

POTOMAC RIVER BIKE-PED BRIDGE: A SUSTAINABILITY LEGACY FOR THE REGION

By 2031, the DC Region will see a leap forward in sustainable recreation and transportation options with the opening of a new Potomac River crossing for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians.

- In concert with the new Long Bridge rail crossing, VPRa and project partners will build a new bike-ped river crossing
 - At approximately one-half mile in length, the new crossing is the longest bike-ped bridge in the region and one of the longest in the country
 - The new bike-ped crossing will be slotted between the new rail bridge and the WMATA Yellow Line
 - With a width of 16 feet, the crossing will accommodate high volumes of users of all ages and abilities (of six existing river crossings in the region, the only wider crossing in the region is the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge)
- The new river crossing will include design features focused on the safety, comfort, and convenience of bicyclists and walkers
 - New river crossing is for the exclusive use of bikers and pedestrians. Bridge width and geometry were developed to accommodate the needs of people of all ages and abilities comfortably and safely, including bicyclists moving at different speeds
 - Bridge provides full accessibility for users of all abilities, including stairs, access ramps, and gradual grades
 - Lighting is provided for safer nighttime use
 - Deck surface will be durable and slip resistant
- Better, more direct connections between Arlington and the District
 - Will shorten trips and provide another option for riders originating throughout Northern Virginia and the District
 - Cuts in half the riding distance and travel time for cycling trips between Long Bridge Park and East Potomac Park
 - Will connect with Long Bridge Park in Virginia (behind the Long Bridge Aquatic Center), the Mount Vernon Trail in Virginia, and Ohio Drive in DC
 - Mount Vernon Trail will be widened, realigned, and elevated where it connects to the new bike-ped crossing and is likely to include areas for resting and interpretive signs. The design includes both a ramp and stair connection to the trail from the bridge.
 - In the District, the design will provide clear and intuitive paths of travel between the bridge and Ohio Drive SW via ramps that connect to future bike lanes (bike lanes will be 6 feet wide)

- **VPRA increased the width from 14 to 16 feet in response to public support**
 - Capacity exceeds the anticipated usage both now and in the future
 - Bridge width exceeds local and national standards for bicyclists to pass each other as well as pedestrians both safely and comfortably
 - Bridge will accommodate two bicyclists riding abreast with space to comfortably pass a pedestrian or someone stopped to rest or enjoy the view
 - Bridge is wider than the facilities it connects to (existing trail within Long Bridge Park is 10 feet wide; existing Mount Vernon Trail is 8-10 feet wide; future Ohio Drive bike lanes are 6 feet wide)
 - Wide open connection points at each end will accommodate emergency vehicles and all types of bikes (trailers, cargo bikes, etc.)
- **VPRA and project partners have ruled out an even wider bridge for cost, impact, safety, and constructability reasons**
 - Adding four feet to the 16 ft. bridge width would cost an additional \$20-25M, further contributing to a current overall funding shortfall of \$389M
 - A wider bridge has greater ecological impacts. These impacts are concerns for NPS, permitting agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, the District Department of Energy and Environment, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and design review agencies (National Capital Planning Commission and Commission of Fine Arts).
 - The distance between the new rail bridge and the bike-ped bridge is only 25 feet at each landing. This is the minimum required for safety and security.
 - Existing and future bridges are supported on deep foundations that flare outward up to 100 ft. below ground. Further widening of the bike-ped bridge creates a risk that the foundations will interfere with each other and the adjacent existing WMATA bridge, potentially jeopardizing structural soundness.
 - All three landing areas are constrained both side to side as well as above and below. At Ohio Drive the bike-ped bridge must avoid an existing WMATA pier and come down within the limited area between Ohio Drive and the river. Further widening could impact existing WMATA piers on both sides of the river.
 - There is very limited space for construction equipment (cranes and barges) and temporary storage of construction material. A wider bridge would further limit available area to construct the bridge, leading to even higher costs and the risk of cost and schedule overruns.
 - Similarly, future maintenance work along the length of the bridge would be more restricted and expensive navigating between bridges.

