

Where should the new river crossing be located?

Development has increased in the Maryland and Virginia counties near our nation's capital on both sides of the Potomac River. With this development came more traffic and greater gridlock on the Washington D.C. beltway. Many people are advocating construction of an additional bridge to ease the gridlock.

In the last three years many proposed studies have evaluated where a new bridge should be built. Some argue that expanding the already existing bridge near Point of Rocks in Frederick, Maryland or adding a bridge to the ferry service at Whites Ferry would help solve the problem. Others say that the bridge should be closer to the Washington D.C area and should connect Fairfax with Montgomery County.

Opponents of a future bridge believe that it will only increase traffic within the D. C. area. Maryland opponents are opposed to one of the current plans because the alignment of the bridge has it entering the heart of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve. This is an agriculturally zoned area of over 90,000 acres of which 56,750 acres are now protected by permanent agricultural and conservation easements. Opponents believe such an alignment would destroy the efforts to protect not only rural character and agricultural lifestyles but severely fragment a viable but vulnerable \$350 million dollar industry. Virginia opponents are opposed to the Point of Rocks bridge because it would run through land that they deem worthy of agricultural preservation.

Your job is to develop and provide support for a position supporting or opposing a proposed bridge crossing. In your presentation, you must explain how a bridge and your proposed site selection will affect forestry, aquatics, soils, wildlife and agriculture as well as ease the gridlock.