



George Washington Regional Commission
406 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401
(540) 373-2890
Fax (540) 899-4808
www.gwregion.org

Tim Ware
Executive Director

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Request for Assistance (Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge Replacement Project)

Dear Governor Hogan:

I am writing on behalf of the George Washington Regional Commission to express our concerns regarding the plans for the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge Replacement Project.

BACKGROUND. The Harry W. Nice Bridge, located on U.S. 301, is a 1.7-mile bridge that spans the Potomac River between King George County, VA and Charles County, MD. Its two lanes service 6.6 million vehicles annually, and the bridge is the second oldest facility in the Maryland Transportation Authority's (MDTA) inventory. In 2006, the MDTA reviewed the Nice Bridge's limited capacity, negative impacts on traffic, and effects on public safety. The MDTA concluded with an initiative to replace the current bridge with a wider four-lane structure.

CONCERNS. Since announcing its "selected alternate" in 2012, the MDTA planned for the bridge's replacement to include a barrier-separated shared-use path and road shoulders wide enough to accommodate vehicle breakdowns. Unfortunately, the MDTA has recently announced the development of a "practical design" with no vehicle breakdown lanes and the option to remove the barrier-separated shared-use path.

We understand that this "practical option" is but one of a few alternatives that the MDTA is considering. However, we fear the MDTA may prioritize cutting costs over the burden a cheaper option would place on our region. Failing to install wider shoulders will only serve to reinforce the traffic congestion King George County suffers on a recurring basis.

Currently, a single accident can shut down this major interstate thoroughfare for hours. This is especially troublesome as the Virginia Department of Transportation is ramping up its promotion of U.S. 301 as an alternative to the soon-to-be project laden Interstate 95.

Removal of the barrier-separated shared-use path is additionally bothersome. In addition to quality of life concerns, the MDTA's practical design option plays a key role in our regional planning. Currently, the Nice

Bridge serves as a critical connection between multiple legs in the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a tourism attraction that spans both Virginia and Maryland. In January, the George Washington Regional Commission jurisdictions of King George County, Stafford County and the City of Fredericksburg signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Park Service designating the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail through our region. The route includes a connection to the Nice Bridge, so users can access the Maryland portion of the trail network. Although currently an on-road route, this connection will eventually be a paved shared-use path adjacent to U.S. 301. If the MDTA moves forward without bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the Nice Bridge, there will not be a safe way for trail users to access the other side of the Potomac River in this region.

REQUEST. The George Washington Regional Commission would like for the MDTA to consider the repercussions the Nice Bridge Replacement Project will have on our region. As such, we are asking to remove any options that fail to include safe bicycle and pedestrian access and vehicular breakdown lanes. We humbly request your assistance with achieving that aim.

I appreciate your consideration. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kelly
Chairman





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The Honorable Terence "Terry" McAuliffe
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

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Paul Milde
FAMPO Chairman

Paul Agnello
FAMPO Administrator

September 18, 2017

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Request for Assistance (Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge Replacement Project)

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