Georgia Avenue - Fenton Street

This section describes the recommended alignment from Georgia Avenue to Fenton Street including the pedestrian/bicycle bridge proposed for Georgia Ave. and an underpass at Burlington Ave (MD 410, East-West Highway).

Existing Conditions

The Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan recommends the need for a bridge crossing over Georgia Avenue. The crossing will provide a direct linkage to the Silver Spring Metro Station and the future Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail (Capital Crescent Trail). The existing bridge is too close to the active freight line with no existing physical barrier.

The current bridge serves as a station platform for the MARC system. As part of the Transit Center project, the MARC Station will relocate. However, it is not possible to simply add on to the existing bridge to accommodate the trail.

Selim Road parallels the CSX/WMATA right-of-way. An existing 10-20 foot wide green space can accommodate the trail along Selim accompanied by a slight narrowing of the road. The narrowing will need to accommodate vehicles turning into the adjacent garages. Currently these turning movements are protected through the use of "No Parking" signs

There is enough clearance under Burlington Avenue (East-West Highway) to accommodate an underpass. However, there are right-of-way limitations on the south side of the bridge where the underpass would emerge. This area is also constrained by a steeply sloping embankment and a wet area at the base of the hill.

Proposed Improvements

It is possible to construct the permanent alignment of the trail incorporating two new pieces of trail infrastructure: the Georgia Avenue Span and the Burlington Avenue underpass.

Proposed Metropolitan Branch Alignment

The Georgia Avenue pedestrian/bicycle bridge would be constructed utilizing an alignment parallel to the existing bridge, starting at the existing stairs on the southbound side of Georgia. The east side of the span would require the removal of five parking spaces on Selim Road.

Construction of the trail along Selim Road will require the narrowing of the road's pavement (a one-way street, northbound), maintaining a 7-foot parking lane and a 12-foot travel lane. To accommodate turning movements, a mountable curb will be used in the locations where parking is currently prohibited. Reinforced turf will be used behind the mountable curb to allow vehicles to drive on the grass.

The trail would be constructed 5 feet from the curb. Parking meters would need to be removed and replaced with a ticketed metering system requiring the driver to place a receipt for payment on the dash of the car. Two of the ticket dispensers would need to be placed on Selim. Street trees would be placed within a five-foot panel.

The underpass would be constructed utilizing a prefabricated 19'-0" x 12'-1"galvanized steel super span horizontal ellipse plate structure with 6" x 2" corrugation. The underpass would be approximately 80 feet in length.

Special techniques would be needed to construct the underpass within a confined area limited by the CSX live rail on one side and Burlington Avenue above. These techniques were already utilized for constructing similar tunnels on the WB&A trail.

South of the underpass, the trail would connect with King Street utilizing a concrete deck structure to minimize the cut and fill required on the steeply sloped embankment

Figure 65: View north showing proposed location for Georgia Avenue Span

Figure 66:
View north from parking garage showing area between King Street and Burlington Avenue (top photograph)

Figure 67:
View south showing existing conditions along Selim Road (bottom left photograph)

Figure 68:
View north showing Burlington Avenue bridge abutment (bottom right photograph)

Figure 69:
Plan detail showing Georgia Ave. to King Street

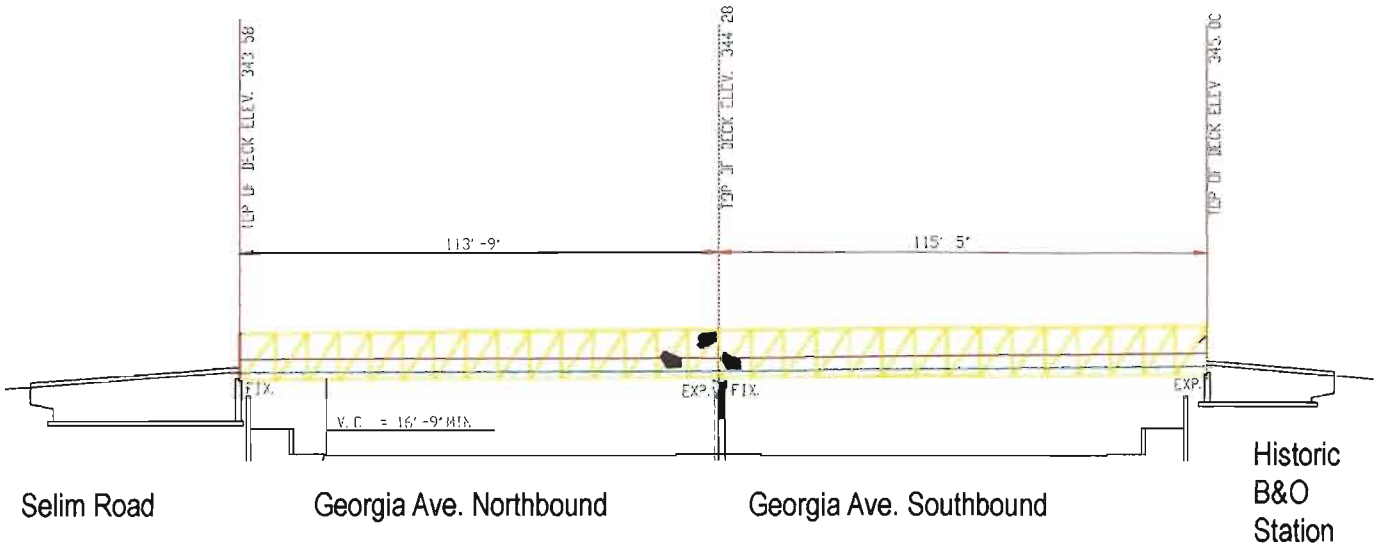
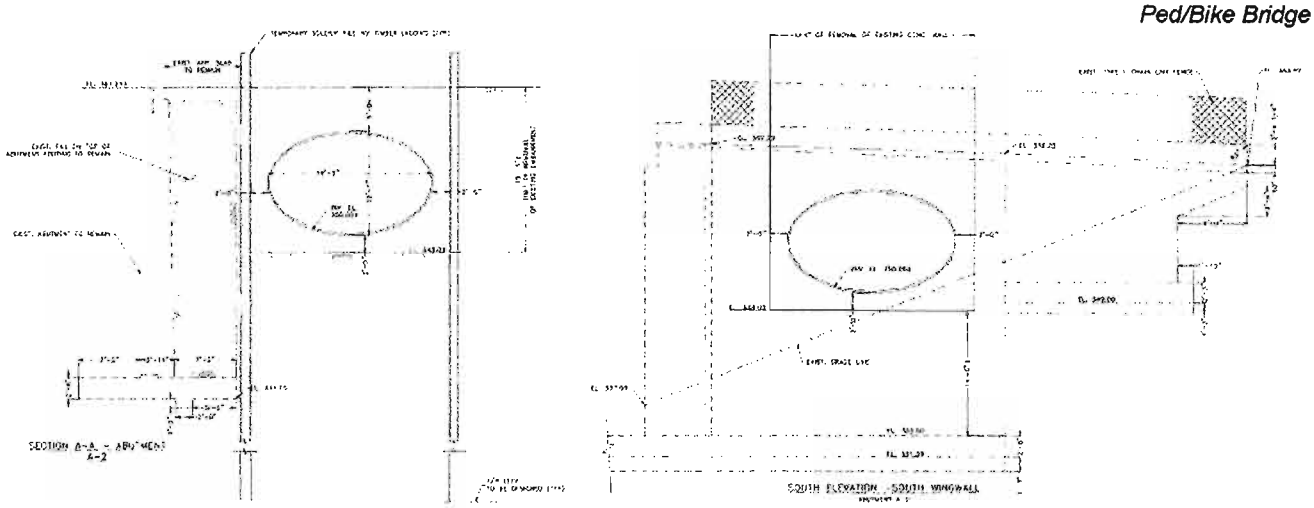


Figure 70: Section detail showing proposed Georgia Avenue Ped/Bike Bridge



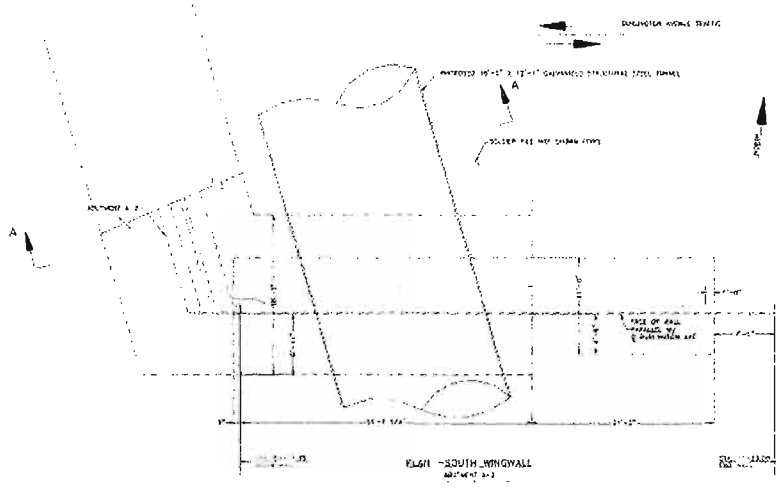


Figure 71: Plan and section detail showing proposed Burlington Avenue underpass

adjacent to the live rail. The concrete decking could be built as a sloped path at approximately 4% grade to meet the existing elevation at King Street.

The trail would continue adjacent to the Montgomery College Parking Garage. Due to limited sight distances from within the garage, bicycles will need to yield to vehicles entering and exiting the garage. As vehicles approach the entrance or exit, hazard identification beacons should be tripped (by embedded wire in the pavement) giving bicycles warning of approaching cars.

Coordination Issues

- Construction of the Georgia Avenue Span will require coordination with the State Highway Administration (SHA).
- Construction of the trail along Selim Road will require pavement narrowing and reconfiguration of the parking meter collection system (MCDPWT) and coordination with adjoining businesses.
- The underpass will need to be lit and patrolled by the County police. The design should be reviewed by the police to ensure that all appropriate safety measures are incorporated into the design. The tunnel will need to be lit.
- The trail will need a memorandum of understanding or an easement from Montgomery College for use of the green spaces adjacent to the parking garage.

King Street - Piney Branch Road

This section describes recommended alignment through Montgomery College including coordination with the College's expansion plans.

Existing Conditions

Montgomery College is developing schematic designs for the realignment of Fenton Street to accommodate a new Student Services Center. The realignment will remove several existing businesses south of an existing storage building. The project also includes a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the railroad tracks connecting to Jesup Blair Park and the College's future Cultural Arts Center in the park.

Montgomery College's expansion plans have been carefully coordinated with the proposed trail alignment along Fenton Street. The trail design has been coordinated with the design of the bridge and its ramps to insure a clear path and good connections.

Fenton Street narrows from 26' to 22' in width between Chicago and Takoma Ave. Due to limited right-of-way the trail will need to be narrowed to 8' in this area.

Consideration for adjoining residences, on-street parking, the historic district, and adjoining park will need to be considered along Takoma Ave.

Proposed Improvements

Proposed Metropolitan Branch Alignment

The trail will utilize the space between the existing curb and the parking garage and storage buildings along Fenton between King Street and Montgomery College. A six-foot planting strip and a 12-foot trail are proposed. In some locations, this leaves only a two-foot clearance to building walls. These areas will be paved with a decorative paver. Discussions will be entered into with the owner of the storage building to incorporate art on the building facade and mount pedestrian scale lighting.

The realignment of Fenton through the Montgomery College Campus will incorporate a 32-foot wide curb-to-curb width - two 12-foot travel lanes and an 8-foot northbound parking lane (including all gutter pans). This will leave room for a 6 foot planting strip and a 10-foot trail with 2-feet clear on both sides. The College realignment project ends at the location where the space between Fenton and the CSX line becomes extremely tight. A cross section that includes a 2-foot clear space between the trail and the existing CSX fence, a 10-foot trail, and a 5-foot planting area will be used (total of 17 feet). There is an approximately 230-foot length where this cross section would apply. Fenton would have to be shifted towards the College by approximately three to four feet. This would narrow the existing sidewalk on the College side to less than five feet and remove a large grouping of existing trees. Discussions should be entered into with the College about redesigning their parking lot in the future to better accommodate the trail and enhance the streetscape and pedestrian circulation on both sides of Fenton Street.

In the interim, the trail and pavement will be narrowed to 8' and 22' pavement respectfully. The southbound curb would need to be reconstructed for a distance of approximately 240 feet to accommodate the 8' trail. Should the College and the City of Takoma Park be able to agree on a redesign of the parking lots and reconfiguration of the Takoma Ave and Fenton Street intersection, the trail can be redesigned and constructed with a 10-foot trail width.

For Takoma Avenue, the recommended option is to remove parking from one side between Buffalo Avenue and Baltimore Avenue and readjust the alignment of the travel lanes to

Figure 72: View south showing Fenton Street at parking garage/ storage building

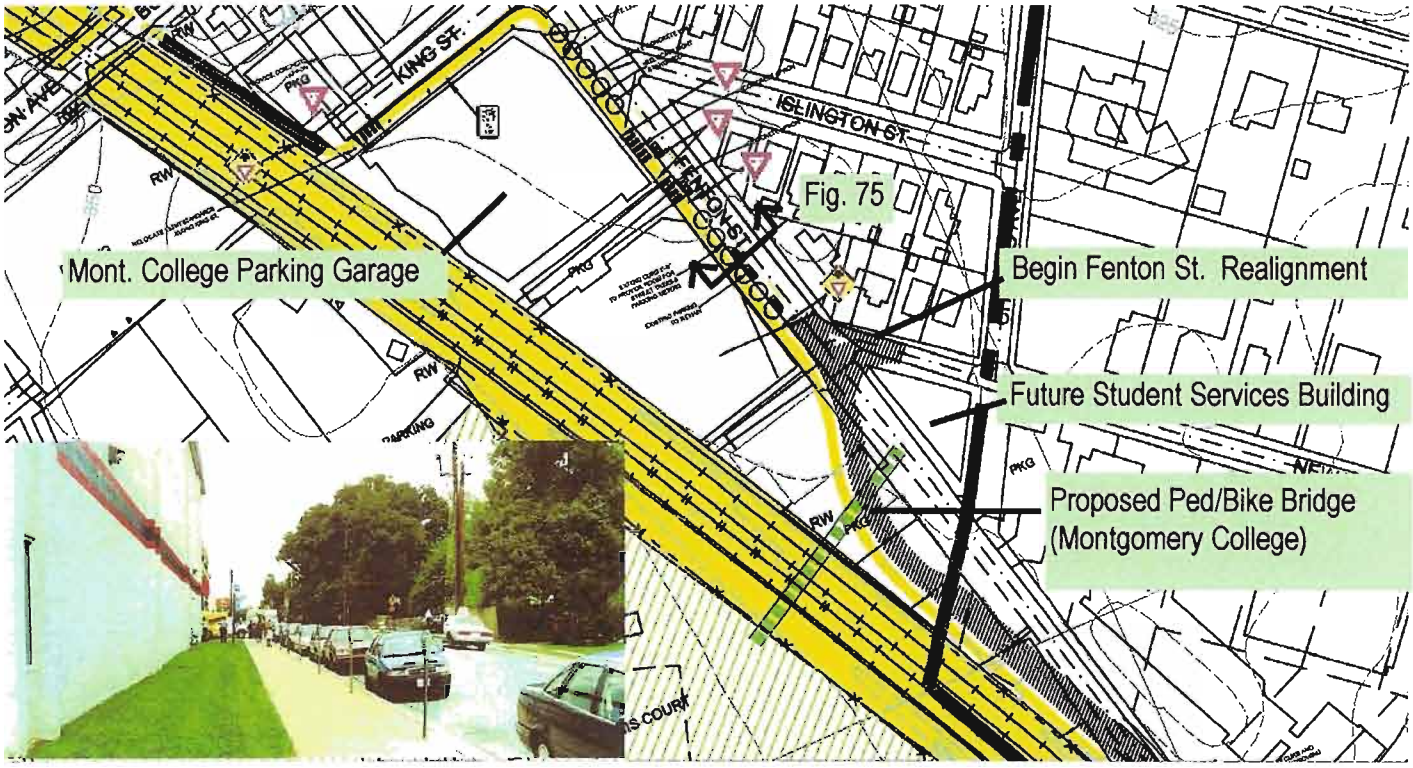


Figure 73: Plan detail of Fenton Street area (above)

Figure 74: Fenton Street at storage building (inset)

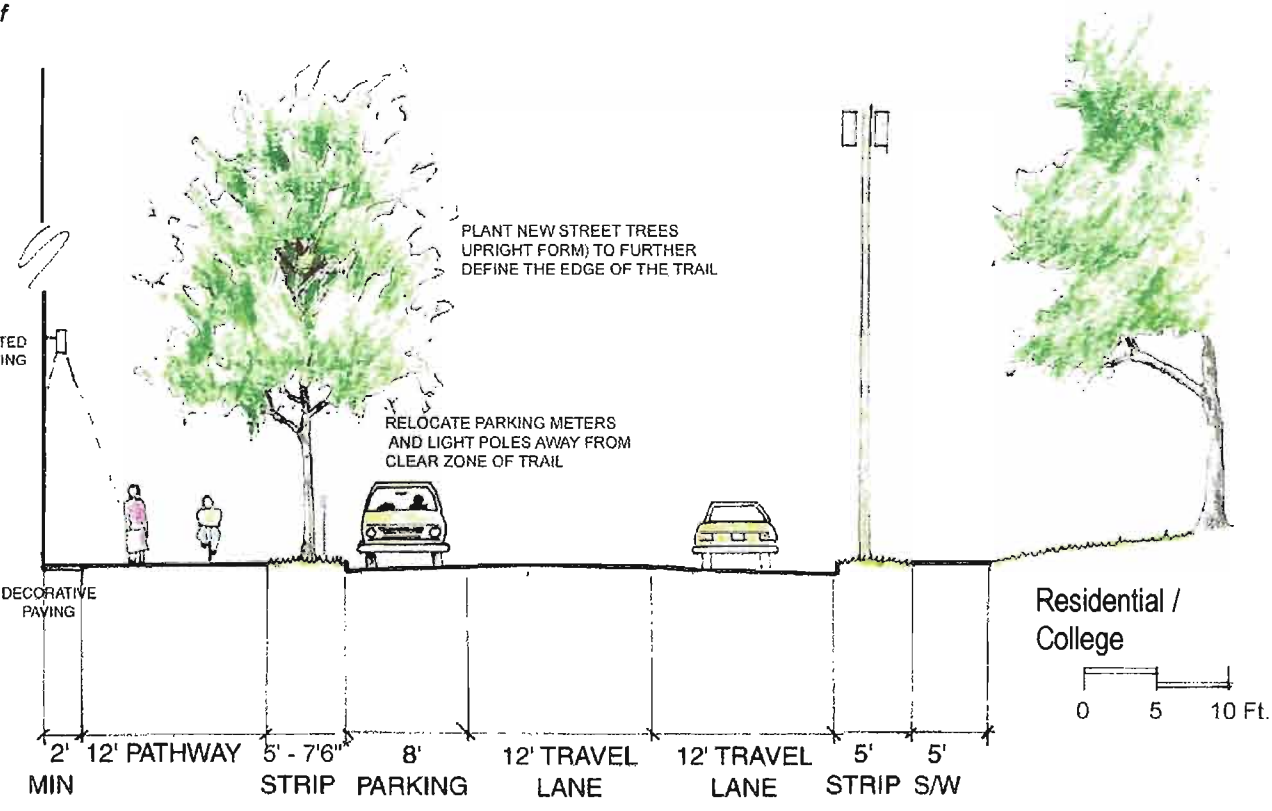


Figure 75: Typical section showing Fenton Street at the storage building

NOTE: EXISTING CURB SHOULD BE RECONSTRUCTED 2' - 6" OUT TOWARDS THE EAST UTILIZING THE ADDITIONAL SPACE FROM THE MINOR LANE NARROWING. THAT SPACE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE 5' LANDSCAPE STRIP BETWEEN THE TRAIL AND CURB.

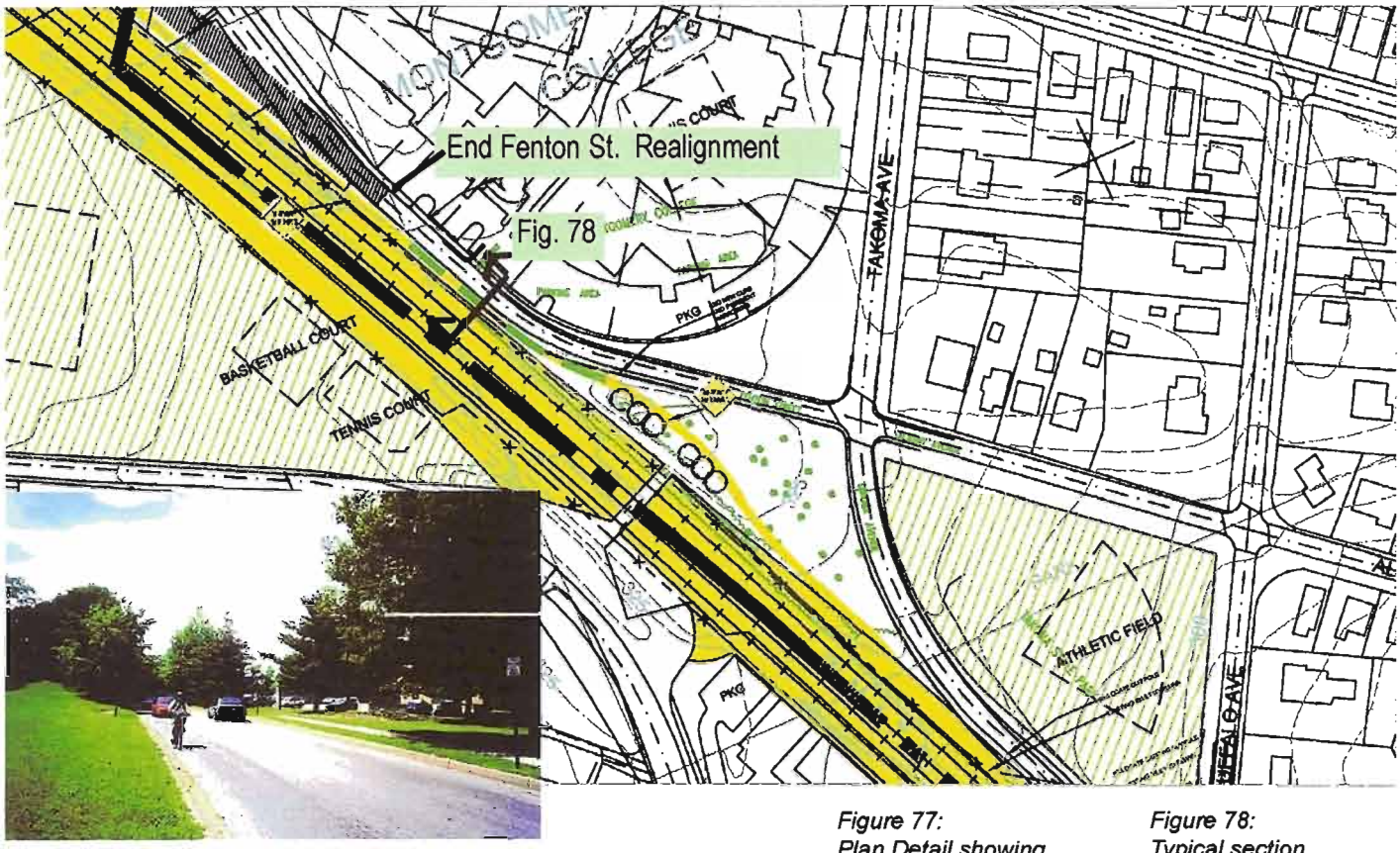


Figure 76: View northwest on Fenton Street near intersection with Takoma Avenue showing highly constrained right-of-way

Figure 77: Plan Detail showing Fenton St./Takoma Ave. intersection

Figure 78: Typical section showing Fenton Street at Montgomery College parking lots

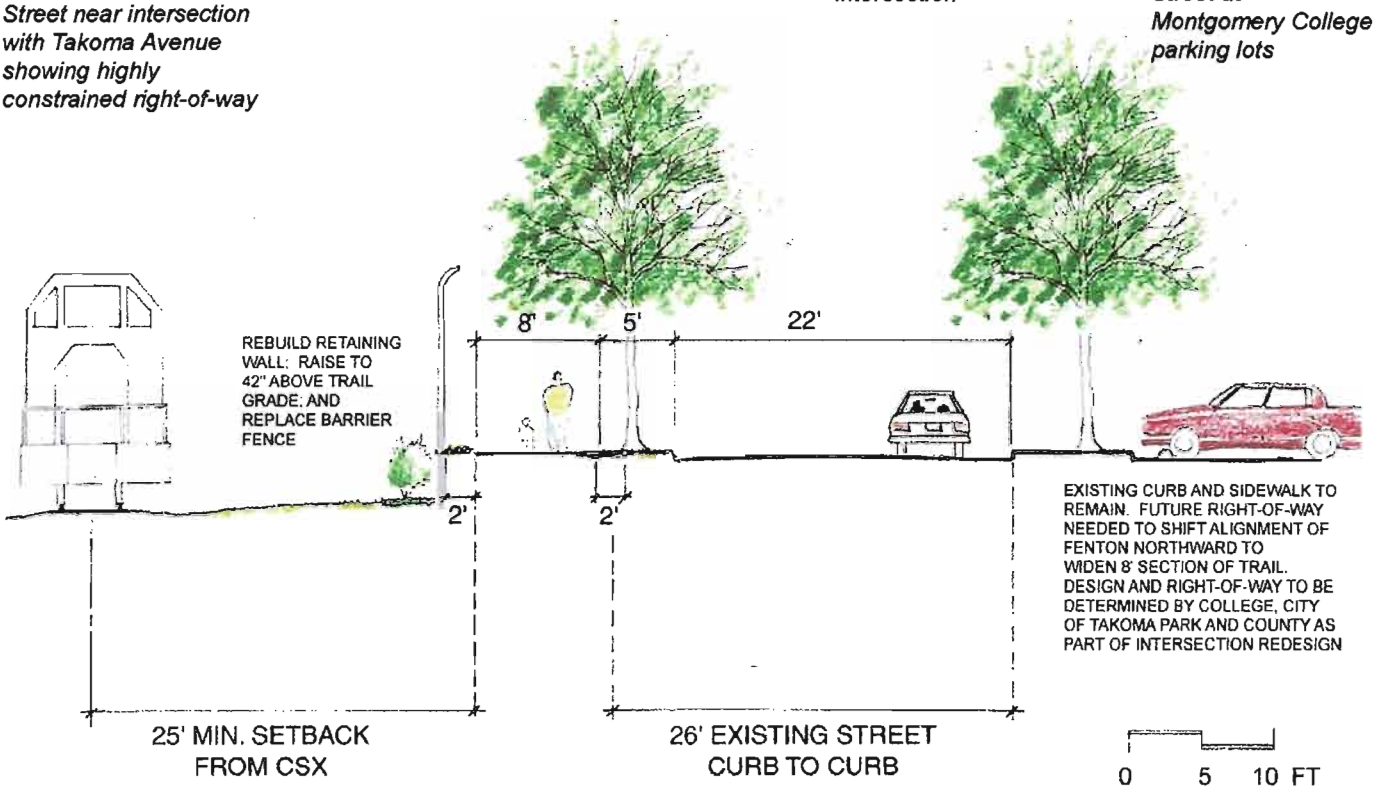


Figure 79: View south on Takoma Avenue showing metered parking location

switch the parking from the trail side (southbound lane) to the opposite side (northbound) in the vicinity of Jequie park. The parking would then better serve park users.

Where tree preservation is an issue, the trail can be narrowed to eight feet and the separation be narrowed from 5 to 4 feet by incorporating a 42-inch height box beam guardrail (two rail system) in the segment between Baltimore Avenue and Buffalo Avenue. Decking may need to be used in some locations to preserve the root zones of the trees.

NOTE: The detailed survey indicates that the distance between the centerline of the CSX rail and the trail may be less than 25 feet in some locations. This may require narrowing of the trail width and/or narrowing of the trail separation from the road with accompanying box beam guardrail.

Coordination Issues

- Montgomery College is planning construction for 2002-2003. The pedestrian/bicycle bridge was budgeted for a 12' inside clear width.
- The City of Takoma Park is considering realigning the location of the intersection of Fenton Street and Takoma Ave. The trail will need to be sited as close as possible to the CSX/Metro tracks to leave room for the relocation.
- The City of Takoma Park will need to relocate the lost parking spaces between Buffalo and Baltimore Aves.
- The City of Takoma Park and District of Columbia need to resolve the alignment issues with the owner of the Cady Lee Historic House. The trail will connect with the sidewalk on Piney Branch Road to complete the Montgomery County construction phase. This leaves multiple options for the District of Columbia section of the trail in the vicinity of the Cady Lee Historic Hiouse.

Figure 80: Plan view showing location of trail along Takoma Avenue to Piney Branch Road

Figure 81:
View north on Takoma Avenue at Baltimore Avenue intersection

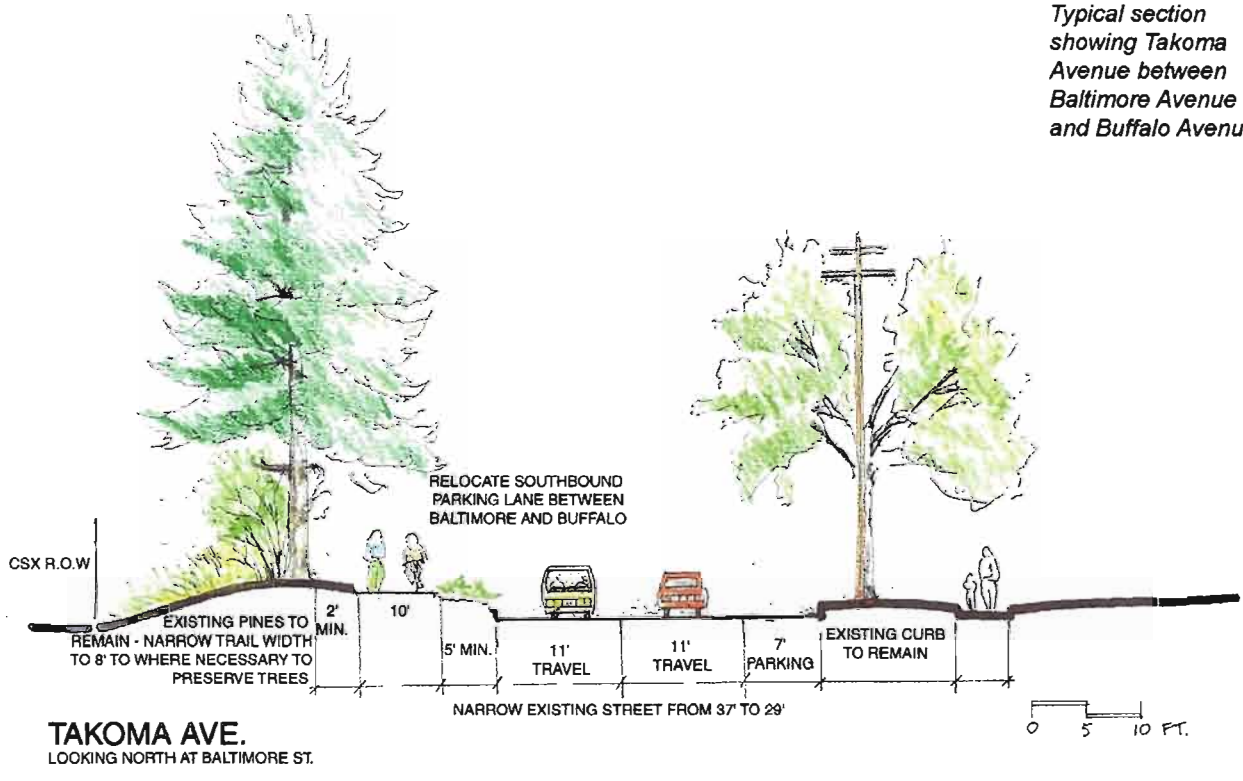


Figure 82:
Typical section showing Takoma Avenue between Baltimore Avenue and Buffalo Avenue

Implementation of the plan can begin immediately and will need to incorporate the following steps:

Review and Endorsement of the Plan

The Project Advisory Group has included representatives from each of the agencies involved in development and infrastructure projects that influence the final trail alignment. In addition to the four Project Advisory Group meetings, extensive coordination has taken place with Montgomery College to ensure that the trail alignment is coordinated directly with the College's realignment project on Fenton Street. Ongoing agency coordination will be required with the following agencies and Departments:

- Montgomery County Planning Board
- City of Takoma Park
- Montgomery College (Fenton St. realignment and college expansion– coordination of construction activities and redesign of Takoma Ave. intersection and College entry to accommodate 10-foot wide Metropolitan Branch Trail with adequate separation and room for landscaping and beautification)
- Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (MCDPWT) - modifications of streets as indicated in the plan, SSTC plans, and as the agency responsible for preparing final design drawings and for trail maintenance and management
- Mass Transit Administration (MTA) for coordination with the Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail project
- Maryland State Highway Administration (16th Street crossing, MD 410 underpass, Colesville Road crossing)
- CSX - crossing of right-of-way at the Talbot Ave. span and construction of underpasses at 16th Street, Spring Street and Burlington Ave.
- Rosemary Hills Elementary School - rebuilding the retaining wall at edge of property

Establishment of Funding Source

Funding should be examined from the following sources:

- Smart Growth Transit Program (due January 31, 2001) - oriented towards improving access to Transit Facilities (within 5-minute walk of transit facilities)
- TEA-21 (typically due in May-June) - requires 20% match and may not apply to interim trails
- Capital Budget - consider funding those segments of the project that are least likely to be funded by outside sources These contributions can be used as local match for grants
- Recreational Trail Grants (SHA) - smaller grants could be used for key linkage points such as the Rock Creek Trail and Park Linkage
- Construction through redevelopment projects - provide land and easements at the future District Courthouse site, through the Silver Spring Transit Center, the Ripley District, and at Montgomery College

Pursue Necessary Transportation System Improvements

Construction of the trail will require several modifications to the transportation system:

- Conversion of Grace Church Road to one-way northbound between 3rd and 4th
- Pursue addition of pedestrian signal at 16th St. (recommended regardless of trail alignment)
- Repaving, striping and signage in alley system around the Silver Spring Transit Center
- Adjustments to parking meters and parking spaces on Selim Road
- Adjustments to street widths, reconstruction of curb, and relocation of parking meters on Fenton Street
- Adjustments to parking on Takoma Ave. (City of Takoma Park)

Purchase of Required Land, Right-of-way, or Easements

There are several locations where land, right-of-way, or easements will be needed including construction easements. These areas include (marked on 50 scale maps):

- Jones Mill Road at trail intersection (northeast quadrant)
- Construction easement for Rock Creek Linkage
- east side of Lyttonsville Place to accommodate community linkage to Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center
- CSX Siding (or alternate at Stewart Ave./ Kansas)
- 3rd Ave. easement to Lyttonsville Road (WSSC or Woodside Mews)
- 16th Street underpass (CSX)
- Spring Street underpass (CSX, United States Postal Service or GSA)
- Parcel at end of Ripley (south side)
- MOU or exchange with Montgomery Preservation at the historic B&O Station building
- Montgomery College parking areas (long-term coordination)

Centerline Survey and Final Design for Phases 1 through 4

Final design can begin immediately with concurrent resolution of the right-of-way and easement issues identified above.

Monitor Transitway/Trail FEIS

If the double tracking system is chosen for the Transitway, it will not be possible to construct many of the interim trail improvements for the Capital Crescent Trail. This decision will be addressed as part of the Final EIS process for the Transitway/Trail. Phase 1 can be constructed regardless of the changes made to the design of the Transitway since the improvements planned for the Capital Crescent are intended to be temporary and the improvements to the Metropolitan Branch are not effected by the Transitway/Trail project.

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Charles Loehr, Director
Donald K. Cochran, Director of Parks

Project Team

Rachel Newhouse, Project Manager, Countywide Planning
Margaret Rifkin, Community-Based Planning
Tom Robertson, Transportation Planning
Gail Tait-Nouri, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation

Contributing Staff

Glenn Kreger, Community-Based Planning
Miguel Iraola, Community-Based Planning
M-NCPPC Park Development Division

Facility Plan Prepared By:

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

JimKlein, ASLA, Principal-in-Charge
Elisabeth Lardner, ASLA, AICP
Jennifer Zornig
Amy Ansell
Steve Sattler
Jeffrey Killion

in association with

Daniel Consultants, Inc.

K. Mammen Daniel, President
Pankaj Patel, P.E., Structural
Richard Sobbott, P.E., Civil
S. Manzur Elahi, P.E., Traffic
Heather Pandullo

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