



City of Havre de Grace

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Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project Advisory Board of the Mayor and City Council

Advisory Bulletin #2
Bridge Architecture
October 21, 2014

Background

The Advisory Board, during its first meeting on October 6, 2014, determined that the overall appearance of the proposed Susquehanna River Rail Bridge is of the highest priority of importance to the City of Havre de Grace, surrounding communities, and the State of Maryland. This discussion was preceded by the strong opinion of many citizens and elected officials that bridge architecture is their most pressing concern.

The new bridge complex will dominate the downtown and waterfront vista for the next century or more, and will become iconic of Havre de Grace as a tourist and entertainment center. It will also become the gateway to the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, being positioned at the mouth of the greatest eastern river in our nation as it flows into the world's largest estuarial bay. This new bridge should also symbolize the future of Amtrak and of rail transportation as a national asset and environmental ally, given its unique location, intense rail activity, and imposing dominance.

Architectural Recommendations

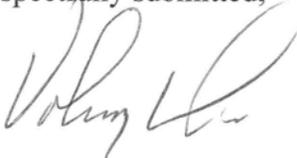
1. In the likely event that new twin bridges of two tracks each are constructed, both bridges should be of identical height and architecture, and should be aligned as closely to each other as possible, to give the appearance of one bridge.
2. The bridges should be entirely open-decked, with each span having graceful shallow-arched symmetry using massive closed-webbed steel beams that present an overall solid appearance. Emphasis should be placed on pleasing lines of curvature, with properly balanced span and arch dimensions.

3. Bridge support piers should be taller, more slender, and spaced farther apart than the existing piers to improve navigation and open up the viewscape.
4. Both bridges should be carried on the same elongated pier structures to emphasize the appearance of “one bridge” and to better resist river-borne collisions.
5. The catenary system should be suspended from a series of single, architecturally graceful solid-form towers, mounted directly on the piers between the bridges, with high-line arms at the very top and wide catenary arms extending in cantilever over the double-track bridge decks along both sides. This will do much to reduce the visual effect of catenary “clutter” while emphasizing the towers as central architectural features of the bridge complex.
6. The bridges and towers should be painted in a light metallic color, such as a golden platinum, to produce a distinctive daytime natural glow from great distances.
7. The entire bridge span, as viewed from upriver and downriver, should be provided with night-time accent lighting to create a warm glow along the outer face of each of its arches, in such a way that subtle arches of light are always visible at night.
8. All existing piers and abutments, whether supporting the current bridge or the previously removed rail/automobile bridge, should be removed down to the river bed, to eliminate clutter, enhance the viewscape, and greatly improve barge and boat navigation.

Recommended Action

The Advisory Board requests that the Mayor send a formal communication to the SRRBP project team, offering these recommendations as a typical example of the style of architecture the City and surrounding communities would expect and want to embrace.

Respectfully submitted,



Volney H. Ford
Chairman