

Federal Highway Administration

Record of Decision

Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

1-95/I-495 from West of Telegraph Road to East of MD 210

City of Alexandria and Fairfax County, Virginia ♦ Prince George's County, Maryland

♦ District of Columbia

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1. Introduction to the Record of Decision

This Record of Decision (ROD) has been prepared by the Federal Highway Administration for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project in cooperation with the Maryland State Highway Administration, Virginia Department of Transportation and District of Columbia, Department of Public Works. This ROD has been developed to document the Federal Highway Administration's decision to proceed with the design and construction of the Preferred Alternative identified in the 2000 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation (2000 Final SEIS) and updates the ROD signed November 1997 (1997 ROD). This ROD complies with 40 CFR 1502.2.

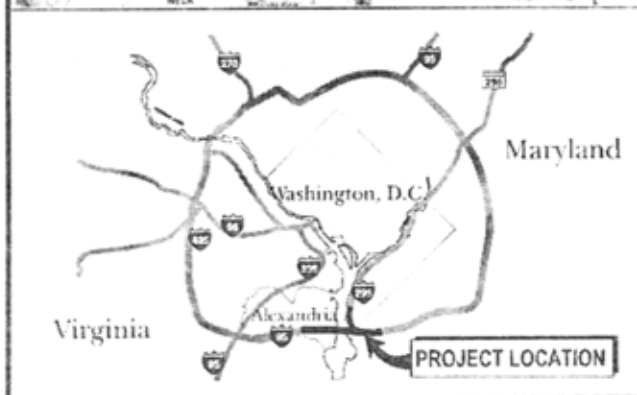
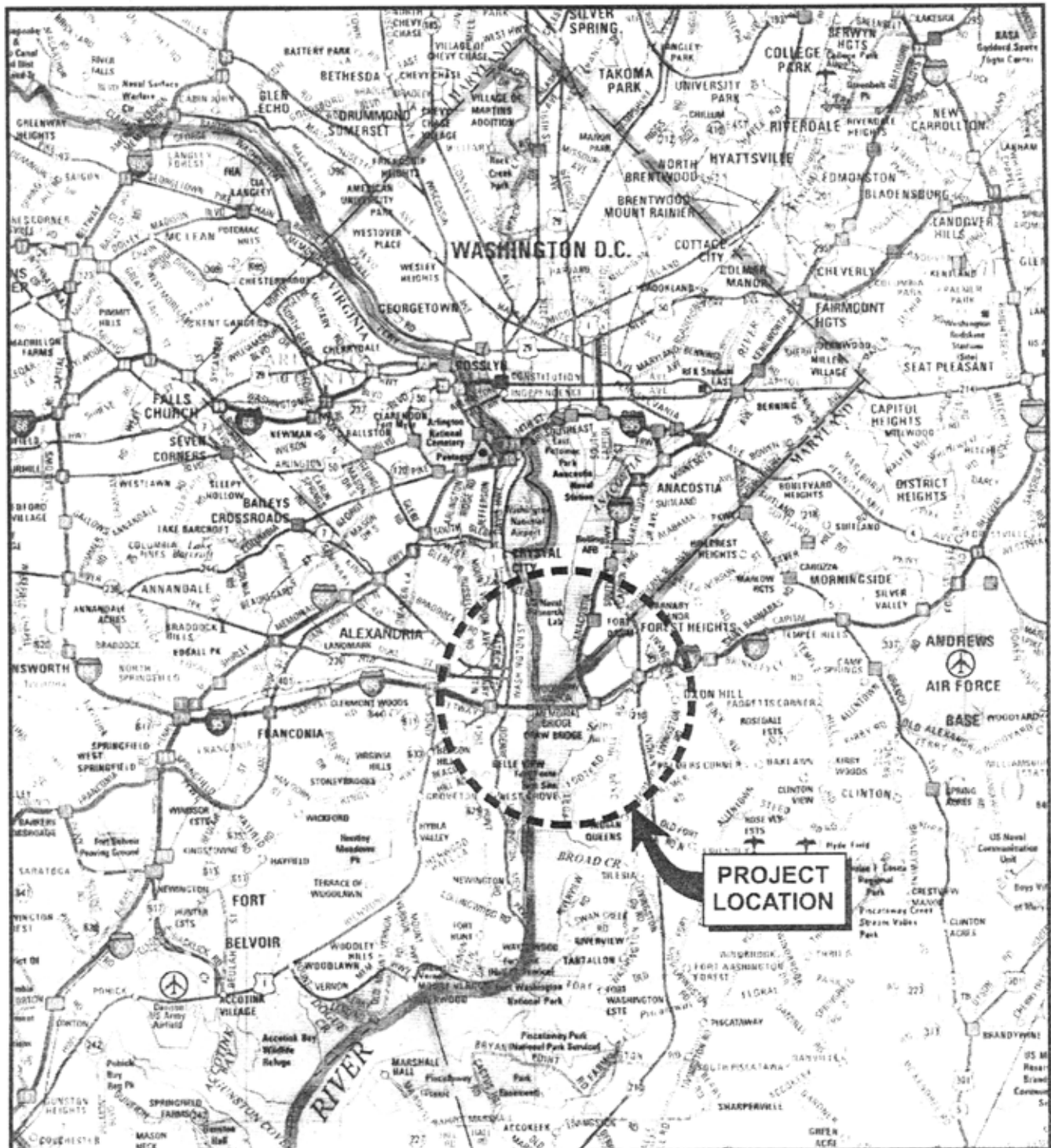
2. Agency Decisions

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge project area is a 12-kilometer (7.5-mile) section along I-95/495 (Capital Beltway) from west of Telegraph Road (VA 241) in Virginia to east of Indian Head Highway (MD 210) in Maryland. The western portion of the corridor is located in Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria in Virginia. The existing drawspan for the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge is located at the southern tip of the District of Columbia. The eastern portion of the corridor is located in Prince George's County, Maryland. The project location is shown on Figure 1. The project limits have been extended since the 1997 Final Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation (1997 FEIS) as a result of the Stakeholder Participation Panel process in Virginia and Maryland, construction-related effects assessments, and the need to transition the proposed roadway into the existing I-95/495 alignment. Figure 2-2 of the 2000 Final SEIS presents both the 1997 and 2000 project limits for comparison purposes.

In the 1997 ROD, Alternative 4A was identified as the Selected Alternative because it was the build alternative that best met the project's purpose and need and was the environmentally preferred alternative. This decision was based on an evaluation of the technical analyses summarized in the 1996 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the 1997 FEIS, and on substantial community and resource agency input. Reasons for selecting Alternative 4A included:

- Least amount of dredge material generated.
- Highest level of public and interagency support.
- One of the highest levels of traffic service and total person carrying capacity.
- With the mitigation described in the 1997 and 2000 Section 4(f) Evaluations, the least overall harm to Section 4(f) resources.
- Fewer visual impacts to Old Town Alexandria.

After the 1997 ROD, refinements were made to Alternative 4A as a result of public involvement, more detailed engineering base map data, new or different environmental data, potential construction-related aquatic resource effects, detailed dredge and dredged material disposal studies, development of a detailed mitigation plan, and other project-specific modifications associated with preliminary design plan development. The refinements to the Selected Alternative, now designated the "Current Design Alternative 4A," are described in detail in Chapter 2 of the 2000 Final SEIS. All references in this ROD to the "Selected Alternative" shall hereafter refer to Current Design Alternative 4A.



WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE PROJECT

FHWA RECORD OF DECISION

Project Location Map

Date
June, 2000

Not to Scale

Figure
1

The Selected Alternative will replace the existing Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge with two new parallel drawbridges, one for eastbound traffic (the "Outer Loop") and the other for westbound traffic (the "Inner Loop"), constructed approximately 9.1 meters (30 feet) south of the existing bridge. The alignment of the Selected Alternative is illustrated in Figure 2. The design includes the comprehensive mitigation measures as described in the 2000 Final SEIS.

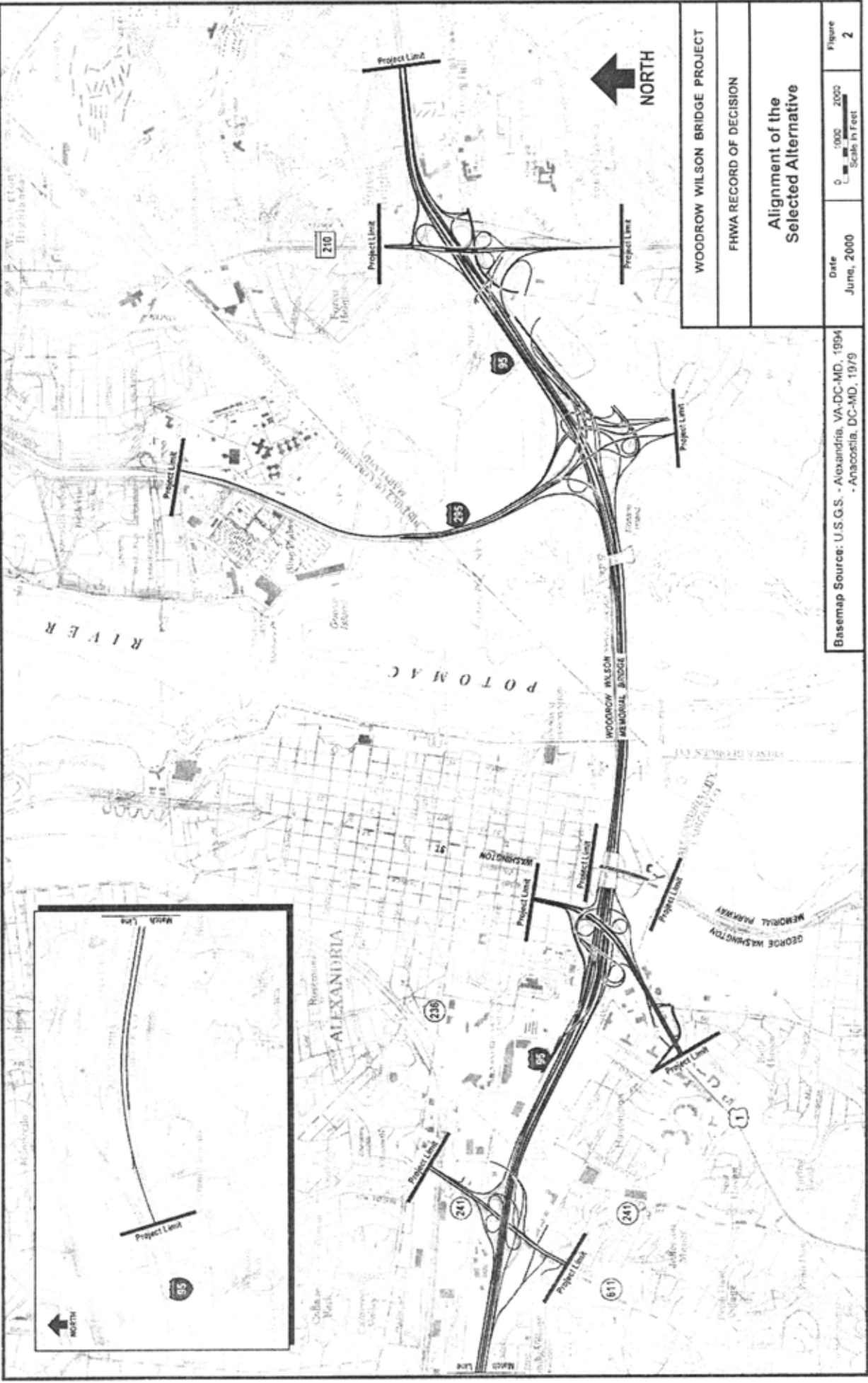
The profile of the bridges rises from the shorelines and reaches an approximate elevation of 101 feet at the crest over the navigation channel. The maximum grade of the profile will be three percent. The vertical clearance with the drawspans in the closed position will be a minimum of 70 feet above mean high water over the full 175-foot wide navigation channel. The actual vertical clearance provided by the selected design, Entry B from the Design Competition, is approximately 82 feet. The increased vertical clearance was achieved by "thinning" the depth of the bridge between the bridge deck and the top of the arch. The bridge deck height, however, has not changed. This particular design was found to best meet the design goals of the 1997 ROD as described below. The vertical clearance of the drawspans in the open position is approximately 135 feet over the full 175-foot wide navigation channel. Detailed design must be completed before the final vertical clearances are determined. Each bridge would include four general use lanes, one HOV/express bus/rail transit lane, and one merging/diverging lane. The bridges would be approximately 1,850 meters (6,075 feet) long and include an operations tower in close proximity to the Potomac River navigation channel.

The typical section of the two bridges (excluding the separation between the two independent structures) is 71.1 meters (234 feet). This 2.8-meter (8-foot) reduction in width from the 1997 FEIS is the result of the March 1999 lawsuit settlement with the City of Alexandria. The typical section for most of the proposed bridge structures is illustrated in Figure 3.

A copy of the document "Settlement Agreement between the City of Alexandria, Virginia and the United States Department of Transportation" is incorporated into this ROD as Attachment 4.

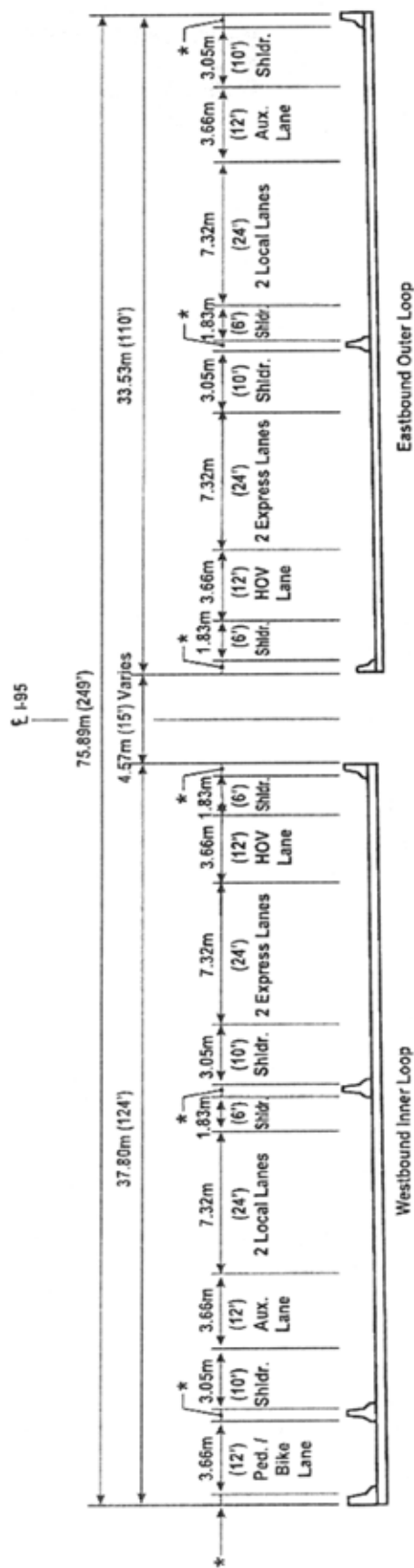
The interchanges at Telegraph Road, US 1, I-295, and MD 210, and the mainline of the Capital Beltway approaching these interchanges shall be reconstructed to allow for smoother traffic flow, increased access, and roadway widening. The specific interchange modifications are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of the 2000 Final SEIS. Table 2-1 in the 2000 Final SEIS compares the alternative design elements between the 1997 FEIS Alternative 4A and the Selected Alternative.

The full project includes HOV/express bus/rail transit lanes on the mainline, beginning immediately west of Telegraph Road in Virginia and extending east across the Potomac River and through the Maryland approach. As noted in the 1997 ROD, these lanes may be used for incident management and also may be temporarily needed for maintenance of traffic during construction. However, these lanes will not be open for normal use until connecting systems are in place on both sides of the Potomac River in Maryland and Virginia. Following extensive coordination with officials at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the interchanges, these lanes and the median will be designed to not preclude the future conversion to WMATA rail transit use when deemed appropriate by WMATA. Additional discussion of transit is included in Section 8 of this ROD.



WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE PROJECT
FHWA RECORD OF DECISION
Alignment of the Selected Alternative
Date June, 2000
Figure 2

Base map Source: U.S.G.S. - Alexandria, VA-DC-MD, 1994
- Anacostia, DC-MD, 1979



Current Design Alternative 4A

View Looking Toward Maryland From Virginia

WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE PROJECT		
FHWA RECORD OF DECISION		
Current Design Alternative 4A Typical Section		
Date June, 2000	Not to Scale	Figure 3

Similar to the 1997 FEIS Alternative 4A, the Selected Alternative includes provisions for several special design features, which are described below.

A deckover will be constructed over I-95/495 in the area of Washington Street in the City of Alexandria to provide opportunities for community enhancements, re-connect portions of southern Alexandria on either side of I-95/495, and provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). Since the 1997 FEIS, the Washington Street Urban Deck has been reconfigured and reduced in size based on coordination with the National Park Service, the City of Alexandria, and the Stakeholder Participation Panels. In addition, the sponsoring agencies continue to work with the Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the City of Alexandria, and others to create a fitting and appropriate memorial for Freedmen's Cemetery. Further design refinements related to the Washington Street Urban Deck to provide a gateway to the City of Alexandria and treatment to the GWMP will continue as part of the design phase and will provide opportunities for input from regulatory agencies, jurisdictions, and the public.

Another deckover will be constructed over I-95/495 on Rosalie Island in Prince George's County to provide passive recreational opportunities for users, offer vistas of the Potomac River, provide bicycle/pedestrian access across the Capital Beltway, and provide a gateway into Prince George's County. As prescribed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion (April 14, 2000), Rosalie Island north of the Maryland State Highway Administration right of way line on the north side of the Capital Beltway shall not be affected by the project. The section of the island owned by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission south of the existing bridge will be regraded and reconfigured for park use. The trails on this portion would connect trails on the mainland to the deckover structure and to the path on the north side of the mainline bridge. Further coordination, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, and Federal Highway Administration will take place prior to any development of the land currently owned by National Harbor on the southern end of Rosalie Island. A trail connecting the Potomac Heritage Trail on the Maryland mainland to the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park and a bicycle/pedestrian facility on the bridge would run generally parallel to the Capital Beltway mainline but would be located on structure approximately 200 feet south of the mainline over Smoots Cove. A conceptual plan identifying the deckover, trail connections to the Potomac Heritage Trail, the pedestrian/bicycle trail over the proposed bridge, and possible park amenities is included in Figure 2-6 of the 2000 Final SEIS. Further coordination with Prince George's County, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Maryland Stakeholder Participation Panel and other agencies as appropriate will continue to further define the deckover and the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park improvements on the south side of Rosalie Island.

A 3.7-meter (12-foot) wide pedestrian/bicycle facility as shown on Figure 3, would be included on the new bridge along the north side of the westbound or "Inner Loop" bridge and have connections to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Maryland and Virginia.

The construction for the proposed Woodrow Wilson Bridge includes demolition and removal of the existing bridge. The proposed southern bridge (outer loop) will be constructed first and traffic will be diverted to the new structure. Then, it is anticipated that portions of the existing bridge will be removed in order to complete the proposed northern bridge (inner loop). The proposed northern bridge overlaps the existing bridge near both the Maryland and Virginia shorelines, necessitating this sequence. As noted in the 2000 Final SEIS discussion of construction impacts, the construction schedules may change, for example, due to funding limitations, additional litigation, or construction phasing decisions.

3. Alternatives Considered

Prior to publication of the 1997 FEIS and ROD, a nearly four-year long alternatives development process evaluated over 350 potential solutions, including the six alternatives contained in the 1991 DEIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation. The solutions were narrowed to seven build alternatives based on extensive agency and public comments, and regulatory requirements. These alternatives, located on alignments adjacent to and south of the existing I-95/495 alignment included both bridge and tunnel crossings of the Potomac River. Other alignments were dismissed due to their potential for significant environmental and social impacts and their inability to satisfy the project's operational needs. Major transit improvements, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane implementation, and various other Transportation Systems Management (TSM) techniques were also evaluated as options to providing improved transportation operations. Each of these approaches was found to only slightly alleviate current congestion and would not adequately address projected future traffic congestion. Increased transit usage and HOV implementation were included as components of the traffic analyses for the development of the build alternatives.

The seven proposed build alternatives represented numerous iterations of refinements and modifications that sought to ensure adequate mobility, engineering feasibility and environmental sensitivity. The alternatives are described in detail and shown graphically in Chapter 2 of the 1997 FEIS. Although developed to accommodate the same transportation requirements, the alignment and/or structure of each alternative is unique. Each of the build alternatives included provisions for several special design features including an urban deck in the vicinity of the Washington Street crossing of the Capital Beltway, bicycle and pedestrian crossings (except for tunnels), and other enhancements, such as wetland replacement, landscaping and park improvements.

In addition to the build alternatives, the No-Build (or no action) alternative was also evaluated. This alternative assumed the existing six-lane Woodrow Wilson Bridge and its surrounding roadway network would remain in place, with little or no refinement, except such repairs and maintenance work as is required to maintain the existing transportation network. Inspection studies at that time concluded that the bridge could require major reconstruction if it was going to last beyond the 2004-2005 time frame.

In response to public comments on the 2000 Draft SEIS, an additional tunnel alternative, constructed using immersed concrete tunnel technology and longitudinal ventilation was investigated. The study examined the environmental impacts, costs, operational and safety

concerns, and schedule and constructability issues associated with this tunnel alternative. The study, presented as Attachment I of Appendix F of the 2000 Final SEIS, concluded that the benefits of an immersed tube concrete tunnel would, like any tunnel alternative, include elimination of most visual intrusions, elimination of river traffic disruptions, elimination of the additional cost for a Potomac River Waterfront Community Park deckover, and the return of the Potomac River to its pre-bridge environment. Those benefits, however, were greatly outweighed by the substantially greater environmental impacts, costs, operational issues and constructability challenges of the alternative. It was determined to be unnecessary to study an immersed tube concrete tunnel alternative in detail because the differences in ventilation and construction method of an immersed concrete tube tunnel would not substantially reduce the adverse impacts and increased cost that led to rejection of the tunnel alternative in 1997.

4. Ancillary Activities

Because the design of the bridge and interchanges included in the Selected Alternative was partially complete when the 2000 Final SEIS was prepared, it was possible to discuss the impacts associated with possible construction staging areas, dredge disposal sites, and wetland mitigation sites.

Normally, construction staging areas are not identified at the EIS stage of a project. However, due to the concern over the availability of potential sites, Federal Highway Administration attempted to identify potential staging areas after the 1997 ROD. Seventeen potential construction staging sites were identified and are listed in Table E-2 in Appendix E, on page E-5 of the 2000 Final SEIS. Five sites have been precluded from use because they function as recreational areas, are now developed, or as a result of Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation. Several of the sites identified are public parks or have a park component. Since it appears that there are feasible and prudent alternatives to using parkland for construction staging, Federal Highway Administration will not locate construction staging on parkland, with one exception, a 200-foot strip of bulkhead within in Jones Point Park as described on page 4-21 of the 2000 Final SEIS. This 200-foot strip is not subject to Section 4(f) because it meets the temporary use criteria of the 4(f) regulation, 23 CFR 771.135(p)(7): (1) The duration of the bulkhead's use will be less than the period required to construct the Project, and there will be no change in ownership of the land, (2) the nature and magnitude of any changes will be minimal, (3) there will be no permanent adverse physical impacts because the bulkhead will be protected during the staging period, (4) the bulkhead will be fully restored to a condition at least as good as that which exists today, and (5) the agreement of all agencies with jurisdiction will be documented prior to the start of construction. Because all of the regulatory requirements are met, the temporary use of the bulkhead will not constitute a "use" of property within the meaning of Section 4(f).

As a result of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maryland State Highway Administration right-of-way on the north side of Rosalie Island, and the northern portion of the potential construction staging area G2 (Waterfront Parcel) will be available for use only after July 15, 2001 to avoid potential impact to bald eagles.

The twelve sites remaining may be utilized as construction staging areas or the contractors may investigate and propose their own staging areas. Therefore, it is possible that some or none of the sites identified by Federal Highway Administration will be used. For any new site proposed by a contractor an environmental investigation/re-evaluation will be undertaken.

With regard to dredge disposal, an extensive alternative analysis of over 20 potential dredge material placement sites to determine the best placement option was conducted for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project. Through the extensive alternatives analysis, it was determined that Port Tobacco at Weanack (Weanack site), located in Charles City County, Virginia, is the preferred site for at least the initial phases of dredging. Similar to construction staging areas, an environmental investigation will be required if a contractor proposes another dredge placement site. The Weanack site is discussed further below.

Numerous possible wetland mitigation sites were also evaluated for environmental impacts and are discussed in the 2000 Final SEIS. Procedures for selecting sites and related conditions will be part of the final Compensatory Aquatic Resource Mitigation and Monitoring Package. The conceptual Package is discussed further in Section 6 of the ROD.

5. Section 4(f) Resources

The 1997 FEIS Alternative 4A used portions of five properties protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. These resources included historic districts, individual historic properties, and park/recreation areas. The Selected Alternative has similar or decreased uses of the same protected properties and also impacts portions of a historic property identified after the 1997 Section 4(f) Evaluation as a component of the newly-developed wetlands mitigation plan.

The final Section 4(f) Evaluations were found to be legally sufficient by Federal Highway Administration's Counsel on September 2, 1997 and April 14, 2000. The Selected Alternative, with the mitigation plan outlined below and described in more detail in Appendix G of the 2000 Final SEIS, remains the alternative with the least overall harm to Section 4(f) resources, with impacts that are less than or substantially similar to those of the other alternatives considered. Detailed information regarding the rejection of alternatives having greater impacts on Section 4(f) resources and/or not meeting the purpose and need of the project is located in the 1997 FEIS on pages S-14 through S-18, and Appendix D, and the 1997 ROD. The reasons for the rejection of those alternatives remain valid.

General measures used throughout the project corridor to reduce impacts to Section 4(f) properties included the use of retaining walls to minimize grading, the use of structures as opposed to fill, a reduction in the number of bridge piers to minimize physical and visual impacts, and alignment shifts to reduce encroachment. Additional efforts have been made to minimize the total width, and resulting footprint impacts, of the roadway and interchange elements of the project.

In addition, design goals were established for the Potomac River Bridge and have been included in the Selected Alternative. They were established with the goal of achieving a high quality bridge design in this important corridor. They include long spans to avoid the appearance of a forest of columns, appropriate pier placement to complement park uses and avoid impacts, a structure that encourages use of land under the bridge, and the encouragement of an arch design in the tradition of other notable Potomac River bridges. The Design Goals are described in more detail in Section 4.3.9 of the 1997 FEIS, Section 4.3.8 of the 2000 Final SEIS, and in the Section 106 Memorandum of

Agreement (MOA) presented as Attachment 1 of this ROD. The Section 106 MOA remains in effect for the project and will continue to govern the identification and treatment of all historic properties affected by the Selected Alternative. Federal Highway Administration will continue to monitor project design and construction to ensure that the requirements of the MOA are fully implemented.

The following discussion presents an overview of the conceptual mitigation plan developed for each specific Section 4(f) resource used by the project. These plans are in various stages of design and specific mitigation measures will continue to be finalized in consultation with appropriate agencies during the design phase:

Lee Recreation Center: The conceptual mitigation plan for the Lee Recreation Center includes the addition of landscaping to improve the buffer, or shield, between the Center and the Capital Beltway, modification of the rear parking area to replace the parking spaces lost along US 1, and the construction of noise walls. The design and extent of coverage of these noise walls will be coordinated with officials in the City of Alexandria during development of final mitigation plans for this site. The areas of impacts to Lee Recreation Center are identified on Figure 4-6 of the 2000 Final SEIS.

George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) / Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (MVMH) / Mount Vernon Trail: The existing Washington Street bridge over the Capital Beltway is a conventional modern concrete bridge and its replacement would not detract from the character or integrity of the Parkway since this part of the Parkway is already urbanized and disturbed by the Capital Beltway. With the construction of the Selected Alternative, visual quality of the GWMP is expected to be enhanced and a gateway provided through construction of the Washington Street Urban Deck over the Capital Beltway on both sides of the George Washington Memorial Parkway/Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Rather than a view of the Capital Beltway, the Parkway would be bordered by additional green space. The Washington Street Urban Deck would also incorporate a connection between the Mount Vernon Trail and the pedestrian/bicycle facility on the new bridge.

Alexandria Historic District/Jones Point Park/Jones Point Lighthouse/District of Columbia Cornerstone: The conceptual mitigation/enhancement plan consists of park improvements, improvements along the shoreline, and historic preservation/interpretation, as discussed below.

Park improvements would include realigning and improving the entrance drive to the park, landscaping the area between the entrance drive and the new bridge to soften the appearance of the structure, parking lot reconfiguration (the City's employee parking will be maintained), a park information sign, paved and unpaved trails, and other amenities such as bike racks and water fountains.

Shoreline improvements would include bulkhead extension under the new bridges and shoreline stabilization near the District of Columbia Cornerstone.

Historic site enhancements would include interpretation of centuries of human occupation within Jones Point, beginning with Native American occupations in 1000 BC. The Washington Street Urban Deck will connect to Jones Point Park via a pedestrian/bike path.

Noise barriers to protect all of Jones Point Park would not be feasible, as it would require construction of barriers crossing the movable portion of the bridge, which is not practical. Reducing the length of the barriers would reduce their effectiveness, but would still provide some noise reduction to the park. A final decision on constructing the barriers will not be made until more detailed analyses are conducted on the costs of the barriers relative to their benefits, the relative benefits of noise reduction versus other impacts of the barriers such as visual intrusion and safety hazards, and consideration of the opinions and desires of local residents and government representatives. This decision will be made in accordance with the established Virginia Department of Transportation noise policy, which includes public input and involvement prior to the completion of design.

Architectural and aesthetic treatments of the bridge structure will be developed in accordance with the design goals established for the project (see Section 4.3.9 of the 1997 FEIS and the Section 106 MOA) during the design phase in consultation with local officials and citizens.

Federal Highway Administration will convey 4.18 hectares (10.32 acres) of land (see Figure 4-7A of the 2000 Final SEIS) to the National Park Service. This donation will consolidate the three discontinuous areas of Jones Point Park under the sole jurisdiction of the National Park Service. In addition, the mitigation plan includes the following additional elements beyond those described in the 1997 FEIS: hard surface courts and play areas; playgrounds and play equipment; public restroom and water fountain; open, active and passive recreation areas; nature and interpretive trails; and other miscellaneous elements.

The Federal Highway Administration believes the impacts to Jones Point Park have been adequately identified based upon the level of design detail conducted to date and appropriate for this stage of project development, and that the conceptual mitigation plan incorporates all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resource.

Potomac River Waterfront Community Park (formerly known as Queen Anne's Park – Future): The conceptual mitigation plan continues to evolve and focuses on providing a gateway to the State of Maryland and bicycle/pedestrian trail connections, as well as enhancements to southern portions of Rosalie Island to provide for recreational opportunities. The final concept for this resource will include a continuous pedestrian/bikeway pathway from the south side of the I-295 interchange over to a pathway on the new bridge, pathway connections, surface parkland features and amenities on the southern portion of the island and a deck over the Capital Beltway to link the north and south half of the island. The northern portion of the island outside of Maryland State Highway Administration right-of-way would remain unaltered. The deckover would provide connections to the Potomac Heritage Trail, Rosalie Island to the south of the bridge, and the pedestrian/bicycle facility on the new bridge and it would serve as an observation area providing views of the Potomac River.

The mitigation plan is not yet finalized due to recent changes in mitigation requirements that came to light in April 2000 to protect threatened bald eagles and sensitive fish habitat. Specifically, since the 2000 Draft SEIS, consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act has occurred regarding impacts to bald eagle foraging habitat located on Rosalie Island. This consultation has resulted in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issuing a Biological Opinion on the Bald Eagle (see Appendix H in the 2000 Final SEIS) with specific terms and conditions that the Project must adhere to during the design and construction phase. Furthermore, coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of the Environment over aquatic resources in Smoots Cove has resulted in the inclusion of a pedestrian/bicycle path supported on structure over Smoots Cove that will ultimately connect the Potomac Heritage Trail on the mainland with Rosalie Island and the pedestrian/bicycle facility on the new bridge. The Capital Beltway and associated ramps will be supported by retaining wall in this area.

Federal Highway Administration will finalize the mitigation plan for the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park and deckover in further coordination with Prince George's County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and other regulatory and local agencies. Based on the results of this coordination, if determined necessary, Federal Highway Administration will seek additional mitigation measures to offset Section 4(f) use of the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park beyond the amenities and improvements proposed within the park. These measures may consist of replacement lands within Prince George's County and close to the project area and/or providing amenities to existing parks serving the affected communities. A Memorandum of Understanding is expected to be developed as part of this coordination effort and signed by the participating agencies.

Oxon Cove Park/Oxon Hill Farm: Measures to minimize impacts to Oxon Cove Park (illustrated in Figure 4-11 and 4-12 of the 2000 Final SEIS) include reducing the size of the encroachment by using retained fill rather than unretained fill material and retaining walls to reduce the width of the fill area and extent of excavation. Mitigation measures currently being discussed with the National Park Service could include the construction of a landscaped buffer in the vicinity of the Capital Beltway retaining wall at the Oxon Hill Farm parking area as visual screening. Federal Highway Administration also investigated the construction of a new entrance for the Children's Farm, but the National Park Service ultimately decided to retain the existing entrance via Bald Eagle Road.

Rock Creek Park Historic District: As described in Sections 3.8 and 4.8 and Appendices B and G of the 2000 Final SEIS, Rock Creek Park, which encompasses the Rock Creek Park Historic District is located within the District of Columbia, and is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. As part of the project's Conceptual Compensatory Aquatic Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Package for Waters of the United States impacts (presented in Appendix B of the 2000 Final SEIS) and at the request of the regulatory agencies, aquatic resources within Rock Creek Park will be enhanced. The Federal Highway Administration proposes the removal of nine fish blockages to restore historic spawning areas to anadromous and resident fish within Rock Creek (refer to

Section 4.7.4 and Appendix B of the 2000 Final SEIS). The National Park Service supports the removal of fish blockages in Rock Creek as part of its overall objective to enhance the natural qualities of the Park, as referenced in the National Park Service letter of May 25, 1999. The Federal Highway Administration has determined that some options of the proposed fish passage improvements within Rock Creek Park will have an adverse effect on the Rock Creek Historic District through the alteration of three contributing elements to the district: Pierce Mill Dam, Active Sanitary Sewer line RC7 and Milkhouse Ford. The proposed improvements could be considered a "use" under Section 4(f); therefore a Section 4(f) Evaluation is included in Appendix G of the 2000 Final SEIS.

To minimize the physical and visual effects of the fish blockage removal activities on the Rock Creek Historic District, the following measures are provided:

- Salvage of stone from the Pierce Mill Dam to be used in the reconstruction of the dam as needed. All reconstruction will be conducted in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- Treatment of the retaining walls and visible portions of the fish ladder at Pierce Mill Dam with rough cut stone to match the existing stone and in keeping with the rustic historic character.
- Documentation and interpretation of historic fish runs and anadromous and resident fish species that used Rock Creek as habitat and spawning areas prior to and after construction of Pierce Mill Dam and other fish passage impediments within Rock Creek.
- Slope stabilization and landscaping of the banks after construction of the fish ladder at Pierce Mill Dam.
- Use of boulders similar in color and size to those existing in the creek bed to create a natural appearance.
- Other mitigation measures developed in consultation with the National Park Service and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer based on correspondence received from the National Park Service on April 13, 2000 and the DC SHPO on May 24, 2000. These mitigation measures could include, for example, the use of masons with have experience in restoration of historic structures to replace and restore historic features, installation of fish run observation areas adjacent to the blockage removals, and educational opportunities associated with anadromous fish spawning viewing and interpretation.

Based on the Section 4(f) Evaluation, it has been determined that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to the use of land from the Rock Creek Historic District, Pierce Mill Dam, Active Sanitary Sewer line RC7 and Milkhouse Ford, and that all possible planning to minimize harm to these resources has been incorporated into the project.

Constructive Use

Federal Highway Administration considered noise, visual, traffic, and other impacts to all Section 4(f) properties in the project area. There is no constructive use of any Section 4(f) property by the project.

Other Historic and Recreation Properties

Freedmen's (Contraband) Cemetery: The 1997 ROD committed to not use the Cemetery. This commitment has been upheld. Based on the definition of the southern, western, and eastern boundaries of the cemetery within the project's Area of Potential Effects, Federal Highway Administration has determined that this historic property will not be impacted by the construction of the proposed Washington Street Urban Deck or any other proposed construction activities associated with the project, including the replacement of the Washington Street bridge. These actions will not disturb any soils within the boundaries of the cemetery. In addition, an appropriate memorial area, to be designated in consultation with the Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery group, will be included on or near the site.

Butler House: None of the alternatives would physically impact this resource. Further, there will be no substantial impairment to the historic qualities of the property due to the proximity of the Selected Alternative. Therefore, the Selected Alternative would not result in a Section 4(f) use at this location.

Shirley Plantation National Historic Landmark: As discussed on page 8 of this ROD, Federal Highway Administration has selected the Port Tobacco at Weanack reclamation site to receive dredge removed from the Potomac River during the first construction season. The Port Tobacco at Weanack site is located within Shirley Plantation, a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a National Historic Landmark. Federal Highway Administration does not believe that the temporary work required at Weanack to dispose of the dredge is a "use" of the Shirley Plantation for a transportation project as defined under Section 4(f). In accordance with the applicable regulation for temporary use, 23 CFR 771.135(p)(7), the Federal Highway Administration has determined: (1) The duration of the disposal work will be less than the period required to construct the Project, and there will be no change in ownership of the land, (2) the nature and magnitude of any changes to the property will be minimal because the previously-mined area to be filled is not visible from the Plantation house, and the disposal will benefit the Plantation by restoring the appearance and functionality of the landscape (using a material historically used for fill), (3) there will be no permanent adverse physical impacts, including no "adverse effect" to the Plantation as defined under the National Historic Preservation Act and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer agreed that the disposal of material will not diminish the integrity of the resource, and (4) all areas of the Plantation impacted by the disposal activities will be fully restored to a condition at least as good as that which exists today. The fifth criteria under the regulation is not applicable because the Plantation is privately owned. Because all of the regulatory requirements are met, the disposal at Weanack is not a "use" of property within the meaning of Section 4(f).

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (Proposed): Conceptual mitigation measures include the redesign/ realignment and construction of the proposed trail through the project area. A mitigation plan has been developed incorporating the Potomac Heritage Trail into the future Potomac River Waterfront Community Park. The Potomac Heritage Trail would pass over the Capital Beltway on the deckover and would have a connection to the pedestrian/bicycle facility on the new bridge. The

crossing would be designed to maintain vistas of the Potomac River and allow safe passage for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Flintstone Elementary School: The revised design of the proposed ramp in the northeast quadrant of the MD 210/Capital Beltway interchange has minimized the impacts to the school property by eliminating impacts to the recreational areas. Approximately 0.04 hectares (0.1 acres) of a wooded area is now required from the Flintstone Elementary School property. This will not impact the school playground or the outdoor recreation areas and, therefore, does not constitute a Section 4(f) use. However, due to the proximity of the school to the Capital Beltway, the Federal Highway Administration has developed a conceptual enhancement plan for the school property. The plan calls for several amenities such as the addition of up to 0.7 hectares (1.7 acres) of land from the adjoining unused property currently owned by Maryland State Highway Administration, the regrading of a portion of the school grounds to provide for enhanced drainage, and the addition of noise walls along the Capital Beltway and off-ramp in the northeast quadrant of the interchange. Further consultation with the school, Prince George's County Board of Education, and adjacent residents, will occur before a final plan is prepared.

6. Measures to Minimize Harm

Since the execution of the Section 106 MOA (included as Attachment 1), the Federal Highway Administration has proceeded with its implementation. Stipulation I, development of the *Historic Resources Identification and Evaluation Report, Alexandria, Virginia* has been completed. Stipulation II on the Project Design and Review is on-going, involving review and consultation with the Project's Design Review Working Group. Federal Highway Administration is also continuing to implement the remaining stipulations of the Section 106 MOA. Specific actions taken in the implementation of the Section 106 MOA stipulations have been detailed in biannual progress reports developed by Federal Highway Administration and submitted to the parties to the Section 106 MOA. These progress reports were generated pursuant to Stipulation XI A of the Section 106 MOA. Copies of all of the progress reports generated to date are included in Appendix D of the 2000 Final SEIS.

A comprehensive mitigation package is being developed to address impacts to aquatic resources. The main components of the package include nontidal and tidal wetland creation and enhancement, fish blockage removal, in-kind SAV creation, riparian buffer creation, shoreline stabilization, and juvenile fish habitat creation. Additional information with respect to compensatory mitigation can be found in the Conceptual Compensatory Aquatic Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Package for Impacts to Waters of the United States contained in Appendix B of the 2000 Final SEIS. Out-of-kind mitigation opportunities that are closer to the project area will be considered by the regulatory and resource agencies as compensation for SAV impacts in Maryland instead of searching for new tidal creation sites even farther away from the project area. This methodology will provide an opportunity to restore historic aquatic functions to an urbanized watershed. Conditions related to the development of the final Compensatory Aquatic Resource Mitigation and Monitoring Package will be included in the Section 404 Permit.

Mitigation measures for park and recreation lands are outlined in the Section 4(f) Evaluation contained in Appendix F of the 1997 FEIS, Appendix G of the 2000 Final SEIS, and Section 5 of this ROD.

The mitigation commitments and other considerations associated with the Selected Alternative have been consolidated into a 2000 Commitments/Considerations list found in Attachment 2. This list has been provided to the General Engineering Consultant and to the design consultants and will be provided to the construction contractors to ensure that the mitigation commitments are incorporated into final design plans and implemented during construction. It should be noted that this list does not refer to all minor permits and clearances that are routinely obtained by the contractor during construction and typically are not addressed as part of the federal environmental review process.

The terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion for the Bald Eagle and Hay's Spring Amphipod and the Shortnose Sturgeon Biological Assessment will be applied to this project. The terms and conditions for the Bald Eagle in the Biological Opinion include: restricted use of potential construction staging area G1 (Beltway Parcel); restricted use of the northernmost portion of potential construction staging area site G2 (Waterfront Parcel) until after July 1, 2001; and required relocation of the existing haul road on potential construction staging area site G2 (Waterfront Parcel) between July 15 and November 15. Relocation of the haul road is to provide a larger buffer from the nest tree and would occur only if the site is selected for use by a contractor. Federal Highway Administration and the states have also agreed to restricted use of the Maryland State Highway Administration right of way on the north side of Rosalie Island until after July 1, 2001 and restricted use of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission property on the south side of Rosalie Island until after April 1, 2001, and to conserve approximately 10 acres of eagle habitat within the region.

Potential project related impacts to shortnose sturgeon include possible direct impacts to the fish during dredging and bridge demolition. In order to obtain a determination of no adverse effect upon the resource, National Marine Fisheries Service required the use of mechanical dredging as opposed to hydraulic dredging, and the use of mitigation techniques during underwater blasting. Mechanical dredging is prohibited between February 15 and October 15. The no adverse effect determination also applies to underwater blasting associated with demolition of the existing bridge in accordance with requirements prescribed in the Biological Assessment. These requirements include several time-of-year restrictions as well as conditional blast design requirements, blast pressure wave maximums, and limited use of specified structural protection.

In general, underwater blasting is not permitted between February 15 and July 1. Restricted underwater blasting is permitted between July 2 and September 15. Unrestricted underwater blasting is permitted between September 16 and February 14. All underwater blasting within the restricted period is required to comply with the specified conditions as found in the Biological Assessment. In addition, structural protection, such as double-walled dewatered cofferdams, are required within the zone of mortality (comprising the nine existing in-water piers beginning from the west riverbank) during the restricted underwater blasting period.

Removal of debris from the river bottom is also required to follow the underwater blasting schedule. No removal of debris is allowed from February 15 to July 1. Removal during the restricted period (July 2-September 15) is restricted to removal of large debris only by means of grapple and maximum sediment suspension reduction techniques if alternate methods of debris removal are used. There are no restrictions on debris removal between September 16 and February 14.

The Biological Opinion is presented in Appendix H of the 2000 Final SEIS and the Final Shortnose Sturgeon Biological Assessment may be viewed in the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project Offices. Based on the information provided above, Federal Highway Administration has determined that all practicable measures to minimize harm have been included in the project.

7. Monitoring and Enforcement Program

As part of the commitment to continue efforts to minimize project impacts, many monitoring and coordination efforts were proposed in the 1997 ROD and the 1997 Section 106 MOA. An independent environmental compliance monitor(s) will provide environmental compliance monitoring for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. In addition, this person(s) will report progress directly to the regulatory agencies and the sponsoring agencies concurrently. A separate team of environmental inspectors and state agency representatives will be used to support and assist the sponsoring agencies in their environmental compliance monitoring efforts. A monitoring protocol for the independent environmental compliance monitor and the environmental inspectors will be established for the project. Monitoring programs will consist primarily of those conditions of the applicable environmental regulations. To ensure compliance with the appropriate Federal and State regulations, all necessary permits will be obtained prior to construction. Environmental monitoring and inspection will ensure compliance with, but not limited to, the following laws:

- Sections 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 403)
- General Bridge Act of 1946 (USC 525-533)
- Sections 401/404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344)
- Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Consistency Act (16 USC 1451)
- Title 27, Subtitle 02, Chapter 05 of the Environmental Article, Annotated Code of Maryland
- Title 5, Subtitle 9 of the Environmental Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; Title 26, Subtitle 23 of the Code of Maryland Regulations
- Title 16 of the Environmental Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; Title 26, Subtitle 24 of the Code of Maryland Regulations; Title 23, Subtitle 02, Chapter 04 of the Code of Maryland Regulations
- Title 5, Subtitle 5 of the Environmental Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; Title 26, Subtitle 17, Chapter 04 of the Code of Maryland Regulations
- Title 62.1 Chapter 3 Code of Virginia
- Title 28.2 chapter 12 and 13 Laws of Virginia Relating to the Marine Resources of the Commonwealth
- Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531)
- Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470)
- Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (15 USC 2601)

- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 USC 9601)
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 USC 6901)
- Federal –Aid Highways Act (23 USC 109) and all applicable FHWA regulations (23 CFR)
- Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401)
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (23 U.S.C. 138)

The 2000 Final SEIS serves as the Federal Section 404/10 permit application.

The U.S. Coast Guard requires a General Bridge Permit for projects that construct or modify bridges or causeways that affect navigation on navigable waterways, including the Potomac River. The permit application was submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard in December 1999 and approval is anticipated in July 2000.

Any other required permits, such as NPDES and sediment erosion control, will be sought during final design, prior to construction.

8. Comments on the 2000 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation

The Notice of Availability of the 2000 Final SEIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 28, 2000 with the period of availability ending on May 30, 2000, a 32-day period of availability. The Notice was also posted on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge website and identified locations where copies of the document were available for public review, including the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project offices, 16 local libraries and at other state and local government offices. Copies of the 2000 Final SEIS were provided to agencies, organizations, and individuals identified in Chapter 7 of the 2000 Final SEIS for review and comment.

A total of 21 comment letters were received on the 2000 Final SEIS. The comment letters have been reproduced and are presented with the corresponding responses in Attachment 3 to this ROD.

Comments were received from the following agencies, organizations and individuals:

Federal Agencies

U.S. Department of the Commerce, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard

Maryland Agencies

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
State of Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission

Virginia Agencies

Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation
Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Environmental Quality

Local Agencies

Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Prince George's County Government

Citizens

Karen Y. Egloff
Philip and Gwenaëlle Martson
Mrs. G. L. Price
Douglas A. Willinger

Interest Groups, Civic Associations, and Advocacy Organizations

1000 Friends of Maryland
The Coalition for a Sensible Bridge Project, Inc.
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Friends of Jones Point
Friends of Oxon Hill
Georgetown University Law Center Institute for Public Participation on behalf of the
Sierra Club
Porto Vecchio Condominium Owner's Association

The Federal Highway Administration considered all of the identified issues and all other pertinent factors while preparing the 2000 Final SEIS, and determined that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of land from various Section 4(f) resources and that the Selected Alternative includes all possible planning to minimize harm.

Three issues were raised repeatedly in the comments received on the 2000 Final SEIS. They related to rail transit, a tunnel alternative, and the number of lanes. Consideration of each of these issues are presented below.

Rail Considerations: The Selected Alternative is being designed with the flexibility and structural strength to add rail transit in the future, which could utilize two of the project's 12 lanes designated specifically for HOV/express bus transit use when connecting systems are in place in Maryland and Virginia. This provision is in direct response to the recommendations of the Federal Highway Administration, the Coordination Committee (refer to 1997 FEIS), and elected local officials to address the region's future mobility and quality of life issues. The Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) is the official intermodal metropolitan transportation plan for the area developed through a planning process for the Washington metropolitan area as defined by MWCOC. The current CLRP budget does not include construction of rail transit in the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project area.

There is, however, a line item for a planning study of transit (options include HOV, light rail, heavy rail, and express bus service) from Branch Avenue to Alexandria as part of the ongoing Capital Beltway studies.

Implementation of rail transit in the project area is under the jurisdiction of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). WMATA plans for extension of rail service are identified in their April 1999 *Transit Service Expansion Plan*. The *Plan* presents WMATA goals for the next 25 years and identifies station and guideway projects to be studied to meet these goals. Rail service in the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project area and rail service across the Potomac River are included in the list of potential extensions. Transit ridership forecasts for the year 2020, (reported in the *Woodrow Wilson Bridge Study Transportation Technical Report* and the *Supplemental Draft EIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation*, published in January 1996) identified a reduction in vehicular traffic of 1,500 vehicles per day with the implementation of express bus service and 3,500 vehicles per day with the implementation of rail transit. Updated draft transit numbers from the Maryland State Highway Administration were more recently considered. While the transit projection for 2020 has increased, there is still not enough ridership to justify a decision to go exclusively with transit in the eleveneth and twelfth lanes at this time. The WMATA studies will continue to consider this issue.

Tunnel Alternative Consideration: The 1997 FEIS addressed in detail a tunnel alternative. At that time, the projected environmental impacts of a tunnel (particularly from dredging) exceeded those of the different bridge options. In response to public testimony received at the February 2000 public hearings and comments on the 2000 Draft SEIS, Attachment I of the 2000 Final SEIS was prepared and presented a detailed and exhaustive analysis of a tunnel concept outlined by a European general contractor. Proposed in lieu of the planned bridge replacement for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, this attachment contrasts the “new” tunnel concept, a previously evaluated tunnel concept (Alternative 2; 1997 FEIS), and the current bridge project (The Selected Alternative; 2000 Draft SEIS).

Repeating portions of the Executive Summary of this report, and presented in Attachment I of the 2000 Final SEIS, the evaluation focused on four major criteria:

- Environment (what natural and human environmental resources will be affected?)
- Cost (how much would it cost to build, operate, and maintain?)
- Operations/Safety (how would the new facility function?)
- Constructability (how can it be built and over what time period?)

The report demonstrated that the “new” tunnel concept is a variation of the previously-evaluated immersed concrete tube construction technique. An immersed concrete tube tunnel was eliminated from consideration based on higher environmental impacts relative to other tunnel techniques. Consequently, the report confirmed that the immersed concrete tube concept would present additional environmental challenges beyond those that were apparent for the “cut-and-cover” tunnel concept that was studied in the 1997 FEIS. Ultimately, the “cut-and-cover” tunnel concept was also eliminated from consideration, due in part to environmental and cost considerations. A detailed analysis of the “new” tunnel concept, the previously evaluated tunnel, and the Selected Alternative can be found in the 2000 Final SEIS. The findings of this report support the Selected Alternative.


Number of Lanes: The 12-lane typical section presented in the 2000 Final SEIS has been identified as the Selective Alternative and consists of eight general use lanes to match the existing I-95/495, two HOV/express bus/rail transit lanes to match those under consideration on connecting systems, and two merging/diverging lanes (one in each direction between the US 1 and I-295 interchanges). The two merge/diverging lanes will ease entering and exiting I-95/495, particularly on the Potomac River crossing between the US 1 and I-295 interchanges. This section has been referred to as the "8+2+2" typical section and is referenced in Figure 3. The lanes would be configured in a divided express/local roadway system allowing for the physical separation of local and through traffic. The HOV lanes and shoulder are of a sufficient width and structural strength to allow for their future conversion to WMATA rail transit use. At this time, it appears that HOV traffic will use the eleventh and twelfth lanes on the facility once HOV connecting systems are in place, and will operate until there is a regional decision for rail to replace the HOV lanes. At that time the HOV traffic would be shifted to the other vehicular travel lanes.

All build alternatives considered in detail in the EIS contain 12 lanes because that is the minimum number that can effectively handle the traffic projected for the year 2020. As explained in detail in Chapter 2 of the 1997 FEIS, several 10 lane variations were studied but eliminated because they could not satisfy the future traffic needs, which is a crucial element of the purpose and need for the Project. In the 2000 Final SEIS, the year 2020 traffic model was updated with current demographics and other information from the official regional forecasting agency. With the updated figures, the daily traffic projection for 2020 decreased slightly (less than 2 percent). Even with this decrease, the 10 lane alternative still fails to meet the purpose and need because safety would not be significantly improved and traffic during peak periods would be substantially worse than with the Selected Alternative.

The selection of a 12-lane alternative was challenged in the Courts. After an initial adverse decision in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in April 1999, in December the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld the elimination of 10 lane alternatives. Motions for rehearing and rehearing en banc were denied in early 2000. A petition for certiorari to the Supreme Court, filed in June 2000, is pending at the time of this ROD.

Date

6/16/00


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