



# Frequently Asked Questions

July 2023

# 1 Resources

## 1.1 Project Website

[Link to Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Long Bridge Project Website](#)

## 1.2 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD)

[Combined Final EIS/ROD](#)

## 1.3 Virtual Public Meeting

[Meeting Recording – June 2022](#)

[Meeting Presentation – June 2022](#)

[Meeting Recording – March 2023](#)

[Meeting Presentation – March 2023](#)

## 1.4 Video Rendering of Project – February 2023

[Link to Project Animation](#)

## 1.5 Project Contacts

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## 2 Design Elements

### 2.1 Determination of Aesthetic Treatments

The Project Team is vetting design aesthetics for the bridges, retaining walls and landscaping, through the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), as well as through the Signatories to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, which include staff from the National Park Service (NPS), NCPC, CFA, District State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Rail Administration (FRA). The design review is intended to minimize potential adverse effects of introducing new features into the historic districts.

### 2.2 Approvals for Aesthetic Elements

During the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase, the Project Team was focused on issues related to the alignment and selecting the preferred alternative. Approvals for aesthetic elements are being obtained during the Preliminary Engineering phase (current phase) as the design progresses and details are developed, reviewed, and finalized.

### 2.3 Landscape Design

Landscape Design for NPS-administered properties is being coordinated with NPS with the intent for the Project's design to coincide with the existing parkland environment. The Project's preliminary engineering landscape design includes a draft vegetation removal and protection plan, a draft vegetation restoration plan, and a draft planting list. The proposed landscape design has been reviewed by the Signatories to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, NCPC, CFA and other stakeholders, as applicable within the Preliminary Engineering Phase. Final Landscaping design, coordination, and review will continue within the Final Design and Construction phase of the Project.

### 2.4 Location of Maine Avenue SW Pedestrian Bridge

The proposed replacement pedestrian bridge crossing over Maine Avenue SW will connect the Maine Avenue SW sidewalk, adjacent to the Washington Marina Company parking lot, to the Salamander Hotel balcony in the approximate location of the existing bridge connection. This pedestrian bridge is privately owned by the Portals Public Improvements Association and is being replaced by the Project due to the conflict with the proposed Maine Avenue SW rail bridge. The replacement Maine Avenue SW pedestrian bridge is in a different location and does not connect to the Potomac River Bicycle-Pedestrian bridge.

### 2.5 ADA Compliance at Maine Avenue SW Pedestrian Bridge

The proposed design for the Maine Avenue SW pedestrian bridge replacement will include access that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The current design provides an ADA-accessible ramp in addition to stairs on the Maine Avenue SW sidewalk, adjacent to the Washington Marina parking lot, side. The existing connection from the hotel balcony to the Maryland Avenue Overbuild, on the Salamander Hotel side, is privately owned by the Portals Public Improvements Association and will not be altered as part of this Project.

## 2.6 Track Layout of Maryland Avenue SW

The four-track layout will continue under the Maryland Avenue SW Overbuild (the deck built over the railroad tracks). The Project Team has been coordinating the track layout with CSX Transportation (CSXT), Amtrak, and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) throughout the Preliminary Engineering phase. This coordination will continue throughout the Final Design phase.

## 2.7 Future Electrification

The Project is committed to not precluding the future addition of electrification of the rail corridor.

## 2.8 Preventing Graffiti

The Project is currently at an early stage of design. The Project Team will incorporate graffiti resistant design details as appropriate in a future design phase.

## 2.9 Pinch Point at Anacostia River Trail on Maine Avenue SW

The pinch point in the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail along Maine Avenue SW will be improved by relocating the rail and pedestrian bridge abutments farther from the roadway and increasing the sidewalk width from the existing 11 feet to approximately 24 feet. Proposed improvements to the geometry of the 14th Street off-ramp at Maine Avenue SW will improve safety and create better visibility and longer sight lines at the intersection.

# 3 Construction Impacts

## 3.1 Train Traffic During Construction

The Project Team is coordinating closely with rail operators, Amtrak, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and CSXT to determine train operability during construction. The Project will keep two tracks in operation throughout construction. There is the potential for brief shutdowns in order to accelerate the overall construction duration of the Maine Ave SW rail bridge and the associated disruptions to the public.

## 3.2 Maintenance of Traffic (MOT)

The Project Team will be coordinating MOT with NPS, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including any necessary road or lane closures and detours for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Additional information will be provided in future design phases.

## 3.3 Length of Construction

Construction is planned to start in late 2024 or early 2025 and preliminarily is estimated to reach substantial completion in 2030. The duration of construction is based on a multitude of factors, including the constrained location, limited access points, limited construction

laydown areas, multifaceted coordination with adjacent stakeholders and the railroad operators, and the overall complexity of the Project.

### 3.4 Nighttime Construction

Where beneficial, nighttime construction will be utilized to minimize traffic disruptions. Traffic advisories will be sent to the news media and posted on the VDOT, DDOT, and NPS websites, and promoted on VPRA social media platforms.

### 3.5 Access to Existing Bicycle-Pedestrian Network including the Mount Vernon Trail During Construction

Although maintenance of traffic including detours may be required, the existing bicycle-pedestrian access will remain throughout construction. Approximately 400 feet of the Mount Vernon Trail will be temporarily rerouted to maintain access during construction.

### 3.6 Maine Avenue SW Pedestrian Bridge Construction

Prior to the demolition of the existing Maine Avenue SW pedestrian bridge, a temporary bridge will be installed to maintain access across Maine Avenue SW from the sidewalk adjacent to the Washington Marina parking lot to the Salamander Hotel balcony and the Maryland Avenue Overbuild (deck over the railroad tracks).

## 4 Environment

### 4.1 Noise and Air Quality due to Added Rail Traffic

The Project Team will follow the District of Columbia's municipal codes and Virginia regulations, as applicable, and best management practices to minimize construction noise, including curfews and noise monitoring, as well as techniques that reduce environmental impacts of construction.

In the Environment Impact Statement (EIS) Phase, the Project analyzed the potential for operational noise impacts throughout the Project area and will be implementing solutions to reduce impact as much as possible. The EIS Phase also analyzed potential short-term and long-term impacts on air quality and how the Project will mitigate these impacts. Please refer to the Final EIS Report in the Long Bridge Project Document Library: <https://vapassengerrailauthority.org/longbridgeproject/lbp-document-library/>.

### 4.2 Tree Protection Efforts

The Project Team conducted a tree survey to catalogue trees within the Project's proposed limit of disturbance, including their size, species, and condition, and designated certain trees to be protected and the means by which they will be protected.

# 5 Potomac River Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge

Refer to the Potomac River Bike-Ped Bridge Explainer document located in the Project website's Document Library: <https://vapassengerrailauthority.org/longbridgeproject/lbp-document-library/>.

## 5.1 Location of Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge and opportunity to extend it

The location of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge across the Potomac River was determined as part of the Final Environment Impact Statement (EIS) after discussion with project stakeholders, such as the Washington Area Bicyclists Association and partners, including NPS and DDOT. Extending the trail farther east from the eastern shore of the Potomac is not feasible due to inadequate space within the constrained railroad corridor.

## 5.2 Width of Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge and opportunity to widen it further

The proposed width of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge is 16 feet clear. Widening the bridge further would significantly increase the cost and complications of construction and future maintenance. Considerations with further widening the bicycle-pedestrian bridge include physical constraints (access for construction equipment and material transport, as well as laydown areas impacting constructability); potential conflicts between permanent structures; increased costs for construction, bridge inspections, and maintenance access; and permitting agency concerns.

Widening sections of the bridge or creating "bump outs" would conflict with existing WMATA fender and foundations. Bump outs also would require costly additional pier columns which increase environmental impacts and complicate future inspection and maintenance activities required during the lifespan of the bridge and/or alteration to the agreed upon bridge type.

## 5.3 Barriers or Lane Markings to Separate Pedestrian Traffic from Cyclist Traffic

The current 16-foot width exceeds industry (DDOT and AASHTO) minimum standards needed for two bicyclists to pass each other with space to safely and comfortably pass pedestrians or anyone stopped on the bridge. According to the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, there is no need to segregate pedestrians and cyclist traffic in most cases since they can coexist and pass each other as needed.

## 5.4 Noise and Exposure to Exhaust and Debris due to Proximity to Tracks

Ensuring those using the bicycle-pedestrian bridge are separated from the railroad and Metro bridges sufficiently to prevent exposure to noise, exhaust and debris was factored

into the location. The rail bridge and the bicycle-pedestrian bridge will be a minimum of 25 feet apart from each other at the landing areas and up to 50 feet apart in the middle section. Cyclists and pedestrians will be much farther away from trains than they are from cars on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street bridge walkway; the trains will also pass less frequently than the cars.

## 5.5 View from Bridge is Obstructed by Other Bridges Due to Height

The elevation of the bicycle-pedestrian bridge is dependent on the elevations of the landing points on either side of the river. Raising the center of the bridge in order to offer views up and down the river would require increasing the grades on either side of the bridge, negatively impacting the user experience.

## 5.6 Connections to Bicycle-Pedestrian Network Around Potomac River

The bicycle-pedestrian bridge will connect to Long Bridge Park in Virginia (behind the Long Bridge Aquatic Center), the Mount Vernon Trail alongside the George Washington Memorial Parkway, on the Virginia side of the Potomac River, and East and West Potomac Park at Ohio Drive SW in DC. A crosswalk will provide access from the bridge ramp to the existing sidewalk and proposed bike lane along Ohio Drive SW.

## 5.7 Emergency Vehicles

The design of the bicycle-pedestrian bridge can structurally accommodate a 10-ton emergency vehicle, easily exceeding the weight of the heaviest ambulances. Additionally, the 42-foot turn radius at the connection points at each end of the bridge (Ohio Drive and Long Bridge Park) is within the turning radius of an emergency vehicle.

## 5.8 Turning Radius on Ramps

The radius at the connection points of the bridge (Ohio Drive, Mount Vernon Trail, and Long Bridge Park) exceeds that of various large bicycle types for the design speed.

## 5.9 Stair Connection to Mount Vernon Trail

The proposed stair connection between Long Bridge Park and Mount Vernon Trail is under coordination with NPS and DDOT. The addition of stairs at the proposed location would help access by reducing the walking distance and promoting the separation of bicycle traffic from pedestrians on the ramp.

## 5.10 Railing Design

The height of the railing system is standard at 3.5 feet, per DDOT requirements. The independent railing is consistent throughout both ends of the bridge and is proposed to integrate the lighting system of the bridge. The railings are compressed against the bridge truss structure as much as possible. Design aesthetics are being coordinated with stakeholders and project partners.

## 6 Adjacent Projects

### 6.1 The Alexandria 4th Track Project and the VRE L'Enfant Station Project

The Long Bridge Project will connect to the Alexandria Fourth Track Project on the Virginia side, and to the VRE L'Enfant Station Project on the District side. All three projects are a part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program and information can be found on the VPRA website, <https://vapassengerrailauthority.org/transforming-rail-in-virginia/>.

### 6.2 Roadway and Sidewalk Improvements to NPS Property

NPS has ongoing projects that will improve bicycle-pedestrian paths in East Potomac Park and alongside the George Washington Memorial Parkway. These projects are not a part of the Long Bridge Project, though coordination between projects is ongoing.

### 6.3 Concerns Regarding Union Station, Raleigh to Richmond High Speed Rail Line, Potomac Shores Station, and the WMATA Bus Service

The projects and locations listed are not a part of the Long Bridge Project; however, coordination between other adjacent projects and agencies is ongoing.

### 6.4 Existing Bicycle-Pedestrian Crossing on 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge

The existing bicycle-pedestrian crossings on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge will not be affected and are not a part of the Long Bridge Project.

## 7 Other

### 7.1 Project Sections/ Construction Packaging

The Project will be built in two sections. The South package will be a Design-Build contract and cover the Virginia portion of the Project and the Potomac River crossings. The North package will be a Progressive Design-Build contract and will include the portion of the Project in the District of Columbia.

### 7.2 Future Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) or Small Women-owned and Minority-owned businesses (SWAM) Involvement

DBE requirements for VPRA projects are identified in the published procurement documents that can be found on VPRA's Procurement site here: Procurement - VPRA ([vapassengerrailauthority.org](https://vapassengerrailauthority.org))



### 7.3 Wayfinding Signing

Wayfinding signage will be coordinated with project stakeholders and partners during the Final Design Phase of the Project.

### 7.4 Impacts to Existing Long Bridge

The existing Long Bridge is a CSXT-owned bridge and is not part of the Long Bridge Project. CSXT has assessed the bridge and determined it is in safe condition to remain in operation. The Project team will continue coordinating with CSXT and the existing bridge will be monitored throughout construction to ensure there are no undue effects to it during construction of the Project.