

# 6

# COORDINATION

A comprehensive public involvement and agency coordination program has been conducted throughout the duration of the Bay Crossing Study. This chapter summarizes that program, including regulatory agency consultation, conducted during the NEPA process from the initial scoping in November 2017 through ongoing activities leading to the publication of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) document. Public and agency engagement will continue during the remainder of the Study and will include the solicitation of comments on this document.

## 6.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

### 6.1.1 Public Involvement Activities

The Bay Crossing Study's public involvement efforts began shortly after the Notice of intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2017. The Bay Crossing Study website ([www.baycrossingstudy.com](http://www.baycrossingstudy.com)) was developed and launched in October 2017 to share project information and gather feedback from the public. Public involvement efforts were organized by subsequent key coordination points: Scoping Activities, Purpose and Need and Screening Criteria, Range of Alternatives and CARA, plus ongoing activities planned for the remainder of the Study, leading to the publication of a Record of Decision (ROD). Three rounds of public meetings have been held thus far. Specifically, one Online Scoping Meeting was held in November 2017, six Open House Meetings were held between May 8 and May 22, 2018, and seven Open House Meetings were held between September 24 and October 28, 2019.

The November 2017 Online Scoping Meeting was held to seek input on the project scope and Purpose and Need. That meeting included a virtual presentation and in-person viewing locations.

The Spring 2018 Open House Meetings were held at six locations to present and solicit comments on the Purpose and Need, the environmental review process, corridor development, and screening process. Information was also provided on scoping activities and public comments. A total of 452 people attended the Spring 2018 Open House Meetings. The meetings were held at the following dates and locations:

- May 8<sup>th</sup> at Calvert High School
- May 9<sup>th</sup> at Broadneck High School
- May 10<sup>th</sup> at Kent County Middle School

- May 16<sup>th</sup> at Middle River Middle School
- May 17<sup>th</sup> at Cambridge-South Dorchester High School
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> at Chesapeake College

Seven Open House Meetings were held in Fall 2019 to present the range of alternatives considered, the screening analysis and results, and the preliminary CARA. The seven Open House Meetings were attended by a total of 1,025 people, with a low of 15 attendees at the Calvert High School Open House to a high of 266 attendees at the Kent County High School Open House.

These meetings were held at the following dates and locations:

- September 24<sup>th</sup> at Kent County High School
- September 26<sup>th</sup> at Calvert High School
- October 1<sup>st</sup> at Middle River Middle School
- October 2<sup>nd</sup> at Anne Arundel Community College
- October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Talbot County Community Center
- October 9<sup>th</sup> at Kent Island High School
- October 28<sup>th</sup> at Annapolis High School

Advertising methods for the Fall 2019 Open House Meetings included website announcements; a press release; emails to the project mailing list, stakeholders, and elected officials; digital advertising in 11 online publications; print ads in 21 publications; and social media outreach on Facebook and Twitter.

### 6.1.2 Public Comments

Public comments are presented in two sections below. First, in **Section 6.1.2.1**, is a summary of the comments received between November 15, 2017 and August 26, 2019. These include all comments received from the initiation of the project until the Fall 2019 Open House meetings. Comments received during and after the Fall 2019 Open Houses are presented in **Section 6.1.2.2**. These are discussed separately because new information on the Corridor Alternatives, MOA, and preliminary CARA was made available to the public in conjunction with the Fall 2019 Open House Meetings. All public comments received are posted on a monthly basis to view on the Bay Crossing Study website at <https://baycrossingstudy.com/public-involvement/view-public-comments>.

#### 6.1.2.1 Comments Received from Fall 2017 to August 2019

MDTA received over 1,100 comments between November 15, 2017 and August 26, 2019. Comments were submitted via the project website, email, comment cards (at meetings) and letters. All public comments are available for review on the project website at baycrossingstudy.com, and have been divided into nine general topic areas: recommendations for a specific crossing location (35 percent), environmental or land use considerations (18 percent), miscellaneous comments (12 percent), modal and operational (10 percent), general opposition to the study or improvements (10 percent), traffic and infrastructure comments (10 percent), general support for the study or improvements (three percent), requests for information (two percent), and bicycle and pedestrian recommendations (less than 1 percent). **Table 6-1** includes the list of comments by topic. Percentages were rounded to the closest one percent.

**Table 6-1: Comments by Topic – November 2017 to August 2019**

TOPIC	PERCENT OF COMMENTS
Recommendations for a specific crossing location	35%
Environmental or land use considerations	18%
Miscellaneous comments	12%
Modal and operational alternatives	10%
General opposition to the study or improvements	10%
Traffic and infrastructure comments	10%
General support for the study or improvements	3%
Requests for information	2%
Bicycle and Pedestrian recommendations	<1%

**6.1.2.2 Comments Received During and After Fall 2019 Open House Meetings**

A total of 736 comments were received from the beginning of the Fall 2019 Open House Meetings to January 31, 2021, including letters, emails, website comments, public meeting comment cards, and MDTA customer survey cards. Information on each of the 14 corridor alternatives was presented to the public at the Fall 2019 Open Houses.

Written comments received have been summarized based on the listed categories: Specific Crossing Location (54 percent), Traffic and Infrastructure (20 percent), Environmental and Land Use (11 percent), Other/Miscellaneous (four percent), Other Alternatives (six percent), General Support (four percent), General Opposition (four percent), Requests for Information (one percent), and Bicycle/Pedestrian (0.2 percent). Many comments are included in multiple categories.

**Table 6-2: Comments Received During and After Fall 2019 Open House Meetings**

TOPIC	PERCENT OF COMMENTS
Specific Crossing Location	54%
Traffic and Infrastructure	20%
Environmental and Land use	11%
Other/Miscellaneous	4%
Other Alternatives	6%
General Support for Study and/or Improvements	4%
General Opposition to Study and/or Improvements	4%
Requests for Information	1%
Bicycle and Pedestrian	0.2%

**Specific Crossing Location**

Information on each of the 14 corridor alternatives was presented to the public at the Fall 2019 Open Houses. Corridors 6, 7, and 8 were highlighted in the materials to collect public input on the recommendation to carry forward as the CARA. Comment cards provided at the public meeting and on the website included a section for comments specifically on the preliminary CARA, Corridors 6, 7, and 8. Written comments were also included in this category where commenters indicated support or opposition to any of the corridors, not solely the preliminary CARA. **Table 6-3** below summarizes the number of comments indicating a preference for or against each of the preliminary CARA. A total of 110 comments were specific to corridors other than the preliminary CARA. Some commenters indicated more than one preference. A total of 76 comments expressed general opposition to the study or a new crossing, including support for the No Build Alternative.

**Table 6-3: Comments For or Against the Preliminary CARA**

Preliminary CARA	In Favor	Opposed
Corridor 6	61	223
Corridor 7	215	171
Corridor 8	90	249

**Other Alternatives**

A total of 134 comments mentioned other alternatives/modes or non-corridor options including the MOA evaluated in the screening. Many commenters in this category advocated for options aside from a new crossing to relieve congestion such as ferry service, bus service, electronic toll lanes, toll rate flexibility during peak times, and rail.

**General Support**

A total of 77 commenters expressed general support for the study or a new crossing. Commenters in this category often emphasized the importance of existing problems at the Bay Bridge and the need to address them.

**General Opposition**

There were 77 comments expressing general opposition to the study or a new crossing. These included comments expressing support for the No Build Alternative. Commenters expressed concerns over impacts to communities and the environment, among other issues.

**Environmental, Cultural and Socioeconomic Issues**

There were 232 comments that touched on environmental issues such as natural resources, communities, cultural resources, and agriculture. Comments in this category expressed concerns with potential impacts to resources such as the Chesapeake Bay, wildlife, and wetlands. Commenters also noted the potential impact of sea level rise on Chesapeake Bay environment and infrastructure. Concerns with potential impacts to cultural resources and agricultural lands were also common themes.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian**

Five comments included the topic of bicycle and pedestrian access. These comments included suggestions for bicycle and/or pedestrian access on a new crossing, as well as general questions as to whether bicycle and pedestrian access has been considered.

**Engineering, Traffic and Transportation**

A total of 421 comments were included in the category of engineering, traffic and transportation. A broad range of issues were mentioned in these comments such as roadway capacity concerns, discussion of specific roadways and intersections, concerns about safety, roadway maintenance issues, comments on the study traffic analysis, and comments on the type of crossing. Common themes included concerns over the impact of a new crossing on local roadways, discussion of how the existing crossing affects local traffic, and concerns that a new crossing would lead to increased traffic on local roadways.

**Requests for Study Information**

There were 23 comments requesting specific information about the study. For example, questions about how to view project materials online or questions about meeting locations were included in this category.

**Other**

A total of 92 comments did not fit into any of the other categories and were classified as “other”. Examples of these include comments regarding cost or funding, the Bay Crossing study process, the Open House meeting format, and questions unrelated to other topic areas.

**Checkboxes: Important Factors in Selecting the Preferred Corridor Alternative**

In addition to the information above, the comment forms included the prompt, “Which three factors are most important to you in selecting the preferred Corridor Alternative?” Commenters were given seven options to choose from. The checkbox options and number of commenters checking each box are provided in **Table 6-4**.

**Table 6-4: Checkbox Prompt Responses**

Checkbox Factors	Number of Commenters Selecting
Community / Development Impacts	402
Reducing congestion	375
Environmental impacts	355
Safety	200
Cost	124
Engineering /Construction	87
Other	85

### 6.1.2.3 Conclusions

The comprehensive public outreach program conducted in support of the Bay Crossing Study has yielded important information and informed key decisions throughout the process. The comments collected reflected a wide range of concerns that were considered in the development of the screening process and methodologies for the environmental technical studies supporting this DEIS. One notable theme emerging from the public comments is an emphasis on the potential for land use changes from a new crossing, particularly on the Eastern Shore. This input underscored the importance of analyzing potential induced growth throughout the alternatives screening and DEIS development.

Public input on the screening analysis also helped to reinforce the identification of the CARA and the MDTA RPCA. Public input collected at the Fall 2019 Open Houses reinforced the emphasis on reducing congestion as a key factor to distinguish between the corridors, in support of the Purpose and Need. Members of the public identified “reducing congestion” as a high priority for identifying corridors to carry forward. Additionally, as shown in **Table 6-3** above, more favorable public comments were received for Corridor 7 compared to the other CARA.

## 6.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

The FHWA and MDTA actively engaged the federal, state, regional, and local agencies, as well as the adjacent counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), and other stakeholders throughout the Study process. A Coordination Plan was developed and made available on the Project website at the initiation of the study to facilitate the structured coordination with agencies and ensure adequate participation in the Study. Key coordination points included the development of the Purpose and Need, the range of alternatives and the identification of the CARA. Agencies were also consulted throughout the development of environmental technical studies and this DEIS, including discussions of methodology and data sets used.

During the Scoping Activities outreach stage, potential Cooperating, Participating, and Notified Agencies at the federal, state, local and regional levels were initially identified by FHWA and MDTA, in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6 and 23 U.S.C. § 139. Seven agencies (four federal and three state) are Cooperating Agencies and 35 agencies (six federal, eight state, 14 counties, and five MPOs) are Participating Agencies for the study. The notified agencies and stakeholders include six federal, eight state, four counties, 68 municipalities, and three MPOs. Additionally, 31 stakeholders were designated as notified agencies, along with 17 federally recognized tribes and ten state recognized tribes. These cooperating, participating, and notified agencies are listed in **Table 6-5**, the local agencies and regional stakeholders in **Table 6-6**. Lists of federal and state recognized tribes and the municipalities area also included below.

**Table 6-5: Lead, Cooperation, Participating, and Notified State and Federal Agencies**

ROLE	FEDERAL AGENCIES	MARYLAND / STATE AGENCIES
Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Maryland Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)</li> </ul>
Cooperating Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</li> <li>• US Coast Guard (USCG)</li> <li>• Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</li> <li>• National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)</li> <li>• MD Department of Environment (MDE)</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)</li> </ul>
Participating Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Park Service (NPS)</li> <li>• Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</li> <li>• Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</li> <li>• US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</li> <li>• Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)</li> <li>• US Navy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDOT Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA)</li> <li>• MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)</li> <li>• Critical Areas Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays (CAC)</li> <li>• Maryland Emergency Management Agency</li> <li>• Maryland Board of Public Works</li> <li>• Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)</li> <li>• Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)</li> </ul>
Notified Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Aviation Administration</li> <li>• US Geological Survey</li> <li>• FHWA – Virginia Division</li> <li>• FHWA – Delaware Division</li> <li>• Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</li> <li>• US Army</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maryland State Police</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Agriculture</li> <li>• MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA)</li> <li>• Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)</li> <li>• Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA)</li> <li>• Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs</li> <li>• Maryland Natural Resources Police</li> <li>• Maryland Department of Commerce</li> </ul>

**Table 6-6: Local Agencies and Regional Stakeholders**

ROLE	Counties	Municipalities	MPOs	Other
Participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cecil County</li> <li>• Kent County</li> <li>• Queen Anne’s County</li> <li>• Talbot County</li> <li>• Caroline County</li> <li>• Dorchester County</li> <li>• Somerset County</li> <li>• Wicomico County</li> <li>• Worcester County</li> <li>• Harford County</li> <li>• Baltimore County</li> <li>• Anne Arundel County</li> <li>• Calvert County</li> <li>• St. Mary’s County</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)</li> <li>• Calvert-St. Mary’s MPO</li> <li>• Tri-County Council – Lower Eastern Shore</li> <li>• Tri-County Council – Southern Maryland</li> <li>• Salisbury/Wicomico MPO</li> </ul>	
Notified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sussex County, DE</li> <li>• Kent County, DE</li> <li>• New Castle County, DE</li> <li>• Baltimore City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities within the fourteen participating counties (see list below)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dover/Kent County MPO</li> <li>• Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)</li> <li>• Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chesapeake Bay Program Members</li> <li>• Chesapeake Bay Foundation</li> <li>• Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay</li> <li>• Waterkeepers Chesapeake</li> <li>• Chesapeake Bay Commission</li> <li>• Chesapeake Bay Trust</li> <li>• Chesapeake Conservancy</li> <li>• Oyster Recovery Partnership</li> <li>• The Nature Conservancy</li> <li>• Preservation Maryland</li> <li>• Federally Recognized Tribes (see list below)</li> <li>• State Recognized Tribes (see list below)</li> <li>• Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area</li> <li>• Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Areas</li> <li>• Annapolis, London Town, &amp; South County (Four Rivers) Heritage Area</li> </ul>



ROLE	Counties	Municipalities	MPOs	Other
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern Maryland Heritage Area</li> <li>• Cecil Land Trust</li> <li>• Harford Land Trust</li> <li>• Gunpowder Valley Conservancy</li> <li>• North County Land Trust</li> <li>• Scenic Rivers Land Trust</li> <li>• American Chestnut Land Trust</li> <li>• Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust</li> <li>• Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage</li> <li>• Eastern Shore Land Conservancy</li> <li>• Lower Shore Land Trust</li> <li>• Ducks Unlimited-Wetlands America Trust</li> <li>• Kent Conservation &amp; Preservation Alliance</li> <li>• Kent County Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee</li> <li>• Queen Anne’s Conservation Association</li> <li>• Rural Maryland Council</li> </ul>

**List of Federally Recognized Tribes:**

- Delaware Nation
- Delaware Tribe of Indians
- Oneida Indian Nation
- Onondaga Nation
- Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Tuscarora Nation
- Seneca-Cayuga Nation
- Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe
- Shawnee Tribe

**List of State Recognized Tribes:**

- Piscatawa Indian Nation
- Piscataway Conoy Tribe of Maryland
- Piscataway Conoy Confederacy and Subtribes of Maryland
- Cedarville Band of Piscataway
- Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians
- Accohannock Indian Tribe
- Pocomoke Indian Nation

**List of Notified Municipalities in the Counties Adjacent to the Bay**

**Anne Arundel County**

- Annapolis
- Highland Beach

**Baltimore County**

- (none)

**Calvert County**

- Chesapeake Beach
- North Beach

**Caroline County**

- Denton
- Federalsburg
- Goldsboro
- Greensboro
- Henderson
- Hillsboro
- Marydel
- Preston
- Ridgely
- Templeville

**Cecil County**

- Cecilton
- Charlestown
- Chesapeake City
- Elkton
- North East
- Perryville
- Port Deposit
- Rising Sun

**Dorchester County**

- Brookview
- Cambridge
- Church Creek
- East New Market
- Eldorado
- Galestown
- Hurlock
- Secretary
- Vienna

**Harford County**

- Aberdeen
- Bel Air
- Havre de Grace

**Kent County**

- Betterton
- Chestertown
- Galena
- Millington
- Rock Hall

**Queen Anne's County**

- Barclay
- Centreville
- Church Hill
- Millington
- Queen Anne
- Queenstown
- Sudlersville
- Templeville

**St. Mary's County**

- Leonardtown

**Somerset County**

- Crisfield
- Princess Anne

**Talbot County**

- Easton
- Oxford
- Queen Anne
- St. Michaels
- Trappe

**Wicomico County**

- Delmar
- Fruitland
- Hebron
- Mardela Springs
- Pittsville
- Salisbury
- Sharptown
- Willards

**Worcester County**

- Berlin
- Ocean City
- Pocomoke City
- Snow Hill

The Interagency Coordination Meetings (ICMs) were held at key coordination points by MDTA and FHWA and attended by the Cooperating and ICM Participating Agencies. ICM Meetings focused on sharing and discussing information and seeking feedback from attendees on the study process, methodologies, and results of major study findings at study milestones. All Cooperating and ICM Participating Agencies were encouraged to provide both data and comments throughout the study thus far.

Cooperating Agencies are requested to provide concurrence at milestones, as outlined in the Agency Coordination Plan. Concurrence was received on the study schedule (as outlined in the BCS Coordination Plan) and guiding principles for the agency coordination process in February 2018. In July 2018, the Cooperating Agencies concurred on the Purpose and Need statement. In February 2020, the Cooperating Agencies concurred on the identification of the CARA. Concurrence will be requested on the MDTA RPCA at a future date.

A total of 13 ICMs have been held since the Study initiation in October 2017. A summary of the ICM meetings held to date for the Study is provided in **Table 6-7**. Coordination with County Participating Agencies has occurred at Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) meetings.

**Table 6-7: Summary of Interagency Coordination Meetings (ICM)**

DATE	KEY TOPICS
October 2017	Agencies comment on study scoping, draft coordination plan, and preliminary Purpose and Need (P&N) concepts.
December 2017	Agencies introduced to draft P&N summary, draft coordination plan, draft Guiding Principles memorandum, and draft study methodologies with opportunity for comment.
January 2018	Review and discussion of draft P&N summary, draft coordination plan, draft Guiding Principles memorandum, and draft study methodologies
February 2018	MDTA requests <b>concurrence from Cooperating Agencies on Guiding Principles memorandum. MDTA requests concurrence from Cooperating and Participating Agencies and on the schedule included in the coordination plan.</b> Agencies introduced to draft screening criteria and draft P&N Statement. Agencies provide comment.
March 2018	Review and discussion of draft screening criteria and draft P&N Statement. Agencies provide comment.
April 2018	Review and discussion of draft screening criteria and draft P&N Statement. Overview of the materials to be presented at the May 2018 Public Meeting. Agencies provide comment.
June 2018	Review of updates to draft P&N Statement. Summary of May Public Meetings.
July 2018	MDTA requests <b>concurrence on draft Purpose and Need Statement from Cooperating Agencies.</b> Agencies provide comment.
September 2018	Review and discussion of draft screening criteria. Agencies provide comment.
November 2018	Present the preliminary range of alternatives. Agencies provide comment.
September 2019	Discuss preliminary range of alternatives. Present the preliminary MDTA recommended CARA. Agencies provide comment.
January 2020	MDTA requests agency comment on the Draft Alternatives Concurrence Package.
February 2020	MDTA requests <b>concurrence on draft CARA from Cooperating Agencies</b> for inclusion in DEIS. Agencies provide comment.

**Appendix B** includes relevant BCS agency correspondence.