



P.O. Box 30703  
Bethesda, MD 20824

---

February 14, 2006

County Executive Doug Duncan  
Executive Office building  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: FY07 Operating Budget for the Interim Capital Crescent Trail

Dear Mr. Duncan:

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) is writing to request funds in your proposed FY07 Operating Budget to repair and stabilize a short section of the Interim Capital Crescent Trail (a.k.a. Georgetown Branch Trail.) This ½ mile long section east of Rock Creek regularly erodes, greatly compromising its safety and utility. Paving this section with a temporary asphalt surface is the most cost effective method of repairing the damage and preventing future erosion. We estimate the cost at around \$160,000. This repair would give underserved Silver Spring neighborhoods a much more inviting trail and would greatly improve the off-road trail connection between Bethesda and Silver Spring.

We greatly appreciate the strong support you have given to the development of the Interim CCT over the years. Use of the trail has steadily grown since its dedication in 1996. We have seen increases in trail traffic every time you have helped us remove a barrier, including the opening of the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, the opening of the trestle over Rock Creek, and again last year with the opening of a better on-road connection into Silver Spring.

The usefulness of the Interim CCT to Silver Spring neighborhoods and as a trail connecting the Bethesda and Silver Spring urban centers is greatly limited today by a badly eroded section east of Rock Creek. An approximately ½ mile long section between the Lyttonsville Place overpass and the Rock Creek Trestle acts as a drainage channel for storm water runoff. Storm water washes away parts of the crushed stone trail surface and cuts dangerous ruts after every major storm. This section of the trail is difficult and unsafe for use by many groups of trail users including cyclists with road bikes, families with children on bikes or in strollers, and all mobility impaired users who need a reasonably even and hard packed surface. Attached is a short series of photographs illustrating typical conditions, which currently exist on this section of the trail.

A cost effective solution to this problem was proposed in the M-NCPPC Interim Trail facility plan approved by the Planning Board in 2001. That facility plan recommends that a temporary 2" asphalt surface be used to stabilize the trail surface in this area. This is judged the best way to meet the important goal of having an interim trail that is usable to all classes of trail users. The facility plan considered the modest cost of construction for this limited section to be consistent with an interim trail use.

At the request of an individual trail user, Mr. Michael Mitchell, P.E., DPWT Drainage Assistance Request Program Manager, examined the trail in January 2006 and also concluded that paving this section of the trail with asphalt would be the most cost effective method to control the erosion. He noted that drainage channels alongside the trail quickly fill with the crushed stone that washes off the trail. Mr. Mitchell recommended that the drainage channels also should be lined with asphalt.

The CCCT estimates the cost of paving this section of the trail as approximately \$80,000, based on the typical cost per linear foot of paving asphalt trails and including a conservative "area factor". We judge that lining the side drainage ditches with asphalt will roughly double the cost, to give a \$160K total cost estimate. You can ask DPWT to provide a more reliable cost estimate.

DPWT has estimated that it costs \$30,000 to \$40,000 to regrade the crushed stone trail to repair erosion damage. This needs to be done immediately after every major storm, several times a year, to keep this section of the trail safe for use by all classes of trail users. This is not a reasonable maintenance burden for DPWT. This ½ mile section of the Interim CCT is unique in that it is the only section where the trail acts as a drainage channel. A smooth crushed stone surface can be maintained on the remainder of the 3+ mile long Interim CCT with a reasonable maintenance schedule and cost.

A modest expenditure to fix this local severe erosion problem would return a high benefit to the County. The Interim CCT would be usable and safe for all classes of trail users east of Rock Creek. Silver Spring neighborhoods would be better served. All trail users would have a much improved trail connection between the Bethesda and Silver Spring urban centers.

We appreciate your strong support for this wonderful trail over the years, and thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Peter Gray  
CCCT Chair (acting)

cc., w. enclosure: Arthur Holmes, DPWT Director  
George Leventhal, President, Montgomery County Council