



City of Havre de Grace

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Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project Advisory Board Of the Mayor and City Council

Advisory Bulletin #14 Union Avenue and Otsego Street Intersection March 16, 2015

Background

The Advisory Board met on February 12 and March 12, 2015 to study the intersection of Union Avenue and Otsego Street, and the closely impacted intersections of Warren, Water, and Saint John Streets. This study was conducted as a logical extension of Advisory Bulletins #3 and #11, Bridge Abutment Area; Advisory Bulletins #6 and #12, Rail Commuter Station; and the following Advisory Bulletin #15, Bridge Historical Preservation and Display. All are directly related to the redesign these street intersections.

Objectives

Intersection redesign and improvement is entirely predicated upon retraction of the proposed new rail bridge abutment, as far westward from the existing intersection curve as the first bridge span will allow, without constraining Water Street with its first pier location. The purposes of bridge abutment retraction are twofold: It will be necessary to allow a wider abutment for the new northerly low-speed bridge span which would otherwise land in Otsego Street. It will also permit a much safer and more gracefully curving street entrance into the historic downtown area of the City. In consideration of this, the Advisory Board has assumed a new bridge span of 240 feet, from pier to pier, which is somewhat longer than the existing 200-foot spans.

Primary objectives are to provide better and safer intersection control at the Union Avenue/Warren Street crossing, safer traffic flow in and out of Saint John Street (principal gateway to downtown), an enlarged David Craig Park with safer vehicular access, and easier access to Water Street. Improved access to and from the southerly parking areas of the proposed rail commuter station, and significantly greater opportunities for gateway beautification are also important. This advisory puts forth a concept plan that is intended to meet each of these objectives.

Specific Recommendations

The Advisory Board has developed the following specific recommendations to give substance to this plan for purposes of public thought and discussion. This concept plan will be subjected to

far more detailed study and public input, and many other viable options will surely be considered, as the bridge project enters the design and construction phases.

1. Intersection street curvature should begin about fifty feet west of Pearl Street and extend to the existing intersection of Saint John Street.
2. A primary intersection with a traffic signal should be created at the intersection of Union Avenue and Warren Street, which would be used to control all traffic entering and exiting Saint John Street and waterfront parking areas, except via a northbound yield lane.
3. Northbound traffic exiting Saint John Street and waterfront parking areas should proceed through a yield lane at the current location in front of the American Legion building.
4. Lafayette Plaza statuary and flagpoles should be relocated to a large triangular traffic island created at the northeast corner of the new Union/Warren intersection.
5. David Craig Park should be enlarged toward the southwest, and a single entry/exit point should be installed farther northwestward from the Saint John Street yield lane.
6. Water Street should intersect the Otsego/Union curve with much improved sight lines, a wider throat for trailer towing, and ample room for a left-turn lane toward Union Avenue.
7. The Havre de Grace welcome sign should be dismantled, cleaned, and relocated to a small landscaped plaza between the proposed Pearl and Water Street corners, positioned to face directly west up the center of Otsego Street. This location would be well out from under the new bridge structure, and will receive direct sunlight toward afternoon and evening.
8. A continuous left-turn lane should be incorporated throughout the Union/Otsego curve to facilitate safe turns into Water Street, David Craig Park, and the American Legion; and at the Union/Warren intersection.
9. The entire intersection area should be extensively landscaped and maintained as the principle gateway to the historic downtown and waterfront areas.

Recommended Action

The Advisory Board requests that the Mayor and City Council take necessary steps to consolidate this concept plan, along with its recommendations, into a formal communication to the SRRBP Project Team as soon as possible. This is necessary to reinforce our efforts toward relocating the bridge abutment westward and gaining a downtown rail commuter station.

Respectfully submitted,



Volney H. Ford
Chairman

Attachment: Concept Road Alignment Plan

