



mbot

metropolitan branch Trail
Safety & Access Study

THIS REPORT IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

NoMa Business Improvement District (NoMa BID)

District Department of Transportation (DDOT)

Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)

EDENS

Level 2 Development

The JBG Companies

WITH SUPPORT FROM:

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DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCAH)

DC Office of Planning (OP)

Gearin' Up Bicycles

Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS)

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Office of Councilmember McDuffie

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Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)



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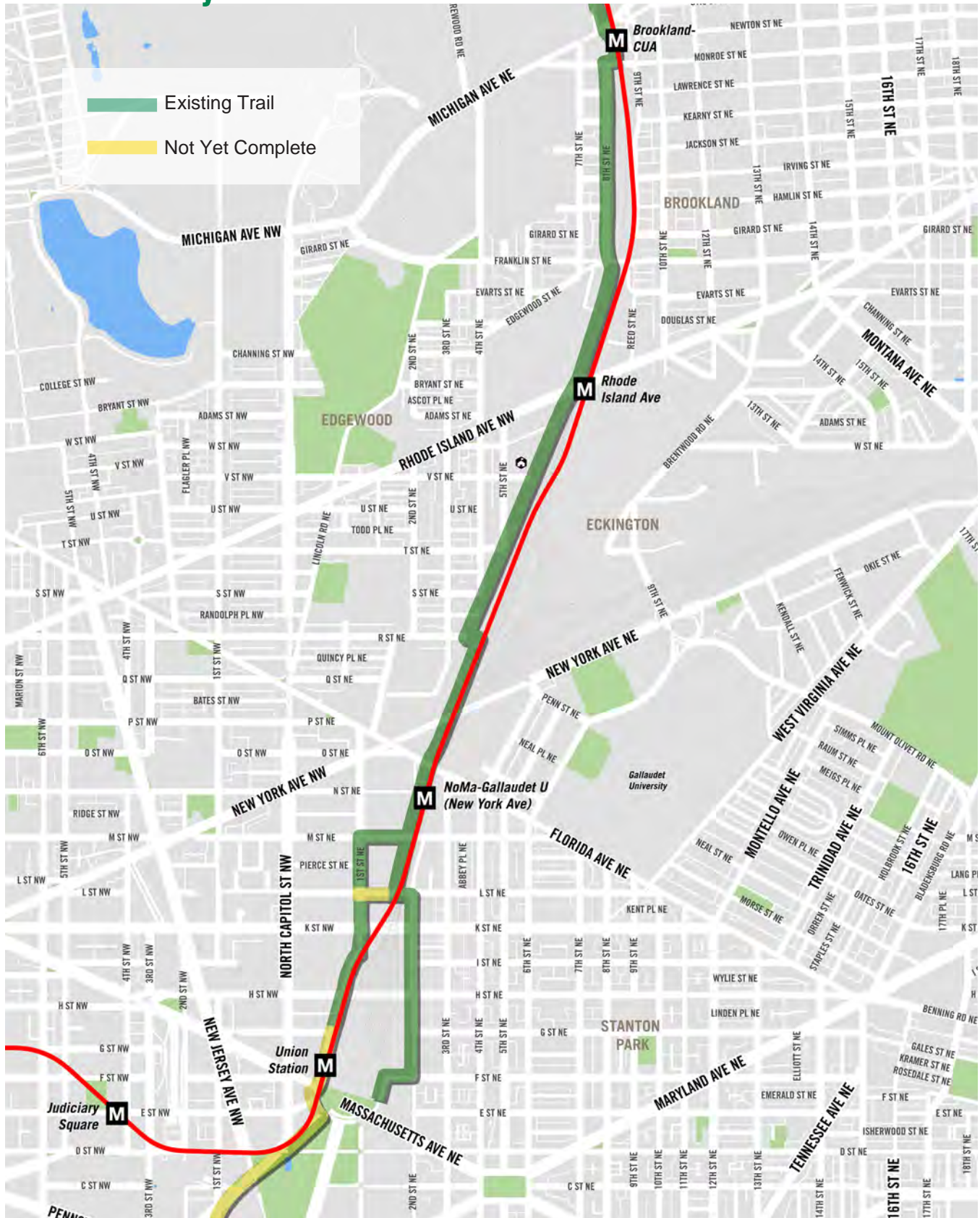
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The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a unique asset in the District of Columbia. This “rail trail” is the premier non-motorized travel corridor for a large portion of northeast Washington, DC. However, the Trail faces challenges of poor perceptions of safety, limited access, and poor visibility.

This study is the product of a robust collaboration between the NoMa Business Improvement District, key property owners, the District Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Police Department, along with the input of over 900 individual residents and stakeholders, identifies key opportunities and provides a focused action agenda for Trail improvement.

OVERVIEW

General Study Area



OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Metropolitan Branch Trail is one of the signature facilities for non-motorized transportation in the District of Columbia. Currently extending 2.8 miles from the Brookland-CUA Metro Station to Union Station, this “rail trail” is one of only a handful of fully segregated non-motorized trails in the city. This premier bicycling and walking facility offers a one-of-a-kind experience. With the US Capitol dome looming large in the foreground, the Trail links the diverse neighborhoods of NoMa, Eckington, Edgewood, Brookland and beyond.

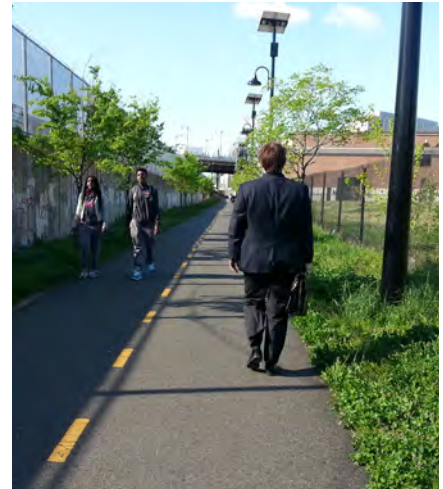
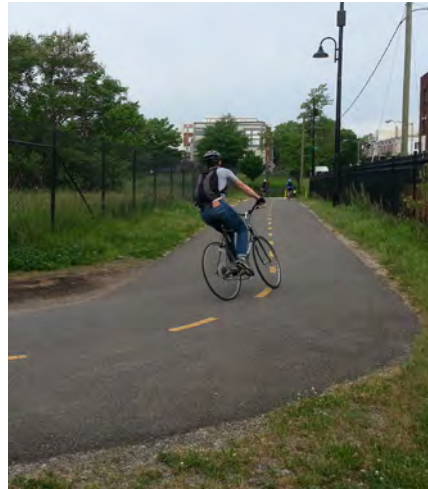
First conceived in the late 1980s, the Trail remains a work in progress. It consists of several existing off-road segments and on-street facilities connecting Union Station in the south to Silver Spring in the north. The Trail has been open to the public since May 2010 and already averages over 700 daily users in cooler months to around 1,200 through the summer.

While used and loved by many, the Trail continues to struggle to attract the volume of activity associated with some of the nation’s leading urban trails. Access points onto the Trail are limited and not very visible. The Trail is located in a largely industrial corridor with few active uses and has low levels of lighting. As a result, many users report a sense of discomfort and vulnerability when using the Trail.

A very small number of trail users have been the victim of thieves or attackers who take advantage of the relative isolation of the Trail. In the past two years, fewer than ten incidences have been reported in the media. Crime report data (shown in the appendix of this report) is not recorded by exact location, and thus is only anecdotal.

Despite these challenges, the value and opportunity of the Trail is obvious. Residents, trail users, developers, business owners, and public agencies all recognize it as a tremendous asset that must be celebrated and improved. They have come together to promote and enhance the Trail as a vital facility for healthy communities, sustainable commuting, and unique place-making. This report is the result of their efforts.

Diverse stakeholders from a wide spectrum of interest and investment came together to advise and advance Trail improvement. Over 900 individuals participated through public meetings, mobile workshops, and online information sharing to provide guidance on how they currently use the Trail, would like to use the Trail, what currently dissuades their use, and ideas for near term improvement. Public agencies including the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the D.C. Office of Planning, and the Office of Unified Communications (OUC), the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), among many others, were critical stakeholders in the process.



The key strategy emerging from our collective work is simple – more users mean more safety. More safety will garner yet more users in a virtuous circle. With this increased use come a number of other ancillary benefits – better access and more patrons for local businesses, more people engaging in healthful activity, and more commuters traveling in environmentally sustainable ways with less pollution and auto congestion.

This is an action-oriented plan and thus begins with the recommended actions followed by the input and information that framed them. The recommended short-term actions are relatively quick and low-cost improvements to enhance the sense of comfort and openness of the Trail.

Each action item includes a list of relevant actors to guide implementation, as well as potential partners to aid the process. Some actions are bolder and more audacious and require substantially more study and consideration than the limits of this study could provide. Nonetheless they remain to provoke continued exploration and idea generation.

Actions are generally assembled into three broad categories:

- Safety enhancements
- Identity enhancements (and)
- Access enhancements

Actions include general policies and broad organizational activities or structures, corridor-wide strategies and enhancements, as well as site-specific opportunities.

The beauty, value and utility of the Metropolitan Branch Trail cannot be underestimated. With the right investments and continued commitment, the Trail will undoubtedly become another icon and not-to-be-missed experience of Washington, D.C.

Improvements to the Metropolitan Branch Trail identified in this study meet three principal objectives: to improve safety, access, and identity. This section outlines a number of actions and opportunities to achieve these goals. Diverse actors will play critical roles in taking action to achieve these goals; not only city agencies, but developers and investors, advocates and local organizations, individual residents, trail users, and trail neighbors will each have a role.

PROPOSAL

Recommended Actions

ACTION	TARGETED TIMELINE	LEAD ACTOR(S)
SAFETY		
1. Overhead Lighting	Immediate	DDOT
2. Mounted Lighting Maintenance	Immediate	NoMa BID*, DDOT
3. Emergency Call Boxes with Security Cameras	Immediate	NoMa BID*, DDOT, MPD, OUC, Partners TBD
4. Share User Counter Data	Immediate	DDOT
5. Real-Time Trail User Counter	Mid Term	DDOT, Partners TBD
6. Mile Markers	Immediate to Near Term	DDOT, OUC, Partners TBD
7. Pavement Markings	Immediate	DDOT
8. WABA Trail Rangers	Ongoing	DDOT, WABA
9. High Visibility Police Patrols	Ongoing	MPD
IDENTITY		
10. Branding	Immediate	DDOT, Partners TBD
11. Visibility	Immediate	DDOT, NoMa BID*, Private Partners TBD
12. Programming	Immediate	NoMa BID*, Partners TBD
13. Connectivity / Public Art	Mid Term	DCCAH, Private Partners TBD
14. Activation	Mid Term	DC OP, Private Partners TBD
15. Structured Management and Governance	Mid to Long Term	Nonprofit Partners TBD, DDOT, Regional Partners
ACCESS		
16. L Street NE	Long Term	DDOT, Property Owner
17. Pierce Street NE	Mid Term	DDOT, Property Owner
18. Access to Union Market / Fl Ave	Mid to Long Term	DDOT, Private Partners TBD
19. Q Street NE / NoMa Green	Near Term	NoMa Parks Foundation, DDOT
20. R Street NE	Near to Mid Term	DDOT, Private Partners TBD
21. Penn Center (Randolph Place)	Near Term	DDOT, DGS, DCCAH, DC OP
22. T Street NE	Near to Mid Term	DDOT, Private Partners TBD
23. V & W Streets NE	Near Term	DDOT, Property Owners
24. Edgewood Court Connection	Near to Mid Term	Private Partners TBD, DDOT
25. Edgewood Court Shared Street	Mid Term	DDOT
26. Franklin Street Alley Connection	Immediate	Property Owner, DDOT
27. 8th Street NE Facility	Near to Mid Term	DDOT, Property Owners
28. Brookland Green Activation	Near to Mid Term	Private Partners TBD, WMATA, DDOT
29. Newton Street Neighborhood Greenway	Near to Mid Term	Private Partners TBD, DDOT, WMATA, DC Office of Planning
30. Complete the Trail	Mid Term	DDOT

NOTES: *Only within NoMa BID boundaries; Implementation timelines are approximate: Immediate = Initiate immediately, implement within 3 months; Near Term = within 18 months; Mid Term = within 3 years; Long Term = indeterminant

PROPOSAL

MULTI-TIERED APPROACH

The team listened to input from community and public agency leaders, local area developers and investors, national experts, project managers intimately familiar with the Trail, and over 900 unique stakeholders who both use and do not use the Trail. In doing so, it became clear that a multi-tiered approach was necessary for trail improvement. It is not enough to simply address safety concerns on the Trail without expanding access to extend the reach, impact, and use of the Trail. Improving access will be of limited utility unless access points are clearly identifiable and the Trail has a clear “brand” to enhance visibility and encourage use.

Recommended strategies, therefore, cut across these multiple dimensions. They range from city-wide policy and system actions to corridor-wide initiatives and interventions at very specific locations. The following action items include: actors identified to guide implementation, general cost estimates, and targeted timelines for implementation. This may be subject to change depending on further evaluation and available funding.

1. Safety

Actions to improve the perception and reality of safety on the Trail.

OBJECTIVES:

- » Safer environment
- » Improved comfort
- » Rapid response

2. Identity

Actions to improve awareness, programming, and use of the Trail.

OBJECTIVES:

- » Better recognition
- » Continued investment
- » Increased use and programming

3. Access

Actions to expand connections and access to the Trail for more users and greater impact.

OBJECTIVES:

- » Broader connections
- » More users
- » Increased visibility

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Safety

Promote Eyes on the Trail

LEGEND



Install Cameras and Call Stations at Key Problem Areas

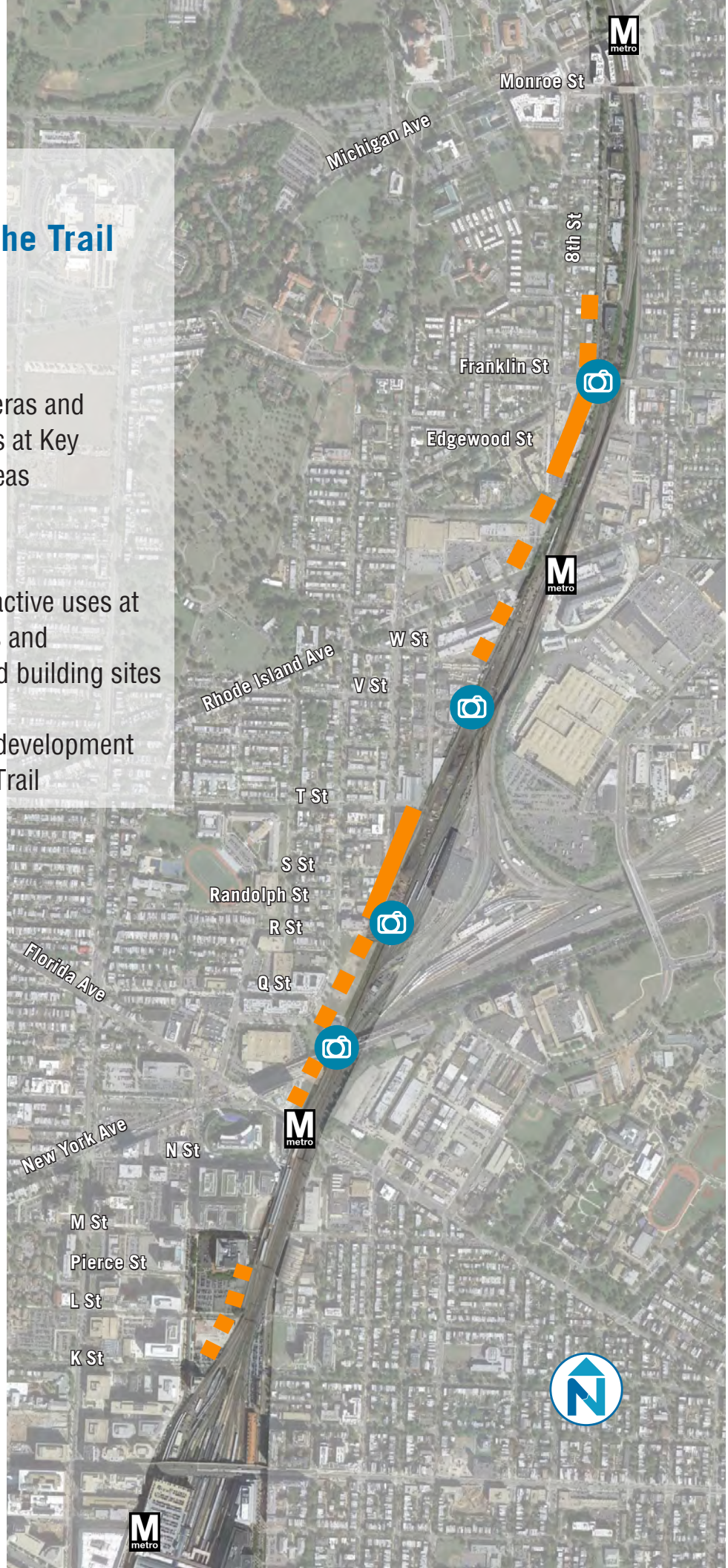
On-Going/Long Term -



Encourage active uses at connections and underutilized building sites



Orient new development toward the Trail



SAFETY

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Safety on the Trail must improve. While the perception of danger on the Trail is greater than the reality, safety remains a real concern. In the past three years, there have been more than a dozen reports of violent crime on or near the Trail. Most of these have been crimes of opportunity – criminals taking advantage of the relative privacy of the Trail to prey on users during periods when there are relatively few users on the Trail.

The single most effective strategy for deterring these criminals is to have more users on the Trail, but in order to gain confidence and attract more users, visible investments in safety infrastructure must be made. New technologies and investments will require integration with existing systems for emergency response. These safety investments can have a positive effect on real and perceived safety. Beyond security, traffic safety improvements are also necessary to avoid crashes and facilitate use.

Proposed Actions

(Each item will be discussed in detail on the following pages.)

- » Enhanced lighting
- » Emergency call boxes and security cameras
- » Real time information - trail user volumes
- » Mile markers
- » Pavement markings
- » Trail Rangers
- » MPD Police Patrols



Broken solar lamp post along the Trail at Rhode Island Ave

Overhead Lighting

Solar lamp posts run the length of the Trail.

When the current off-road section of the Trail was constructed in 2008 and 2009, solar lights were installed to provide overhead lighting of the Trail. The lights were somewhat experimental and untried in the District at the time. In the more than five years since installation users have consistently complained that lighting levels are too low. Lights have stopped working and repair and replacement has been slow (the original manufacturer is now out of business).

Lighting improvements are necessary. The key needs are for brighter lighting, a consistent level of lighting along the Trail, and reliable operation.

ACTION:

The overhead lights are assets covered by DDOT's master street lighting maintenance contract and program. The preferred course of action is for the maintenance contractor to retain the lighting poles and solar panels but replace the lighting fixture with a brighter light that more appropriately directs light on the Trail. Should this fail, it may be necessary to replace the whole light assembly.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

Included in street light maintenance contract

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Broken globe light along the Trail on the WMATA wall



Globe lights along the WMATA wall

Mounted Lighting

Globe lights on WMATA wall

The DDOT street light maintenance contract addresses overhead lighting on the Trail, but not wall-mounted fixtures on the Trail or adjacent buildings, which have been subject to vandalism. Delays in routine maintenance and repair lead to a perception of disinvestment and neglect on the Trail, deterring some users.

In 2015, the District Council authorized Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to enter into agreements with District agencies, allowing them to perform minor public space maintenance activities on behalf of the District. NoMa BID representatives are often the first to spot and report any broken or out of service light. This new authority could enable a swifter, and more cost-effective, response to minor lighting maintenance needs and avoid delays that have plagued DDOT repairs.

ACTION:

Exercise this new authority and enable the NoMa BID to carry out necessary repairs for the surface mounted lighting not covered by the DDOT streetlight maintenance contract.

LEAD ACTORS:

NoMa BID, supported by DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

Periodic minor costs

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Emergency call box on the Howard University campus

Emergency Call Boxes and Security Cameras

Call boxes on the Trail for emergency use

Emergency call boxes can provide trail users with an increased sense of security and connection. Law enforcement officials have strongly endorsed installation of them along the Trail.

Obstacles to installing call boxes historically included integrating them into the 911 system, the need for landlines for emergency call services, and uncertainty over ownership, maintenance and service response. Modern cellular and solar technology eliminates the need for major construction and Trail disruption for conduit installation. The District's Office of Unified Communications (OUC) can receive 911 calls from the call box as they would from any other phone.

ACTION:

Install solar-powered, wireless, two-way audio emergency call boxes with security video functions and strobe lights approximately every 1/4- to 1/2-mile along the Trail. Video recording must follow the MPD convention and allow MPD unrestricted access.

LEAD ACTORS:

NoMa BID, DDOT, MPD, OUC, Private Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

\$10,000 to \$15,000 per installed call box and \$800 to \$1,000 annually in operations and maintenance.

For the entire 8-mile Trail corridor:

- » At 1/2-mile intervals - approximately \$240,000
- » At 1/4-mile intervals - approximately \$480,000

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Eco-TOTEM Dynamic Trail User Counter in Arlington County

Real-Time Trail User Counter

Counters provide data on pedestrian and bicycle activity

Users feel safer when they know there are other users on the Trail. In 2014, DDOT installed the first “Eco-Counter” on the Metropolitan Branch Trail. This counter passively records the number of trail users every 15 minutes, differentiating between people on foot or bicycles and direction of travel. It can then transmit data electronically. “Eco-TOTEMS” are available that will additionally dynamically display the number of users passing by the detector. This information can be transmitted in real time.

Not only can user data be displayed at a stationary point, but transmitted data can and should be made available to app developers. This data can be used to create innovative apps to provide information to potential trail users, raising awareness about trail use and hopefully making users feel safer there.

ACTION:

Immediate: Share user data collected by existing Eco-Counter on the MBT to encourage crowd-sourced app development.

Mid Term: Install TOTEM displays and additional counters on the Trail. Fund as a community benefit by major development projects.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

Each Eco-Counter costs about \$5,000 and each Eco-TOTEM is about \$13,000; \$2,000 to \$3,000 to install both devices

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate to Mid Term

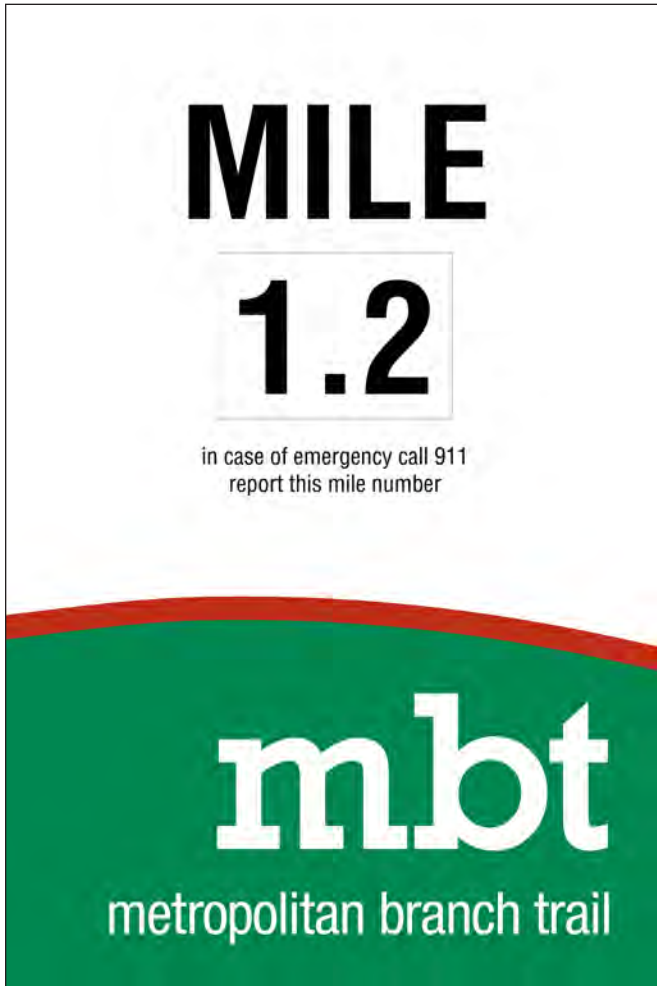


Image of mile marker signage being implemented by DDOT



Mile marker stencil for Trail surface - Floridastateparks.org

Mile Markers

A tool for orientation and wayfinding

Marking distances on the Trail is a low cost improvement with substantial benefits. Mile markers can encourage and facilitate use of the Trail for exercise, races, or events. Mile markers have ancillary utility as a location marker for reporting any issues of public safety, needs for maintenance (street light or pothole repair, for example), or coordinating a meeting location for users joining from different points on the Trail.

Mile markers also provide an opportunity for place-making and branding. They can be very simple installations – nothing more than paint stencils on the pavement of the Trail – or special installations of vertical elements that may include geographic coordinates, wayfinding or directional information, sponsorship information and/or elements of public art.

ACTION:

Immediate: Install low-tech/low effort mile markers, like painted stencils, quickly as an “early win.”

Near Term: DDOT is currently in the process of coordinating with OUC to implement more permanent, geocoded mile marker signage.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, OUC, Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

\$40 per fabricated sign; with 2 signs per post at every 0.10 miles, cost to install is around \$400 per mile of trail

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate: Temporary mile markers

Near Term: Permanent, branded, and geocoded mile markers



Current pavement markings on the MBT at an existing access point

Pavement Markings

Markings to alert users of conflicting traffic zones

Field visits to the Trail highlighted the conflicts that exist at some access points. Bicyclists can travel at a relatively high rate of speed, while breaks in fences or walls are virtually invisible when passing by. Trail users don't receive any advance warning that someone may suddenly step into the Trail.

The lack of a "center line" along portions of the Trail adds to this confusion. Trail users do not know which side to use or how to pass travelers going the same or opposite direction. Installing pavement markings and directional arrows is an easy and cheap remedy. Priority locations for pavement markings include:

- » M Street where the access ramp joins the Trail
- » NoMa Metro Station stairs access point
- » Florida Avenue access
- » Rhode Island Metro Bridge access
- » R St NE access

ACTION:

Paint center-line markings at access points and mark "merge zones" where they join the Trail. Consider advance warning strategies like signage or additional markings.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT

FUNDING APPROACH:

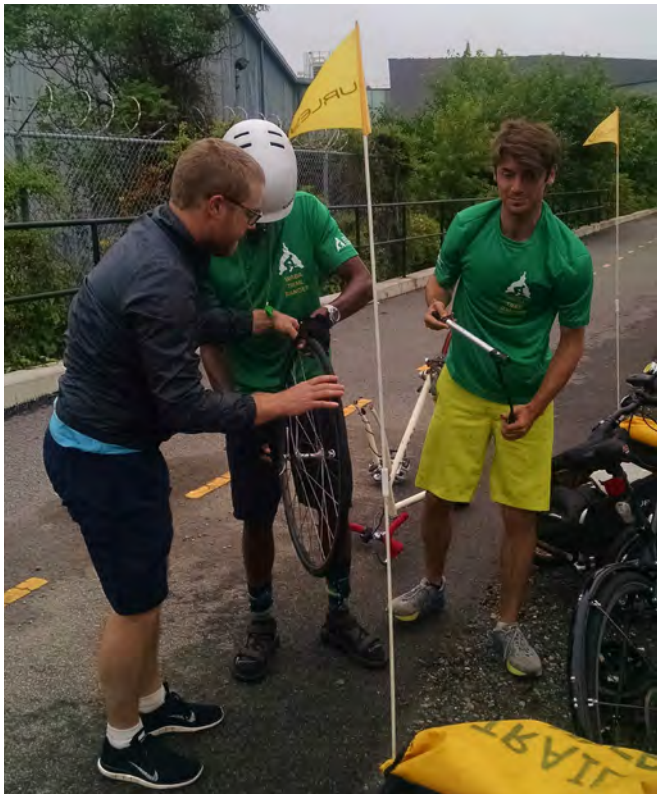
Pavement markings are eligible for inclusion under DDOT's existing annual pavement marking contract.

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Trail Rangers patrolling the MBT - Source: WABA



Trail Rangers helping a trail user fix a bike - Source: WABA

WABA Trail Rangers

A support crew for D.C. area trails

WABA's Trail Ranger program is putting a fresh set of eyes on D.C. area trails to support and encourage a growing community of trail users. Trail Rangers are a consistent and helpful presence on D.C.'s shared use trails charged with assisting trail users, improving trail conditions, and working with city agencies to keep the trails clean, bright, and clear of obstacles.

The Trail Rangers pull trailers stocked with tools for a variety of tasks and are eager to help patch a flat, provide a quick fix, give out maps and directions, or clear up glass and debris before it causes trouble. Their presence provides for a quick response to trail obstructions, an added sense of "eyes on the trail", and more reasons to enjoy the area's Trail network. The Trail Ranger program is made possible through a grant from the District Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Administration.

The Trail Ranger program is only a small part of the trail advocacy and support within the WABA organization. WABA sponsors, such as REI, help to keep these programs rolling.

ACTION:

Continue to support the WABA Trail Rangers program.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, WABA

ESTIMATED COST:

Funded through \$100,000 annual grant from the DDOT Urban Forestry Administration

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Ongoing

High Visibility Police Patrols

Active police presence on the Trail

One of the most common comments received from survey participants was a desire for a more visible police presence on the Trail. While MPD bicycle officers do routinely patrol the Trail, respondents expressed a desire to see more patrols, particularly during off-peak hours.

While an over-abundance of police could convey a negative perception of the Trail, many respondents stated a preference for a visible police presence. Non-users were especially in favor of seeing more police on the trail.

ACTION:

Create a more focused police patrol for the Trail. This may be part of a larger MPD District-wide trail program or a dedicated beat for MPD officers.

LEAD ACTORS:

MPD, Trail Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

Potential additional police staffing and equipment

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Ongoing



Metropolitan Police Department Bicycle Officers on the MBT
Source: MPD



Metropolitan Police Department Bicycle Officers riding on the MBT during a community outreach event.
Source: MPD

Identity

Enhance Aesthetics and Sustainability

LEGEND



Develop Mile Marker Program

*Will also improve Safety

On-Going/Long Term



Incorporate signature lighting and wayfinding at infrastructure crossings and key access points



Use LID* projects to enhance quality and potentially raise revenue

*LID, or Low Impact Development, is a design approach geared toward managing stormwater in a natural manner similar to what exists on site prior to starting any development.



IDENTITY

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

The Metropolitan Branch Trail already has an appealing “brand” that was developed in 2008. The associated logo and imagery, however, is represented subtly in modest and limited signage along the Trail. A much more robust effort is required to establish a consistent and positive identity that will increase recognition of the Trail, visibility, and use. Public art and signage can help to broadcast a brand identity and increase its recognition and familiarity.

Brand and identity is more than just a logo, font, and color scheme. The Trail’s identity must also include and be associated with unique and positive programming and activity on the Trail.

Eventually, a structured organization may be required to organize coordinated action on the Trail, pursue continued and reliable funding for the Trail, and manage programming and maintenance.

Proposed Actions:

(Each item will be discussed in detail on the following pages.)

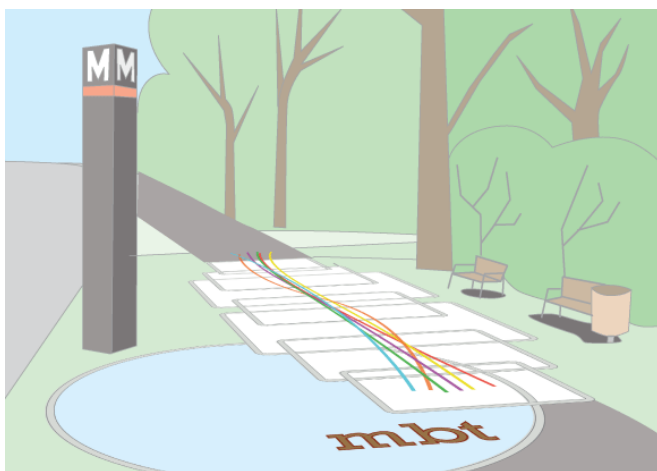
- » Branding
- » Visibility
- » Programming
- » Connectivity & Public Art
- » Activation
- » Management



One of the series of MBT logo designs - Source: DCCA



MBT brand package developed for DCCA in 2008 - Source: DCCA



"Gateway" branding concept for MBT entrances - Source: DCCA

Branding

In 2008 the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities completed a branding package for the Metropolitan Branch Trail. A simple, sleek and identifiable brand was developed along with a style guide and recommendations and opportunities for use.

Despite the sophistication of this work, the Metropolitan Branch Trail "brand" has yet to be fully marketed. While the brand is present on the limited number of wayfinding signs along the Trail and on the Trail webpage, it is not well known nor well promoted.

The first and simplest strategy is to embrace and advance what has been done. The "MBT" brand needs to be featured in more places and more broadly to enhance identity of the Trail and as a reminder that it is a wonderful and unique asset. The brand and logo should be featured along the Trail on bridge overpasses and near intersections. It can be used as guidance (trailblazing) to get to the Trail and promoted through active transportation events utilizing the Trail.

Prolific use of the brand can contribute to greater identification of the Trail leading to greater use.

ACTION:

Adopt and promote the developed branding package and utilize on large-scale signage as well as print and electronic materials.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

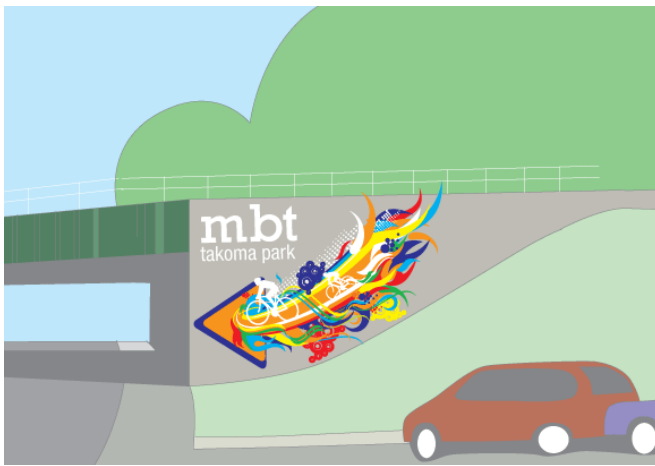
~\$50,000 - \$100,000 for complete wayfinding system implementation, depending on complexity

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

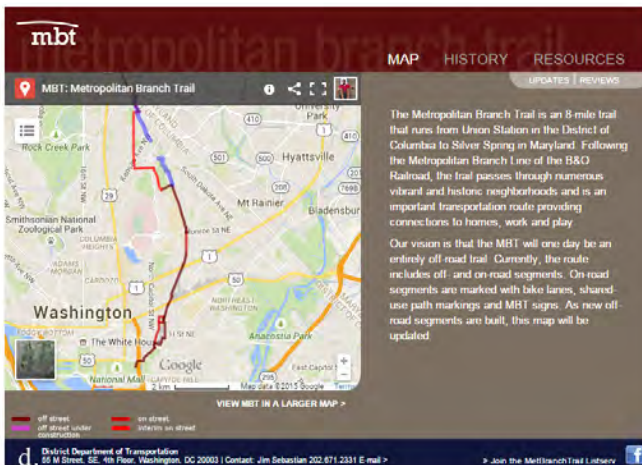
Immediate



Wayfinding signage design from branding package - Source: DCCA



Sample of wayfinding art from branding package - Source: DCCA



Resource page on the MBT website - Source: MetBranchTrail.com

Visibility

Many access recommendations provide an opportunity to increase visibility of Trail access points and overall awareness of the Trail. Access points should include distinctive and visible signage, murals, or other identifiers indicating the presence of the Trail and the opportunity to use it.

Visibility can also include proactive distribution of positive images and experiences of the Trail including iconic views of the Capitol, unique wildlife sightings, images of community members and users and other highlights of the positive use and active use of the Trail.

Electronic and social media visibility of the Trail is also necessary. Although a website and Facebook page have been established for the Trail, neither is used at full potential. These resources could be better used to aid in the promotion of the Trail. A more legible, well-designed map on the website was a common suggestion appearing throughout the public feedback process. The website is used to announce important milestone meetings, but updates seem to be rare. The website should also include an events page to promote upcoming events on the Trail and any information about ongoing programs and activities along or near the Trail.

ACTION:

Utilize existing brand and resources to promote Trail.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, NoMa BID, Private Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

\$3,000 - \$13,500 per mural (through the MuralsDC program); paid staff to update online resources

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Yoga classes are a great activity for regular Trail programming



National Park Service has installed “Fitness Zones” in DC area parks



Bike fix-it stations provide cyclists with tools to repair minor issues

Programming

Programmed activities are a good way to increase awareness and draw new users to the Trail. Some programs and events can bring a modest amount of financial resources for Trail promotion, maintenance and enhancement.

A number of programs and events are already routinely offered on the Trail. These include annual events like the springtime MBT 5k, to regularly occurring activities like Yoga on the MBT taught by Serenity Place Yoga. WABA organizes a number of periodic activities including Coffee on the Trail and MBT Clean Up Days and provides a regular and welcome presence through the Trail Rangers program. Other Trail stakeholders also have regular events on the Trail including bike tours led by BicycleSPACE, bicycle repair adjacent to the Trail by Gearin’ Up Bicycles, and community runs organized through REI.

Stakeholders and public input recommended a number of additional ideas for programmed activities on the Trail. These include the installation of exercise stations adjacent to the Trail, and dog training classes with Unleashed by PetCo now located in NoMa.

ACTION:

The Trail is fortunate to have a diversity of unique institutions and enterprises adjacent to the Trail who could be enlisted to offer additional innovative programming on the Trail. Trail partners should collaborate on regular programming and promote that programming by outreach and electronic media.

LEAD ACTORS:

NoMa BID, Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

Low (Fund through private sponsorship)

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediate



Temporary wayfinding signage to guide trail users - walkyourcity.org



Conceptual rendering of how art and lighting could transform the



Public art has been a prominent feature of the MBT since its inception

Connectivity & Public Art

The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a single facility that strings together a series of very distinct communities and experiences. Public art and lighting both present strong opportunities to increase visibility, unify the story and experience of the Trail while celebrating and highlighting the opportunities for diverse experiences in communities along the trail.

A public art program focused in key locations on artistic lighting can draw users along the trail, connect it to the surrounding communities and concurrently increase lighting and the sense of safety. These elements can be incorporated into a wayfinding system that connects trail users to nearby destinations, and vice versa. As an active transportation facility providing sustainable transportation options and connections through modest income neighborhoods, the Trail is a promising candidate for foundation assistance to implement a public art and artistic lighting program.

The unique spaces of the blank wall of the Courtyard Hotel at the NoMa Metro, the New York Avenue and Franklin Street bridges, and transitioning character of 8th Street NE all present potential canvases for art lighting.

ACTION:

Install lighting and public art in a sensitive and coordinated fashion to avoid the appearance of “plop art.” Integrate public art programming with wayfinding standards to increase connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and destinations.

LEAD ACTORS:

DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Private Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

Low (Fund through private sponsorship)

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid Term

Activate Trail Edge

Many of the buildings along the Trail evolved from or during its use as an industrial corridor. As a result, many of these buildings turn their back to the Trail with long stretches of blank wall, high windows or windows that are boarded up and virtually no active doors along the Trail. This results in the general sense along the Trail that one is in an unobserved and isolated geography with a barricade of buildings along the western edge and fenced off railyards along the eastern side.

As buildings transition uses and as new buildings are constructed along the Trail, it is essential that these buildings present an active interface with the Trail. Buildings should have a high degree of transparency with large windows and active uses in the ground floor. Where possible and practical, active doors would increase interaction with the Trail and increase the sense of integration with the community adjacent the Trail. The use of transparent windows in Charter Schools and other institutional buildings along the Trail is an example of how this could be achieved. Industrial buildings could also place administrative offices or “maker-doer” spaces on the ground floor. For newer buildings, exercise rooms and communal spaces could spill out onto the Trail.

Private users and developers should consider ways to interact with the Trail and District agencies should review development plans with the goal of increasing “eyes on the Trail” to enhance the sense of safety and invite additional use of this unique asset. Trail amenities such as water fountains, benches, trash bins, and shade trees should also be incorporated into any new development.



New residential development built with a “front” to this rail-Trail in Charlotte, North Carolina.

ACTION:

Develop or adaptively reuse parcels and buildings along the Trail to place active uses and transparent facades along the edge of the Trail. Agency reviews should encourage such features and uses.

LEAD ACTORS:

DC Office of Planning, Private Partners TBD

FUNDING APPROACH:

Can be addressed with redevelopment of sites adjacent the Trail

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid Term

Management and Governance

Stakeholders envision the Metropolitan Branch Trail to be part of a much larger “bicycle beltway” circling from Georgetown out the Capital Crescent Trail through the inner suburban communities in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties in Maryland down the Metropolitan Branch Trail back to the Central Business District. This is a grand vision on par with some of the great urban trails in the U.S. such as the BeltLine in Atlanta or Katy Trail in Dallas. Like these other trails, a major urban trail facility of this scale requires a management and governance structure capable of facilitating, enacting and tracking many of the major improvements recommended here.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail and connecting components of this “bicycle beltway” have many committed and active stakeholders and great stewards (including the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail), but as yet none have the scale nor capacity necessary to achieve this ambitious vision. In time, a sophisticated structured organization must be established to carry forward the mission of achieving this large scale, multi-jurisdiction trail facility. Any structured and dedicated organization must invite and maintain broad ownership and involvement across a diversity of stakeholders and an open approach to trail programming and improvement.

Immediate actions to improve the Trail need to be a first priority. Establishment of a management and programming organization is a secondary concern, but a vital component in long term sustainability of the Trail.

CASE STUDIES:

(see appendix)

- » Katy Trail, Dallas, TX
- » Morgana Run Trail, Cleveland, OH
- » Atlanta BeltLine, Atlanta, GA
- » LaFitte Corridor, New Orleans, LA



Logos of organizations managing comparable urban trails

Sources: katyTraildallas.org; beltline.org; www.lafittegreenway.org; slavicvillage.org/livingactive/morganarunTrail

ACTION:

Mid Term: Raise initial funding for staff to pursue sustainable resources for programming and marketing.

Long Term: After the organization is well established, it may eventually assume maintenance and monitoring functions.

LEAD ACTORS:

Nonprofit Partners TBD, DDOT, Regional Partners

ESTIMATED COST:

\$200,000 (startup costs for 1 full-time staff person)

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid to Long Term

Connectivity

Improve and Increase Access Points

LEGEND



Enhance Existing Connections

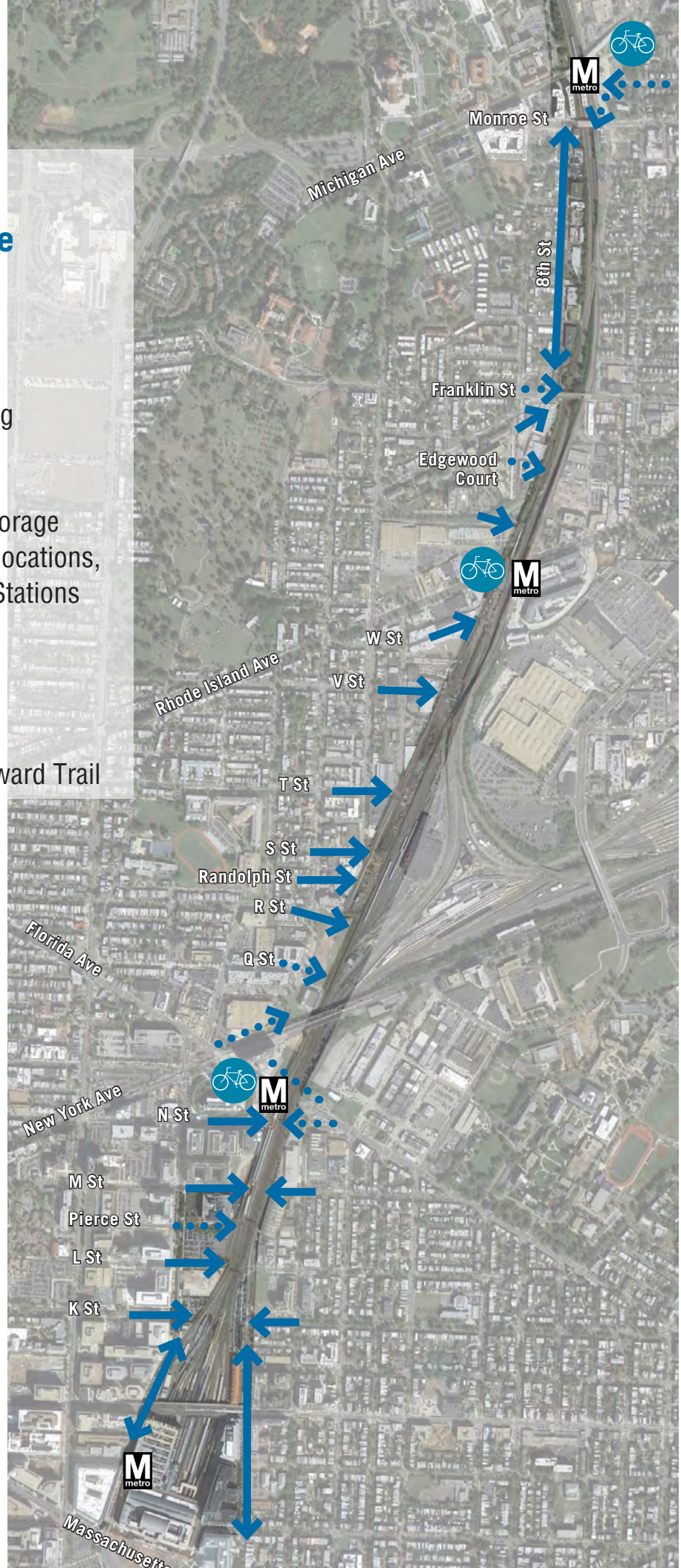


Improve bike storage facilities at key locations, such as Metro Stations

Ongoing-Long Term



Potential Future Connections toward Trail



ACCESS

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

The location and context of the Metropolitan Branch Trail pose certain unavoidable access challenges. Located on the west side of an active freight and passenger rail line limits at-grade connections from the rail-side of the Trail. The industrial uses that still remain along the corridor are often large parcels that require fencing for protection of both the public and the industrial facility.

However, numerous opportunities exist to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the access points that do exist, introduce additional points of access, and increase connectivity to the larger community. Doing so can expand awareness of the Trail and the number of potential users who realize they have access to it.

Several locations along the Trail offer unique opportunities to enhance access and visibility of the Trail. Most can be dramatically improved with relatively minor investments. Concepts for a few locations are much bolder and contemplate more profound changes – as such, these are strictly introduced as concepts for consideration with a caveat that further study is necessary before the concepts can be responsibly endorsed.

Proposed Actions:

(Each location will be discussed in detail on the following pages.)

- » L Street NE
- » Pierce Street NE
- » Access to Union Market
- » Q Street NE / NoMa Green
- » R Street NE
- » Penn Center at Randolph Place
- » T Street NE
- » V & W Street Access
- » Edgewood Court Connection
- » Edgewood Court Shared Street
- » Franklin Street Alley Connection
- » 8th Street NE Facility
- » Brookland Green Activation
- » Newton Street Neighborhood Greenway
- » Complete the Trail

L Street NE

Make the existing access point more appealing

At the terminus of the off-street portion of the Trail in NoMa, the L Street NE access point is currently built only to accommodate pedestrians. The staircase connecting the Trail to L Street has been reconstructed by DDOT after being destroyed by fire, and has been identified as a problem area on the Trail because of vandalism as well as access.

Conceptual designs to improve this connection have previously been prepared by KGP Design Studios, as shown here. These designs exhibit the potential for a more appealing entrance to the Trail.

ACTION:

Work with adjacent property owner to reconstruct the L Street connection in conjunction with redevelopment.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, Property Owner

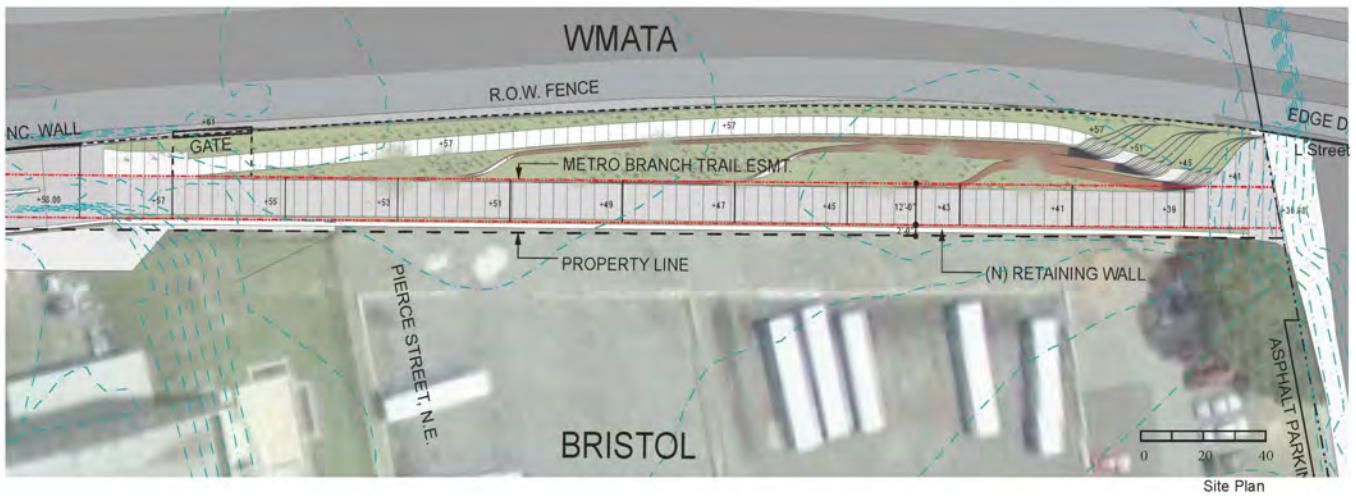
FUNDING APPROACH:

Component of development

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

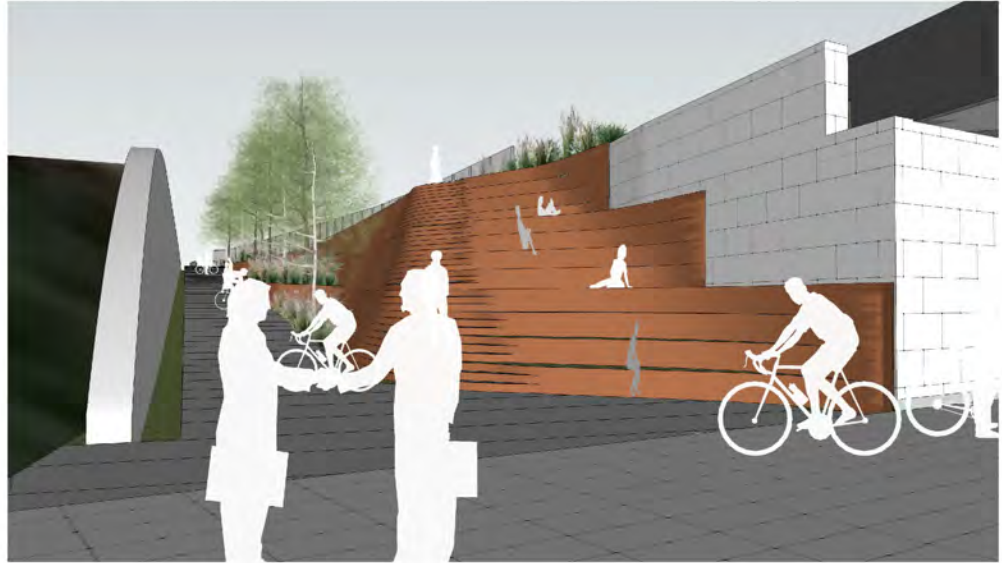
Long Term

Renderings of potential designs for the L Street NE access point - Source: DDOT





Approach on L Street



Approach on L Street

Met Branch Trail - Concept Design 08.28.12

District Department of Transportation

Scheme 1



View from northwest



View from south



Aerial from west



View from north

Met Branch Trail - Concept Design 08.28.12

District Department of Transportation

Trail Landing

Pierce Street NE

Increase permeability of Trail within NoMa

In the heart of NoMa, the 1100 block of First Street NE, between L Street and M Street, is one of the area's largest blocks. Its unbroken mass lends an air of impenetrability to the Metropolitan Branch Trail as it traverses this southernmost segment of the separated Trail.

Pierce Street currently terminates at First Street NE. Extending Pierce Street through the large

block as a private connector permitting public access would improve access to the Trail and potentially create a valuable resource for the development parcel as a multiuse service alley.

ACTION:

Implement a midblock connection from First Street NE at Pierce St to the Trail through the 1100 block of First Street NE.

Although private, the connection should provide for public access.

LEAD ACTORS:

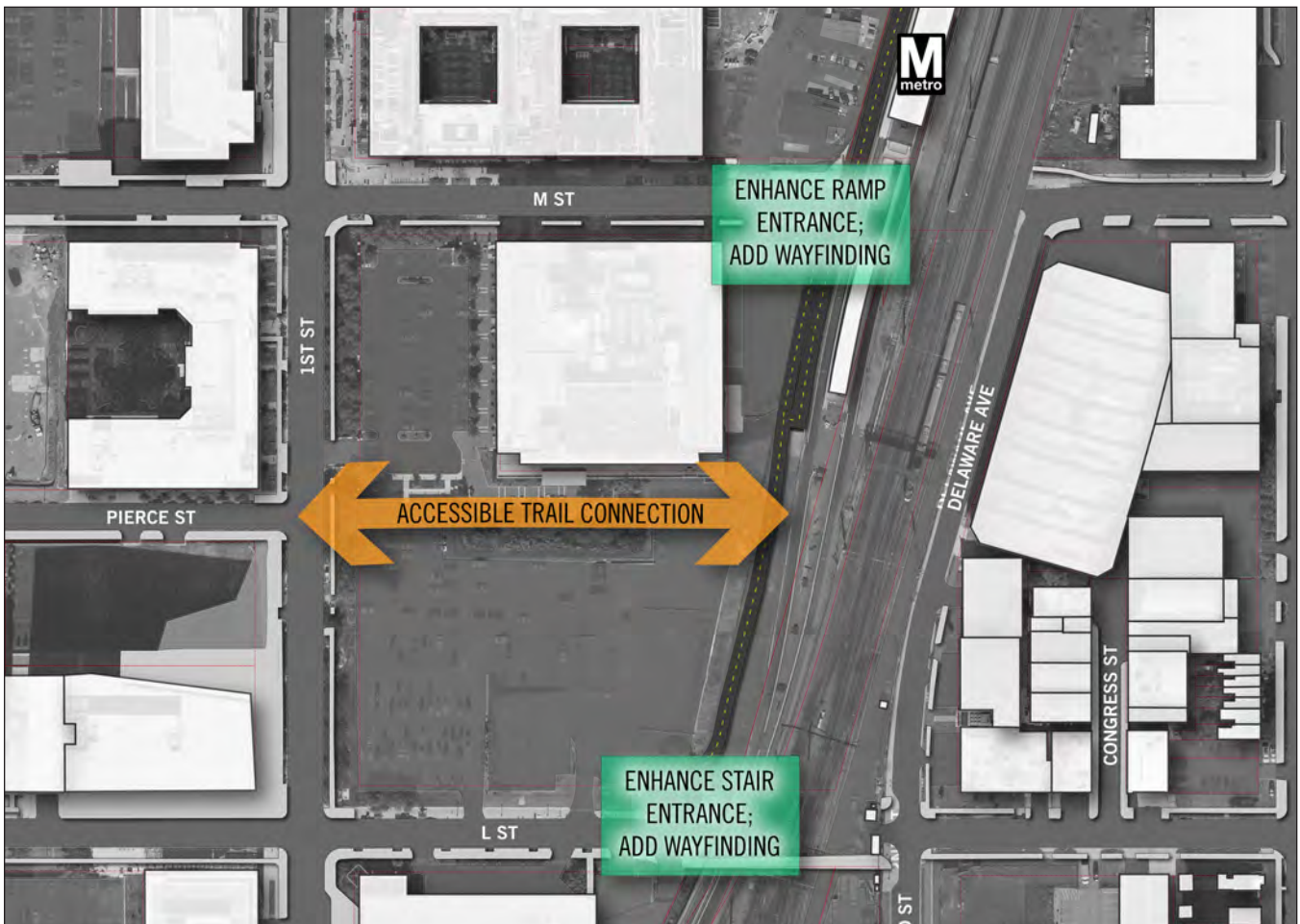
DDOT, Property Owner

FUNDING APPROACH:

Component of development

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid Term





PIERCE STREET - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

Access to Union Market

Establish connection between the MBT and Union Market

Many stakeholders and survey respondents indicated a strong desire to provide a convenient connection between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Florida Avenue Market/ Union Market area including Gallaudet University and a proposed trail along the New York Avenue corridor. This is a high priority for project sponsors, the NoMa BID, trail users, and neighborhood residents.

Multiple alternatives were considered to facilitate this connection. Each alternative involves different tradeoffs. Some alternatives are lower cost and logistically easier to implement, but provide only more circuitous connections to the Market and points east. Others provide a more direct link, but present significant challenges in cost and construction.

Four alternatives concepts were established based on feedback and preliminary evaluation. Each alternative will require further analysis and coordination with impacted parties.

1. New York Avenue Bridge Easement Spur

Establish a Trail connection paralleling New York Avenue from the Trail to Florida Avenue. This connection follows an existing bridge maintenance easement and provides a relatively flat and easy connection to the intersection of Florida Avenue and New York Avenue.

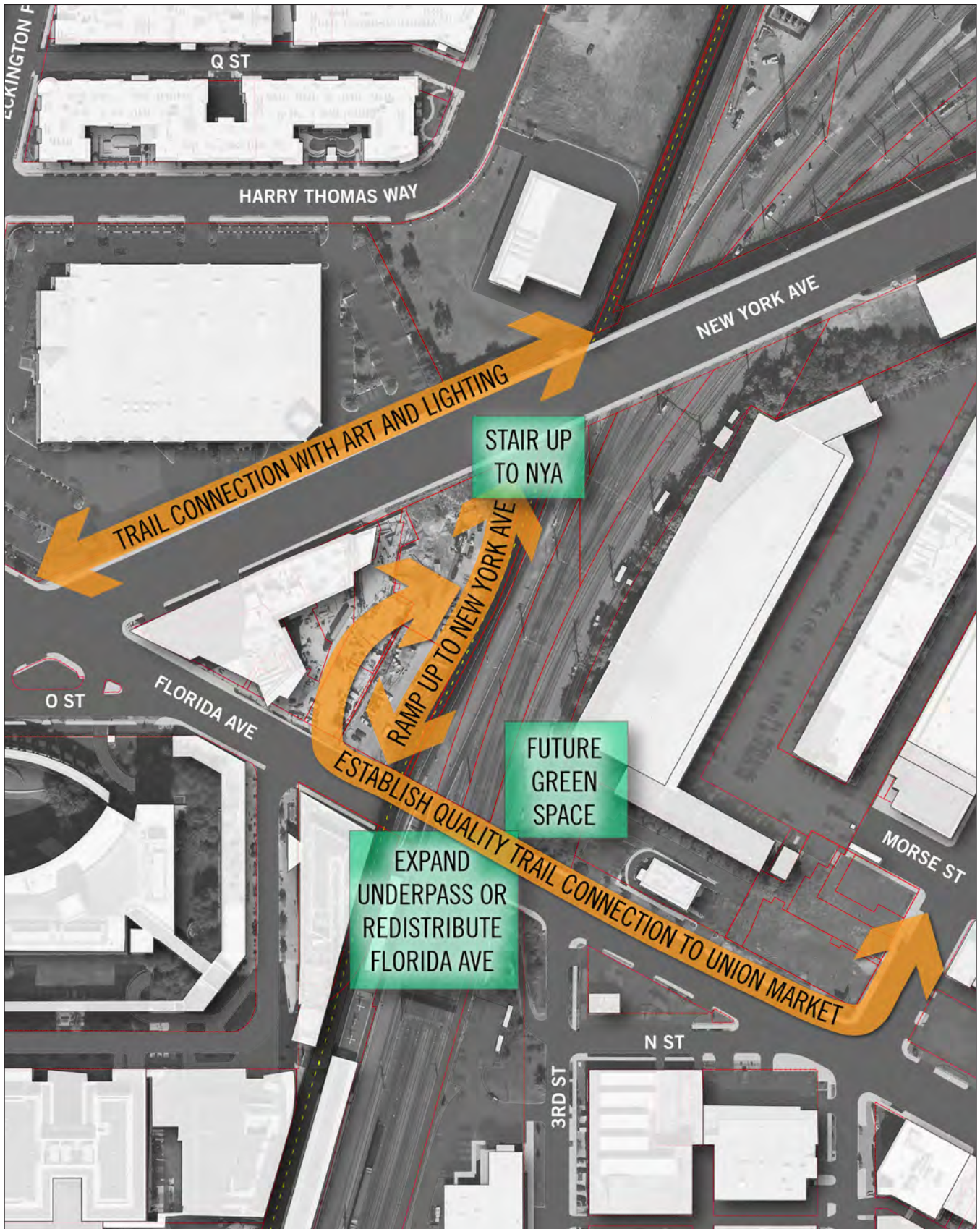
From that point trail users may continue to the west toward destinations in the Northwest One and Truxton Circle communities, or cross over New York Avenue at the signalized intersection to continue up and over the New York Avenue bridge to destinations on the east side including Union Market, Union Art Center, as well as the proposed New York Avenue Trail. This surface alternative along existing public right-of-way could be implemented in the near term at relatively low cost, although it involves nearly 1/4-mile of out-of-direction travel for trail users coming from the south and/or destined to the east. The distance along the north side of the bridge between the Trail and the intersection of New York Ave and Florida Ave is about 900 feet.

2. New York Avenue Stairs

Construct stairs leading directly from the Trail up to the south side of New York Avenue. A small parcel of publically held land remains directly south of the New York Avenue bridge at the point where the Trail travels under the bridge. The parcel is a steep embankment up to the bridge, but could accommodate stairs from the Trail to the bridge. The potential grade of the stairs could introduce difficulty, and be insufficient for bicycle accommodation to the bridge. The stairs that currently exist at the northern end of the Washington Gateway site (100 Florida Ave NE) are open to the public and provide a connection between the temporary Trail access on the site and New York Avenue above.

3. Ramp extension up to New York Avenue

Construct a bridge or raised connection paralleling the Trail up to the New York Avenue Bridge. This alternative would require construction of a ramp and/or bridge structure to provide a spur of the Trail beginning just north of Florida Avenue and climbing to meet the south sidewalk of the New York Avenue Bridge.





NEW YORK AVE - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING - DAYTIME

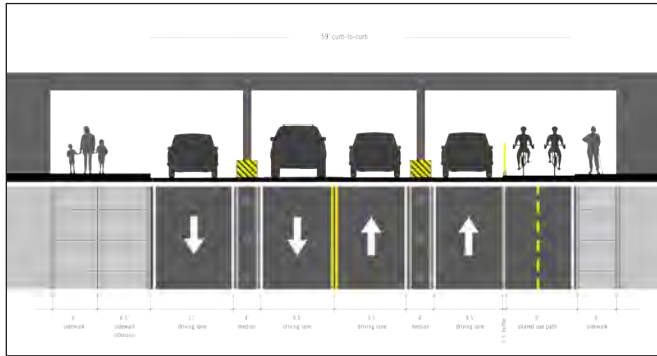


NEW YORK AVE - EXISTING

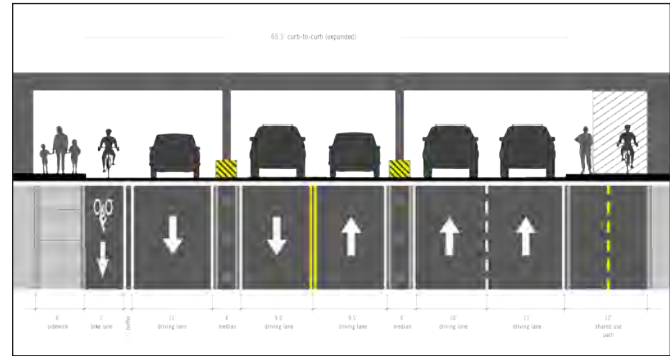


ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING - EVENING

Florida Avenue Study Draft Recommendation



Florida Avenue Underpass Excavation



Challenges associated with this alternative include challenges of grade (the ramp may be too steep to meet ADA standards or provide a comfortable bicycle connection), right-of-way challenges (there may not be adequate space in the MBT easement for a ramp facility), security challenges (WMATA and CSX may both oppose an elevated structure adjacent to their tracks); and structural challenges (joining with the new New York Avenue Bridge may require cutting the bridge parapet which could introduce additional challenges). This elevated alternative requires additional study and substantial capital investment but, depending on feasibility, could be implemented within four to eight years.

4. Florida Avenue Shared Use Path

Relocate the Trail through the Washington Gateway site to a direct connection from the Trail down to Florida Avenue and continue via a widened connection along Florida Avenue's north side to the market area east of the railroad underpass. The relocation of the trail access should be incorporated into Phase II of the Washington Gateway site development, which should include active uses on the ground floor facing the MBT where possible. The widened connection along Florida Avenue may be accomplished by taking a westbound travel lane and converting it into a two-way cycletrack. It is important to note, however, that the Florida Avenue Multimodal Transportation Study (not yet released) has recommended against a reduction in vehicle travel lanes in the westbound section of the roadway through the underpass.

While expensive and requiring further engineering study, a second alternative is to excavate under the railroad tracks and support the tracks over the road. This would enable the widening of the sidewalk/sidepath area without reduction in vehicle capacity and provide convenient and direct access from the Trail, under the railroad tracks to the Market area.

ACTION:

Additional evaluation and engineering study, engagement with impacted parties, and advance capital planning is necessary to further advance this concept.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, Private Partners TBD

ESTIMATED COST:

Cost is significant

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid to Long Term

Union Market Access Options

Option	Merits	Challenges
1. New York Avenue Bridge Easement Spur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provides relatively level connection from MBT to New York Avenue. » Easier to do in that easement is already in public domain and Trail is on surface not structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not efficient connection for pedestrians; acceptable for bicyclists but fairly circuitous with about 900 feet of out of direction travel required » Cyclists would need to cross New York Avenue (at intersection with Florida) » Cyclists would need to ride up and over New York Avenue Bridge to access the north side of Union Market
2. New York Avenue Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Property is publically held » Connection is short and direct » Relatively simple to construct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Not acceptable for bicyclists; may be steep for many users » Still requires travelers to continue over New York Avenue Bridge to get to Union Market
3. Ramp extension to New York Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Short and direct connection to New York Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » May not have adequate Trail width for ramp » Ramp may be too steep for cyclists and ADA standards » Ramp may introduce concern for WMATA, CSX and DDOT » Requires out-of-direction travel (doubling-back) for southbound trail users » High cost
4a. Widen sidewalk on north side of Florida Avenue into travel lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could be constructed relatively quickly and at comparatively low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Florida Avenue Study (not yet released) concluded removing another lane on Florida Avenue would result in negative consequences; not recommended
4b. Excavate and reinforce embankment under rail tracks to widen sidewalk on north side of Florida Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Does not impact operations on Florida Avenue » Provides relatively direct and level connection from Trail to Union Market area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Costly to construct » Requires approval by CSX and multiple federal and local agencies

Q Street NE / NoMa Green

Establish a permanent connection from the MBT to Harry Thomas Way

Despite being an important east-west bicycle connection across town, Q Street is physically cut off from the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The Trilogy development at Q Street provided funding to DDOT for this connection through a PUD, but has not yet been constructed as a result of indemnification issues.

ACTION:

Implement NoMa Green with a Q Street NE MBT connection as a component.

LEAD ACTORS:

NoMa Parks Foundation, DDOT

FUNDING APPROACH:

Component of NoMa Green project

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term (in conjunction with NoMa Green implementation)

R Street NE

Connect the Trail to neighborhood destinations

Of all the nodes along the Metropolitan Branch Trail, the R Street access point presents one of the most exciting and necessary opportunities for improvement. Gearin' Up Bicycles and other popular neighborhood shops already provide some activity in the area.

The R Street area is also the location most often cited for personal safety concern – the acute “S” curve in the Trail. Bicyclists must slow down in this segment of Trail to navigate the tight turns, making themselves vulnerable should anyone be waiting there looking for an opportunity. Bicyclists who continue rapidly through this section risk sliding on the gravel or

other Trail debris typically present around the curve. The angle of the turn also truncates sight lines, preventing clear observation of the Trail north and south of the turn.

R Street, and its pair Q Street, are important cross-town bicycle connections linking the Trail all the way to Shaw, Dupont Circle, and West End, yet pavement condition in this last linking block is quite poor. Wayfinding signage and, if necessary, trailblazing indicators (such as small MBT thermoplastic logos on the pavement) should be installed to increase trail user awareness of local neighborhood destinations, and neighborhood awareness of the proximity and presence of the Trail.

ACTION:

Near Term: Repave the 400 block of R Street NE; install a sidewalk on the south side of the street; implement wayfinding/trailblazing.

Mid Term: Realign “S” curve to reduce the sharp turns; program resulting green space, and design access to prevent conflict with Trail use.

LEAD ACTORS:

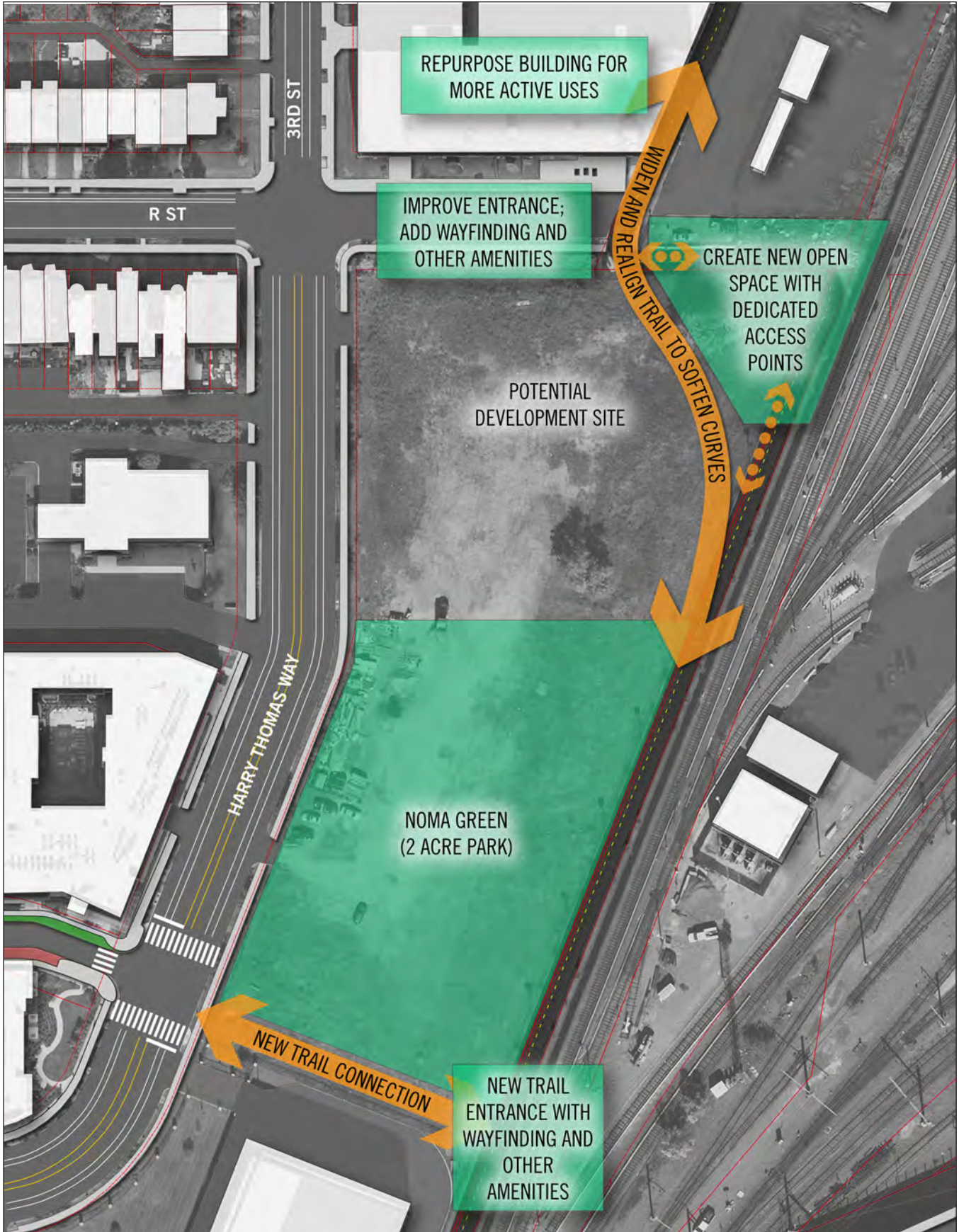
DDOT, Private Partners TBD

FUNDING APPROACH:

DDOT repaving program; component of redevelopment

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near to Mid Term





Randolph Place is currently home to only one active use space, Gearin' Up Bicycles

Penn Center (at Randolph Place)

Rehabilitate building for active uses

The District Government owns the Penn Center – the former National Geographic space – located at R Street and 4th Streets NE. This unique building presents a wonderful opportunity to bring active uses to the Trail through catalytic and visionary government partnership and incentives. The building provides windows and open platform spaces providing direct observation of the Trail.

Active use of the Penn Center, particularly during periods when the Trail is less well used (mid-day and evening hours) would increase the sense of safety and improve safety as well as increase Trail use.

The building is currently being cleared out with the possibility of a future sale upon DC Executive Council approval. There is potential for an interim use of the portion of the building facing the Trail while the building is vacant.

ACTION:

Solicit active uses to occupy the Penn Center building; install highly visible and iconic features on the vertical edges of building corners near to the Trail to raise visibility of the nearby Trail connection.

Repave Randolph Place and reconstruct sidewalks connecting to the Trail.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, Department of Government Services (Penn Center), DC Commission on Arts and Humanities (public art opportunities), DC Office of Planning

ESTIMATED COST / FUNDING APPROACH:

Penn Center - Dependent upon program and reuse;
Streetscape - DDOT repaving program; ~\$25,000 - \$50,000 for sidewalks

TARGETED TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term



R STREET NE - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING



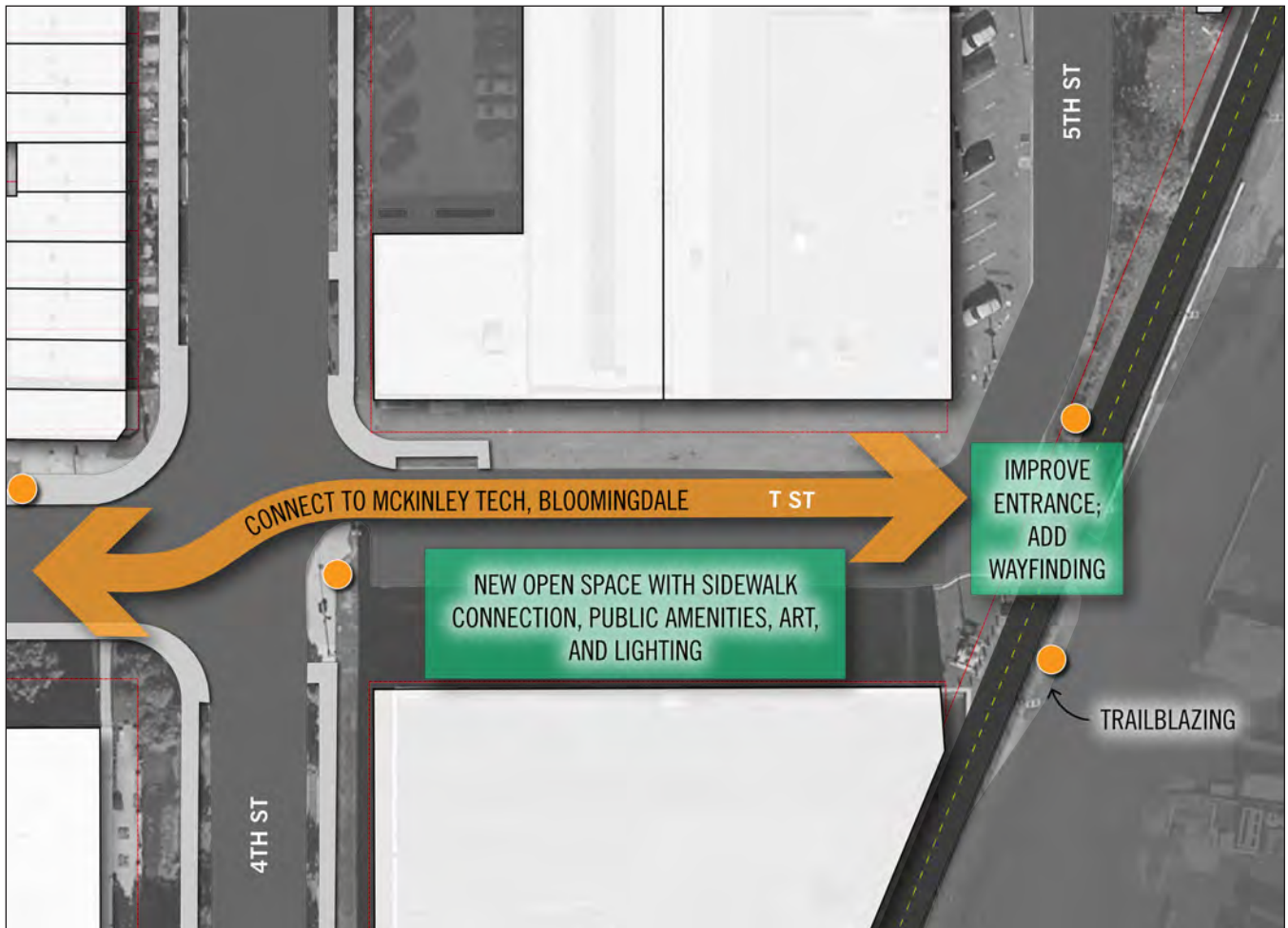
PENN CENTER - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

T Street NE

Connect the Trail to neighborhood destinations





T Street NE is an access point for large vehicles entering and exiting the Fort Myer Construction site

T Street NE presently serves as a primary access point for trucks entering the Fort Myer construction site. The T Street connection from the Trail to the McKinley Technology Educational Campus and Edgewood and Bloomingdale neighborhoods is neither highly visible nor attractive. The pavement condition of T Street is poor and expansive. Information about proximity to neighborhood destinations is completely lacking.

The Trail can be enhanced with wayfinding signage at the Trail junction, pavement removal along the 400 block of T Street NE, and trailblazing indicators extending from the Bloomingdale commercial node at First and T Streets NW to the MBT.

ACTION:

Install sidewalks on T Street NE leading to the Trail.

Design a uniform strategy for wayfinding signs and trailblazing markings; install wayfinding signage at T and 5th Streets NE; install public art to increase visibility and awareness of MBT to and from the T Street connection.

Pursue pavement removal and re-greening of excessive pavement along 400 block of T Street NE; restore pavement of the travelway of T Street NE in the same block.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT and partner agencies, local business organizations (Private Partners TBD)

ESTIMATED COST:

(Rough estimates based on material costs) ~\$25,000 - \$50,000 for sidewalks; ~\$5,000 for T Street trailblazing; wayfinding part of larger program; pavement removal and resurfacing covered in DDOT repaving program (more costly if reconstruction is required per asset preservation planning: ~\$200,000)

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term: Resurfacing (if feasible); trailblazing, wayfinding and public art installations

Mid Term: Reconstruction of T Street (if required); include installation of sidewalks and green infrastructure with reconstruction.





V Street Trail entrance provides access to the Carlos Rosario charter



The W Street entrance is barely visible

V & W Street Access

Improve the quality of MBT access points

Just to the south of Rhode Island Avenue, W and V Streets provide additional access points to the MBT. W Street at the entrance to the Trail is currently no more than a parking lot storing U-Haul and Car2Go vehicles. The access point on the Trail is marked with a street sign and a small, barely visible opening in the fence along the Trail.

The V Street connection to the Trail is slightly more established, with a recently constructed stairwell that provides access for pedestrians, but not bicyclists.

The stairs connect down from the Trail to the front entrance of the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School - Sonia Gutierrez Campus that sits directly adjacent to the Trail.

Both of these streets offer opportunities for better connectivity from the Trail into the Eckington neighborhood. Improvements to each of these entrances could help to make them more visible, both to users on the Trail and those looking for a way to access it from the neighborhood.

ACTION:

Work with adjacent property owners to clean up areas adjacent to the Trail; add wayfinding and install paved pathways to further establish these access points as Trail entrances.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, adjacent property owners

ESTIMATED COST:

Volunteer effort; wayfinding program

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term





The difference in elevation between the Trail and Edgewood Court is a significant barrier

Edgewood Court Connection

Improve the quality of connections to the MBT entrance

At present, the dead-end of Edgewood Court is cut off from the Trail by a significant grade separation. This creates a physical and psychological barrier between people on Edgewood Court and the trail users below. Trail users have reported incidences of rocks or other objects being thrown down onto the Trail below. The culprits know there is no means of accessing them to stop the practice. This disconnect also limits the potential to use the Trail as a means of access to the schools on Edgewood Court.

While the grade between the Trail and the terminus of Edgewood Court is too steep to implement a bicycle ramp connection, it would make an attractive and convenient pedestrian connection and landscape area for sitting and enjoying the Trail and the school facilities and programs. ADA access to the Trail is provided nearby via Edgewood Street NE.

ACTION:

Near Term: work with schools along Edgewood Court to revive the community garden space along the Trail.

Mid Term: Establish a terraced connection between the Trail and Edgewood Court; plan for additional connection to the Trail with the redevelopment of the Rhode Island Ave shopping center.

LEAD ACTORS:

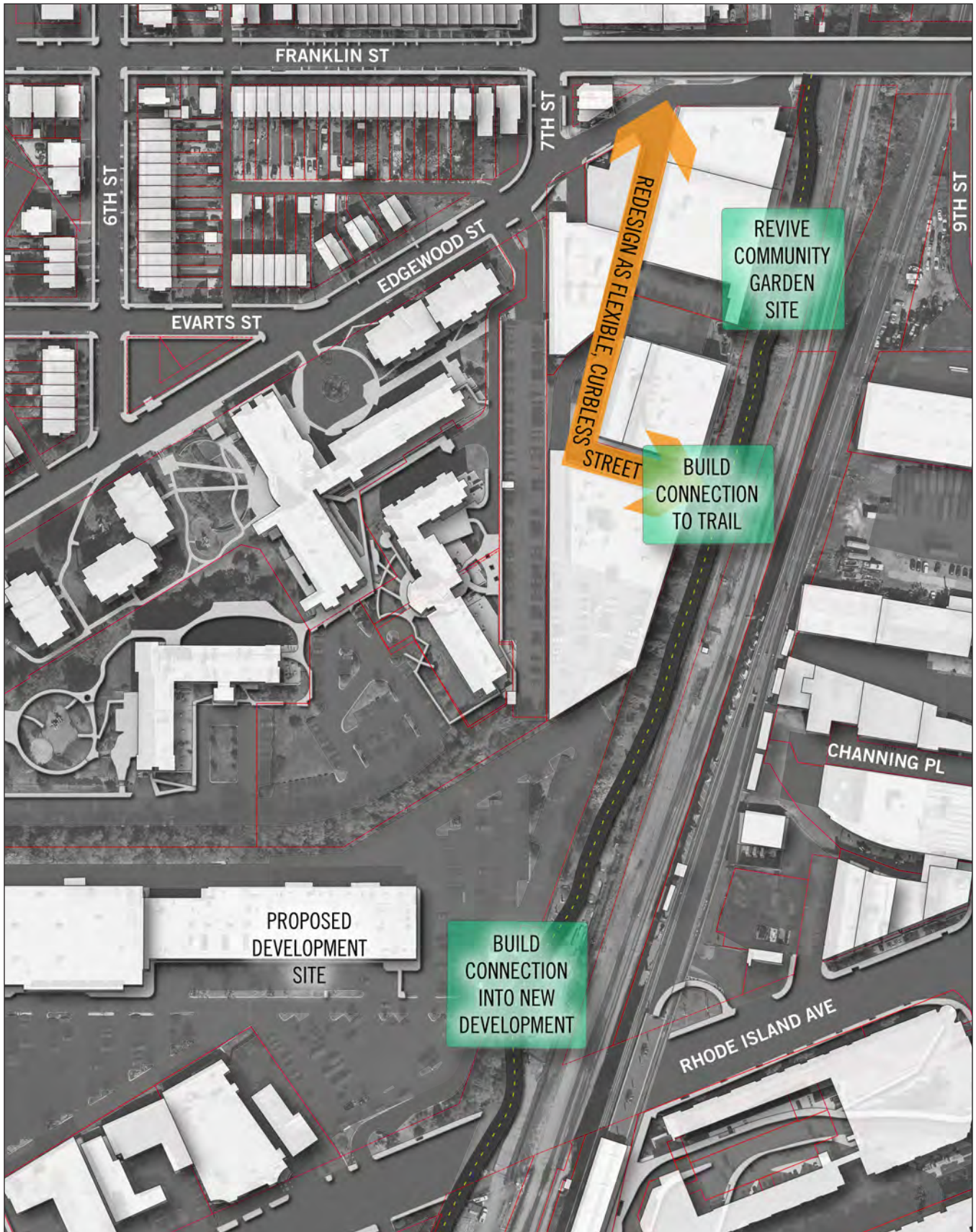
DDOT, adjacent property owners, schools, neighborhood residents (Private Partners TBD)

ESTIMATED COST:

~\$150,000 for connection

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near to Mid Term





EDGEWOOD COURT - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

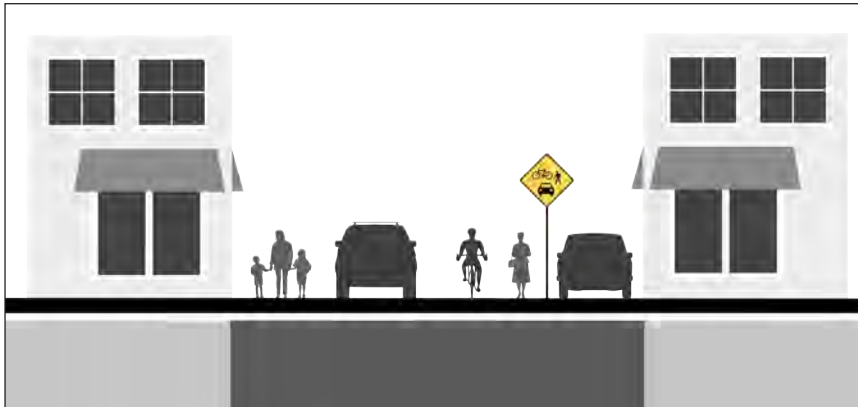


EDGEWOOD COURT - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

Edgewood Court Shared Street Cross-Section



Edgewood Court Shared Street

Create a shared street environment on Edgewood Court.

Edgewood Court is a very narrow dog-leg/dead end street branching off of Edgewood Street NE. The street appears to be a former industrial alley lined with a handful of former industrial buildings, at least four of which have been converted to charter school uses. A fifth building is occupied by an innovative food industry incubator space – the Mess Hall – which houses a number of small businesses and has created several local jobs.

Edgewood Court is a highly constrained space. At present it does not provide adequate space for accessible sidewalks. Provision of traditional sidewalks would necessitate the removal of on-street parking and could

further compromise operation of the street and success of the institutions and enterprises along it.

As a dead-end, low volume street with uses that change dramatically over various periods of the day and days of the week, the street is an ideal candidate for a shared use, curbsless street. Such a concept alleviates the need to attempt to carve up such a limited space to provide a uniquely dedicated place for each user. It allows vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles to come in a shared, very low volume, very low speed space. In order for a shared street to be successful here, a satisfactory alternative for parent dropoff and pickup must be developed.

ACTION:

Convert Edgewood Court to a shared, curbsless street to provide adequate accommodation for students and commerce, and allow flexible and adaptive use of the space for a variety of demands.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

Based on similar (minimal reconstruction) projects, around \$500,000; removal of asphalt to install pavers would have a much higher cost.

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Mid Term



EDGEWOOD COURT - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

Franklin Street Alley Connection

Establish connection between 7th and 8th Streets

To connect between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and Franklin Street, users must travel on Edgewood Street NE to 7th Street, and then to Franklin Street. The connection lacks an obvious visible link and requires a small amount of out-of-direction travel up a relatively steep hill. Additionally, this is the same corridor used by 8th Street drivers.

In morning rush hours Edgewood Street NE can be somewhat busy with parents dropping children off at the many schools along the corridor and buses sitting in the bike lanes.

An alley runs along the north side of Franklin Street between 7th and 8th Street with a much more direct and visible connection between the Trail and Franklin Street.

It is currently blocked off from vehicle access, but disinvestment in the alley and resulting crumbling pavement have made it undesirable for other users as well.

The Franklin Street overpass is currently decorated by a mural on each bridge abutment, but could be further enhanced with artistic lighting installations and additional branding for the Trail.

This Franklin Street Alley connects the Edgewood entrance to the MBT up to the intersection of 7th and Franklin Street.



ACTION:

Repave the alley and improve its access for bicycle and pedestrian connections between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and Franklin Street while continuing to prohibit vehicular use of this connection.

Complement this connection with enhanced signage and visibility and improved crossings across 8th Street at the Trail entrance. The alley connection could also be an opportunity for green alley treatments.

LEAD ACTORS:

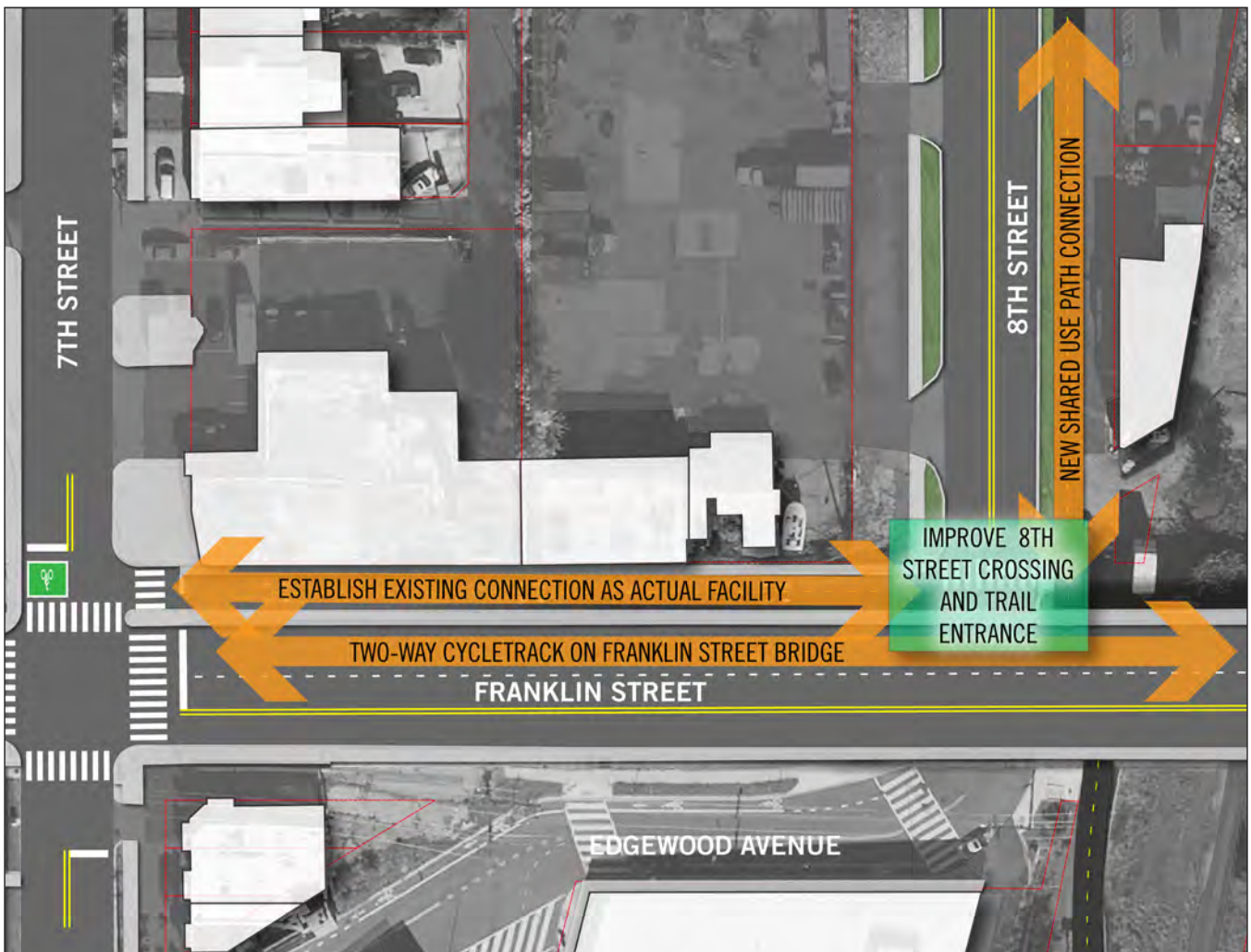
Adjacent property owner, DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

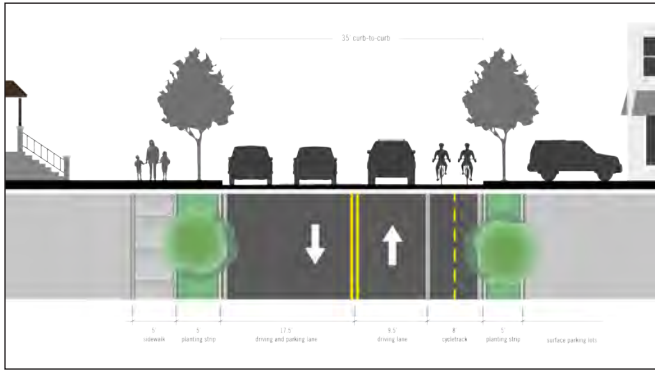
\$15,000 for standard pavement

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

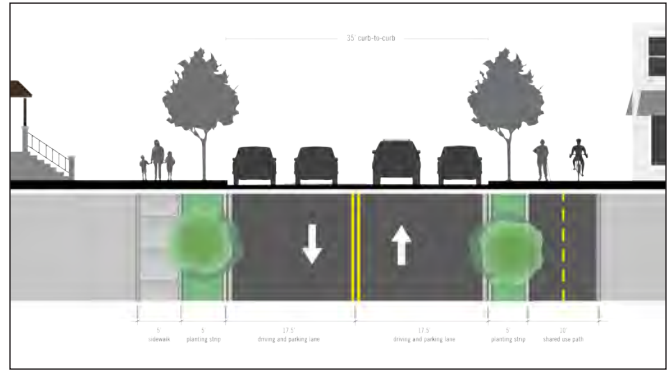
Immediate



8th Street Cycletrack Cross-Section



8th Street Shared Use Path Cross-Section



8th Street NE Bike Facility

Establish separated facility on 8th Street as continuation of the Trail

The Metropolitan Branch Trail goes on-street onto 8th Street north of Franklin Street. The Trail is only accommodated with shared lane markings (“sharrows”) without a dedicated lane for bicyclists. Furthermore, 8th Street, as a former industrial street, lacks sidewalks on its east side compromising access for pedestrians. The presence of charter schools along this street, however, generates significant pedestrian activity.

The 8th Street public right of way is adequate to accommodate the installation of a shared use Trail for bicycles and pedestrians on the east side of the street. Grade issues, however, may make this a longer term and more costly proposition. In the interim, bicycle travel can be accommodated through restriping the existing 8th Street cartway (the area between

the curbs of the street) to provide a two-way cycletrack on one side of the street (the east side is recommended) or a traditional bicycle lane on either side of the street. Reallocation of the space will require removal of parking from one side of the street, however this would enable property owners to continue using parking in the “public parking” portion of the right of way between the curb and property line. Observation of the street indicates that curbside parking is not excessively used along this segment and reallocation would benefit bicycle safety and access without substantial increases to parking pressures. This facility would require a dedicated bicycle signal at the intersection with Monroe Street to mitigate any potential conflict.

ACTION:

Near Term: Restripe 8th Street NE to provide an on-street 2-way cycletrack or traditional bike lanes. Signalization for this facility will need to be addressed in concert with the planned Monroe Street Bridge project.

Mid Term: Implement an off-street shared use path along the east side of 8th Street.

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT, property owners

ESTIMATED COST:

Near term restriping: ~ \$25,000; shared use path costs unknown

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term: Restriping

Mid Term: Shared Use Path



8TH STREET - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

Brookland Green Activation

Provide temporary pop-up use in Brookland Green to activate space

Community members and city advocates have asked for the preservation of the “Brookland Green” – a 0.75 acre parcel of mature trees on the northwest corner of Newton and 10th Street NE. Activation of this parcel can improve use and enjoyment of the Brookland Green and concurrently enhance awareness, use and convenience of the Trail.

Introduction of a modular bicycle station and repair “pod” can improve access to both the Brookland Green and the Trail, promote sustainable mobility, and attract more users to the Trail, Metro, and the Brookland Green. The facility should be entirely “off the grid”, self-contained and modular (meaning it can be installed and removed fairly simply). These can be prefabricated units or adapted use of shipping containers or other similar resources. With additional enhancements, the bike station could also be adapted to provide a small coffee kiosk, neighborhood message board or other amenities.

The Brookland access point must also be improved from a traffic safety standpoint. The Monroe Street bridge at present does not accommodate bicycles well and the crossing at the base of the bridge at 8th Street and Monroe Streets NE is difficult. Fortunately, DDOT is initiating a project to reconstruct the Monroe Street bridge. This bridge project will make the bridge more bicycle-friendly and will add a signal at the 8th and Monroe Street intersection to improve safety and access. This intersection should incorporate a bicycle signal to accommodate the proposed 8th Street bicycle facility.

ACTION:

Near Term: Work with MRP Realty/CAS Riegler, the Brookland Joint Development partner, to introduce a temporary bicycle station/kiosk as an early and visible improvement to the Brookland station area.

Mid Term: Support DDOT’s Monroe Street Bridge project to improve bicycle safety and access to the MBT.

LEAD ACTORS:

Private Partners TBD, WMATA, DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

Bike Station \$60,000+; Monroe Street Access – component of funded DDOT bridge improvement project

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term: Bike Station

Mid Term: Monroe Street



BROOKLAND GREEN - EXISTING



ASPIRATIONAL RENDERING

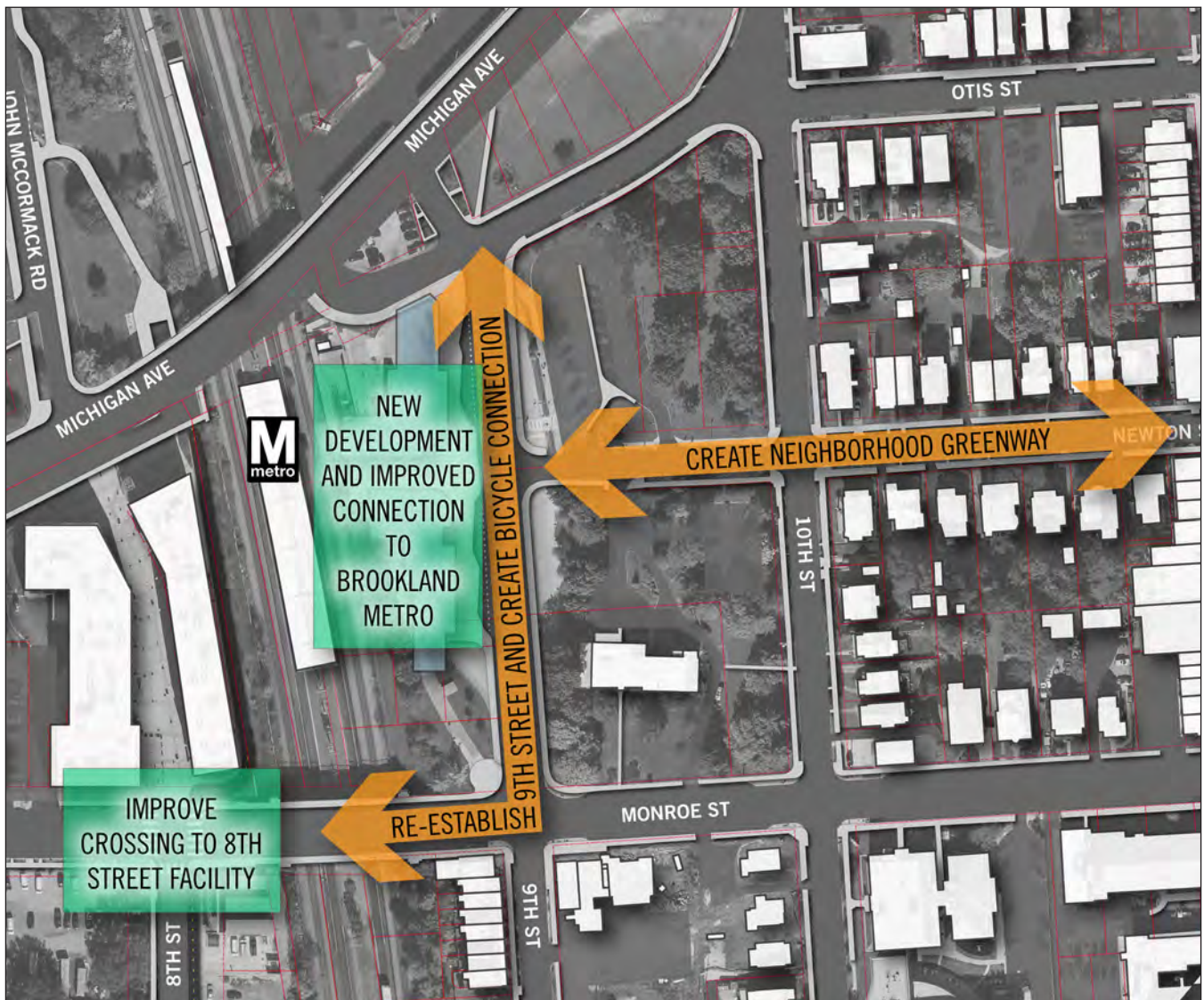
Newton Street Neighborhood Greenway

Establish a connection through Brookland Metro to the Monroe Street entrance of the Trail

MoveDC (2014) identifies Newton Street NE as the preferred east-west bicycle facility through the Brookland community. The Brookland Livability Study (2015) carries this concept further, proposing that the corridor be implemented as a “neighborhood

greenway” – a street designed to deter higher volumes of traffic and maintain low travel speeds. This would allow bicyclists of all abilities to comfortably operate in the street without any specifically designated facility.

While the Brookland Livability Study makes recommendations for the Newton Street segment, the connection from Newton Street to the Brookland Metro and down to Monroe Street is an important consideration.



Newton Street presently terminates at 10th Street NE. To enhance access to the Trail, Newton Street should extend west to Metro's Joint Development parcel. Development of the parcel should include the reintroduction of 9th Street NE as a bicycle friendly facility. Extension of Newton Street and introduction of 9th Street were also components of the draft Brookland Station Area Access Study completed by WMATA. Additionally, 9th Street was previously proposed

in the joint development concept for the Brookland parcel.

ACTION:

Near Term: Design Newton Street as a neighborhood greenway.

Mid Term: Coordinate with DDOT, WMATA and the Joint Development partner (MRP Realty/CAS Riegler) to continue Newton Street through to a reconstructed 9th Street. Ensure 9th Street is designed as a bicycle friendly facility from Newton Street to Monroe Street.

LEAD ACTORS:

Private Partners TBD, DDOT, WMATA, DC Office of Planning

ESTIMATED COST:

No additional cost; component of joint development

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Near Term: Newton Street Greenway

Mid Term: Connector in concert with new development

Newton Street runs parallel to Monroe Street through Brookland and offers a much calmer environment for bicycling.



Complete the Trail

Construct the remaining segments of the Trail between Fort Totten and Silver Spring

The most significant improvement to the Trail would be the completion of the final segments on its northern end. A large number of comments were received through survey responses and other outreach efforts asking for the Trail to be finished and connected into other D.C. area trails.

Completing the Trail would provide access to more people and more destinations, encouraging greater and more frequent use. The remaining segments are currently in the preliminary design phase, with the goal of beginning construction in 2017. Details on the design can be found on the MBT website at metbranchTrail.com.

ACTION:

Continue efforts to complete the Trail in a timely manner

LEAD ACTORS:

DDOT

ESTIMATED COST:

Cost is significant

TARGET TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

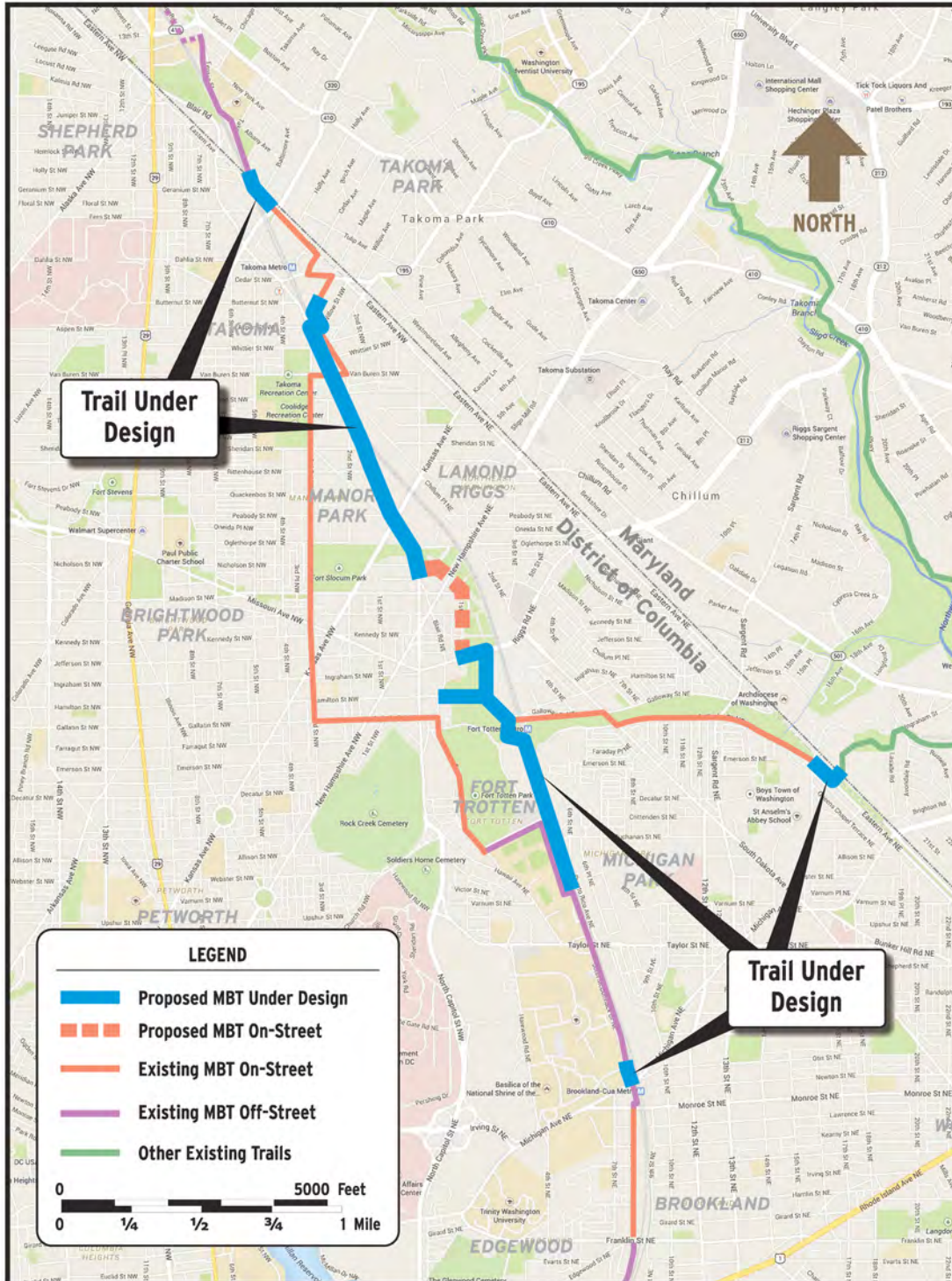
Mid Term

Renderings of potential designs for remaining Trail segments - Source: metbranchTrail.com





Metropolitan Branch Trail Trail Under Design



District Department of Transportation

Detailed information about each phase of the study is included in the following pages; plan development, survey results, stakeholder input, and relevant case studies.

APPENDIX

PROCESS

STEPS LEADING TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of these recommendations included consultation with a large group of stakeholders representing various interests in the Trail; repeated visits to the Trail in varying weather conditions, time of day and days of the week; consultation with the general public through innovative outreach events including meetings on the Trail itself and a very social final meeting at a pop up beer garden adjacent to the Trail.

Alternatives were developed based on the variety of input and ideas and review of best practices and case studies from across the country. Alternatives were assessed and vetted with implementing partners, the stakeholder group and project leadership. A preferred set of alternatives were selected and refined to form this implementation agenda.

Steps in the Process:

(The outcome of each phase is discussed in detail on the following pages.)

- » Site Visits
- » Stakeholder Meetings
- » Public Workshops
- » Stakeholder Interviews
- » Public Survey
- » Research and Analysis
- » Results and Recommendations



Public “Walk-Shop” mobile site



“Walk-Shop” with stakeholders to tour the Trail and identify challenges and opportunities

Plan Development

This Metropolitan Branch Trail Safety and Access Study took place over a three-month period and involved a large and diverse range of stakeholders, multiple public agencies, and engaged hundreds of citizens and trail users through a variety of outreach activities. The study grew out of a commitment from the Chief of Police, Cathy Lanier, DDOT Director Leif Dormsjo, and the NoMa BID to improve trail safety, the perception of trail safety, and the trail user experience. The study was funded through the NoMa BID and three private sector partners with a keen interest in the success and vitality of the Trail: Edens, Level 2 Development and JBG.

Given the central concern of safety and access, strong commitment and active participation from MPD and DDOT was essential and both public agencies demonstrated commitment at the highest levels to real and rapid solutions for the Trail.

The study kicked off in early April of 2015 with a series of stakeholder meetings to guide the process. Stakeholders represented different backgrounds and interests, from property owners to public agencies, from residents to Council Representatives, all with the goal of seeing the MBT reach its full potential. The project team, Nelson\Nygaard and ZGF Architects, spent time getting to know the intricacies of the Trail and

the ideas of critical stakeholders through numerous site visits, public outreach, and individual interviews. The public outreach process involved an in-depth online survey and a mobile “walk shop” out on the Trail at three important sites. The “walk shop” intercepted stakeholders as they used the Trail and enabled them to participate with a minimum commitment of time or inconvenience. Users noted on maps and comment boards the challenges and opportunities that exist on the MBT in both general terms and at specific locations. In just two hours on the Trail, more than 60 individuals provided information through the pop-up meeting.



Edgewood Neighborhood Bike to Work Day Booth. One of multiple locations where flyers were distributed to advertise the online survey.

The online survey gathered feedback through nearly 900 respondents representing both active users of the Trail as well as number of responses from individuals who had never been on the Trail, including some that did not know the Trail existed prior to stumbling upon the survey. Survey findings follow.

Individual stakeholder interviews provided further insight into possible interventions and revealed additional options for improvement. Stakeholders reviewed funding, staffing, and systemic capacities to participate in and aid the implementation of recommendations to ensure all

proposed actions are generally feasible and have a reasonable degree of support from responsible or governing agencies.

Similar urban trail projects were reviewed for lessons learned for the Metropolitan Branch Trail both in terms of physical improvements, programming and management strategies. These case studies of the experience and structures of comparable urban trails can be found later in this appendix.

Using the input gathered from both the project stakeholders and members of the public, the project team developed a wide range of alternatives for improvement in

different areas of the Trail or more general policies or programs. After subsequent review and comment by the stakeholders and public agencies, the range of alternatives was narrowed to this study's recommended agenda of improvements and follow up investigations.

Draft recommended improvements were presented to the stakeholder group and later to the public at an open house directly adjacent the Trail. Both groups generally supported the ideas and concepts presented in this study. Near term, tangible improvements are a strong desire for many.

SURVEY RESULTS

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The project team received close to 900 responses to the public survey over the course of the study. The goal of the survey was to gather input on the perception of safety on the Trail, as well as insight into particular challenge or opportunity areas.

92.6%

of all survey respondents identified as having previously used the MBT.

83.8%

of those identified “trail users” ride bicycles on the Trail.

49.7%

of them use the Trail for either running or walking.

58.4%

use the Trail to get to destinations **other than** home or work.

43.6%

use the Trail to commute,

89.4%

use the Trail for leisure or exercise.

82%

of respondents who provided their home zip code live within DC.

15%

live in Maryland,

3%

live in Virginia.



An online survey helped to gather input from the public



A mobile workshop was held on the Trail to solicit public input

Survey Responses

Nearly 900 individuals responded to an online user survey with the majority responding between mid-April and mid-May 2015. The overwhelming majority of respondents (93 percent) had used the Trail at least once. Roughly 7 percent (66 respondents) had never used the Trail.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Among respondents who have never used the Trail before, roughly one-third live within the 20002 zip code (the zip code in which the majority of NoMa is located), about 20 percent were from the Columbia Heights/Petworth area while over a quarter were from elsewhere in DC and 20 percent resided in Maryland or Virginia. Of the non-users, 45 percent worked Downtown beyond the NoMa area while 30 percent worked within or close to NoMa. A quarter of respondents who had never used the Trail worked outside the downtown area.

Among trail users who responded, 42 percent live in the NoMa/Edgewood/Eckington area, 11 percent live in Columbia Heights/Petworth, 10 percent reside in Brookland and 20 percent live elsewhere in the District. 18 percent were residents of Maryland or Virginia. Over one-third of trail users worked in areas of downtown other than NoMa while 16 percent worked in NoMa. Nearly half the trail users who responded worked outside of the downtown core or did not work.



Stakeholder “Walk-Shop” - M Street ramp entrance to the MBT

A greater proportion of non-trail users were women (70 percent) compared to women among trail users (45 percent). Trail users and non-users reflected a similar pattern in distribution of ages:

- » Less than 1 percent were under 20 years of age
- » 25 to 30 percent were aged 21 to 29
- » Just over 40 percent were 30 to 39 years old
- » Roughly 15 percent were 40 to 49 years old
- » 13 percent were 50 years or older

Not surprisingly, more non-users classified themselves as “cautious” or “novice” bicyclists while more trail users classified themselves as “very confident” or “comfortable” bicyclists. However, the largest share of non-trail users (19) identified themselves as very confident and frequent cyclists. 60 percent of non-trail users indicated that they have used other trails in the region such as the Capital Crescent Trail, Mount Vernon Trail, Rock Creek Trail, or Anacostia River Trail.

The majority of both trail users and non-trail users commute via transit and/or bicycle. The majority of trail users (50 percent) reported bicycle commuting as their most frequent method of commuting when the weather is pleasant while 24 percent favor transit. The split is more even among non-trail users, however, despite never having used the Trail, 40 percent report bicycling as their preferred mode of commute when the weather is nice. The same proportion prefer transit. Among both groups, fewer than 10 percent drive to work during nice weather.



Stakeholder “Walk-Shop” - 1st Street cycletrack section of the MBT

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO:

Identify as



female



male

Are very confident cyclists and ride often

39%

64%

Use the Metropolitan Branch Trail alone

80%

90%

Feel **comfortable** riding alone on the MBT during midday

18%

37%

Feel **uncomfortable** riding alone on the MBT at night

74%

44%

Feel **uncomfortable** riding alone on the MBT at dawn

32%

11%

Have **not** used the MBT, and don't really have a reason to

18%

56%

Have **not** used the MBT, because they don't feel comfortable with it

79%

63%

Think the MBT is **at least** somewhat safe

33%

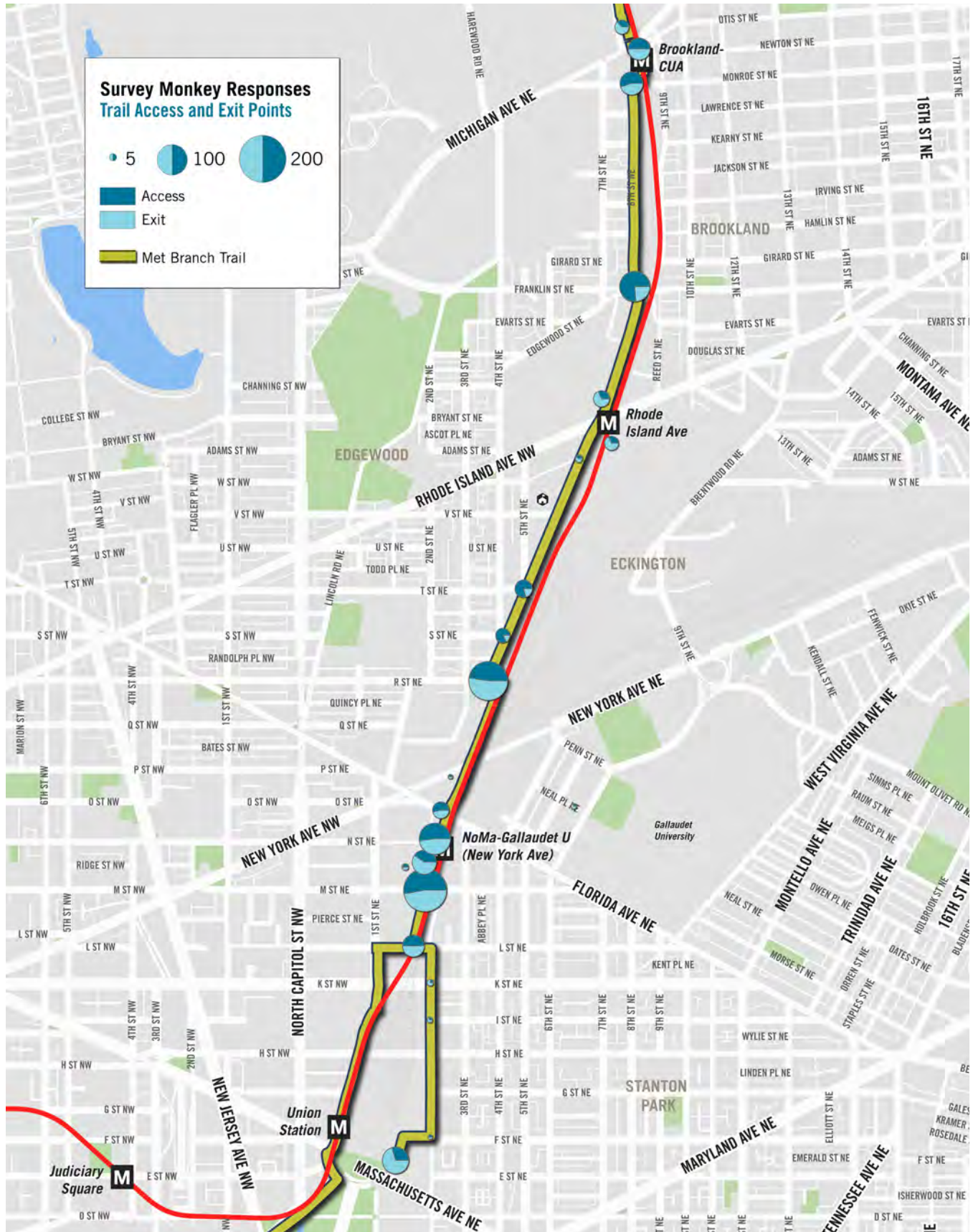
55%

Think the MBT is **unsafe**

11%

6%

Trail Access and Exit Points



TRAIL USE

Among the nearly 900 respondents who indicated that they have used the Trail, only 17 percent use it nearly every day. One-quarter use the Trail often (a few times a week) while another quarter use the Trail a few times a month. About a third of respondents use the Trail only occasionally or very infrequently.

Eighty-four percent use the Trail for bicycling and roughly 50 percent use the Trail for walking or running. Relatively few users (less than 2 percent) skateboard or rollerblade/roller skate on the Trail. Most (over 86 percent) use the Trail by themselves, at least some of the time. Relatively few people use the Trail with very small children (7 percent), with children cycling on their own (3 percent), or with teenagers 18 or under (less than 1 percent).

The Trail is used for a variety of purposes. The majority of users (over 50 percent) used the Trail either for exercise or make non-commuting trips (e.g. to get to local stores or destinations, to visit a neighbor, etc.).

Forty-four percent of users use the Trail for commuting purposes at least occasionally and over a third use the Trail for leisure (dog walking, strolling, etc.).

TRAIL ACCESS

The most frequently cited points of access onto or exit from the Trail were in the NoMa district – either the NoMa Metro station or M Street access point. Brookland Metro and the Franklin Street access points were the second most common.

Other frequently cited points of access included R Street, T Street and Rhode Island Avenue. Fewer than 10 percent of respondents indicated that they accessed the Trail at points north of the Brookland neighborhood and fewer than 10 percent indicated that they continued on the Trail all the way down to Union Station.

Trail users identified a number of locations they would like to be able to connect to from the Trail.

The most frequently expressed need was to complete Trail construction as planned up to Takoma and Silver Spring.

Aside from completion of the Trail, users also indicated a desire to connect to:

- » Brookland, Edgewood and Bloomingdale area shops and restaurants
- » Howard University
- » Union Market, Gallaudet and Ivy City/Trinidad
- » The Q and R Street bicycle lanes (as heavily used crosstown bicycle facilities)
- » The Pennsylvania Avenue bike lanes
- » Nationals Stadium
- » Hyattsville and West Hyattsville

Many users advocated for safe, protected and more intuitive connections to and through Union Station, Columbus Circle, the U.S. Capitol grounds, and the National Mall. Additionally, users cited a desire for ramps instead of stairs at the access points at L Street and V Street NE.



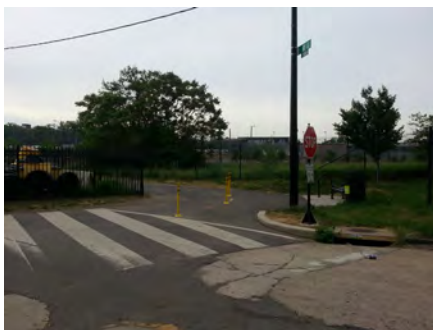
NoMa Access Point - stairwell and elevator



New York Avenue Underpass



NoMa Access Point - Florida Ave spur



R Street Access - R Street "S" Curve

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

Most users (80 percent) feel at least somewhat safe using the Trail by themselves during the peak travel periods, however comfort levels drop when fewer users are on the Trail.

Although 56 percent of respondents generally felt safe alone on the Trail during mid-day, only 32 percent were comfortable being alone on the Trail in the early morning or late afternoon and less than 10 percent felt comfortable being alone on the Trail at night. Not surprisingly, comfort levels increased across all times of day when users were accompanied on the Trail with other people.

When asked to identify areas of particular concern, users called out a number of different locations.

The most frequently cited area of concern was the sharp turn just south of the R Street access point. Other areas of concern include:

- » NoMa Metro stair access point
- » New York Avenue Bridge underpass
- » Rhode Island Avenue Metro station area
- » Brookland area

Over two-thirds of non-users indicated they have not/do not use the Trail because they do not feel comfortable on the Trail; more than 30 percent responded that they felt the Trail was unsafe or somewhat unsafe.

Those who have actually used the Trail, however, have a markedly more positive perception of the Trail with over 47 percent feeling that the Trail is either safe or mostly safe and another 20 percent indicating that they did not feel particularly safe or unsafe on the Trail.

36%

of respondents identified the Trail as being unsafe or somewhat unsafe.

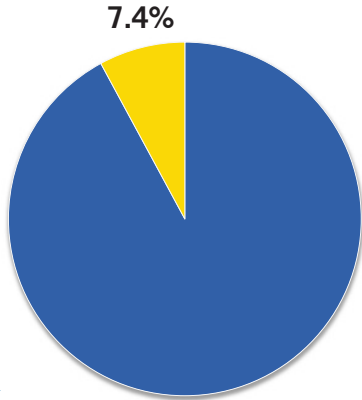
10%

of respondents perceive the Trail as being safe.

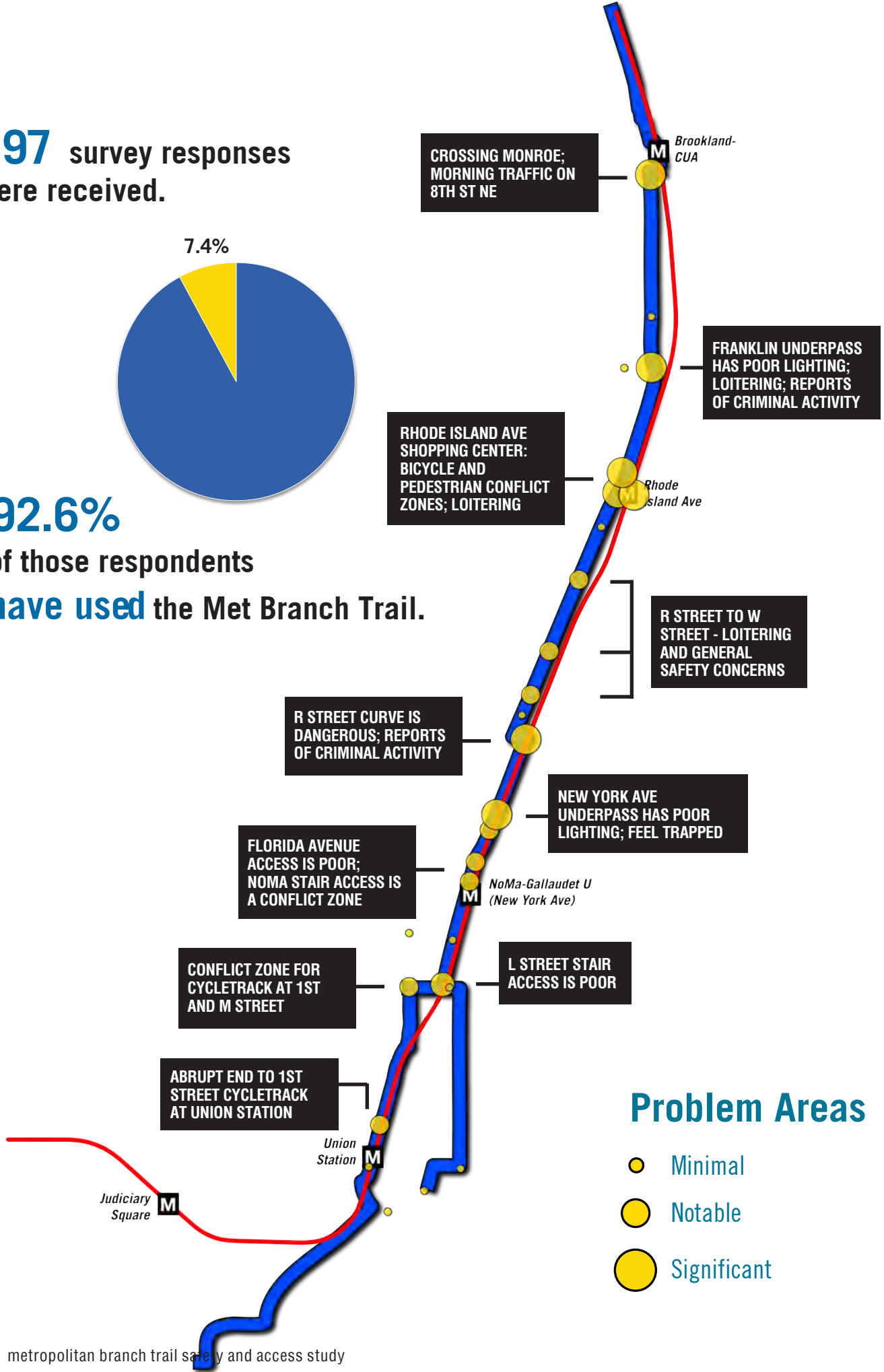
89%

of respondents think the solution is just getting more people and activities on the Trail.

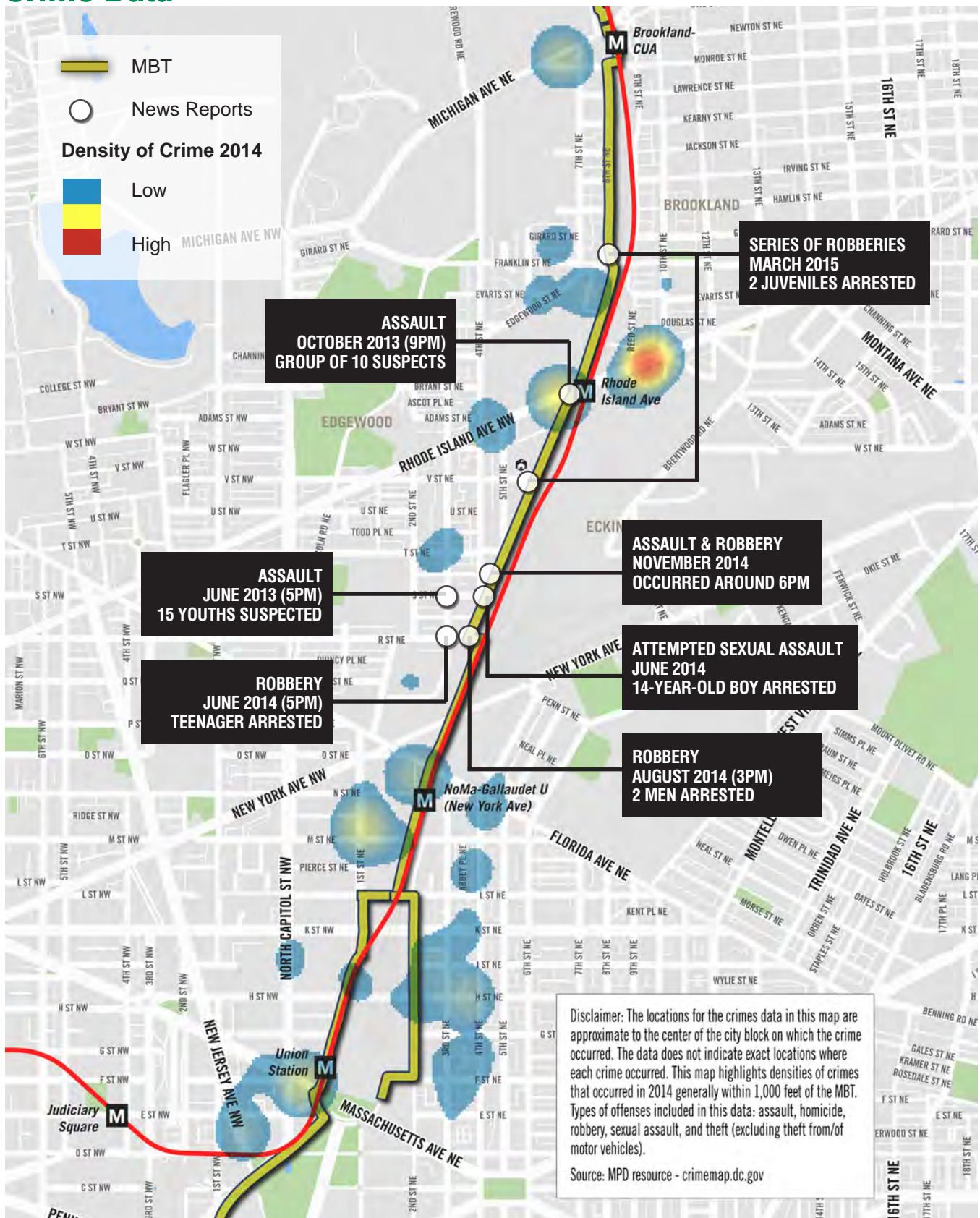
897 survey responses were received.



92.6% of those respondents have used the Met Branch Trail.



Crime Data



While only a third of trail users indicated feeling the Trail was somewhat unsafe, this is still a significant share and an indication that safety concerns – whether real or perceived – must be addressed.

Although personal safety is the over-riding concern for many, traffic safety was repeatedly emphasized. Trail users are concerned about poorly marked or dangerous intersections and vehicle threats in areas where the Trail shares the road with general traffic.

An analysis of actual crime versus perceived crime was conducted at an anecdotal level. Crime data reports are not recorded to the exact location of the incident. It is especially difficult to analyze crime on the Trail, because at the time of the study the Trail did not have any associated address points. Reports of crime on the Trail reported by the media are a secondary source for this information, but suggest that fewer than 10 incidents occurred on the Trail in the last 3 years.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Whether regular trail users, occasional visitors, or completely unfamiliar with the Trail; respondents were generally in consensus that the single most

effective way to improve safety and comfort on the Trail is to get more users on it. Nearly 90 percent of respondents felt more people on the Trail would be a substantial improvement. Respondents were also clear that better lighting and more activities along the Trail – such as cafes, parks and community uses – would also improve the Trail.

Respondents were more divided in their opinions of security cameras and emergency call boxes. While most indicated these would still help the Trail, many felt they would only provide a modest improvement. Respondents saw little benefit in further segregating the Trail from adjacent properties through fencing or mesh protections.

Specific additional recommendations and overall top recommendations for enhancing access and security on the Trail include:

- » Better lighting
- » Greater and more visible bicycle police presence
- » Better maintenance and more timely repairs
- » Extending the Trail and increasing points of access to the Trail

- » Better signage indicating/advertising access points to the Trail (many long time residents indicated that they didn't know the Trail exists.)
- » More active uses along the Trail including development, businesses, residences and community uses. Potentially even zoning modifications to encourage or require buildings to "face the Trail"
- » Less "imposing" infrastructure along the Trail (e.g. barbed wire) and less fencing along the Trail
- » Straightening out the sharp turn at R Street NE.
- » Wayfinding signage indicating local destinations and shopping districts and mile markers along the Trail – both to encourage use and to use as locators in the event of any disturbances on the Trail
- » Programmed activities on the Trail such as organized runs or events
- » More maintained landscaping and public art along the Trail such as parks, gardens or other beautification projects

Home Zip Codes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ZIP CODE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
NoMa/Edgewood/Eckington	20002	309	41%
Brookland	20017	67	9%
Shaw/Chinatown/Downtown	20001	58	8%
Petworth	20011	47	6%
Langdon	20018	27	4%

Work Zip Codes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ZIP CODE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
NoMa/Edgewood/Eckington	20002	121	17%
Shaw/Chinatown/Downtown	20001	54	8%
Dupont Circle	20036	51	7%
McPherson Square	20005	46	6%
Farragut Square	20006	32	5%

The greatest percentages of respondents live in or near NoMa. The majority of respondents work inside the District and the highest concentrations work in NoMa.

Trail Access Areas

NEIGHBORHOOD	ENTRY	EXIT
NoMa	38%	42%
Eckington	21%	18%
Edgewood	15%	10%
Brookland	12%	13%
Union Station	5%	12%
Takoma Park	4%	1%
Fort Totten	3%	2%
Other	3%	2%

RANK	ENTRY	EXIT
1	M Street NE	M Street NE
2	R Street NE	R Street NE
3	8th Street NE (Franklin)	Union Station

The greatest percentages of respondents use the NoMa Trail access points to enter and exit the MBT. The access point with the highest usage is the M Street ramp.

STAKEHOLDERS

SUMMARY OF INPUT RECEIVED FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the course of the study, more than 20 different DC area organizations were involved as part of the project stakeholder group or as partners in the study. The project team interviewed stakeholders from 10 different organizations and received feedback from many others who attended a stakeholder site visit.

List of Stakeholders:

(Stakeholders present for one meeting, at minimum)

PARTNERS

- » NoMa BID
- » DDOT
- » MPD
- » JBG
- » EDENS
- » Level 2 Development

STAKEHOLDERS

- » Metro Transit Police Department
- » OUC
- » WMATA Office of Long Range Planning
- » MOCRS
- » Staff from the office of Councilmember McDuffie
- » Staff from the office of Councilmember Allen
- » DC Office of Planning
- » ANC 6C (Commissioner Tony Goodman)
- » WABA
- » Rails to Trails Conservancy
- » BicycleSPACE
- » REI
- » Gearin' Up Bicycles
- » Stonebridge Carras
- » DCCAH

INTERVIEWEES

- » ANC 6C (Commissioner Tony Goodman)
- » Heather Deutsch (Previously with DDOT)
- » DDOT Street Lighting Team
- » Level 2 Development
- » Metro Transit Police
- » DC Office of Planning
- » WABA
- » WMATA Office of Long Range Planning
- » Rails to Trails Conservancy
- » MPD

Convert the DGS building at Randolph Place for artist spaces or to house a 501c3 to manage the Trail.

Activate blank walls and spaces along the Trail to create more interest.

Activate the Trail during non-peak usage times.

Dog park, or at least pet waste stations along the Trail

Public restrooms along the Trail

Break up the Trail into useable public spaces with destinations that encourage stopping and spending time on the Trail.

“Adopt-a-Trail” program to help with maintenance

Require a mid-block connection to Pierce St in NoMa with any redevelopment.

Stakeholder Interview Summary: **IDEAS**

Finish the Trail at L Street NE

Buy/take a portion of the parking lot next to the M St ramp – enhance this connection.

Connect the Trail to other DC area bike facilities – it can't be a stand alone facility.

Exercise/fitness stations along the Trail

Seating areas and furniture along the Trail for people to stop and enjoy the space

Improve existing spaces with shade and public art, make the spaces more enticing.

Plan for a connection into Burnham Place development from L St in the future.

Potential Resources:

- » Office of Planning has grants from discretionary funds that are given out for temporary activation projects that must be spent within 2 years
- » Sustainable DC Challenge grants may still have funding available
- » Planned Unit Development (PUD) proffers
- » DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities
- » Partnerships with area businesses: (e.g. REI)
- » Kresge and other private foundation funding
- » NoMa Parks Foundation

Signage in the areas around the Trail showing how to get to the Trail, and signage on the Trail telling trail users where nearby destinations are

No other Trail in DC connects to as many Metro stations as the MBT – this unique feature should be capitalized on.

The Met Branch Trail website needs better, more professional maps and resources (with branding) – Trail needs better promotion and marketing.

Pocket park at Rhode Island bridge

Artistic lighting elements – potential partnership with DCCAH or DOE

Need to separate the Trail from vehicular traffic on 8th Street

Direct connection into Union Market from the Trail

Partner with adjacent property owners to find additional lighting opportunities

Establish a staffed 501c3 to be the “Trail keepers”

CASE STUDIES

COMPARABLE URBAN TRAILS

The MBT is not the only trail of its kind. Similar urban trails exist in transitioning areas of many other cities. The following case studies illustrate some of those trails, their management structures, and information about how they overcame the same perception challenges the MBT is experiencing today.

Example Trails:

(Information about each Trail will follow.)

- » Atlanta BeltLine in Atlanta, GA
- » LaFitte Corridor in New Orleans, LA
- » Katy Trail in Dallas, TX
- » Morgana Run Trail in Cleveland, OH

*Note: the Capital Crescent was not included as a case study. The selected case studies have well-established and official management organizations that have (in some capacity) addressed safety challenges, access, and maintenance issues, or developed effective trail programming.



Atlanta BeltLine

Multiuse Trail in Atlanta, Georgia

BACKGROUND:

- » Abandoned rail corridor circling the core of the city
- » Very few “eyes on the trail” at beginning
- » Will eventually be a complete 33-mile loop of multi-use trails; currently has four completed segments at a total of 10 miles long.

MANAGEMENT:

- » Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) is an affiliate of Invest Atlanta (Atlanta Development Authority) and coordinates with the City to manage implementation of the Atlanta BeltLine project. Functions include: defining the plan, securing funding, managing vendors and suppliers, serving as project management office to execute project.
- » Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP) is a non-profit organization funded entirely through private endeavors. This group works with neighborhoods, businesses, and other organizations to raise awareness and support for the BeltLine. ABLP raises funds through private and philanthropic sources.
- » Atlanta BeltLine Partners is a group of organizations outside of ABI that help to support the project. Some of the major partners include: U.S. EPA, U.S. DOT, PATH, and the Trust for Public Land.

IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Security cameras that feed into the Atlanta Police Department citywide Video Integration Center
- » Mile markers along all trails that are tied into the 911 system so first responders know exactly where to go
- » Decided against having emergency call boxes on the trail
- » Police: Path Force Unit is a dedicated unit from the Atlanta Police Department. This unit is responsible for the Atlanta BeltLine and adjacent parks and neighborhoods.
 - » Funding for this unit came from the U.S. Department of Justice.
 - » The unit patrols 7 days a week and is made up of 15 officers and 3 supervisors, all of whom are military veterans.
- » Maintenance: Fix-it line for users to call in maintenance issues. Trail users can call the dedicated phone line or send photos in an email to the dedicated beltline fix-it email address. (ABI helps with funding, CoA staff maintains)
 - » Trees Atlanta planted and maintains much of the vegetation along the BeltLine trail.



LaFitte Corridor

Multiuse Trail in New Orleans, Louisiana

BACKGROUND:

- » Greenway follows the path of a former canal and railway, operated by Norfolk Southern Railroad.
- » 2.6 mile corridor to be completed Summer 2015

MANAGEMENT:

- » Friends of Lafitte Corridor (FOLC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for profit, membership based organization. The group educates and engages the community about the trail, helps with planning and research, and advocates for and promotes the trail. The organization depends on memberships and donations for funding. It also has designated volunteer committees that meet once a month and are open to members.
- » The City of New Orleans owns the corridor and is constructing the trail; \$9.1 million in funding has been secured by the City through a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); FOLC raised and contributed \$87,000 through the Recreational Trails Program.

IMPROVEMENTS:

- » The City of New Orleans is developing a management plan for the Lafitte Greenway.
- » The City allocated \$156,000 to the Department of Parks and Parkways in the 2015 Budget for the “maintenance and upkeep of Lafitte Greenway.”



Katy Trail

Multiuse Trail in Dallas, Texas

BACKGROUND:

- » The trail is an adaptive reuse of abandoned railroad tracks, the old Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad right-of-way; the land was donated by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1993.
- » The majority of the trail's funding was through the Texas Department of Transportation's Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP). Additional enhancements have been funded through the Friends of the Katy Trail.
- » At completion, the trail will be 3.5 miles long.

MANAGEMENT:

- » The Katy Trail is owned by the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department
- » Founded in 1997, Friends of the Katy Trail is a nonprofit, membership-based organization that manages and maintains the Katy Trail.
- » The Friends of the Katy Trail employs additional security patrols during evening commuting hours (4:30-6:30 pm).

IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Signage markers with unique location identifiers placed along the trail; identifiers are geographic coordinates to aid emergency response.
- » In 2014, the Dallas City Council approved a \$664,000 contract to install better signage, directions, and warnings at at-grade trail-road intersections on the Katy Trail and four others multiuse trails in the city.

MAINTENANCE

- » The trail is maintained by the Friends of the Katy Trail organization.



Morgana Run Trail

Multiuse Trail in Cleveland, Ohio

BACKGROUND:

- » 2 mile long path in the abandoned Wheeling & Lake Erie Rail line
- » The trail was completed in 2007 and runs through the Slavic Village neighborhood.
- » The Morgana Run Trail is part of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Urban Pathway Initiative (UPI).

MANAGEMENT:

- » Built from a joint partnership between local community organizations, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, NOACA, State of Ohio, and private, grant-making foundations.
- » Slavic Village Development Corporation now manages the trail

IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Public art featured prominently throughout the trail
- » Neighborhood outreach and programming attracts more trail users
- » Removed fencing and other barriers to allow for better visibility
- » Neighborhood wayfinding signage and pet refuse stations have been installed
- » Has been a positive force in the revitalization of the neighborhood

MAINTENANCE

- » Funding from the UPI was used to purchase a bicycle and pull-behind trailer to address graffiti and litter concerns. The trailer is equipped with a trash can, brooms, dustpans, paint, and additional maintenance tools.