West Valley Green Road Bridge
Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Who owns the existing bridge?

**Answer:** The existing bridge is owned and maintained by Montgomery County.

**Question:** Of the alternatives studied, which alternative is preferred by the County?

**Answer:** A number of bridge replacement options were studied as well as an existing bridge rehabilitation option. The preferred alternative is Alternative #4: Replacement on New Alignment, Similar Location as Existing Bridge. Other bridge replacement options have significant impacts to adjacent properties, both from a right-of-way and flooding standpoint. A bridge rehabilitation does not meet the project purpose and needs and would require significant long-term maintenance to keep the bridge in service. With the ADT being approximately 6,000 vehicles per day as counted in 2013 and the width of the bridge being 18’-8”, providing two lanes of traffic on the bridge is tight and has resulted in a number of minor impacts to both cars and the bridge – typically it is the loss of a side mirror.

**Question:** If the existing bridge were to be rehabilitated, can the weight restriction on the bridge be increased?

**Answer:** PennDOT has determined that the bridge could be rehabilitated to carry 38 tons without having an adverse effect. EMS vehicles weigh up to 38 tons. However, the rehabilitated bridge would have the same substandard width as the existing bridge. Widening the bridge as part of a rehabilitation would result in an adverse effect.

**Question:** Could a conditional use permit for emergency vehicles such as fire engines be provided if the bridge was rehabilitated to 20 +/- tons (to accommodate school buses)?

**Answer:** The Colonial School District buses range in weight from 6 Tons to 17 Tons which would be accommodated if the existing bridge were to be strengthened. In regard to larger emergency vehicles using the existing bridge, the County does not issue emergency vehicle permits. The County would consider an application/permit to exceed posted weight or size limit and have to review the vehicle configuration on a case-by-case basis to determine if an overweight vehicle could utilize the bridge. These types of permits have both been granted and denied.
**Question:** Could the historic bridge be widened without an Adverse Effect.

**Answer:** The bridge could be widened; however, all of the floorbeams (include other members, truss, stringers, etc.) would need to be replaced and the Floorbeam-to-Truss connections would need to be modified. This connection is a character defining feature and as such would lead to an Adverse Effect finding.

**Question:** How would the replacement of the bridge impact traffic speed on West Valley Green Road?

**Answer:** The existing posted 25 mph speed limit on West Valley Green Road will remain after the project is constructed.

**Question:** Would a new bridge accommodate pedestrians?

**Answer:** A new bridge would include 6-foot-wide shoulders which would provide room for pedestrians walking across the bridge.

**Question:** How will proposed bridge alternatives impact flooding to the properties surrounding the bridge?

**Answer:** Preliminary hydraulic analysis of Alternative #4 (the preferred alternative) indicates both a 10-year storm event and a 25-year storm event pass beneath the bridge without overtopping West Valley Green Road as opposed to the existing condition which suggests the 10-year storm event does overtop West Valley Green Road. Analysis of the 100-year storm event indicates Alternative #4 flood elevations will not increase over existing flood elevations. A detailed hydraulic analysis will be performed in Preliminary Design to verify that the new construction will create no impacts to 100-year flood elevations as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

**Question:** Would emergency services’ response times be improved to properties on each side of the bridge if the bridge were to be replaced with no weight restrictions?

**Answer:** The local fire companies and ambulance services are not able to cross the existing bridge due to the current weight restrictions. They all stated that their response times would be improved should the bridge be replaced and all weight restrictions removed.