

## **CASE STUDY - Maryland**

### **Statewide Programmatic Agreement for Maryland's Historic Highway Bridges**



Photo Caption: The Dover Bridge on MD 331 over Choptank River is a movable Pratt Through Truss with a Swing Span. It has been designated a Preservation Priority Bridge.

#### **Description of the Program:**

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has completed a comprehensive historic bridge survey of Maryland's state and county owned highways. This inventory was updated in 2010 to include all SHA owned bridges constructed through the year 1965. All of these bridges were evaluated for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility using a statewide context for historic highway bridges, in consultation with Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), local governments, historic preservation commissions and heritage areas. As a result of the inventory, 168 state-owned bridges have been determined eligible or are listed in the NRHP. To streamline consultation between the SHA and SHPO, and more effectively manage Maryland's eligible State-owned bridges, SHA and SHPO developed the statewide Programmatic Agreement (PA), which was executed by FHWA, SHA, SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) on July 19, 2013. It identifies three treatment categories for SHA-owned and managed historic bridges and includes provisions for the management and corresponding review processes for National Register-eligible or listed bridges in each of these three categories.

1. Preservation Priority Historic Bridges (17 bridges listed in Attachment A) – designated for indefinite preservation. A *Management Plan for Historic Highway Bridges (April 2010)* includes individual management plans for the preservation of these bridges and general guidance for best practices. SHA, FHWA, and SHPO will review all undertakings involving Preservation Priority Historic Bridges in accordance with 36 CFR 800 and will thoroughly investigate options for preservation of the bridge. The PA specifically encourages FHWA and SHA to use design exceptions and variances, when practical, to allow for the preservation and rehabilitation of the 17 Preservation Priority Historic Bridges.
2. Eligible Historic Bridges (91 bridges listed in Attachment B) – will be maintained and preserved, when feasible, and subject to a streamlined review process under the PA. Although SHA will maintain and preserve these bridges in accordance with relevant guidance in the *Management Plan*, the PA provides a streamlined review when the project will have *no adverse effect* on historic properties. Adverse effects to bridges in this category will be reviewed in accordance with 36 CFR 800.
3. Non-Priority Historic Bridges (60 historic bridges listed in Attachment C) – do not require preservation in place and subject to streamlined review process and standard mitigation treatments. Demolition and replacement are possible treatment options for this bridge category, when maintenance and rehabilitation are no longer feasible and cost effective options. If adverse effects cannot be avoided, SHA may conclude Section 106 review by preparing a standard recordation package to be filed with the SHPO.

In addition, the PA requires that SHA:

- Nominate the 17 Preservation Priority Historic Bridges to the NHRP (at least two bridge nominations per year, as funds are available).
- Within one year of signing the PA, update the Maryland Historic Bridges portion of its website to include information on the PA, the Historic Bridges Management Plan and the NRHP eligible bridges covered by the PA.
- Carry out public outreach efforts and installing metal plaques on all Preservation Priority Historic Bridges.
- Ensure that projects within a Certified Heritage Area or along a Maryland Scenic Byway support the objective and mission of such affected area.
- Ensure that other historic properties (e.g., archaeological sites, historic buildings) that may be affected by bridge projects are identified, evaluated and treated in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.

While the PA does not cover locally-owned bridges, it includes a stipulation specifically encouraging FHWA, SHA, and MD SHPO to promote the appropriate stewardship of non-SHA owned historic bridges in Maryland through their respective agency programs.

#### **WHY THIS IS A GOOD AGREEMENT:**

The PA was developed through a lengthy consultation between SHA and the Maryland SHPO and the resulting document includes some very good stipulations that provide for long-term preservation, and an attitude of stewardship concerning the most important state-owned historic bridges in Maryland. The PA also encourages the use of variances and design exceptions to protect these important historic bridges from replacement, even where they do not meet current design guidelines. This PA is recommended as a model for other states seeking to effectively manage the most significant bridges under their jurisdiction.

