

Gov. Harry W. Nice Bridge tops Charles transportation list

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La Plata, MD - The construction of a new Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge linking Virginia to Charles County in Maryland is among the top high-priority items for Charles County's transportation needs, Jason Groth, chief of Resource and Infrastructure Management for the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management told the county commissioners Tuesday, March 24.

Groth said that, thanks to Maryland Transportation Authority efforts to secure a record of decision agreement and a commitment of \$56 million for engineering and right-of-way acquisition for the new bridge, the project is moving forward.

"This is a major step forward," Groth told the commissioners. "Now we will be looking for money for the total replacement of the bridge."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for the project in 1939. In December 1940, the bridge was opened and in 1967, the former Potomac River Bridge was renamed for Nice, who served as governor of Maryland from 1935-1939. The proposed replacement span would cross the river just north of the current structure.

"This will affect a park on the Virginia side and the Aqualand property on the Maryland shore," Charles County Commissioner Vice President Ken Robinson [D-District 1] noted.

The \$56 million will be used for engineering and acquisition of the property needed for the new span, Groth said.

Groth added that Route 234 in Budd's Creek and light rail to Waldorf are both areas of concern for the county as well.

"We have made significant progress preserving the corridor for the light rail option," he added, naming light rail "essential" in the effort to revitalize downtown Waldorf.

Groth noted there are other areas of need as well, on Route 301, 231, which he said is continuing to see additional traffic and congestion.

Contact Joseph Norris at joe.norris@thebaynet.com

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