

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter inventories existing and recreational areas within or intersecting a 1,000-foot boundary on any side of the current rail right-of-way, as depicted on **Figure 6-1**, and discusses proposed parks, trails, and recreational spaces in the area and analyzes potential environmental impacts that could result from the implementation of the Proposed Project as compared with the No Action Alternative. As discussed in Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives,” this Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates two Build Alternatives: Alternative 9A and Alternative 9B. FRA has selected Alternative 9A as the Preferred Alternative.

B. REGULATORY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

REGULATORY CONTEXT

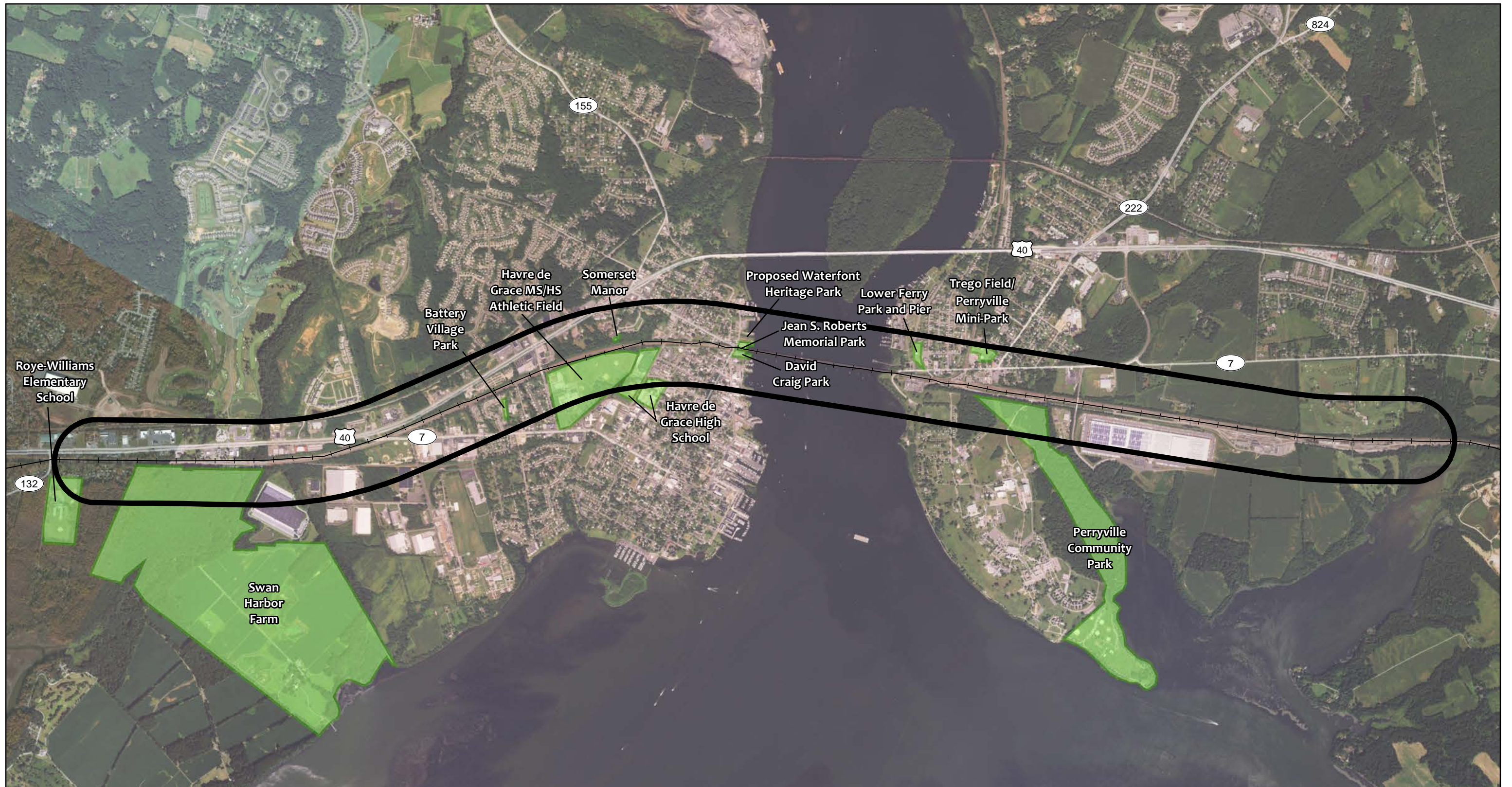
Publicly owned parks and recreational facilities may be subject to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966 (23 United States Code [USC] § 138 and 49 USC § 303), which requires that the proposed use of land from a publicly owned public park, recreation area, wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic or archaeological site, as part of a federally funded or approved transportation project, is permissible only if: (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use and (2) the project includes all planning to minimize harm; or (3) if the use is a *de minimis*. The full Section 4(f) evaluation is in Chapter 9, “Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.”

Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (16 USC § 460) requires that the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI) approve any conversion of lands purchased or developed with assistance under this Act to a use other than public, outdoor recreation use. Any park or recreational resource that received grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is considered a Section 6(f) resource. Furthermore, some parks and recreational facilities have been funded through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Program Open Space (POS). Additional information regarding LWCF and POS can be found in Chapter 10, “Section 6(f) Evaluation.”

METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND

The Project Team obtained information regarding parks, recreational areas, greenways, and trails from the following sources:

- Geographic information System (GIS) data
- Field visits
- Harford County *2012 Master Plan and Land Use Element Plan*
- Harford County *2013 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*

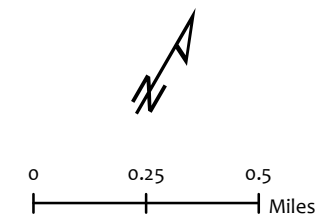


 1,000 ft Study Area
  Parks/Recreation*
  Existing Track

* Only public parks and recreational resources within the study area are shown

Data Sources

Parks:
 Harford County Government, 2013;
 MD SDAT, 2014



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Figure 6-1
 Parks and
 Recreational Resources

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- City of Havre de Grace *Comprehensive Plan, March 2004 (and Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources Amendments, 2010)*
- Harford County *2013 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*
- Cecil County *2010 Comprehensive Plan*
- Cecil County *Bicycle Master Plan (2012)*
- Cecil County *2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*
- Cecil County *2011 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*
- Town of Perryville *2010 Comprehensive Plan*
- Town of Perryville *Annual Report for 2013*
- *Perryville Greenway Plan (2012)*
- National Parks Service (<http://www.nps.gov/>)
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/>)
- Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (<http://www.hitourtrails.com/>)
- *Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan (2000)*, (http://www.hitourtrails.com/PDF/LSHG_ManagementPlan_2009.pdf)
- Coordination with local governments, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders.

For each park affected by the Proposed Project, the Project Team calculated the acreage of potential impact and considered the type and extent of recreational activities impacted.

C. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the parks and other recreational resources described in this section, the Susquehanna River is also used as a recreational resource. Several private marinas and municipal boat ramps (such as the Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park and Havre de Grace Marina) are located near the existing Susquehanna River Rail Bridge, and recreational boaters navigate around and through the study area.

EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS

Each locality (Harford County, the City of Havre de Grace, Cecil County, and the Town of Perryville) offers extensive recreational programs within the study area through its respective parks and recreation departments. Programs range from youth sports programs such as soccer, tennis, basketball, lacrosse, youth football, dance, gymnastics, to adult aerobics and activities for seniors.

CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE AND HARFORD COUNTY

Seven publicly accessible outdoor parks and recreational resources exist within the 1,000-foot study area in Havre de Grace (see **Table 6-1** and **Figure 6-1**). The approximately 0.87-acre Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park lies to the west of the existing railroad right-of-way, off Otsego Street and along the Susquehanna River. The park comprises a parking lot a fishing pier, a picnicking area, a kayak launch, and a boat launch. Havre de Grace owns approximately 0.61 acre and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) owns 0.26 acre, which Amtrak leases to the City of Havre de Grace. Somerset Manor, a residential development located at 101 Stansbury Court, approximately 100 feet from the closest Build Alternative right-of-way, includes a 1.0-

acre of recreational space with a playground and basketball court. This space is also owned by the City of Havre de Grace.

**Table 6-1
Havre de Grace Parks and Recreational Resources within 1,000-Foot Study Area**

Park	Location	Acres	Ownership	Amenities	LWCF/POS Funding
Battery Village Park (Bradford Green)	Village Dr.	2.0	Havre de Grace	Parking on street, basketball court, playground	N/A
David Craig Park	Union Ave. btwn Otsego St. and Warren St.	1.5	Havre de Grace	Parking and waterfront views	POS
Havre De Grace Middle/High School Athletic Fields ²	401 Lewis Ln./ 700 Congress Ave.	57.6	Board of Education Harford County	Harris Stadium, Multi-use fields, baseball/softball diamonds, and tennis courts	LWCF
Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park ¹	Otsego St. and Water St.	0.87	Amtrak / Havre de Grace	Picnicking, parking, fishing pier, kayak and boat launch	N/A
Roye-Williams Elementary School	201 Oakington Rd.	28.0	Board of Education Harford County	Ball fields, activity fields, and playgrounds	N/A
Somerset Manor	101 Stansbury Ct.	1.0	Havre de Grace	Parking, playground, basketball court	N/A
Swan Harbor Farm	401 Oakington Rd.	531	Harford County	Mansion house, meadow areas, farm fields, fishing, vineyards, field for radio controlled aircraft, and exhibit area for agricultural education	POS
Notes:	N/A = No LWCF or POS funding identified for subject parkland.				
1.	Deed is not available for Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park.				
2.	According to consultation with the Havre de Grace High School, the athletic fields are open to the public outside of school hours, unless reserved for a special event.				
Sources:	City of Havre de Grace Comprehensive Plan, March 2004 (and Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources Amendments, 2010); Harford County 2013 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan; Harford County Government Parks and Recreation website; Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, Real Property Search website.				

David Craig Park is located east of the existing Northeast Corridor (NEC). This park is owned by the City of Havre de Grace and provides 1.5 acres of open space with waterfront views. According to property deeds, the City of Havre de Grace received funding from Maryland’s POS for David Craig Park.

The Havre de Grace Middle/High School athletic fields, owned by the Board of Education, offer more than 57.6 acres of recreational space with multi-use fields, baseball and softball diamonds,

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and tennis courts.¹ Improvements to the Havre de Grace Middle/High School athletic fields were undertaken utilizing Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Act funds (see Chapter 10, “Section 6(f) Evaluation”).

Battery Village Park, owned by the City of Havre de Grace, is part of the Battery Village/Bradford Green low-income housing community, and offers basketball courts and a playground.

The largest recreational resource partially within the study area, Swan Harbor Farm, is owned by Harford County and offers more than 500 acres of recreational space with farm fields, vineyards, fishing, and educational exhibits. Harford County received POS monies in 1994 to purchase Swan Harbor Farm.²

Another recreational space in Harford County is the Roye-Williams Elementary School, a portion of which is within the study area, and which is owned by the Harford County Board of Education. The school features approximately 28 acres of recreational space, including activity fields and playgrounds, when school is not in session.

In addition to these publicly accessible outdoor park and recreational resources identified in **Table 6-1**, the Havre de Grace Activity Center provides 5.8 acres of indoor recreational space including an indoor gymnasium, basketball court, and bocce court.

Finally, Stencil Field Park, a private recreational resource owned by Have de Grace Little League Inc. and approximately 50 feet from the closest Build Alternative right-of-way, comprises 15 acres with baseball and softball fields.

TOWN OF PERRYVILLE AND CECIL COUNTY

Several parks and recreational resources exist within the 1,000-foot study area in the Town of Perryville (see **Table 6-2** and **Figure 6-1**). All parks within this portion of the study area are owned by the Town of Perryville. These include Trego Field/Perryville Mini-Park, which is located off of Broad Street west of the existing NEC and adjacent to the NS Port Road. Trego Field/Perryville Mini-Park provides approximately 3.8 acres of recreational space with amenities such as a baseball field, basketball courts, playground, pavilion, and picnic area.

A portion of the Perryville Community Park is also located within the study area, east of the existing NEC. Perryville Community Park offers 168.5 acres of recreational space with baseball fields, soccer fields, lacrosse fields, tennis courts, a playground, fishing pier, and a kayak launch.³ The portion of Perryville Community Park located within the study area comprises open space and the access road to the main park.

Lower Ferry Park and Pier consists of the area on Broad Street and Roundhouse Drive, and provides approximately 1.84 acres of open space.⁴ The Town of Perryville received funding from DNR, Maryland’s POS, and Maryland Heritage Areas grants for Lower Ferry Park.⁵

¹ According to consultation with the Havre de Grace High School, the athletic fields are open to the public outside of school hours, unless reserved for a special event.

² <http://www.swanharborfarm.org/History.html>, accessed September 23, 2014.

³ Consultation letter from Town Commissioners of Perryville, June 25, 2015.

⁴ Consultation letter from Town Commissioners of Perryville, June 25, 2015 indicated Lower Ferry Park consists of Town Map 801, 0834 Lots 1, 3, 5, and 7.

⁵ Consultation letter from Town Commissioners of Perryville, June 25, 2015

Table 6-2
Perryville Parks and Recreational Resources within 1,000-Foot Study Area

Park	Location	Acres	Ownership	Amenities	LWCF/POS Funding
Lower Ferry Park and Pier	Broad St. and Roundhouse Dr.	1.84*	Perryville	Waterfront views, pier, and benches	POS
Perryville Community Park	100 Marion Tapp Pkwy	168.5*	Perryville	Preserved lands in addition to baseball fields, pavilion, restrooms, playing courts, fields, fishing pier, kayak launch, playground	N/A
Trego Field/ Perryville Mini-Park	Behind Town Hall off Broad St.	3.8	Perryville	Little league baseball field, basketball courts, playground equipment, and pavilion and picnic area	N/A
Notes:	N/A = No LWCF or POS funding identified for subject parkland.				
Sources:	* Based on consultation letter from Town Commissioners of Perryville, June 25, 2015. Perryville 2010 Comprehensive Plan; Town of Perryville Annual Report for 2013; Cecil County 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan; Cecil County 2011 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan; Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, Real Property Search website.				

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Several local bicycle and pedestrian trails exist within the study area. These include the Old Town Loop, Old Town/New Town Trail, and the waterfront walkway in Havre de Grace. Old Town Loop crosses the NEC twice in Havre de Grace at N. Union Avenue and N. Juniata Street. The Old Town/New Town Trail in Havre de Grace is collocated with the East Coast Greenway from Juniata Street to MD 155. The waterfront walkway connects North Park to the Tyding’s Park and Promenade in Havre de Grace. The waterfront walkway is a part of the Heritage Corridor Plan, which has been implemented for the past 20 years. The walkway is bisected by the NEC at N. Union Avenue.⁶

The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG) passes through the City of Havre de Grace and the Town of Perryville as well as other riverfront areas of Harford and Cecil Counties. The non-profit organization aims to stimulate local economic activity by developing a link between natural, historic, and cultural resources within the Lower Susquehanna Region. The LSHG is part of a statewide system of heritage areas; it is planned to eventually comprise a 40-mile network of trails along both shores of the Susquehanna River below from the Conowingo Dam to the river’s mouth. Approximately two-thirds of the network is complete. The LSHG crosses the NEC twice in Havre de Grace, via N. Union Avenue and at N. Juniata Street. The LSHG also crosses the NEC in Perryville, via Broad Street.

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a planned 3,000-mile, continuous cyclist and pedestrian trail that would stretch from Maine to Florida and connect 25 major cities along the East Coast. The ECG is being planned and promoted by the East Coast Greenway Alliance, a non-profit

⁶ Consultation letter from Department of Planning City of Havre de Grace, June 20, 2014.

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organization with individual state chapters. Overall, 27 percent of the ECG is complete on trails with 73 percent on interim on-road sections. In Maryland, the ECG runs for 166 miles, 32 percent of which are completed off-road trails.⁷ Currently, a gap area exists within the ECG trail network between the Baltimore area and Newark, Delaware. Within the study area, the ECG suggests an on-road route, which crosses the NEC twice in Havre de Grace at N. Union Avenue and Lewis Lane. As of July 1, 2016 cyclists are permitted to use the U.S. 40 Hatem Bridge to provide connectivity between Havre de Grace and Perryville.

Several historic trails highlighting sites of historic importance also exist within the study area; however, public easements or rights-of-way do not exist for these trails. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the Maryland Civil War Trail, the Mason Dixon Trail, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail each run through portions of the study area, by way of water or auto-routes, and highlight important historic sites, including Rodgers Tavern on Broad Street in Perryville.⁸

D. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative assumes the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge will remain in service as-is, with no intervention beside minimal repairs and continuation of the current maintenance regime. Service over the bridge would continue to worsen in the future under the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative as a baseline scenario against which potential impacts of the Proposed Project are measured. The following parks and recreational projects are expected to be completed within the study area before the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project build year, and are therefore included in the No Action Alternative.

CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE

Havre de Grace plans to complete their Waterfront Heritage Park along the Susquehanna River, west of the existing NEC by 2020.⁹ Havre de Grace recently approved the purchase of four properties, totaling 3.2 acres, as part of a proposed plan to develop the park along the water.¹⁰ Conceptual artist renderings show plans for a plaza, kayak and boat launch, the gateway to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, an amphitheater, lawn, benches, promenade, and fishing pier.

The City of Havre de Grace also intends to improve David Craig Park by adding a fishing pier and pavilion along its waterfront by 2018.¹¹

⁷ “Maryland.” East Coast Greenway. <http://www.greenway.org/explore-by-state/md>.

⁸ See **Appendix D**, “Cultural Resources,” for an analysis of the trail resources with respect to the Proposed Project and the draft Programmatic Agreement, which includes a commitment to further consider National Historic Trails in the future.

⁹ Consultation letter from Department of Planning City of Havre de Grace, June 20, 2014.

¹⁰ “Havre de Grace Voters Approve Spending \$1.1 Million to Buy Water Street Properties,” *The Aegis*, December 28, 2016, accessed December 28, 2016.

¹¹ Harford County 2013 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.

TOWN OF PERRYVILLE

The Town of Perryville plans to improve Lower Ferry Park to host town events. Future plans for Lower Ferry Park include the construction of a comfort station, a band shell, picnic area, playground equipment, walking paths, landscaping, bio-retention areas, paths lined with vegetation, and some supportive parking. The comfort station at Lower Ferry Park was awarded a Maryland Heritage Areas Grant.

Perryville also plans to create a new Municipal Complex at 515 Broad Street, located to the north of the north wye track. The approximately 5.5-acre complex will include a police station, a new Town Hall, a new little league baseball field and improved pedestrian access.¹²

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Traversing both Harford and Cecil Counties, the September 11th Memorial Trail is a planned 1,100-mile cyclist and pedestrian trail proposed by the September 11th Trail Alliance. The trail would link the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The exact route of the trail and its year of completion are yet to be determined; however, within the study area, the trail is expected to overlap with the East Coast Greenway.¹³

Development of the waterfront walkway in Havre de Grace, ECG, LSHG, and September 11 Memorial Trail are expected, with additional trail segments being identified and developed. The waterfront walkway in Havre de Grace is intended to be continuously developed as new projects and public park improvements occur. Trail development is constrained in the study area by the lack of access points across the Susquehanna River, as the only river crossing on the lower Susquehanna that permits bicycle or pedestrian access is at the Conowingo Dam Route 1 crossing. The Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge was recently open to bicyclists in the Summer of 2016, although some safety concerns remain because the bridge does not have shoulders. This bridge does not permit pedestrians.¹⁴ There are no other known planned improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Proposed Project study area by the analysis year.

HAVRE DE GRACE MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is replacing the Havre de Grace Middle School and High School (see **Figure 6-1**). The proposed facility is currently in the final design phase. HCPS's proposed designs require modifications to the existing ball fields. The proposed HCPS enhancements will not require any modifications to the existing track and field facility. According to school representatives, HCPS is currently awaiting construction funding from the Harford County School Board to move forward with the project.

¹²Consultation letter from Town Commissioners of Perryville, June 30, 2014.

¹³September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance. http://911memorialtrail.org/?page_id=5, accessed September 2014.

¹⁴Maryland Transportation Authority, "Hatem Bridge (US 40) Bicycle Access." http://www.mta.maryland.gov/Toll_Facilities/Hatem_Bike_Access.html#FAQ13, accessed January 2017.

E. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE BUILD ALTERNATIVES

BUILD ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Project would be designed so as not to preclude a future bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the river. The Proposed Project would not alter or adversely affect the trail routes. Each National Historic Trail includes important historic resources within the study area that FRA and MDOT evaluated as part of Chapter 7, “Visual and Aesthetic Conditions” and Chapter 8, “Cultural Resources.” Measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse impacts to historic and archaeological resources have been identified and will be further developed in coordination with the Maryland Historical Trust and Section 106 consulting parties. The Proposed Project would not affect public use, enjoyment, or educational value of the trails within the study area. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to trails or greenways would result from the Proposed Project.

ALTERNATIVE 9A

Alternative 9A would require expansion of the existing rail right-of-way. This would involve the acquisition and conversion of narrow areas of park and recreational resources. Alternative 9A would require the permanent acquisition of small portions of two recreational resources (Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park and the Havre de Grace Middle/High School athletic fields) immediately adjacent to the existing right-of-way (see **Table 4-3**). Short-term effects on any park and recreational resources are discussed in Chapter 17, “Construction Effects.” Long-term effects on specific parks and recreational resources would be as follows:

- **Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park:** Alternative 9A would require the permanent use of the entire 0.26-acre, Amtrak-owned portion of Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park as well as the acquisition of 0.01 acre of the City-owned portion of the park. Alternative 9A constructs a new bridge that would cross above the park on an elevated structure that would require the modification of the existing lease agreement and the modification of park infrastructure. This would prohibit public access within the Amtrak right-of-way and would require the taking of the boat ramp area and a portion of the pier located at the park. According to public records, Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park has not received funding from the LWCF and is therefore not a Section 6(f) resource. The part of Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park beyond Amtrak’s existing right-of-way is considered a Section 4(f) resource and is discussed in Chapter 9, “Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.”
- **Havre de Grace Middle School/High School Track and Athletic Fields:** Alternative 9A would require the acquisition of a strip of the Havre de Grace Middle/High School athletic fields immediately adjacent to the existing rail right-of-way. This acquisition would total approximately 1.5 acres. Since improvements to the Havre de Grace Middle/High School athletic fields were undertaken utilizing Section 6(f) LWCA funds, Section 6(f) applicability is discussed in Chapter 10, “Section 6(f) Evaluation.” Section 4(f) applicability is discussed in Chapter 9, “Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.” Alternative 9A has the potential to result in minor reconfigurations of the existing and proposed ballfields on the Harford County School property. Alternative 9A would also result in permanent impacts to the existing pole vault/high jump, long jump and 110-meter hurdle runout area at the existing track and field facility. A storage shed would also be impacted. Overall, Alternative 9A would physically impact this recreational resource and would require mitigation.

ALTERNATIVE 9B

Alternative 9B would also require expansion of the existing rail right-of-way. This would involve the acquisition and conversion of a narrow area of park. As with Alternative 9A, Alternative 9B would require the same permanent acquisition of a narrow strip of land associated with Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park immediately adjacent to the existing right-of-way. Alternative 9B would not impact or require any modifications to the Havre de Grace Middle School/High School athletic fields.

F. MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION OF IMPACTS

The Project Team made efforts to minimize the impacts to parks, recreational lands, and open space resources and to this end have eliminated several alignments based on greater impacts to parks and recreational resources (see **Appendix A**, “Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study and Bridge Types”). The Project Team is currently coordinating with agencies that have jurisdiction over any affected parks (HCPS and City of Havre de Grace) to develop appropriate minimization and mitigation strategies.

As described in Chapter 9, “Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation,” FRA proposes to determine that the use of the City-owned portion of Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park is *de minimis*. FRA and MDOT will work with the City of Havre de Grace to identify appropriate mitigation measures and to ensure that a replacement for the Jean S. Roberts Memorial Park boat ramp is provided in a suitable location.

In addition, as described in more detail in Chapter 9, “Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation,” based on the analysis of the potential impacts to the Havre de Grace Middle/High School Athletic Fields and collaboration with the school board, minimization and mitigation include:

- Amtrak would build the railroad on an elevated structure over the 110-meter hurdle runout area. During construction the runout would be reduced to 8.5 meters but after construction would be rebuilt to its current 11.5-meter length.
- Relocate pole vault, high jump, long jump and storage shed.
- The Project would reimburse Harford County Public Schools for the agreed upon additional design cost.
- To the extent practical, construction would be scheduled to minimize disruption to the track and field facilities.
- The baseball field would be redesigned by shifting home plate three feet away from the railroad and rotating the field 2.5 degrees counter clockwise.
- Design consultant working on the baseball fields would redesign the field to provide adequate clear area around Amtrak’s proposed retaining wall.
- The Project would reimburse Harford County Public Schools for the agreed upon additional design cost of the baseball fields.
- Amtrak would provide conduit and embedded inserts for installation of a future score board by Harford County Public Schools.
- Amtrak would install a protective netting to shield the railroad from foul balls.
- The water main would be relocated in a casing, allowing future replacement to be done without affecting the athletic facilities.

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Based on the analysis of the potential impacts to the Havre de Grace Middle/High School Athletic Fields and the minimization and mitigation measures, FRA proposes to make a *de minimis* finding for the use of the facility. Coordination is ongoing. *