



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION

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GOVERNOR EHRLICH ANNOUNCES PREFERRED ROUTE FOR INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR



Governor Ehrlich makes clear his strong position on the ICC.

Road Project Includes Landmark Environmental Stewardship Package

Rockville - (July 11, 2005) - Standing at the corner of Veirs Mill and Norbeck roads, Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., today announced the State's preference is to build the Intercounty Connector (ICC) highway along the Corridor 1 alignment. For much of its length, Corridor 1 follows the alignment shown in both Montgomery and Prince George's county Master Plans. The ICC is a proposed 18-mile, limited access, toll road linking US 1 in Prince George's County to I-270/ I-370 in Montgomery County.

"We are making history today by bringing the ICC a step closer to reality," said Governor Ehrlich. "Building an ICC means less congestion and safer commuting throughout the Washington metropolitan region. Based on input we received and a two-year comprehensive analysis, Corridor 1 is the State-preferred option for the ICC. It provides better travel reliability and access to jobs. Corridor 1 brings with it \$369 million annually in user benefits and prevents between 350-425 crashes a year on overburdened local roads."

"Corridor 1 avoids historic properties, Rocky Gorge Reservoir and meets Smart Growth requirements," said Governor Ehrlich. "We are going above and beyond with a \$270 million environmental stewardship and mitigation package that makes this road viable."

The State will further analyze Corridor 1 and submit a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) document to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) this fall. After reviewing the comprehensive package, FHWA will make the final determination on the project in a "Record of Decision" expected by year end. The state-recommended corridor, which was preferred by all elected officials who stated a preference for a build option, is estimated to cost \$2.1 billion.

Following the 95-day public comment period, the study team analyzed 8,000 issues/comments, continuing to work closely with environmental resource agencies to develop mitigation and enhancement packages that more than offset the impacts of the project. The team plans to preserve a 450-acre Germantown property with mature trees adjacent to Great Seneca Park as part of an overall commitment to replace parkland/wildlife habitat at a five to one ratio.

"Governor Ehrlich's leadership, along with the professionalism and commitment of many talented people from federal, state and local governments, have made this study a model for success under President Bush's Executive Order on environmental streamlining," said Transportation Secretary Robert L. Flanagan. "We won't let dust gather on this project anymore. Once approved, we will begin detailed design and start construction."

The Corridor 1 proposal includes interchanges located at: MD 355, Shady Grove Metro Access Road, MD 97 (Georgia Avenue), MD 182 (Layhill Road), MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue), Old Columbia Pike/US 29/ Briggs Chaney Road, A-59 (a planned road west of I-95), I-95, Virginia Manor Road and an intersection at grade with US 1. The plan includes longer than typical bridges to minimize wetland impacts and state of the art storm water management and wildlife protection. The project will include a bike path adjacent to portions of the ICC that will tie to a network of bike paths across Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

The Intercounty Connector project was included as one of President Bush's priority projects for environmental streamlining, which provided for more timely environmental review by federal resource agencies. The Maryland Transportation Authority will operate and maintain the roadway once completed. The State Highway Administration will manage the design and construction, scheduled to begin 2006 and estimated to be complete 2010.

[**View Preferred Route for Intercounty Connector.**](#)

[**View photo of Governor Ehrlich announcing southern alignment as the State's preferred alternative for the Intercounty Connector.**](#)

[**View photo of Governor Ehrlich and Transportation Secretary Flanagan briefing the press on the ICC preferred alternative.**](#)

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