

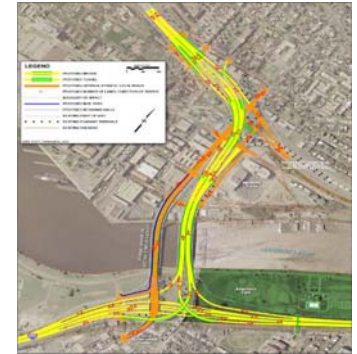
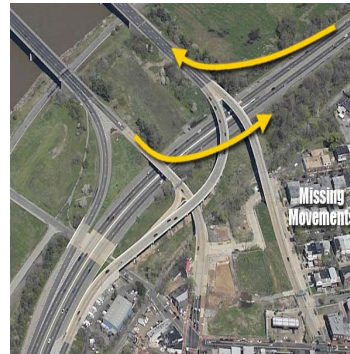
Successes **in** Stewardship

<http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/es4newsltrs.asp>

August 2008

The 11th Street Bridges: Building Teams to Improve Outcomes and Expedite Environmental Review

The 11th Street Bridges are a pair of one-way bridges that cross the Anacostia River in southeastern Washington, DC. The bridges were built in the mid-1960s to provide a vital link between the Anacostia Freeway (I-295 and DC-295) and the Southeast/Southwest Freeway (I-695). However the full connections envisioned in the original project plan remain incomplete. Drivers heading south on the Anacostia Freeway cannot access the bridges and drivers heading east across the bridges cannot access the Anacostia Freeway heading north. For decades, the only alternative has been to use neighborhood streets to compensate for these missing highway connections. With the release of the Record of Decision (ROD) on July 2, 2008, however, the 11th Street Bridges are now poised for completion of these connections.



Aerial photographs of missing bridge movements (left) and Final EIS preferred alternative (right) (courtesy of DDOT).

With assistance provided through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Teambuilding Initiative, the 11th Street Bridges Project Team reached a ROD in 34 months compared with FHWA's median time of 68 months for completing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The project's NEPA process also exceeded FHWA's National Performance Objective to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process in 36 months.

Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and 11th Street Bridges Project

The 11th Street Bridges Project is part of a broader revitalization effort known as the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) which is led by the District of Columbia Office of Planning. Partners in the AWI include FHWA and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). In 2004, DDOT commissioned a Middle Anacostia River Crossings (MAC) study to explore transportation planning and redevelopment options in the area that would support the AWI. The MAC study recommended over 30 short-, mid-, and long-term projects to enhance transportation infrastructure, safety, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity and support broader revitalization of the waterfront, including completion of the 11th Street Bridges' missing highway connections. In 2005, FHWA issued a Notice of Intent to formally get the project underway.

In addition to building the necessary ramp infrastructure, the project will replace deficient bridge components, expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities along traffic lanes, accommodate future streetcars, and make aesthetic improvements to the bridge and freeway interchanges. The current traffic pattern of the 11th Street Bridges requires drivers to leave the freeways and navigate local roads, which results in highly congested neighborhood streets. Construction of the missing freeway ramps will separate regional and local traffic and significantly improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and safety in the Anacostia neighborhood.

Teambuilding Initiative

Due to the project's high visibility and the rapid pace of redevelopment in the area, the project team set an ambitious timeline to complete the EIS. To facilitate expedited EIS review and help project managers and stakeholders better meet streamlining and stewardship objectives, FHWA selected the project to participate in its NEPA Teambuilding Initiative, which is administered by the FHWA Office of Project Development and Environmental Review.

The goal of the NEPA Teambuilding Initiative is to assist state DOTs and FHWA Divisions in improving the quality and timeliness of the transportation-development process through teambuilding. The Initiative will also help to ensure that environmental stewardship and improved

NEPA Teambuilding Initiative Project-Selection Criteria

To be considered for support through the NEPA Teambuilding Initiative, projects must meet the following selection criteria:

- New or recently initiated EIS process.
- Local desire for project to get off to good start.
- Aggressive or fast-track schedule.
- High priority in state or local community.
- Project managers desire assistance.
- State willing to commit resources to effort.
- Resource agencies do not already have hardened positions.

decisionmaking are built into transportation-project development and review.

The NEPA Teambuilding Initiative encourages public involvement throughout the EIS process, establishes project timeframes that are agreeable to all stakeholders, and uses transparent methods to document project impacts and progress. Assistance is typically focused on earlier stages of the project-development process for selected projects, such as:

Teambuilding/Conflict Resolution. Teams of public stakeholders, issue experts, and Federal/state staff respond to specific project needs and use conflict-resolution techniques to address potential conflicts of interest early in the planning and development process.

Scoping. Interagency teams provide project-management and scoping support to state DOTs to more effectively clarify DOT and agency responsibilities and develop more accurate cost and time estimates for environmental review.

Documentation and Review. Subject-matter experts review documents, engage neutral third parties for conflict resolution, and develop approaches for mitigating impacts on natural, historical, and cultural resources.

Taking these steps early on builds better project teams, resulting in increased cost effectiveness and fewer project delays due to poor communication or failure to address critical project issues.

How Teambuilding Improved EIS Preparation for the 11th Street Bridges Project

The 11th Street Bridges Project shows how the NEPA Teambuilding Initiative can be used with targeted public outreach strategies to address environmental streamlining and stewardship goals. These strategies include:

- *Actively encouraging public involvement early in the process.* Project managers created an 11th Street Bridges website, newsletters, and mailing lists; delivered formal presentations and workshops to community groups; and held public scoping meetings and monthly AWI meetings to involve multiple agency and citizen stakeholders throughout all stages of project development and EIS review. The website and newsletters were designed to present information to both the general public and technical experts in engaging, stimulating, and accessible ways.
- *Expediting the entire EIS development and review.* FHWA assisted DDOT, the project team, and agency and public stakeholders with coordinating concurrent reviews of key project materials.
- *Ensuring that bridge construction would not negatively affect boathouse operations.* The project team worked closely with the Anacostia Community Boathouse Association, located on the eastern side of the Anacostia River between the spans of the 11th Street Bridges. Boat storage and operations will be temporarily relocated upstream while construction is ongoing, but all boathouse facilities and activities will remain open and available to the public. This cooperative partnership between the boathouse and the 11th Street Bridges Project Team allowed all parties to develop a satisfactory solution to a potentially contentious issue.
- *Addressing Section 4(f) requirements for transportation use of publicly owned land.* FHWA worked with DDOT and the National Park Service to develop a Net Benefit Programmatic Agreement. Under the terms and conditions of the agreement, DDOT will acquire 1.5 acres of the public Anacostia Park for planned project construction. The measures to minimize harm and the mitigation incorporated into the project will result in an overall enhancement of the acquired Section 4(f) property.

11th Street Bridges Project Milestones	Date
Notice of Intent	Sept. 2005
Draft EIS	July 2006
Final EIS	Nov. 2007
ROD	July 2008

For more details on the Final EIS, along with updates, newsletters, maps, and other related project materials, please visit the [11th Street Bridge EIS website](#).

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Look What's New!

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of TEA-21, Defenders of Wildlife is proud to announce a new publication, "THE \$ 61 MILLION QUESTION: How Can Transportation Enhancements Benefit Wildlife?" This guide to Transportation Enhancements Activity 11 is a call for wildlife conservationists and natural resource managers to apply for TE funding. You can view or download the report by visiting the [Defenders of Wildlife website](#).

Read more about the 15 Eco-Logical cooperative agreements on [Eco-Logical's new updated website](#). The page now features project descriptions, updates and contact information.