Street exit. 0 Provide c
3/10/2026	Website	Another reason why an assessment of the benefits of the trail is requires is that 40 CFR § 1502.16 (a) (12) says "Where applicable, economic and technical considerations, including the economic benefits of the proposed action". Clearly it is applilcable in the case of the SUP because the DEIS says that the decision depends on "financial considerations"/
3/10/2026	Website	<p>To the Project Team,</p> <p>We are writing to formally advocate for the inclusion of a mandatory, separated bicycle and pedestrian path in the design and construction of the replacement Chesapeake Bay Bridge.</p> <p>While many iconic spans across the United States have integrated separated facilities to great success, the unique scale of the Chesapeake Bay presents a rare opportunity. We believe a shared-use path here would provide a significantly higher return on investment for the regional economy than existing precedents. For example, the Mario Cuomo Bridge over the Hudson River has quickly become a premier destination for recreation, drawing Maryland residents and tourists alike. The Bay Bridge has the potential to exceed this impact, transforming the crossing from a transit corridor into a world-class landmark.</p> <p>Strategic connectivity is another primary driver for this request. A dedicated path would bridge the current gap between the extensive trail networks in Anne Arundel and Queen Anne’s counties. Furthermore, it would serve as a vital link for three major national routes:</p> <p>The East Coast Greenway (Maine to Florida)</p> <p>The 911 National Memorial Trail</p> <p>The American Discovery Trail (Coast-to-Coast)</p> <p>Beyond recreation, this facility offers practical infrastructure benefits, providing a carbon-neutral commuting alternative and a dedicated lane for maintenance or emergency vehicles when required.</p> <p>This replacement project is a once-in-a-generation chance to modernize our infrastructure and support the growing Maryland Eastern Shore Trail Network. We strongly urge you to ensure this path is a non-negotiable component of the final design.</p> <p>Sincerely, [Name Redacted]</p>
3/10/2026	Website	I believe we should totally bi-pass Kent Island for all traffic going to the ocean. They did this in Salisbury and there's no reason it can't be done here. I believe we should also continue the service road from Thompson Creek Road to Sherman Drive, so traffic can get to chester from Rte 8 and not have to go over an overpass. This would keep a great deal of traffic away from Stevensville Middle and Bayside Elementary. We also need bike lanes on this road, so people can bike safely to Rte 8 without having to bike over an overpass and go all the way around to get to Rte 8.
3/13/2026	Website	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I live on Maryland's Eastern Shore and I am asking MDTA to require — not merely allow — a separated bicycle and pedestrian shared-use path on the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge.</p> <p>The Bay is not just a geographic feature — it is a barrier. For cyclists and pedestrians, it has always been an impassable one. The bridge replacement is a once-in-a-century opportunity to change that. A shared-use path would finally connect the Cross Island Trail on Kent Island to the Broadneck Trail in Cape Saint Claire, linking communities on both sides of the Bay in a meaningful and lasting way.</p> <p>Making this feature optional is not a compromise — it is a near-guarantee it will be cut. Active transportation infrastructure is consistently the first thing eliminated when project costs rise. If we want this connection to exist when the new bridge opens, it must be required now.</p>



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		Over 50 organizations agree. I hope MDTA will listen. Sincerely, [Name and Address Redacted]