In order to honor Maryland's engineering heritage and preserve the best of Maryland's bridges from across the state, SHA has identified 17 historic bridges to be retained as Preservation Priority Bridges in SHA's Historic Highway Bridge Program. The Preservation Priority Bridges exemplify Maryland's essential bridge types: fixed and movable spans of stone, concrete, iron, steel, and aluminum. Retention of these superb structures spotlights the significant history of Maryland's principal transportation routes, such as the National Road and tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, the towns and regions they transformed, as well as the engineering marvels of our roadways from the past two centuries. The bridges were constructed by turnpike companies, the Maryland State Roads Commission and its predecessor agency, the Maryland State Highway Administration. Each bridge is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Maryland's Historic Highway Bridges

Maryland Scenic Byways
Community Improvement/Cultural Resource Protection
Community Improvement/Scenic Byways
Maryland Historical Trust
www.mht.maryland.gov
Maryland Office of Tourism
www.visitmaryland.org

Find out More

Bridge No. 10, SHA Copyright, photos by Carol Highsmith: Bridge Nos. 2, 6, 7, 14, and 16

Metal Truss Bridges
Timber Bridges

king-post truss). arch combined with a multiple king-post trusses supported by various truss types: the king-post truss (one large wooden triangle with one vertical member), hammering boards into triangles allowed timber to be retained as Preservation Priority

Concrete Bridges

Find out More

Bridge Basics - Movable Bridge, Masonry Arch Bridge, Concrete Bridge, Photo credits:

(Cost of Improvement/Community Protection)
(Cost of Improvement/Scenic Byways)
Maryland State Highway Administration
Maryland Scenic Byways
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Maryland’s Historic Highway Bridges

Western Maryland

US 40 Alternate over Casselman River 1932, Frostburg, Allegany County

When viewed from Casselman River Park, the 1932 Pratt through-truss bridge provides a dramatic counterpart to the 1873 Casselman River Bridge, one of the National Road’s stone arch bridges. In the early 20th century, standardized concrete bridges and steel trusses replaced the natural stone arches of the National Road’s 19th century crossings. The Casselman River Bridge is the only one of its type in Maryland and one of only seven in the US and Canada.

Blue Bridge (MD 942 over Potomac River) 1954, Cumberland, Allegany County

The 323-foot-long, double-span bridge is one of the state’s few steel tied-arch designs. An unpretentious Cumberland landmark, the Blue Bridge crosses Johnson Street (MD 942) over the North Branch of the Potomac River. A tied-arch bridge works much like a bow (as in a bow and arrow) turned on its side. The columns in the bridge’s open spandrel support the deck which gives it a lighter appearance.

US 40 over Licking Creek 1910, McStravick, Washington County

An unusual example among the sturdy 1930s metal bridges along the Historic National Pike, US 40 over Licking Creek is a Whetstone deck truss and pier bridge that is further distinguished by its Art Deco detailing that entrains the twostride. The Whetstone truss is a single span truss that engineers struglled to calculate the interaction of tension and compression on truss bridge spans. E. M. Whetstone of Pittsburgh developed a new solution to the problem in 1931. A Whetstone truss, an hinged quadrilateral. The intermediate pier allows the force of each span to be calculated independently.

US 40 over Conococheague Creek 1936, Wilson, Washington County

US 40 over Conococheague Creek is a triple-span, reinforced-concrete open spandrel arch bridge that replaced the Wilson Stone Arch Bridge in 1936 when the traffic on the National Road surpassed the older bridge’s capacity. The current bridge elegantly pays tribute to its predecessor. The volume in the bridge’s open spandrel supports the deck which gives it a lighter appearance.

US 40 over Middle Creek 1936, Meyersdale, Franklin County

Built in 1936 as part of the Highway’s relocation and widening, US 40 over Middle Creek is a closed-spandrel concrete arch bridge. The simple grace of the bridge’s Woodstock granite-faced arches and refined details enhance its utilitarian setting. Public Works projects such as this show how infrastructure projects employed local tradespeople to bolster the economy, enrich communities, and support commerce and personal mobility as the United States climbed out of the Great Depression.

Booth’s Mill Bridge (MD 56 over Antietam Creek) 1954, Hagerstown, Washington County

Charles Wilson led construction of the Booth’s Mill Bridge in Washington County’s specifications, replacing an earlier timber bridge. The bridge is of course local traditions in all three regional styles supported by bullhorn piers. These rounded piers, prevent drafts from deranging the bridge. Early bridges are often found alongside water-powered mill sites because farmers needed to bring their grain and lumber to local mills. The stone-arch bridges on the National Road quickly proved their utility and in the early 19th century Commissioners in stone-rich areas like Washington County specified them for many routes between farms and mills.

Booth’s Mill Bridge (MD 56 over Antietam Creek) 1954, Hagerstown, Washington County

US 40 over Patapsco River 1904, Catonsville, Baltimore County

US 40 over the Patapsco River is a single-span, open-spandrel concrete arch bridge located in the Patapsco River State Park. The SRC engineers celebrated the natural beauty of the Patapsco River Bridge’s setting. According to the plans, the bridge was to be built of brick and sandstone walls that decreased dead load. This made the structure appear lighter and overall, the bridge lengthened the possible spans. The attenuated beauty of US 40 over Patapsoc River takes the grand spandrel concept even further than most arch bridges with open spandrels as well.

US 40 over Patapsco River 1904, Catonsville, Baltimore County

Preservation Priority Bridges of Western Maryland

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Main Street (MD 591) over Wicomico River 1932, Salisbury, Wicomico County

Main Street (MD 591) over Wicomico River is a double-leaf bascule bridge in the Chicago trunnion style, which is one in which the movable span swings outward around a pivot point at the center of rotation. Like most of the movable bridges on the Eastern Shore, it was built by the J. E. Greener Company for the SRC. Movable bridges became a necessary technological method for spanning the Eastern Shore’s navigable rivers.