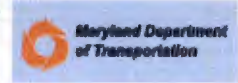




**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers**
Baltimore District

Public Notice



In Reply to Application Number:

CENAB-OP-RMN (MD SHA/US 219/I-68 to Old Salisbury Road)
2005-00415-M15

PN 16- 69

COMMENT PERIOD: December 23, 2016 through February 16, 2017

THE PURPOSE OF THIS JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE IS TO ANNOUNCE THE SCHEDULING OF A JOINT MDOT/SHA AND CORPS PUBLIC HEARING, AND TO SOLICIT COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE WORK DESCRIBED BELOW. AT THIS TIME, NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT PERMITS WILL BE ISSUED. THE CORPS/MDOT/SHA HEARING WILL BE HELD AT THE FOLLOWING TIME AND LOCATION:

January 23, 2017*
Grantsville Elementary School
120 Grant Street
Grantsville, MD 21536
6:00 pm-7:00 pm Poster Session
7:00 pm Public Hearing

*There is a snow date of January 30, 2017, if Garrett County public schools are closed or if the county's snow emergency plan is in effect. There is a second snow date of February 6, 2017.

The US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (Corps) and the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (SHA) joint public hearing provide members of the public the opportunity to present views, opinions, and information which will be considered by the COE in evaluating the permit application. The purpose of the hearing is for the Corps and SHA to receive oral or written comments that will enable them to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project on the public interest. All interested parties, including representatives of Federal, State, and local governments and private individuals and organizations, are invited to be present or to be represented. Each will be given an opportunity to express their views regarding the proposed project.

Prior to the public hearing, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm, a poster session will be held where the public will have an opportunity to review exhibits and ask general questions of the applicant, SHA, and their representatives. Representatives from the COE will also be available during the poster session. Beginning at 7:00 pm, the formal public hearing will begin with agency statements, a brief project overview of the project alternatives, a summary of environmental impacts, information on right-of-way acquisition and relocation assistance procedures and an explanation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and related legislation as part of SHA's Equal Opportunity Program. Public Testimony will follow the project overview. The public hearing will be recorded and transcribed.

Anyone who is hearing impaired and/or is non-English speaking; who wishes to attend the public hearings should notify Mr. Jack Dinne at 410-962-6005 or in writing to his address below. All requests for an oral, sign language, or non-English language interpreter must be received by January 5, 2017. To the extent possible and feasible, an interpreter will be provided.

The Corps has received and is evaluating a joint permit application as described below for Department of the Army authorization pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

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APPLICANT: Maryland State Highway Administration
Attn: Mr. Todd Nichols
707 North Calvert Street Mailstop –C-303
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

LOCATION: The proposed 1.4 mile project is located in Grantsville, Garrett County, Maryland from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road. Waterways that are to be impacted include unnamed tributaries to Meadow Run.

WORK: The SHA proposes to construct an upgraded I-68/US 219 Interchange and approximately 1.4 miles of upgraded or relocated US 219. SHA is currently considering one no-build alternative and three build alternatives. The alternatives are described below:

Alternative 1: The No-Build Alternative, serves as a baseline for comparison with the various built alternatives.

Alternative 2: Alternative 2 proposes widening US 219 from just north of the I-68 interchange by providing two 12-foot-wide through lanes in each direction of travel, divided by a raised median ranging in width from two feet to sixteen feet, and will transition back to a two lane roadway to a point near Old Salisbury Road. Median openings with left turn lanes are provided on US 219 to facilitate full traffic movement at major commercial entrance or exit points as well as allow for u-turning movements for vehicles. A dedicated right-turn lane is maintained for the Pilot Travel Center and channelized lanes for right –turning movements are provided at the intersection of US 219 and US 40 Alternate. Alternative 2 would impact approximately 456 linear feet of streams and 0.5 acres of nontidal wetlands.

Alternative 3: Alternative 3 proposes to modify existing US 219 between I-68 and US 40 Alternate by providing two 12-foot wide through lanes in each direction of travel, separated by a variable width raised median. Just north of the Pilot Travel Center, US 219 transitions into the proposed two-lane roundabout and provides direct access to the Pilot Travel Center, existing US 219 and US 40 Alternate, and the new US 219; where the new proposed four-lane roadway will bridge over US 40 Alternate and continue approximately one mile before tying into existing US 219 near the entrance to the proposed Casselman Farm Development site. The new alignment of US 219 features two 12-foot wide travel lanes in each direction, and is divided by a 28-foot wide grass median. Alternative 3 would impact approximately 979 linear feet of streams and 1.1 acres of nontidal wetlands.

Alternative 4: Alternative 4 proposes a new roadway alignment and begins near the I-68 interchange, as a two-lane roundabout replaces the existing intersection at US 219 and the I-68 westbound on and off ramps, and will loop around the Pilot Travel Center as a four-lane divided highway where it crosses over US 40 Alternate via a bridge and continues along a new alignment for approximately one mile before it ties back into existing US 219 near the entrance to the proposed Casselman Farm Development site. The new alignment of US 219 features two 12-foot wide travel lanes in each direction, and is divided by a 28-foot wide grass median. The current exit ramp from I-68 westbound to US 219 is realigned with I-68 and lengthened to pass under the existing bridge over I-68 and tie-in to the western side of the new roundabout in a partial cloverleaf configuration. The travel lane for each ramp is 15-foot wide. The exit ramp transitions into two access lanes closer to the roundabout and vary in width from 12- to 14-feet. Alternative 4 would impact approximately 4,205 linear feet of stream and 1.4 acres of nontidal wetlands.

SHA has proposed to provide compensatory mitigation for unavoidable permanent impacts to wetlands and streams near the existing I-68 and US 219 Interchange. The exact type and amount of proposed compensatory mitigation will be based upon the alternative selected by SHA.

Additional information concerning the proposed project and the design alternatives being considered by SHA can be found at www.US219NorthMD.com.

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this project is to provide transportation improvements that are responsive to planned economic development and address safety conditions.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: To be included in the official record, written comments and information provided by interested parties must be received by the Corps by the closing date of this notice's comment period, February 16, 2017, to receive consideration. The mailing address for submission of written comments is:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District
Attn: Mr. Jack Dinne, CENAB-OPR-M
10 South Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Jack Dinne, Corps at (410) 962-6005 or by email at john.j.dinne@usace.army.mil.

The decision whether to issue a DA permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which may reasonably be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economic, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, and consideration of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The evaluation of the impact of the work described above on the public interest will include the application of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Comments are being solicited from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny each agency's permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used by in the preparation of a Corps Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments provided will become part of the public record for this action. Comments are also used to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

SECTION 401 WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: The applicant is required to obtain a Water Quality Certification, (WQC) in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from MDE, the Section 401 certifying agency. Any written comments concerning the work described above which relate to the WQC must be received by the Wetlands and Waterways Program, Maryland Department of the Environment, Montgomery Park Business Center, 1800 Washington Boulevard, Suite 430, Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1708 within the comment period as specified above to receive consideration. MDE has a statutory limit of one year from the date of this public notice to make its decision.

The applicant must obtain any other State and local permits/approvals which are required for the proposed activities.

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The preliminary review of the application indicates that the proposed work could impact the federally threatened Northern Long-eared bat and the federally endangered Indiana bat. These impacts will be resolved through development of a US Fish and Wildlife Biological Opinion to ensure that the project will have no effect on federally listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended.

SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other interested and consulting parties, has identified two historic properties and one archeological district in the area of potential effects that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These resources are the Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows (897 acres), the National Road (US 40 Alternate) and the Little Meadows Archeological District. Impacts range from 1.1-1.3 acres to the National Road, and from 46.9-98.4 acres of impact to Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows historic site for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. Impact quantities to the Little Meadows Archeological District are still being quantified. Between 35 – 56.8 acres of impacts to the Little Meadows/Tomlinson Inn site overlap SHA-owned right-of way. The MHT has concurred with SHA's determination that the project will have an adverse effect on these resources. Consistent with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), public comments are requested regarding effects on historic properties. For additional information on SHA's effect determination, contact the SHA Environmental Manager, Ms. Karen Arnold, at Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration, 707 North Calvert Street, Mailstop C-301, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, by emailing karnold@sha.state.md.us, or by calling 1-866-527-0502.

Because of the adverse effect determination associated with Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, methods to avoid or minimize historic property impacts have been developed in accordance with the Section 4(f) regulations found at 23 CFR 774 and Section 106 of the NHPA. The extent of the historic property impacts was minimized by using a narrow shoulder, placement of the roadway near the boundary of the historic parcel, lowering the design speed, and investigating the use of retaining walls. This Hearing and the circulation of the Section 4(f) Evaluation will allow FHWA to obtain comments on the avoidance and minimization options and impacts. FHWA is the lead Federal agency for determining compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

It is requested that you communicate this information concerning the proposed work to any persons known by you to be interested, but may not have not received a copy of this public notice.

FOR THE DISTRICT ENGINEER:



Joseph P. DaVia
Chief, Maryland Section Northern

Figure 1. US 219 Improvement Project Location Map



Figure 4. Alternative 2: Widened Existing US 219



Figure 5. Alternative 3: Existing Interchange with Local and Relocated US 219

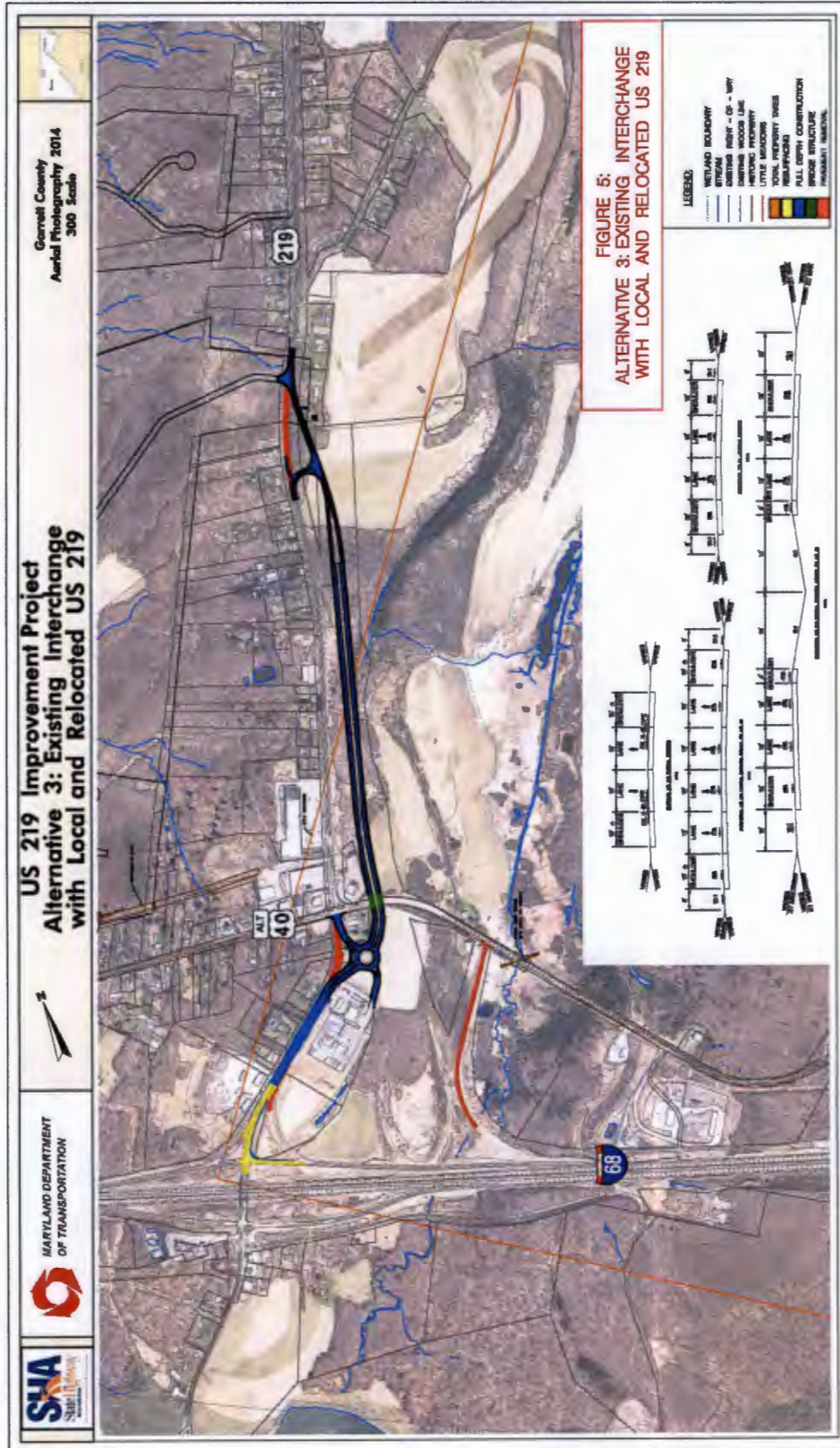


Figure 6. Alternative 4: Roundabout Interchange with Local and Relocated US 219

