

# Capital Crescent Trail Rehabilitation Update

## Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Briefing

September 8, 2025

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Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park – National Park Service





# Agenda

- Introductions
- CCT Rehabilitation Overview
- Discussion





# Introductions



## The Georgetown Branch Railroad

The Capital Greenway Trail follows the route of an old railroad line called the Georgetown Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B & O). It's all that remains of an wonderful attempt by the B & O to construct a major rail line between the Baltimore-Washington area and southern states. Had it been successfully developed, this part of the Washington area might look very different today.

In the late 1880s, the B & O was eager to capture more business in southern states but lacked a good Promote line existing and rail connection. The Pennsylvania Railroad, a major competitor also wanting more southern business, had extensive access to its bridge and rail links. B & O devised a plan to build a rail line to connect to Metropolitan Branch line in Silver Spring, Maryland to northern Virginia by bridging the Potomac near Chain Bridge and linking up with southern lines at Fairfax Station and at Quantico.

In the early 1900s the railroad competitive atmosphere stabilized somewhat, and the B & O was able to use the Pennsylvania Railroad's route through Washington into Virginia, eliminating the need for a separate and costly B & O line. The proposed bridge and Virginia sections were never built. After overcoming financial difficulties in the 1930s, the B & O completed the line from Silver Spring to Georgetown in 1939 and named it the Georgetown Branch.

The single-track Georgetown Branch was never intended to carry passengers but did a far business hauling freight—mainly coal to Georgetown and building supplies to Chevy Chase and Bethesda. Demand declined steadily after World War II and few trains ran on the line after 1980. The B & O was taken over by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway in 1962, which in turn was acquired by the CSX Corporation in the 1980s. The last train on the Georgetown Branch ran in 1986 and CSX sought to abandon the line in 1986. Local interest in preserving the corridor led to its development as the Capital Greenway Trail, a rail-to-trail project.

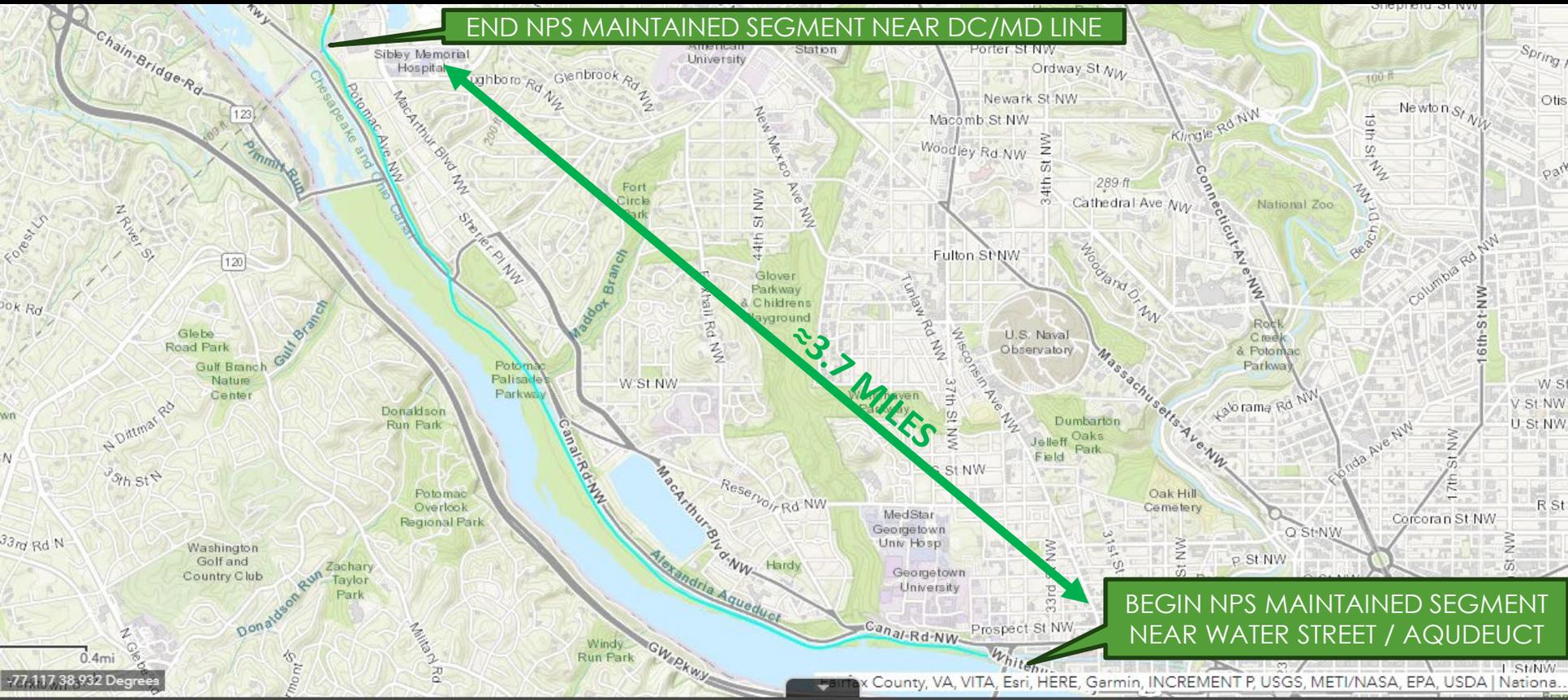
### 100 Years on the Georgetown Branch Railroad

- 1888 B & O Railroad developed the concept of creating a railroad line that would connect to Metropolitan Branch with two Virginia lines, crossing the Potomac River near Chain Bridge. Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co. formed in Georgetown.
- 1889 The Washington & Western Maryland Railroad formed for the section from Delmar to the Aqueduct Bridge.
- 1890 The Metropolitan Western subsidiary of the B & O Railroad formed for the Maryland section, and the Metropolitan Western subsidiary formed for the Virginia section. One mile section of rail completed from Rock Creek to the Aqueduct Bridge.
- 1891 The B & O Railroad takes over the Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co.
- 1892 One mile of track laid from the junction with the B & O's Metropolitan Branch in Linden to Chevy Chase, including the 3,000-foot-long wooden trestle over Rock Creek.
- 1895 The Annapolis American trestle built over Canal Road and the C & O Canal.
- 1904 The Rock Creek trestle is rebuilt and widened to 201 feet to bridge the widening B & O embankment.
- 1906 Plans for abandonment of the Potomac River and Chain Bridge and connection with railroad lines in Virginia abandoned.
- 1909 Metropolitan Southern Railroad completed additional 1.5 miles from Chain Bridge to the Fairfax Line, including trestle over creek.
- 1918 Georgetown Branch is completed and named by the B & O Railroad.
- 1914 Trestle spans only trestle at Rock Creek is being replaced by the concrete trestle bridge in the next year.
- 1928 Rock Creek trestle replaced with concrete trestle with steel girders on the trestle span.
- 1942 A B & O section of railroad runs into the Potomac River at Georgetown.
- 1967 Name the section part of the B & O's Washington & Annapolis Line.
- 1971 Rock Creek trestle replaced with steel trestle bridge over creek.
- 1984 CSX Corporation formed the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway National, which in turn took over the B & O Railroad in 1980.
- 1985 Last train runs on the Georgetown Branch.
- 1986 Hydroplaner & Boat Works Inc. and the Potomac River Bridge Commission (PRBC) are awarded contracts for the Potomac River Bridge project.
- 1988 B & O section of Potomac River Bridge is built by the Metropolitan Bridge Commission.

A 1917 B & O sign showing the route over Rock Creek on way to Georgetown.

M A R Y L A N D  
D I S T R I C T O F C O L U M B I A  
G E O R G E T O W N  
V I R G I N I A  
D U R H A M C O U N T Y  
P A R K S T A T I O N  
M E T R O P O L I T A N W E S T E R N R A I L R O A D

DATE	EVENT
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1892	One mile of track laid from the junction with the B & O's Metropolitan Branch in Linden to Chevy Chase, including the 3,000-foot-long wooden trestle over Rock Creek.
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1904	The Rock Creek trestle is rebuilt and widened to 201 feet to bridge the widening B & O embankment.
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Trail Name	Trail Type	Trail Class	Trail Use	Trail Surface	NPS Unit Code	NPS Unit Name	Map Symbol
Capital Crescent Trail	Standard Terra Trail	Class 5: Fully Developed	Hiker / Pedestrian and Bicycle	Asphalt	CHOH	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	Trail
Capital Crescent Trail	Standard Terra Trail	Class 5: Fully Developed	Hiker / Pedestrian and Bicycle	Asphalt	CHOH	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	Trail Bridge
Capital Crescent Trail	Standard Terra Trail	Class 5: Fully Developed	Hiker / Pedestrian and Bicycle	Asphalt	CHOH	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	Trail



## CCT Rehabilitation - Overview

- Trail has not had significant rehabilitation since its construction in 1996
  - NPS/CHOH staff are leading the project with technical support from partners at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
  - Collaboration and partial funding from DDOT.



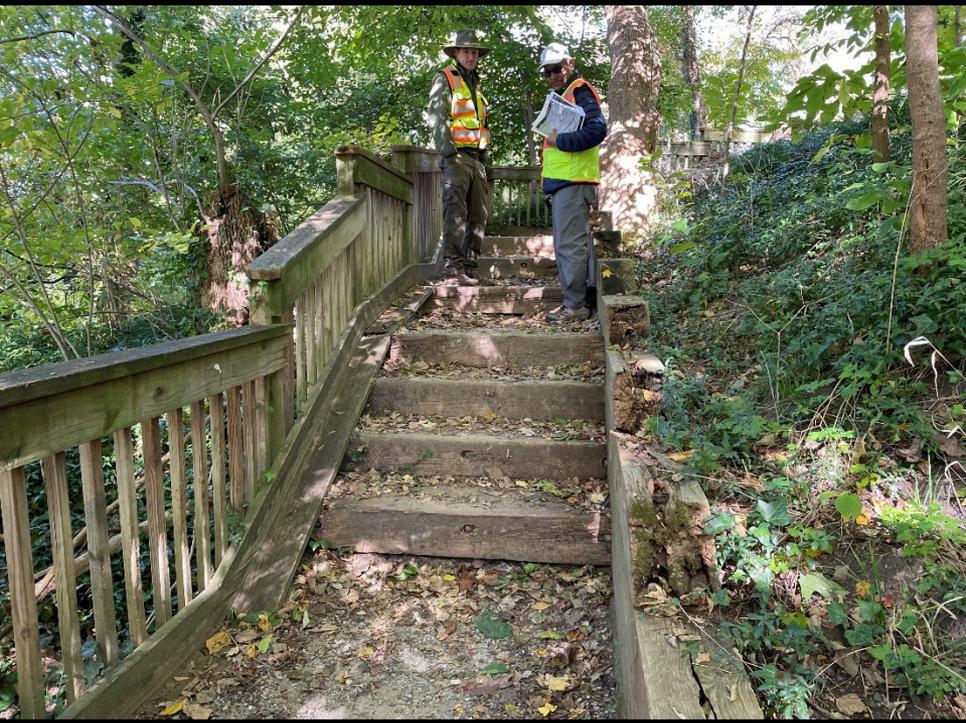


# Existing Conditions





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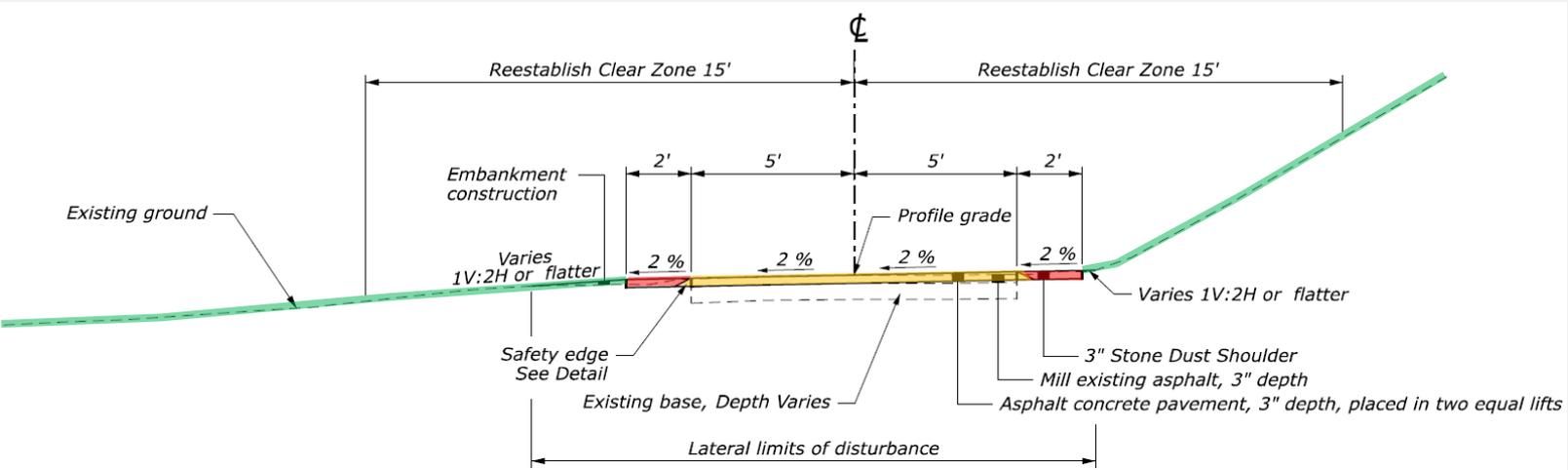
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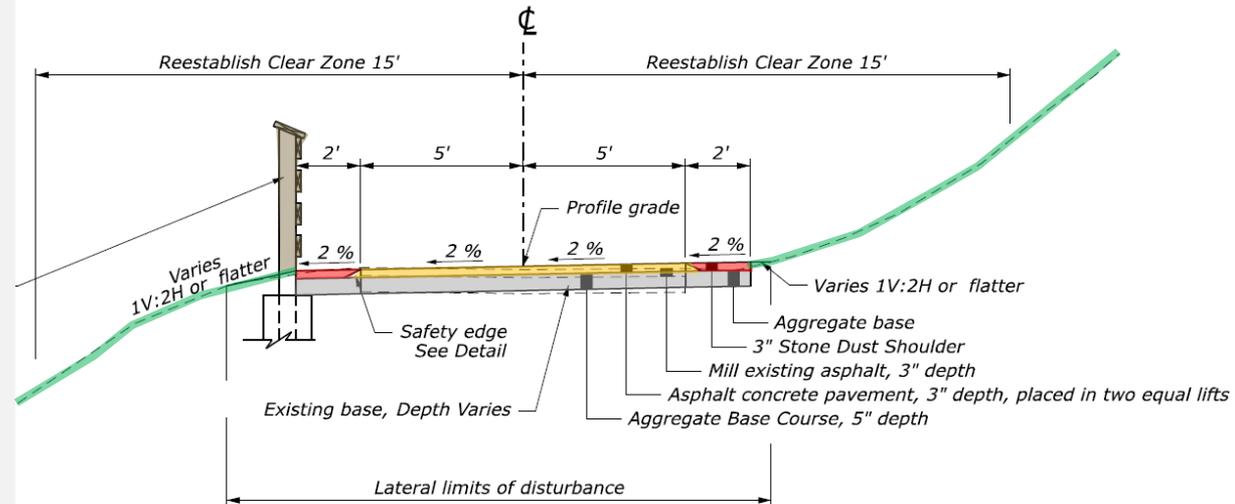
# CCT Rehabilitation - Elements

- Key project elements:
  - Rehab the 10' wide asphalt pavement end-to-end (3.7 miles)
  - Reconstruct timber retaining walls, railings, and Manning Steps
  - Repair/paint Arizona Ave. Bridge
  - Re-establish gravel shoulders, drainage channels, and recovery area
  - Replace/Upgrade Existing Signage (including re-ordering mile markers from Georgetown)
  - Mark center and edge lines
  - Install two automated bike-ped counters
  - Potential stormwater management and drainage improvements.
  - Pedestrian Management Plans to be developed for Maintenance of Traffic during Construction.
- Permitting Ongoing
- Anticipating 95% draft design in Fall 2025 & 100% Design Spring 2026.





### CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL 3" MILL & OVERLAY



### CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL FULL DEPTH RECONSTRUCTION





# Mile Markers

Example Trail Mile Markers along the Anacostia River Trail



Pavement Markings  
Placed Every  
0.1-mile

Sign Posts  
Placed Every  
0.5-mile

## Primary Purposes:

- **Navigation aid** – help users know what trail they are on and where they are along the trail.
- **Distance tracking** – allow users to monitor progress.
- **Emergency response** – provide precise location references for first responders.
- **Maintenance management** – give a clear reference point for reporting and addressing issues.



Opportunity for a CCT  
Logo near the top of  
the sign.



# Project Schedule

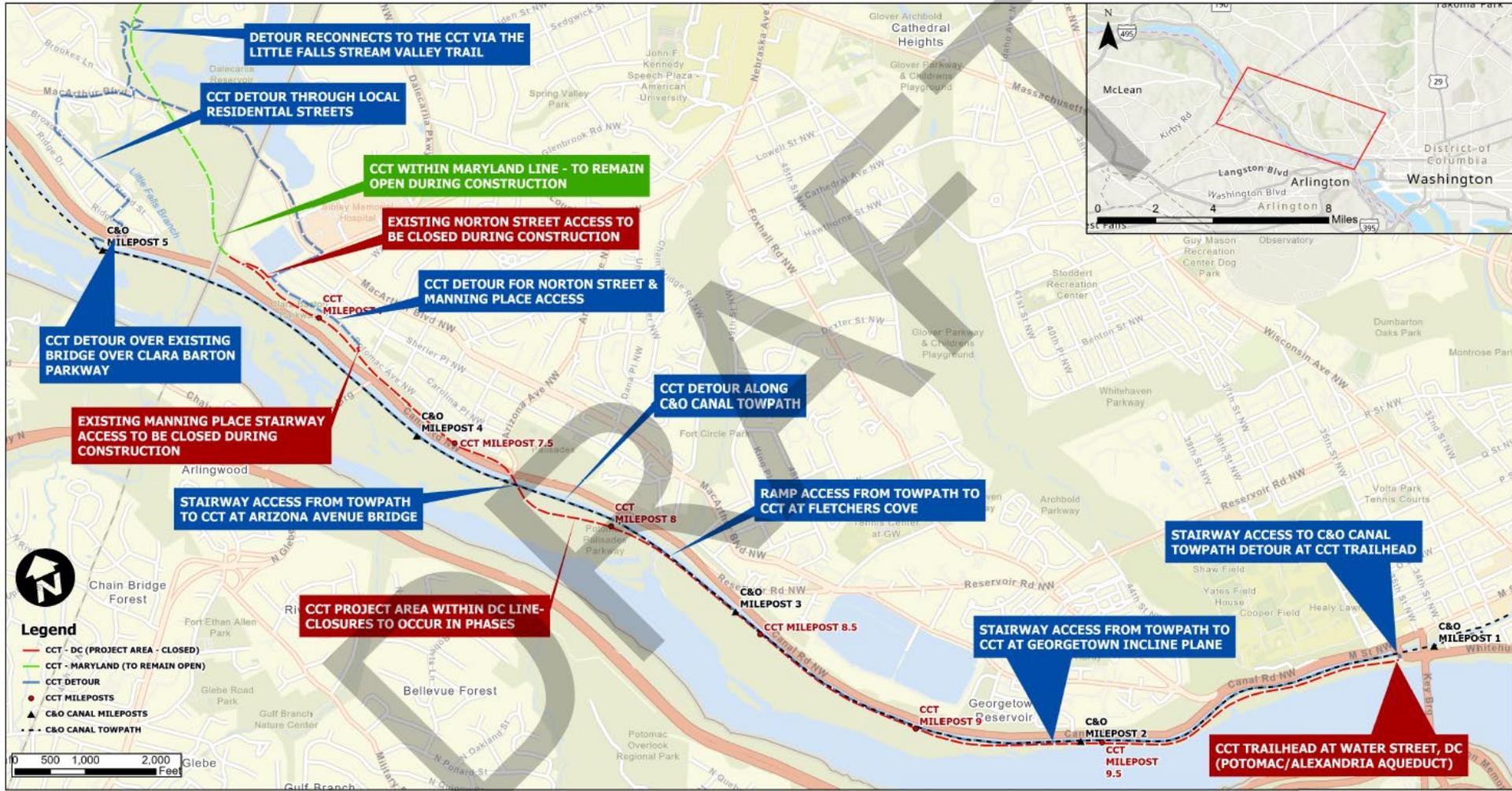


- DDOT awarded NPS a \$412K Transportation Alternative Grant (TAP) for design in 2022. NPS committed matching funds for FHWA to award a design contract.
- DDOT awarded NPS a Transportation Alternative Grant (TAP) for construction in 2026. NPS committed matching funds for construction contract.
- NPS anticipates using Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) funds to leverage future DDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant award for construction
- Construction anticipated to begin in 2026, funding dependent.
  - Use of multiple schedules included in design for scalability.



# Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL (CCT) REHABILITATION - PROJECT AREA OVERVIEW

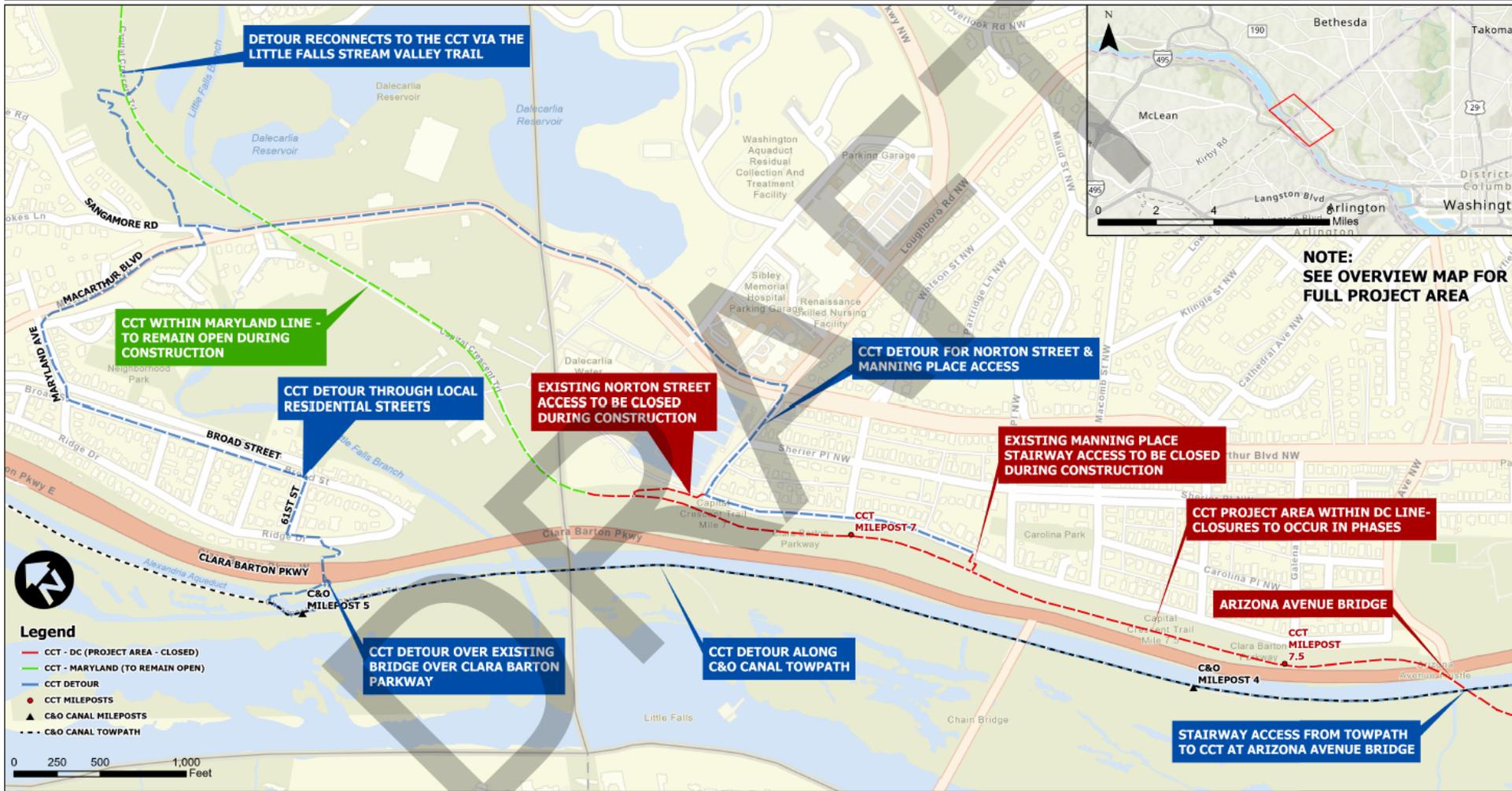
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior





# Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL (CCT) REHABILITATION - PROJECT AREA - NORTHERN END

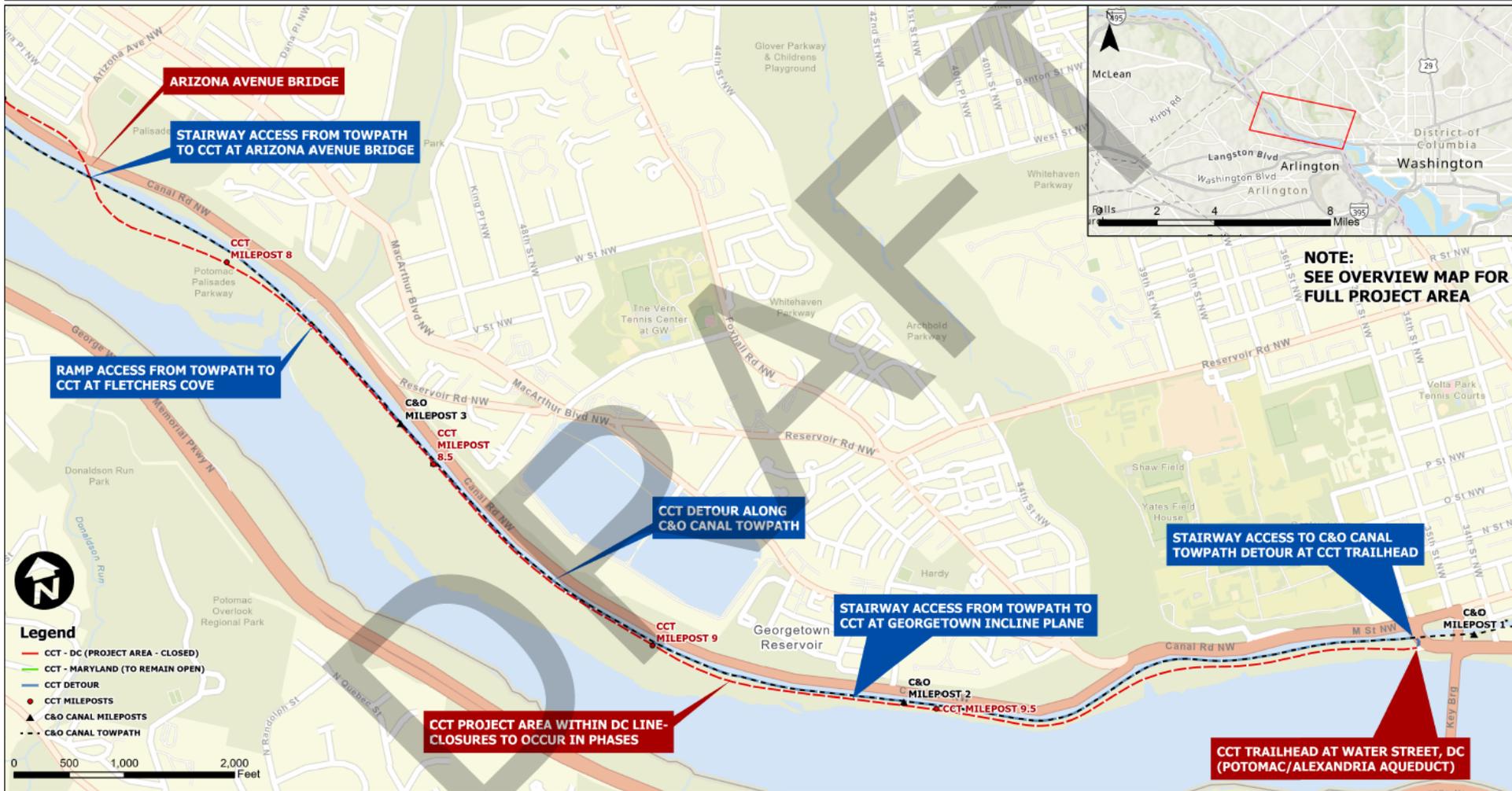
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U.S. Department of the Interior





# Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL (CCT) REHABILITATION - PROJECT AREA - SOUTHERN END

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



**Legend**

- CCT - DC (PROJECT AREA - CLOSED)
- CCT - MARYLAND (TO REMAIN OPEN)
- CCT DETOUR
- CCT MILEPOSTS
- C&O CANAL MILEPOSTS
- C&O CANAL TOWPATH





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