

**Metropolitan Branch Trail
ANC 4B Public Works and Infrastructure
Committee**



**Response to questions submitted by ANC 4B Public Works and Infrastructure
committee**

Updated December 2017

- 1. What is the feasibility of a Third Street multi-use path / bike trail, and what are the pros and cons relative to the Blair Road proposal?**

Issue	3rd St (Via North Dakota or Other)	Blair Rd
The predominate use of each proposed route.	<p>Would add bike use to North Dakota. Would not provide changes for pedestrians. North Dakota Ave would be either marked with “sharrows” or would require removal of parking to accommodate a protected bicycle facility. Would require further study.</p> <p>Striped bicycle lanes on 3rd St could be improved to a two way cycle track, which would provide separation from motor vehicle traffic.</p>	Fully separated trail should expect to see a wider mix of users and age groups. The proposed trail on Blair Rd would be a shared use trail that would be open to bicyclists and pedestrians, fully separated from traffic.
Proximity to and ease of accessing civic facilities from each proposed route.	A route on 3 rd St would be directly adjacent to the Takoma Rec Center and Coolidge High School. Bicycle lanes on 3 rd St would still be available if there is a trail on Blair Rd.	The trail on Blair Rd would be 1-3 blocks from the Takoma Rec Center and Coolidge High School.
Points of conflict with cars / motorized vehicles of each proposed route.	10 intersection crossings	3 intersection crossings
Possibility of "dooring" along each.	Moderate. To minimize possibility of dooring, it would require removal of parking from certain blocks of North Dakota or other connecting streets.	Zero. There is no parking adjacent to the trail. The trail will be fully separated from motor vehicle traffic.

Issue	3 rd St (Via North Dakota or Other)	Blair Rd
Is bike crossing five-star intersections handled differently from pedestrian crossings or motorized vehicle crossings?	Would require 3-4 crossings for pedestrians and bikes.	Would require 2 crossings for pedestrians and bikes.
Distance (from 7-11 to Aspen/Sandy Spring)	0.9 mile	0.7 mile
Grade change	Hills on North Dakota and on Van Buren	Relatively flat.
Crossing under Railroad Tracks	Would require crossing Blair Rd and under the railroad tracks at Van Buren Street. East of the railroad tracks the route would require modification of parking and relocation of utilities on Sandy Spring Rd between Van Buren and Aspen.	Could cross the railroad tracks at Aspen or at Van Buren Street. A crossing at Aspen would minimally impact traffic operations at Blair/Aspen. A crossing at Van Buren Street would require modification of parking and relocation of utilities on Sandy Spring Rd between Van Buren and Aspen.
Traffic Calming along Blair Rd	Would not impact Blair Rd safety.	Would reduce speeding and weaving on Blair Rd.
Traffic Calming on E/W Neighborhood Streets	Could be implemented in coordination with this route	Could be implemented in coordination with this route.
New Facility	The 3 rd /North Dakota route would enhance existing facilities for bicyclists. The project would not provide improvements for pedestrians.	The Blair Rd route would create a new facility for bicyclists and pedestrians

- 2. What is the estimated volume of traffic through the Aspen Street/Blair Road intersection? -- both during rush hour and outside of rush hour? – (once the following facilities are built and in operation: DCI school, the large apartment building at the corner of Aspen and Sixteenth, the recreational facilities in and around Walter Reed's former power plant, the art facilities along Cameron Drive, the three large apartment and condo buildings (V/U) with first floor retail in the building at the corner of Aspen and Georgia, events held on the Great Lawn.)**

The estimated Annual Daily Traffic of Blair Rd at Sheridan St NE is 15,000 vehicles. The impacts of the proposed trail on rush hour traffic were analyzed using a traffic model. The results of the

(Response to question on traffic at Aspen/Blair continued)...

model indicate that the proposed trail and one northbound lane approach of Blair Rd at Aspen St meet an acceptable level of service. While there will be minimal delay for motor vehicles, there will be benefits to pedestrians and bicyclists from the addition of the trail.

Table VII.2 – LOS and Delay for Blair Rd at Aspen St – NB Approach Option 2 (Shored Left/Thru/Right Lane)

Blair Road at Aspen Street - Peak Hour Synchro LOS and Delay (sec/veh)										
	Existing		2020 No-Build		2020 Build with Northbound Opt 2		2040 No-Build		2040 Build with Northbound Opt 2	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Northbound Blair Road	A (8.1)	A (3.2)	A (8.4)	A (3.5)	C (34.1)	B (13.4)	A (8.8)	A (3.8)	D (47.8)	C (21.1)
Southbound Blair Road	C (22.6)	B (11.4)	C (23.3)	B (11.7)	C (23.4)	B (12.0)	C (24.2)	B (12.2)	C (24.4)	B (12.5)
Eastbound Aspen Street	B (14.3)	C (27.9)	B (14.2)	C (28.2)	B (14.2)	C (28.2)	B (14.0)	C (28.6)	B (14.0)	C (28.6)
Westbound Aspen Street	C (28.5)	D (51.2)	C (29.9)	E (57.3)	C (29.9)	E (57.3)	C (31.7)	E (66.4)	C (31.7)	E (66.4)
Overall	B (16.9)	B (14.6)	B (17.6)	B (15.8)	C (29.3)	C (21.1)	B (18.4)	B (17.6)	D (36.2)	C (26.6)

The traffic analysis utilized projected future traffic volumes in 2040, which include trips due to adjacent new development (such as Walter Reed) and other increases in vehicle volumes due to overall regional growth. The table above shows the “Level of Service” (which is a quantitative measure of traffic flow on a scale of A to F) at the intersection of Aspen and Blair. The table also shows the delay in seconds per vehicle under the existing conditions and expected conditions based on the traffic model.

We expect the majority of trips traveling to the new development at Walter Reed to access the site via Georgia Ave. Additionally, trips to the site coming from the east or via Blair Rd are expected to utilize Butternut St to travel east-west. Butternut is a collector street that goes directly into the new development at Walter Reed. It is a wider street designed to carry a higher volume of traffic. Aspen is a local street and does not provide direct access into the site. The traffic model estimates that a small amount (<5%) of traffic will divert to Missouri/5th St NW and Kansas/Eastern Ave NE. However, the current design of the trail will not preclude the addition of a left turn lane at Aspen St if necessary to mitigate future increases in vehicular delay

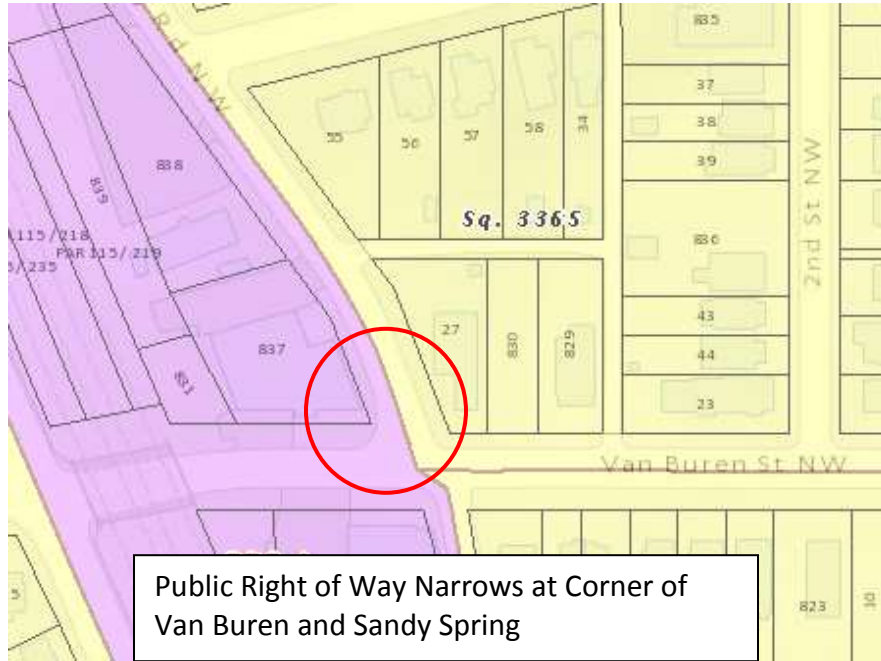
3. What makes the stretch of Sandy Spring Road between Van Buren and Aspen Streets prohibitively difficult for the MBT Trail?

Sandy Spring is 30’ wide. There is not space to build a trail on the west side of Sandy Spring without removing parking on both sides of the street. Even if the sidewalk area became part of the trail, parking would likely have to be removed from both sides of the street near Van Buren. Additionally, it would require significant utility relocation.

The trail segment on Sandy Spring north of Aspen will be built outside of the roadway. It will be built in what is currently the grassy area between the road and the railroad wall. Building the

(Response to question on trail design on Sandy Spring continued)...

trail between Aspen and Van Buren would require narrowing the street, particularly where it gets closer to Van Buren, and removing parking from both sides of the street.



4. When Blair Road is repaved, will it be coordinated with plans for the MBT Trail, or will it have to be restriped -- or even re-graded -- later when the Trail is built?

The work on Blair Rd occurring right now is routine roadway resurfacing. The trail project will widen the sidewalk and remove one of the travel lanes on Blair North of Sheridan. The surface of the two remaining lanes on Blair Rd will not be affected by the new trail.

5. Why does the trail go on First St and McDonald Place NE?

The route for the Metropolitan Branch Trail in this area was selected through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. The EA process identified four potential routes in this area, and studied the environmental impacts of each route. Through that process, the preferred alternative was selected. A new alignment will require a new Environmental Assessment. DDOT and NPS are willing to initiate such a study, which would take at least a year or more to complete. DDOT plans to begin this study in 2018.

6. Can DDOT review Aspen/Willow/Sandy Spring and Blair/Aspen/3rd St for traffic and safety changes?

DDOT Traffic Operations Administration will collect and analyze data to develop concepts and alternatives to be shared with the ANC. Implementation can be phased in shorter term, and/or coordinated with development of the trail.

7. Why is the trail elevated along Blair Rd? Wouldn't it be cheaper to use flex-posts like other bike lanes downtown?

The trail along Blair Rd will be elevated slightly to match the existing curb along the retaining wall. Elevating the trail to curb height will allow for the trail to be as wide as possible while not further impacting the roadway. The trail is proposed to be separated from the roadway with a wall. The Metropolitan Branch Trail is expected to be used by pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities, and fully separating the trail from the roadway would provide the greatest safety benefit for all those traveling along Blair Rd.

8. How will trail users cross Blair Rd to access the trail?

Crosswalks will be added across Blair Rd to access the trail at side streets including Whittier, Underwood, Tuckerman, Sheridan, and Quackenboss. Curb extensions will be added where possible to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians to access the trail. Other crossing enhancements such as signage or lights may be added where appropriate.

9. How will emergency response vehicles be impacted by the trail?

The roadway will function as a two lane roadway with parking on one side, no different from the many two lane roadways throughout the city today.

10. How will snow be cleared from the roadway and trail?

In plowing the roadway of snow, it is expected that some snow will be pushed toward the trail, and some toward the parking lane. DDOT and DPW will continue to be responsible for pre-treating the roadway and clearing snow. DDOT will be responsible for clearing snow from the trail.

11. Why is the Metropolitan Branch Trail project happening?

The Metropolitan Branch Trail was first proposed in the early 1990's by local residents to develop the former Metropolitan Branch of the B&O railroad into a multi-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. The trail was adopted into the DC Comprehensive Plan in the 1990's. An alignment study for the trail in Takoma was completed in 2004. In 2011, DDOT completed the Environmental Assessment and selected the preferred route alignment in this area. In 2015, DDOT completed the preliminary design of the trail from Fort Totten to Takoma. DDOT constructed the first segments of the trail (in Brookland) in 1999, and has completed over 5 miles of trail construction over the past 15 years from Union Station to Brookland.

12. When will the project be constructed?

DDOT anticipates completing the final design of the trail in 2018 and beginning construction between Fort Totten and Takoma in 2019.

13. Where can I get more information on this project?

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Materials are available at <http://metbranchtrail.com/resources/>