

PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD OPENS FOR THE WALLOPS ISLAND CAUSEWAY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, ACCOMACK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is initiating an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will evaluate potential impacts associated with replacement of the Wallops Island Causeway Bridge over Cat Creek at Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility, in Accomack County, VA. The EA is being prepared to satisfy both NASA's and FHWA's obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and will also serve as a means for ensuring compliance with a variety of other Federal statutes, including the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Clean Water Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The EA is being tiered from the July 2019 Wallops Site-wide Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Site-wide PEIS). The Site-wide PEIS, which is available at https://code200-external.gsfc.nasa.gov/250-wff/site-wide_eis, analyzed the potential environmental impacts associated with various institutional support activities including the causeway bridge replacement.

The existing bridge was constructed in 1959 and is approaching the end of its anticipated service life. It is 1,284 feet long, 27 feet wide, and has a cast-in-place concrete deck supported by four prestressed concrete beams on concrete piers. The bridge is located on the two-mile long Causeway Road connecting the mainland with Wallops Island. The proposed project would address structural deficiencies and improve safety by meeting current roadway and bridge design standards.

The EA will discuss the project background, the need for the proposed action, environmental issues associated with the project, potential impacts resulting from the alternatives considered, public involvement, and government agency coordination. The two alternatives being evaluated in the EA are "no build" and "replacement". The no build alternative would include maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing bridge until structural deficiencies necessitate a full closure. The replacement alternative would require construction of a new bridge parallel to the existing bridge. The existing bridge would remain in use during construction of the new bridge.

NASA and FHWA are seeking preliminary comments on the proposed action and its potential impacts. Updates about the project will be posted on the following FHWA website:

<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/va/st-nasa-1-9>

Comments submitted during the Public Scoping period will assist NASA and FHWA during preparation of the Draft EA. The public scoping comment period concludes on September 20, 2020. Comments can be sent by e-mail to Ryan.Kimberley@dot.gov, or by standard mail to:

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