

ALTERNATIVES NOT RETAINED FOR DETAILED EVALUATION

US 301 Project Development



Why has the ORANGE Alternative been dropped?

- After additional detailed evaluation and consideration of comments from the public and resource agencies, DeIDOT decided to drop the Orange Alternative based on the following:
 - Virtually no public support
 - High wetland, high quality wetlands and Waters of the US impacts
 - High cost, high impact on properties and high potential for traffic impacts during construction
 - Directly impacts historic resources [Section 4(f)], a potential fatal flaw in utilizing federal funds
 - Community impacts concerns - divides Middletown in two

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- High wetland impacts
- High - high quality wetland impacts
- Moderate Waters of the US impacts
- High stream impacts
- Highest DNREC tidal wetlands impacts
- High hydric soils impacts
- High floodplain impacts
- Moderate Agricultural District impacts
- Low forestland impacts
- Moderate habitat area impacts



CULTURAL RESOURCES

- "Unsatisfactory" level of potential effects on historic properties (based on incomplete data) - SHPO supports recommendation to drop

STATE "PLUS" AGENCY COMMENTS

- State Fire Marshall's Office - On-Alignment alternative may pose Emergency Services access issues

ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- North-south roadway remains along existing US 301 Corridor
- Mid-range length Alternative
- Mid-range Number of Interchanges
- High Number of Overpasses
- High Cost (along US 301 & Service Roads)
- High Impact on Properties
- High Impact on Property Access
- Moderate Impact on Existing Communities (within 600 feet)
- High potential traffic impact during construction (along Existing US 301)
- Impact on Summit Airport - not on existing runway, but on clear zone and expansion plans
- Large impact on proposed development (Whitehall)
- Large impact on approved development (Rothwell Village & Scott Run Business Park)

SECTION 4(f) RESOURCES (Public Parks, Recreation Area & Historic Sites)

- Direct impacts on 4 historic properties
 - Armstrong-Walker House (N05146) - frontage impact
 - Summertown (N00112) - demolition impact
 - Hayes House (N05153) - demolition impact
 - Mt. Pleasant Farm (N05242) - frontage impact

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Virtually no public support (31 Retain & 222 Drop)
- Orange divides Middletown in two (adverse impacts on community cohesion and established commercial enterprises)

Why has the RED Alternative been dropped?

- After additional detailed evaluation and consideration of comments from the public and resource agencies, DeIDOT decided to drop the Red Alternative based on the following:
 - Does not optimize traffic capacity of the existing bridge crossings of the C&D Canal
 - Does not match roadway improvements with the desired destinations of motorists (65% want to go northeast)
 - Requires a new Summit Bridge crossing the C&D Canal, the most costly alternative
 - Directly Impacts recreational property [Section 4(f)], a potential fatal flaw in utilizing federal funds
 - Will result in significant construction impacts: Route 896 north of C&D Canal and I-95/Route 896 interchange reconstruction

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- High wetland impacts
- Moderate - high quality wetland impacts
- Highest Waters of the US impacts
- Highest - stream impacts
- No DNREC tidal wetlands impacts
- Highest hydric soils impact
- Highest floodplain impacts
- High Agricultural District impacts
- Highest forestland impacts
- Moderate habitat area impacts
- Potential RTE Areas



CULTURAL RESOURCES

- "Unsatisfactory" level of potential effects on historic properties (based on incomplete data) - SHPO supports recommendation to drop

STATE "PLUS" AGENCY COMMENTS

- DNREC - Ridge Alignment may be least impactful on ground water recharge (also Purple + Spur, Brown & Green + Spur Alts.)

ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Longest alternative
- Most costly alternative
- Greatest number of interchanges
 - New I-95 / SR 896 / OBP Interchange (costly/complex MOT)
 - New Interchange at US 40/SR 896 (complex MOT), also recommended by Route 40 Transportation Plan
- Large number of overpasses
- New Bridge Across C&D Canal (long span)
- Requires reduction in design speed / design exception (70 to 60 mph) or results in property impact to Paul M. Hodgson Voc-Tech school or park / historic Frenchtown Railroad area
- Large number of properties affected
- Moderate property access affected

SECTION 4(f) RESOURCES (Public Parks, Recreation Area & Historic Sites)

- Direct impact to C & D Canal Recreation & Wildlife Refuge
- Direct impact to sensitive wildlife area with additional impacts to hiking and biking trails possible
- High potential for construction impacts - direct or temporary - to provide parallel bridge to west of existing structure
- Linear nature of Canal means total avoidance is not feasible
- Direct impact to Iron Hill Park forested area, needed for new flyover ramp (SB I-95 to SB 896), avoidance to east would impact, Cooches Bridge Historic District
- Direct impact to Lums Pond State Park forested and open space
- Needed for realigned SR 896 / Howell School Road intersection
- Potential benefit: consolidates park property south of Howell School Road

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- The number of comments in opposition (157) somewhat exceeded the number of comments in support (139)

Why has the BLUE Alternative been dropped?

- After additional detailed evaluation and consideration of comments from the public and resource agencies, DeIDOT decided to drop the Blue Alternative based on the following:
 - Strong opposition from both the public (over 2300 opposed) and resource agencies
 - Poor traffic performance and congestion relief compared to the retained alternatives (20,000-26,000 vehicles per day versus 38,000-57,000)
 - Significant environmental impacts, including two high quality wetlands, forested lands, natural areas and wildlife habitat
 - Based on the Department of Agricultural analysis, areas of agricultural suitability would be the most severely impacted by this alternative
 - Could encourage development where state policies are designed to preserve agricultural and natural resources

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- High wetland impacts
- Low (N) / High (S) - high quality wetland impacts
- Moderate (N) / Low (S) Waters of the US impacts
- High - stream impacts
- No DNREC tidal wetlands impacts
- Low hydric soils impact
- Least floodplain impacts
- Least Agricultural District impacts
- High forestland impacts
- High (N) / Low (S) habitat area impacts

(N) = North
(S) = South

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- "Unsatisfactory" level of potential effects on historic properties (based on incomplete data) - SHPO supports recommendation to drop

STATE "PLUS" AGENCY COMMENTS

- DNREC - Significant impacts on forests, Blackbird Creek Natural Area and Noxontown Pond Natural Area
- DNREC - "Blue South Option travels through the most environmentally sensitive areas of all of the proposed alternatives and could not be supported by DNREC"
- DNREC - Impacts to depleted forest systems should be minimized (Blue alternative less desirable)
- DDA - Lack of support
- OSP - Level 4 issues (Strategies for State Policy and Spending - natural/preservation area)

ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Carries the least traffic (20,000 to 26,000 vpd vs. 56,000 vpd); i.e. meets less of the project Purpose and Need than other alternatives
- Shortest alternative
- Lowest cost alternative
- Results in LOS F (failing) on US 301 North of Middletown

SECTION 4(f) RESOURCES (Public Parks, Recreation Area & Historic Sites)

- Wiggins Mill Park (North Option)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Added as alternative as a result of the June Public Workshops - suggested on 42 comment forms.
- By far, the strongest public opposition illustrated in 535 individual comments and petitions (with 1,867 signatures), with only 167 voicing support.
- Nature Conservancy statement (9/16/05) and Delaware Nature Society statement (9/16/05) - argue that Blue Alternative does not meet project goals and objectives, conflict with the Blackbird-Millington Corridor Conservation Plan, and encourage dropping Blue Alternatives

