Amtrak’s existing two-track Susquehanna River Bridge crosses the Susquehanna River between the City of Havre de Grace and the Town of Perryville in Maryland—roughly mid-way between Wilmington and Baltimore. The highly-used bridge serves Amtrak, the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail and Norfolk Southern Railway to carry passenger and freight trains across the Susquehanna River.

**Project Need**

 Owned by Amtrak, the Susquehanna River Bridge is the longest moveable bridge on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and is a critical link for intercity, commuter and freight connectivity in the Mid-Atlantic. Built in 1906, the bridge is approaching the end of its service life and will need to be replaced with a new structure to maintain future rail services across the Susquehanna River. The age of the bridge and its constriction from four to two tracks limits the speed and number of trains that can use the bridge. **The replacement of the Susquehanna River Bridge is necessary to preserve reliability and allow the future expansion of MARC commuter rail service and Amtrak high-speed service.** The project will also significantly improve the navigation channel for maritime users.

**Infrastructure Background**

The Susquehanna River Bridge was constructed in 1906 as a 4,000 foot-long multi-span truss bridge. The limited number of tracks across the river, combined with the wide variety of trains utilizing the bridge and the need for continual maintenance, results in tightly managed and restrictive operations. While regular, major repairs have occurred on the bridge since the 1960s, few repairs and/or inspections can be made without disrupting rail operations. The existing bridge’s movable swing span causes train delays when opening is required for marine traffic, and large crews are needed to operate the span because work must be done quickly. Each bridge opening introduces risks of significant train delays if a breakdown of the operating mechanisms were to occur.
Project Benefits

- More reliable, flexible and faster service
- Expansion of future freight, commuter, intercity, and high-speed rail operations
- Improved maritime navigation and safety
- Enhanced trade connectivity for economic growth

With significant growth in passenger and freight rail service expected by 2040, the replacement bridge is being designed to accommodate future capacity needs. The new bridge design includes two new high-level, fixed bridges with a total of four tracks – doubling capacity compared to the current two tracks.

One of the new bridges would be built primarily to serve high-speed trains operating at speeds up to 160 miles per hour. With 60 feet of vertical clearance, the new fixed bridges will support better maritime uses along the river by maintaining navigation and eliminating the need to open and close for tall vessels.

Project Status

Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration and Maryland Department of Transportation have cooperated on an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a new replacement bridge, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). After the evaluation and public screening of multiple alternatives, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was released in June 2017 for Selected Alternative 9A. The study included preliminary engineering and 30% design which has been advanced in close coordination with the adjacent communities to ensure aesthetic consistency and to respect the historic character of the surrounding area.

Funding is now needed to finish design and construct the estimated $1.7 billion new bridge. Funding will be pursued through a combination of federal grant programs, funding from Amtrak, and other state and local matches.

Rendering of the future Susquehanna River Bridge that will double track capacity and eliminate the need to open for maritime traffic.

NEC FUTURE Investment Plan: 2040 and Beyond

The Susquehanna River Bridge replacement has been identified in the Federal Railroad Administration’s long-term NEC FUTURE investment plan as fundamental to improving the reliability, capacity and connectivity of the NEC. NEC FUTURE recommends a modern, conflict-free high-speed rail operation would be best provided for with a four-track bridge permitting speeds up to 160mph. The new Susquehanna River Bridge is being designed with this recommendation in mind.