

MD 5 Project Moves Forward

Progress continues on the MD 5 Project Planning Study initiated by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) in January 2007. Since that time, the project team has gathered environmental and traffic data, drafted the Purpose and Need Statement, received concurrence on purpose and need from environmental regulatory agencies and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and developed preliminary alternatives.

Detailed engineering and environmental studies are now underway, and an Open House has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, 2008. At that meeting, the team will provide updates on the project planning process, project purpose and need, potential environmental impacts, and the preliminary alternatives. Members of the public are encouraged to share their project-related comments, suggestions, and questions, which will be considered as the alternatives undergo further development. No formal presentation will be given. A Location/Design Public Hearing is being planned for Fall 2009 as the team moves closer to the selection of a preferred alternative.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the MD 5 Project Planning Study is to improve safety and operations for existing traffic and additional traffic resulting from future development along MD 5, while supporting existing and planned development in the area. The project will address the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and horse-drawn vehicles and improve access to homes, businesses, schools, and places of worship in the MD 5 study area. The project team will also evaluate the need for intersection improvements along the MD 5 corridor to ensure that the special transportation needs of the Amish and seniors are addressed.

Increased growth and development along the MD 5 corridor and substantial redevelopment within the Town of Leonardtown have contributed to greater vehicle travel and congestion on MD 5. SHA expects that area traffic congestion and delays will worsen as growth continues throughout Leonardtown, St. Mary's County, and the Southern Maryland region.

MD 5 MD 243 to MD 245 Study Area Map

OPEN HOUSE
Wednesday,
December 10, 2008
3:00 PM-7:00 PM

Arrive at any time between
3:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

**Leonardtown Volunteer Fire
Department – Fire Hall**
22733 Lawrence Avenue
Leonardtown, MD 20650

There is no formal
presentation.

**Snow Date: Wednesday,
December 17, 2008**

Persons who need special assistance to participate in the Open House should contact Jeremy Beck, Project Manager, at 1-800-548-5026 no later than Wednesday, December 3, 2008. The Maryland Relay Service for impaired hearing and speech can be reached at 1-800-735-2258.

Preliminary Alternatives

SHA is currently considering four alternatives and three options for the MD 5 Project Planning Study:

Alternative 1: No-Build – No major improvements are proposed under Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative. Minor short-term improvements would occur as part of routine maintenance and safety operations. The No-Build Alternative does not address future traffic concerns or the purpose and need for the project. It serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits associated with the Build Alternatives.

Alternative 2: Traffic System Management (TSM) – Alternative 2 consists of a range of spot improvements that address the most serious concerns at specific locations or segments of roadway along the MD 5 corridor. TSM generally involves lower-cost improvements with fewer environmental impacts, including:

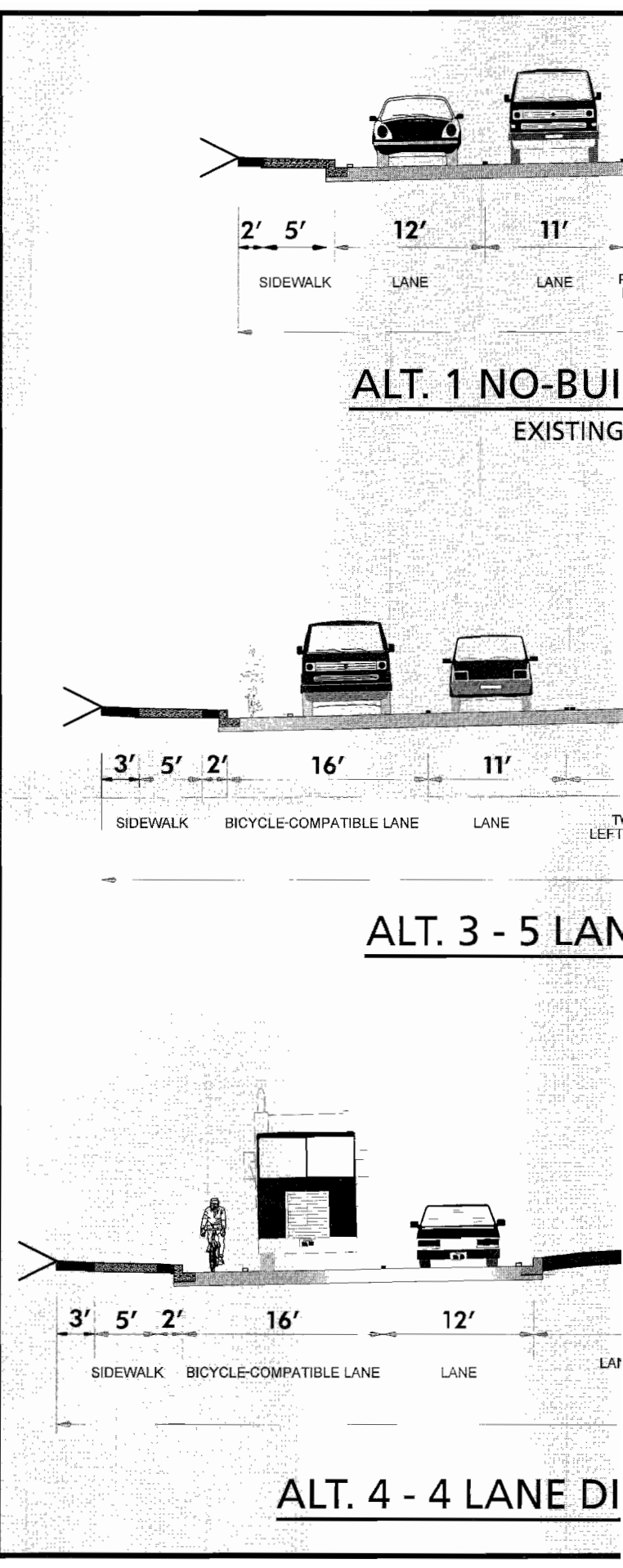
- Adding and lengthening turn lanes or improving signal timing at the MD 5 intersections with MD 243 and MD 245;
- Adding a traffic signal and turn lanes at the MD 5 intersection with Abell Street/Moakley Street;
- Making vehicle, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety improvements; and
- Consolidating entrances to properties along the MD 5 corridor.

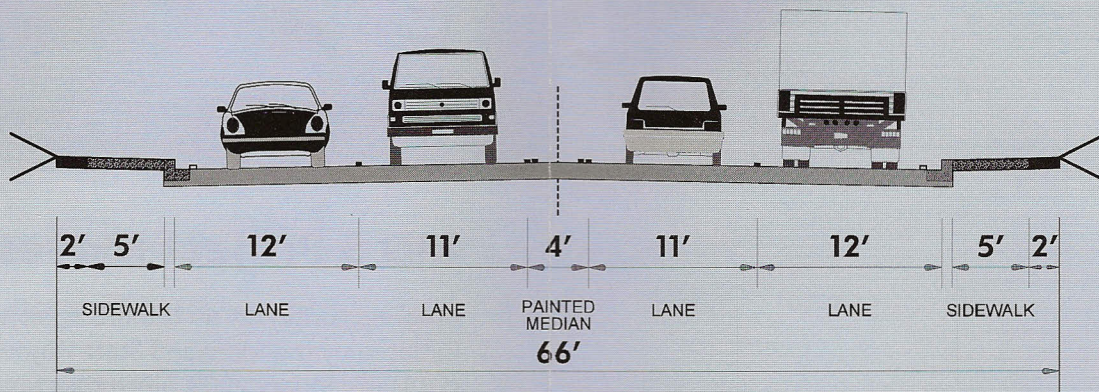
No major physical improvements are involved under the TSM Alternative.

Alternative 3: Five-lane Typical Section – In addition to the intersection improvements listed under Alternative 2, this alternative would add a two-way, center left-turn lane along the entire length of the corridor and maintain two travel lanes in each direction. Outside travel lanes would be 16 feet wide for bicycle compatibility, and five-foot-wide sidewalks would be added to both sides of the roadway along the MD 5 corridor.

Alternative 4: Four-lane Divided Typical Section – Alternative 4 is identical to Alternative 3 with the following exceptions:

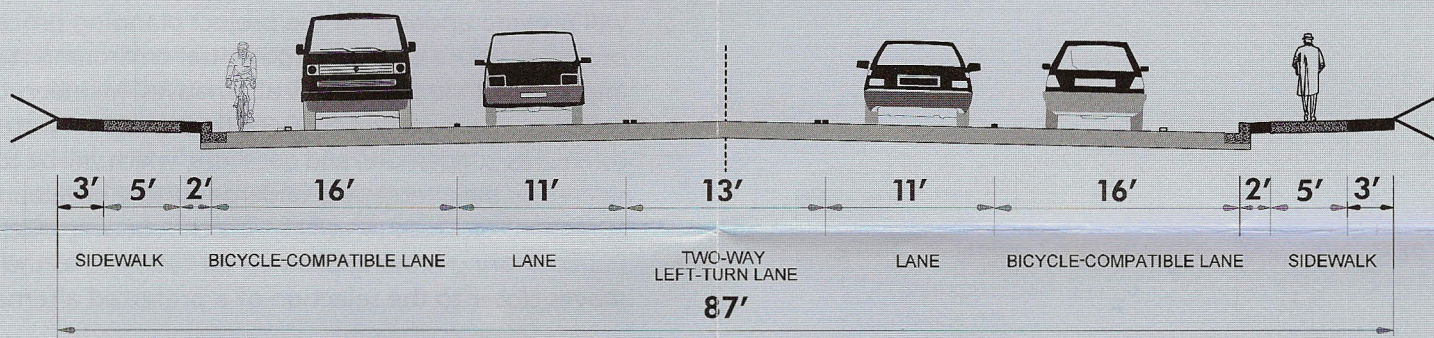
- Inside lanes would be 12 feet wide;
- Alternative 4 would add a landscaped raised median with turn lanes at appropriate intersections throughout the corridor; and
- It would **not** include a two-way center left-turn lane.



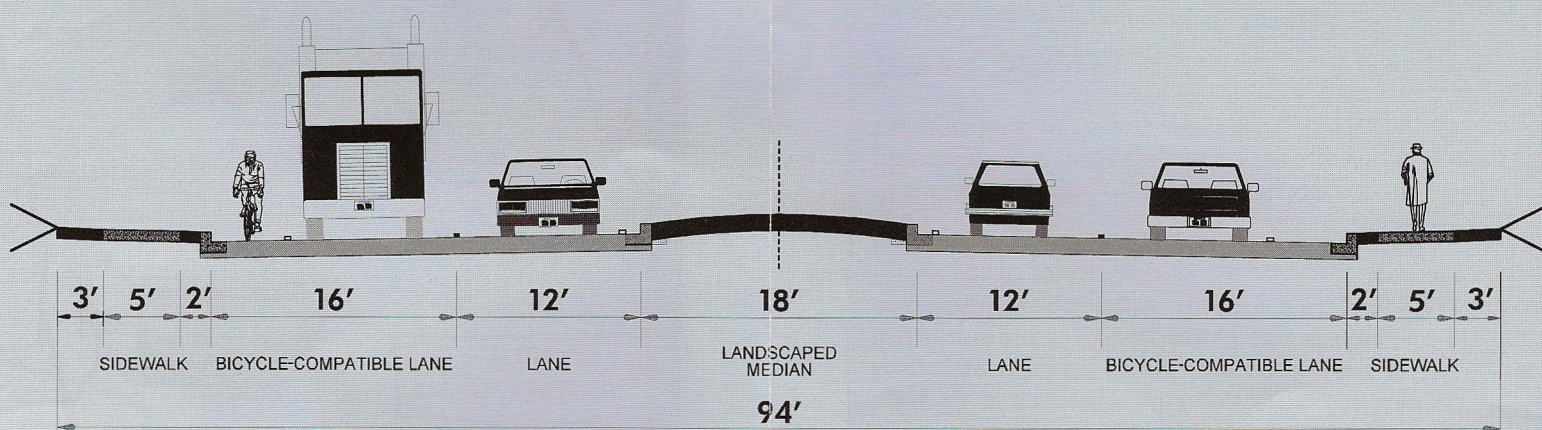


ALT. 1 NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

EXISTING CONDITIONS



ALT. 3 - 5 LANE ALTERNATIVE



ALT. 4 - 4 LANE DIVIDED ALTERNATIVE

Options

Three options are also being evaluated for Alternatives 3 and 4:

Option 1: Section 4(f) Minimization –

Under Option 1, widening would occur on both sides of MD 5, except in areas where widening would impact several historic properties, including the Port of Leonardtown (former SHA garage), Gough Farm, Buena Vista, the Drury-Saunders House, and St. Mary's Academy. In these areas, the road would only be widened on the south side.

Option 2: Stream Avoidance – Under Option 2, widening would occur on both sides of MD 5, except in the area where a stream is located on the north side of MD 5 between Abell Street/Moakley Street and Clark's Rest Lane. In this area, the road would only be widened on the south side in order to avoid impacts to the stream.

Option 3: Additional Intersection

Improvements – Option 3 would expand the intersections at MD 5/MD 243 and MD 5/MD 245 by adding longer left-turn lanes to further improve operations at those intersections. This option would also add a traffic signal at the intersection of MD 243 and Merchants Lane.

Summary of 2007 Public Comments - Safety Is Primary Concern

On Tuesday, December 11, 2007, SHA conducted an Informational Workshop at Leonardtown Middle School to present the MD 5 Project Planning Study, explain the project's purpose and need, gather information about the study area, and provide an opportunity for public comments. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting.

Based on comments from the workshop, safety leads the list of concerns for the MD 5 corridor. Excessive speeding, difficulty making left-turns onto and from MD 5, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and the lack of traffic signals were listed as other major project-area concerns. The intersection at Abell Street/Moakley Street and MD 5 was identified as having the greatest number of traffic problems. The area around the entrance to St. Mary's Hospital was frequently identified as a location of serious concern.

Other comments stressed the need to implement area improvements quickly, and several respondents suggested the addition of traffic signals and a center-turn lane. The public also expressed concern about the preservation of community character and reduction of impacts to properties.

Summary continued...

The project team has received approximately 300 completed surveys from the Fall 2007 Project Newsletter. Many of these survey comments reflect those received at the Informational Workshop: safety and the inability to make turns across traffic, especially during peak hours, were listed as top corridor concerns. Additional survey responses included multiple requests for increased enforcement or lowering of corridor speed limits, and many respondents identified Abell Street/Moakley Street south to MD 245 as the area with the greatest number of traffic problems.

Public comments received throughout the project planning study process will be considered by the MD 5 team as final decisions are made.

Next Steps

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Conduct Open House | December 10, 2008 |
| Complete Detailed Engineering and Environmental Analyses | Spring 2009 |
| Prepare Draft Environmental Document | Summer 2009 |
| Conduct Location/Design Public Hearing | Fall 2009 |
| Complete Final Environmental Document | Fall 2010 |
| Complete Project Planning Phase | Fall/Winter 2010 |

Contact

For more information about the MD 5 Project Planning Study, please contact:

Mr. Jeremy Beck, Project Manager

Maryland State Highway Administration
707 N. Calvert Street
Mail Stop C-301
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Telephone: (410) 545-8518 or
toll-free 1-800-548-5026

Email: jbeck@sha.state.md.us

Information on this and other SHA projects can be found by logging onto the SHA website at www.marylandroads.com and clicking on **Projects**. The project team is available to meet with community organizations, business groups, and neighborhood associations. Contact the Project Manager to request a meeting for your group.

Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

John D. Porcari, Secretary

Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator

LEONARDTOWN MD 20650-0001
PO BOX 1
ST. MARY'S COUNTY
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, TOWN OF LEONARDTOWN
8 8 3843*****AUTO**SCH 5-DIGIT 20636

MD 5 Project Planning 10
Open House December 10



Maryland Department of Transportation
SHA
State Highway Administration
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering
P.O. Box 717, Mail Stop C-301
Baltimore, MD 21203-0717

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