

The Indian River Inlet Bridge aesthetic design was created by the Sussex County community through two full day design charrettes and public workshops. The community worked closely with bridge engineers to select preferences that create a one-of-a-kind, world-class bridge. This intimate involvement captured the spirit of the local community. The bridge embraces a distinctive sense of place that will attract visitors to the picturesque views of the Delaware Seashore State Park.

The community chose a theme for the bridge of "Harmony with Nature" and a sub-theme of "Nautical/Celestial Navigation". To blend the bridge into its natural setting, the community chose elegant, flowing structural forms with organic qualities.

**1.** The grand sweeping arch rises from the ocean shoreline dunes. The base of the arch is founded on opposite sides of the inlet banks and it rises above the four-lane roadway. Located at the center, the arch forms a separation between the northbound and southbound traffic and preserves the extraordinary views of the ocean and bay for travelers. The arch, with its single plane of radial stays, supports a 1000' span across the waterway, avoiding the need for piers in the inlet. The color of the bridge will match the color of the sand so that the bridge forms the visual impression of being "born of the earth".

**2.** The tulip shape of the arch cross section is a curved organic shape with tapering sides. As the shape points to the earth and opens to the sky, its angles create a slender shape.

**3.** The single plane of radial circular stays is made of stainless steel, a low maintenance marine material. When the sun reflects on the stainless steel stays they will appear like rays of light reaching to the beach.

**4.** The bridge deck shape is sculpted in free-flowing curves, in keeping with the organic qualities of the natural environment.

**5.** A 12' pedestrian pathway on the oceanside of the bridge connects the sides of the inlet. The custom railing pattern reflects the grasses found in the dunes in a simplistic form. The top rail mirrors the tulip shape of the arch, while the bottom rail forms a wave pattern.

**6.** Five storyboards will be positioned along the pedestrian walkway railing, while an additional three boards will be along pathways at each end of the bridge. The stories on the boards will be discoveries of information for visitors to enjoy and learn about the land, beach, lighthouses, shallow river, deep river and, at the center of the bridge, the story of the sky with images of constellations and celestial navigation. The surface of the pathway will give the appearance of walking along the beach, with a sprinkling of images typically found on a beach walk, such as imprints of shells, feathers, bird tracks, etc.

**7.** The traffic railing will be partially open to provide those crossing the bridge with unobstructed vistas of the beautiful natural setting.

**8.** At night, the stays of the arch will be softly lit in blue. The silhouette of the arch, with its gentle light, will glow against the night sky, providing mariners with the gateway to the inlet. Pedestrian pathway lighting will be focused and directed from the railing towards the pathway, creating a necklace of light. Lighting will be on timers to ensure the comfort of campers nearby.

**9.** The concrete bridge abutment surfaces will be sculpted with an oceanfront landscape pattern, in harmony with the site. The impression is to mimic the view in order to make the bridge part of the landscape.

**10.** The bridge back spans are open, providing park visitors with easy and safe access under the bridge, along with many views of the new bridge.