



Capital Crescent Trail Rehabilitation Update

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Briefing

September 2024





Agenda

- Introductions
- CCT Rehabilitation Overview
- Discussion





Introductions



The Georgetown Branch Railroad

The Capital Crescent Trail follows the route of an old railroad line called the Georgetown Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B & O). It's all the remains of an abandoned railway. The B & O constructed a major rail link 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 Potomac River crossing and rail connection. The Pennsylvania Railroad, a major competitor also wanting more southern business, had excellent access to the 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 subsided 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 section were never built. After overcoming financial difficulties in the 1900s, the B & O reemphasized the use from Silver Spring to Georgetown in 1910 and named it the Georgetown Branch.

The single-track Georgetown Branch was never intended to carry passengers but did a fair 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 Crescent Trail, a rail-to-trail project.

100 Years on the Georgetown Branch Railroad

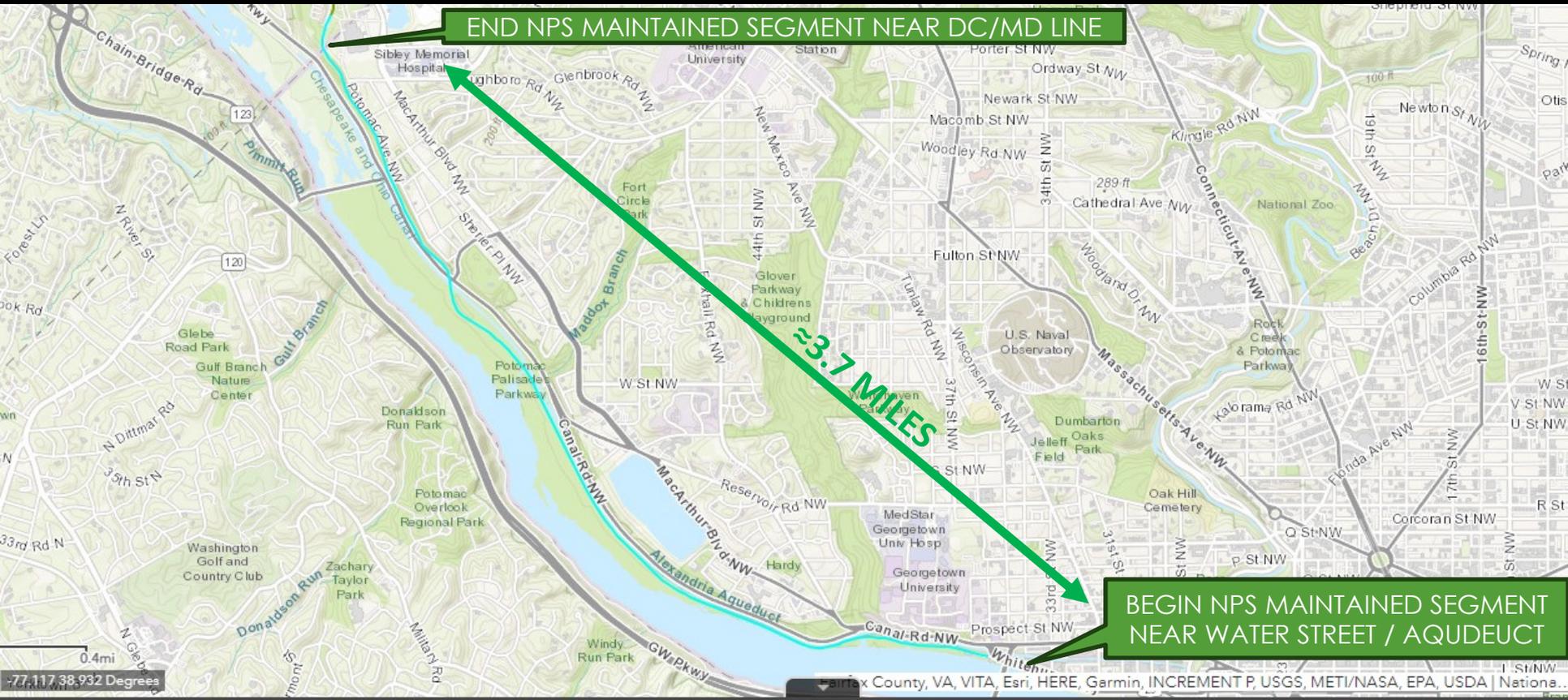
- 1888 B & O Railroad developed the concept of creating a railroad line that would connect to Metropolitan Branch with two Virginia lines, crossing the Potomac River near Chain Bridge. Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co. formed in Georgetown.
- 1889 The Washington & Western Maryland Railroad formed for the section from Dulcetta to the Aqueduct Bridge 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 Piece of track laid from the junction with the B & O's Metropolitan Branch in Landon to Chevy Chase, including the 1,600-foot-long wooden trestle over Rock Creek.
- 1895 The Mount Airie trestle built over Canal Road and the C & O Canal.
- 1904 The Rock Creek trestle is rebuilt and shortened to 281 feet to bridge the gulch at the order end.
- 1906 Plans for abandonment of the Potomac Branch Chain Bridge and connection with central lines in Virginia abandoned.
- 1909 Metropolitan Southern Railroad completed abandoned 1.5 miles from Chevy Chase to the District Line, including District's segment.
- 1910 Georgetown Branch is completed and named for the B & O Railroad.
- 1914 Train regularly scheduled across Rock Creek to bring limestone to the granite for a bridge across the canal.
- 1918 Rock Creek trestle rebuilt with steel and concrete with steel girders on the trestle spans.
- 1921 A Wood trestle railroad runs into the Washington Branch in Georgetown.
- 1967 Stage for bridge built for C & O Rock Creek trestle.
- 1972 Rock Creek trestle rebuilt with steel and concrete by private citizen.
- 1984 CSX Corporation formed and developed the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which had taken over the B & O Railroad in 1980.
- 1985 Last train runs on the Georgetown Branch.
- 1986 Agreement to build with the National Park Service, Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co. and the Metropolitan Branch Company.
- 1988 NPS begins capital crest trail project. The first train on the trail runs on the Georgetown Branch.

A 1917 B & O train crossing the trestle over Rock Creek on its way to Georgetown.

M A D V L A N D
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CITY OF WASHINGTON
DUAL LORNO
VIRGINIA
NORTH CROFT BRIDGE
FAIRFAX STATION
METROPOLITAN WESTERN RAILROAD

Historical photograph of a bridge over a creek, likely the Chain Bridge mentioned in the text.

DATE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
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.	Completed
1889	The Washington & Western Maryland Railroad formed for the section from Dulcetta to the Aqueduct Bridge for the Virginia section. One mile section of rail completed from Rock Creek to the Aqueduct Bridge.	Completed
1891	The B & O Railroad takes over the Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co.	Completed
1892	Piece of track laid from the junction with the B & O's Metropolitan Branch in Landon to Chevy Chase, including the 1,600-foot-long wooden trestle over Rock Creek.	Completed
1895	The Mount Airie trestle built over Canal Road and the C & O Canal.	Completed
1904	The Rock Creek trestle is rebuilt and shortened to 281 feet to bridge the gulch at the order end.	Completed
1906	Plans for abandonment of the Potomac Branch Chain Bridge and connection with central lines in Virginia abandoned.	Abandoned
1909	Metropolitan Southern Railroad completed abandoned 1.5 miles from Chevy Chase to the District Line, including District's segment.	Abandoned
1910	Georgetown Branch is completed and named for the B & O Railroad.	Completed
1914	Train regularly scheduled across Rock Creek to bring limestone to the granite for a bridge across the canal.	Completed
1918	Rock Creek trestle rebuilt with steel and concrete with steel girders on the trestle spans.	Completed
1921	A Wood trestle railroad runs into the Washington Branch in Georgetown.	Completed
1967	Stage for bridge built for C & O Rock Creek trestle.	Completed
1972	Rock Creek trestle rebuilt with steel and concrete by private citizen.	Completed
1984	CSX Corporation formed and developed the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which had taken over the B & O Railroad in 1980.	Completed
1985	Last train runs on the Georgetown Branch.	Completed
1986	Agreement to build with the National Park Service, Georgetown Bridge, Dock, Elevator & Railway Co. and the Metropolitan Branch Company.	Completed
1988	NPS begins capital crest trail project. The first train on the trail runs on the Georgetown Branch.	Completed



Options Filter by map extent Zoom to Clear selection Refresh

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
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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.



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.
- Received 30% draft design in August 2024, currently under review.

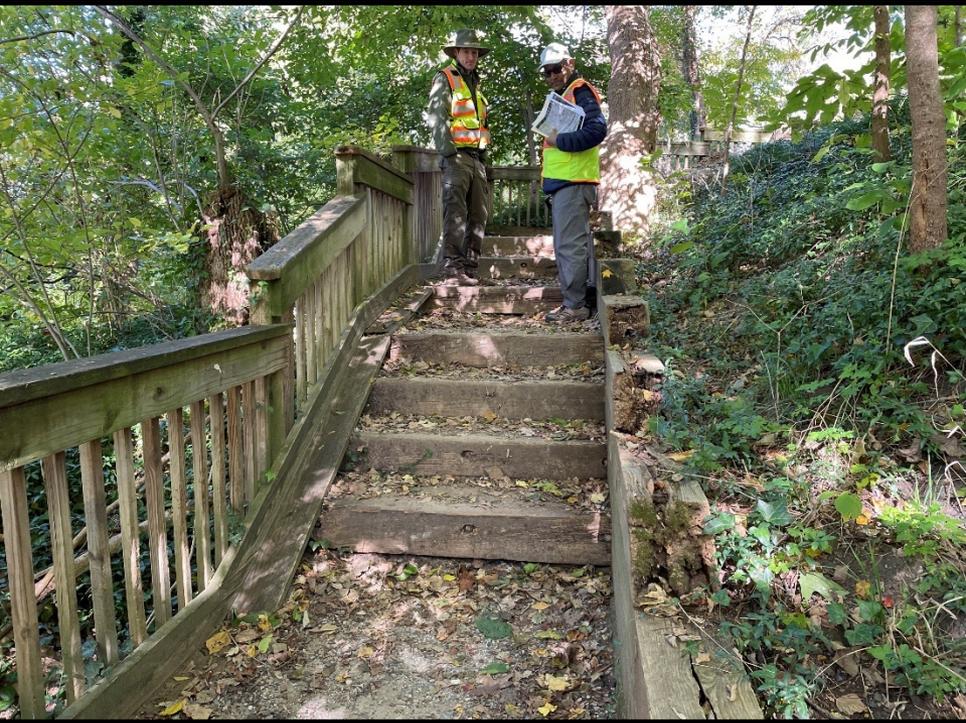




Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



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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.
- 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.



Questions?



Work by Others – Supplemental Slides

Georgetown Trailhead & Turnaround

- Georgetown BID received a \$150K DDOT TAP Grant
- Project is on DDOT ROW and NPS jurisdiction
- Project completed





Arizona Avenue Connection

- DDOT is leading the project in partnership with NPS
- Environmental surveys occurring over the next 9 months (archaeological, trees, etc.)
- Design anticipated late 2023-2024
- Construction late 2024/2025
- DDOT Project Manager: Karyn McAlister
- [Arizona Avenue Trail | Trails DC \(arcgis.com\)](#)



Norton Street Connection

- DDOT is leading the project in partnership with NPS
- Design scheduled late 2022-2023
- DDOT will look to secure funding in late 2023
- DDOT Project Manager: Steph Piperno

