

# Chesapeake Connector: Freight and Passenger Rail Benefits Advisory Committee Project Update

January 10, 2012

Elkton, MD

## Summary of Project Activities

- Review of project documents
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Development of cost estimates for project alternatives

## Key Findings from Review of Documents

- Reviewed roughly 50 documents and reports
- Many things have changed in the corridor since many of the reports were authored, however, several points emerge from the review:
  - No capital costs available
  - Many conclusions concerning freight impact rest on limited operating window at night which no longer applies
  - Difference of opinion among studies on key points for benefit cost assessment:
    - Sufficient existing capacity to add transit service
    - Limited outlook for freight growth along the Delmarva
  - Agreement that introduction of HSR is a large uncertainty

## Stakeholder Interviews

- Amtrak
- Norfolk Southern (national and operations)
- Maryland & Delaware Railroad
- Maryland MTA
- DeIDOT
- Port of Baltimore
- Sussex County Economic Development
- Attended Delmarva Freight Summit

## What We Heard About Freight

- Freight trains are now permitted to cross during the day
- Key shippers on the Delmarva include aggregates, coal for the power plant, and inputs for the poultry industry
  - Growth outlook for all is flat to declining
  - Freight is not time sensitive
- Unable to find instances where the port, a shipper, or the rail lines were unable to attract business or lost business specifically because of rail service



Preliminary, still  
evaluating

Minimal freight benefits due to project

## What We Heard About Passenger Service

- Transit service could be accommodated in the corridor without the Connector based on operations elsewhere in the corridor
  - Potential conflicts could be mitigated with a siding and much less costly improvements
  - No confirmed date to extend MARC service along this track section
- Investment in HSR and new FRA regulations could change this, but implementation is decades off and at present uncommitted—difficult to use this larger potential future program



Preliminary, still  
evaluating

No short-term benefit to passenger service

## What Alternatives are Feasible?

### Option A

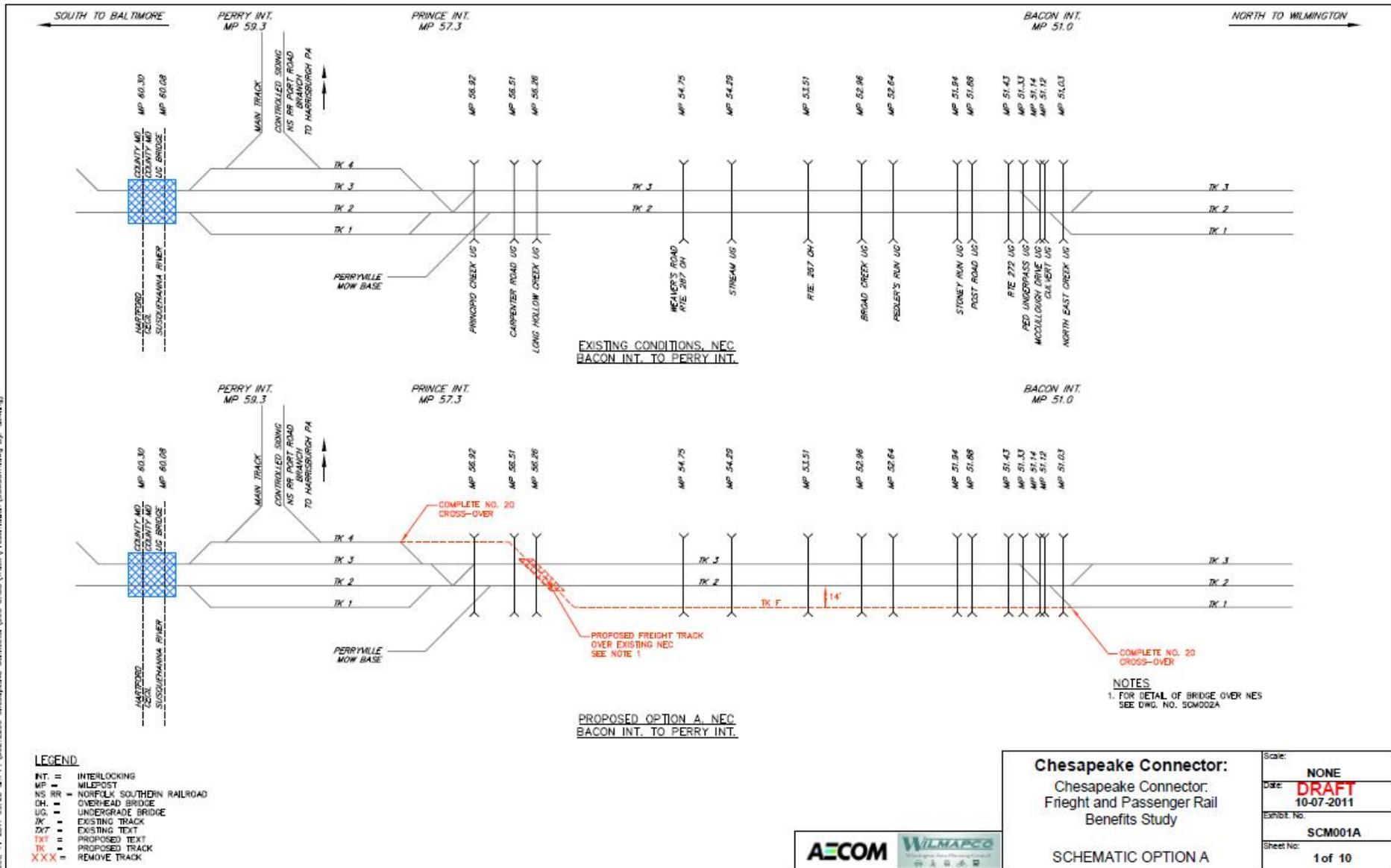
- Adds a single third main track and crosses the NEC by a grade-separated structure over the NEC
- Will require a high level of engineering work
- Anticipated structural improvements to three existing bridges and the construction of at least six new structures

### Option B

- Adds a third track to the NEC at grade
- Anticipated structural improvements to three existing bridges and the construction of at least seven new bridges
- Greater likelihood of conflict relative to Option A because all of the crossings are at-grade
- Will cause higher levels of interruption to freight and passenger rail traffic along the corridor during construction

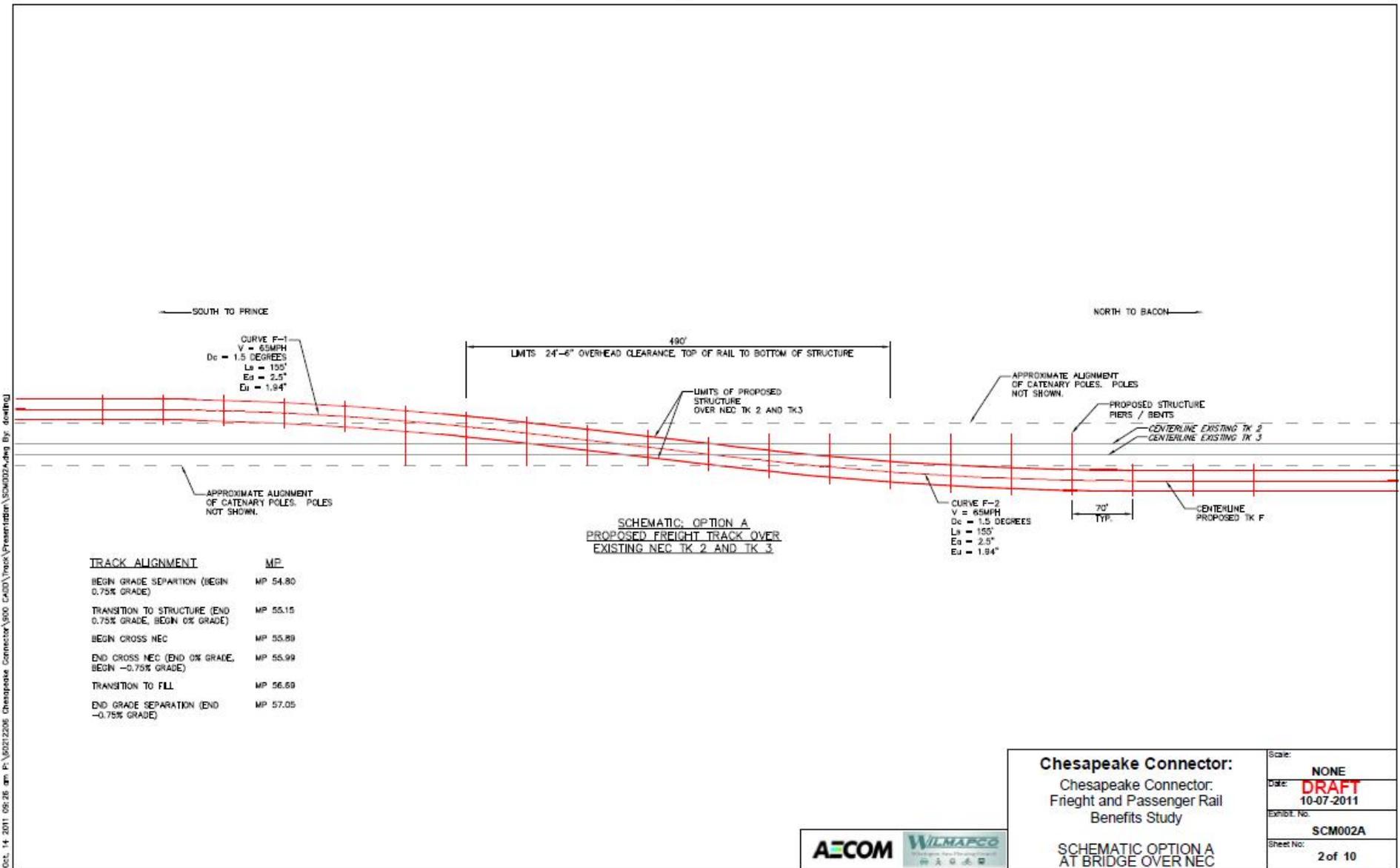
Please refer to your handout for additional details.

# Schematic Option A

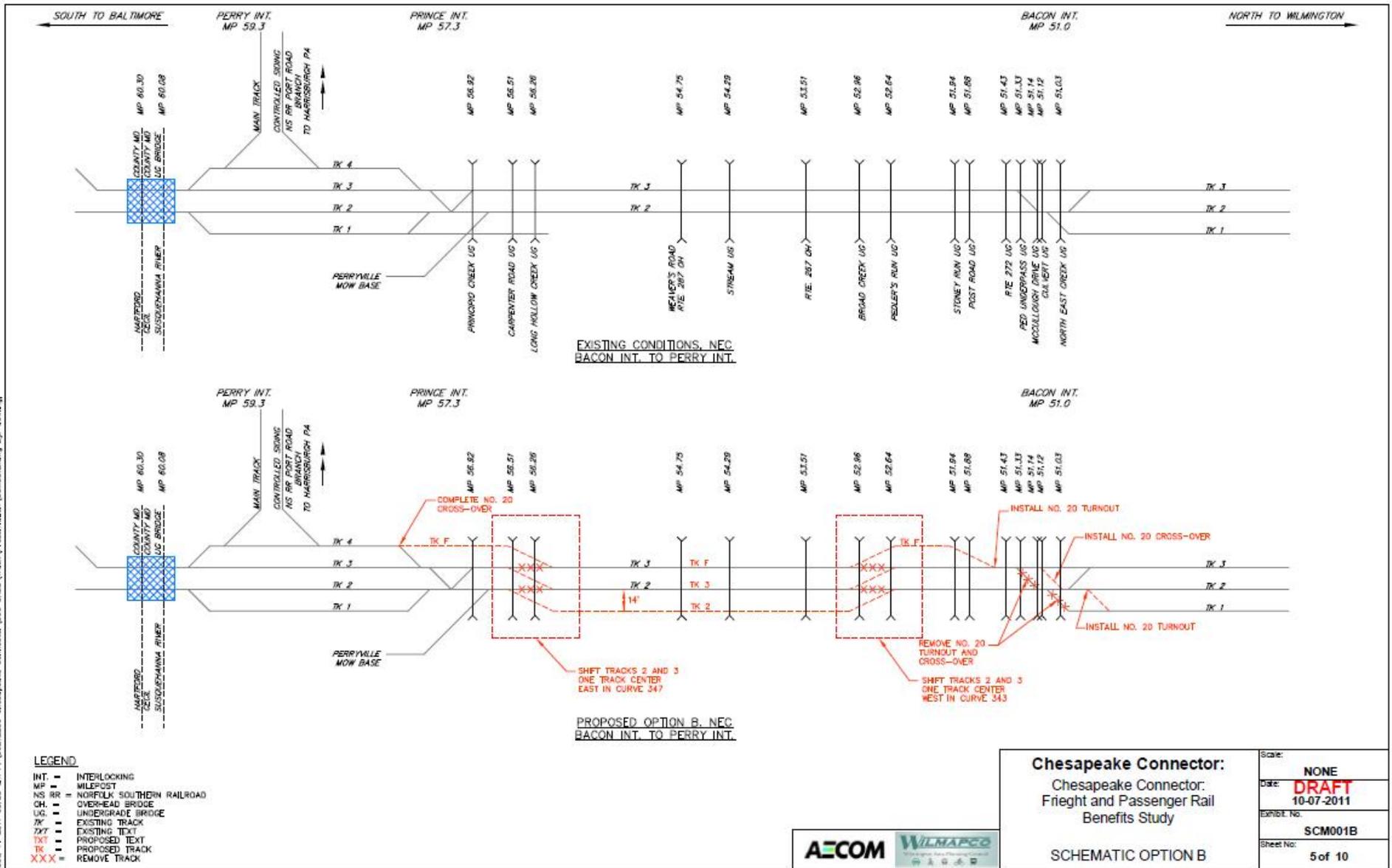


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# Schematic Option A at Bridge over NEC



# Schematic Option B



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## Next Steps

- Incorporate your comments from today and follow up on your suggestions concerning for any documents or examples of missed opportunities that we've missed
  - Toni.horst@aecom.com
- Complete the benefit cost assessment
  - If finding of minimal benefits holds, we will assess what level of benefits would be needed to justify project cost
- Document findings in final report