



S T R A U G H A N
E N V I R O N M E N T A L
S E R V I C E S , I N C .

Categorical Exclusion Forest Park Avenue Bridge

Location: Baltimore, MD

Description: The original Forest Park Avenue Bridge in Baltimore, MD was a major contributing element to the Dickeyville Historic District and an integral part of the community as it carried Forest Park Avenue over Gwynns Falls. The neighborhood of Dickeyville was listed as a historic district in 1969 and included on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1972. Dickeyville is significant as a surviving mill town with a variety of buildings from the late eighteenth century through the Victorian Era. The Forest Park Avenue Bridge was 75 years old and eligible for the NRHP. However, the bridge was in poor structural condition and the City of Baltimore decided to replace the bridge due to public safety concerns.

Straughan Environmental Services, Inc. (SES) provided environmental evaluation services, environmental documentation and permit preparation, and civil engineering services to support the Forest Park Avenue Bridge Replacement project for the City of Baltimore. Specific activities included:

- Examination and documentation of human, cultural, and natural resources;
- Public outreach to present identified resources and concepts;
- Public involvement to refine alternative concepts;
- Environmental impact analysis on alternative concepts;
- Preparation of Section 404 Joint Federal/State Application (*JF/SA*) for waterway impacts;
- Preparation of planting plans;
- Preparation of environmental documentation including a Forest Stand Delineation, a NEPA Categorical Exclusion, and a Section 4(f) report to comply with city, state, and federal regulations;
- Stormwater management planning; and
- Sediment and erosion control planning.

This project required significant public outreach and agency coordination. Early in the study, SES facilitated a pre-design meeting that provided the surrounding neighborhood with information about the overall condition of the bridge and the potential environmental constraints. With careful and thorough documentation of community concerns regarding safety, aesthetics, historic integrity, wildlife, informal pedestrian trails, and water quality in the Gwynns Falls stream, the team set an agenda for the second meeting to systematically review progress towards addressing these concerns.

SES worked with the City, contractors, and community to avoid, minimize, and if necessary mitigate any impacts to natural and human resources created by the construction process and the eventual bridge replacement.