

Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

Milestones: 1996-2001

Updates the Coalition Publication

"Milestones: 1986-1996

A Chronology of the First Ten Years"

Published by the Coalition, February 2002

UPDATE OF THE CCT CHRONOLOGY

August 1995 through October 2001

August 1995: Development of interim trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring approved by Montgomery County Council.

June 1996: Coalition celebrates its tenth anniversary at the Washington Canoe Club, at which copies of "*A Chronology of the First Ten Years, Milestones: 1986-1996*" are distributed.

Summer 1996: Maryland Mass Transit Administration released its "Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail.

July 1996: Montgomery County Council approves \$100,000, in addition to \$40,000 already appropriated, to help pay for changes requested by the Columbia Country Club to separate the Trail from the Club property.

December 1996: Dedication ceremonies for the River Road Bridge, which had been informally open to use several weeks previous. The Dalecarlia Bridge was also formally opened on this day.

December 1996: The Capital Crescent Trail from Georgetown to Bethesda was dedicated.

December 1996: Cottonwood Foundation approved grant of \$1500 for waysides along the Trail.

January 1997: A walkthrough of the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, led by County Executive Douglas Duncan, included County officials, Board members, and other interested people.

January 1997: The Board approved a revised model for mileage signs along the Trail and requested that they be procured and installed.

March 1997: Coalition sponsors ride for the full length of the Trail from Georgetown to Silver Spring; more than 100 participate.

April 1997: Minkoff and Tower Companies jointly proposed that in exchange for possible continuance of their lease to park on the right-of-way that they would pay for an elaborate scheme of landscaping the property on the east end of the River Road bridge to provide a small park adjacent to the Trail. The Coalition opposed use of any of the right-of-way for private purposes.

May 1997: Montgomery County Council votes to delete funding to pay for improvements needed to open the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue; Coalition starts petition drive for funding to open the tunnel.

May 1997: Official dedication of the Georgetown Branch Trail/Interim Capital Crescent Trail, connecting from Elm Street Park to Silver Spring, with a detour necessary to cross Rock Creek Park. Many participants demonstrated in favor of opening the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue.

September 1997: Large "Open the Tunnel" rally at the Woodmont end of the tunnel; Pam Browning presented to County Executive Douglas M. Duncan petitions with 8000 signatures from supporters of opening the tunnel. More than 100 supporters participated; present were Council Members Krahne, Leggett, and Dacek.

October 1997: National Park Service proposes major changes in the Trail crossing at Fletchers to improved safety and meet ADA standards; changes include a new bridge and ramps from the Trail to

the Boat House.

January 1998: M-NCPPC conducts briefings on a proposed use of areas along the Trail right-of-way at River Road for a small park and for parking arrangements permitting the current lessee of parking spaces, the Minkoff Company, to continue using the spaces in exchange for landscaping.

February 1998: Montgomery County Council approved by a 5-4 vote opening the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, appropriating \$410,000 for this process.

April 1998: Meetings begin on a uniform Capital Crescent Trail Management Plan, to be an agreed document of the National Park Service and the Montgomery County Departments of Parks and of Transportation, with participation by the Coalition and other interested parties.

May 1998: The first of many "Bells and Whistles" events was held at the Bethesda Avenue trailhead, at which bicycle bells provided by the Coalition were installed on bicycles at no cost to recipients as were plastic whistles for rollerbladers to encourage Trail users to give warning before passing.

July 1998: C&O Canal NHP Superintendent Douglas Faris conducted a hearing with Palisades residents concerning planned improvements to the access path at Norton Street; citizen opposition was intense and invoked a previous agreement not to improve access paths to Palisades; the proposal for improvements was cancelled.

August 15, 1998: In ceremonies with senior County officials Douglas Duncan, Betty Ann Krahnke, and Isiah Leggett, the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue was officially opened. The Coalition provided \$45,000 from its treasury to obtain trail routing on the

outside of the curve in the tunnel, providing longer sight lines, and to obtain more attractive and brighter lighting fixtures for greater tunnel safety. Of this \$20,000 was provided to reorient the Trail, and \$25,000 toward lighting; the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition also provided \$5000.

August 1998: A wooden fence funded by the Coalition was installed on the south side of the Ourisman Honda property to shield dumpsters and car repair activity from the Trail.

January 1999: The Coalition sponsored a hike to support the preferred CCT alignment in Silver Spring, walking from the area of the Metro station to Stewart Avenue and beyond.

Early 1999: An internet web site for the CCT was established at www.cctrail.org, including maps, historical information, trail information, news and events, and other subjects..

April 1999: A drinking fountain with water supplied by Washington Aqueduct was established near the Dalecarlia Bridge; the fountain was funded by a private party, and installation was funded by the Coalition.

April 1999: A new bridge over the Canal and new ramps were completed at the Trail crossing at Fletcher's Boathouse. Bike racks, funded by the Coalition, were installed at Boathouse level.

May 1999: The M-NCPPC began a trail alignment study for the CCT and the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) through Silver Spring.

May 1999: Concept Plan for the Metropolitan Branch Trail was published; this is planned to connect with the CCT in Silver Spring,

and continue for eight miles to Union Station in downtown D.C..

Summer 1999: The Arts Council of Montgomery County announces a proposal for an art project in the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, with \$15,000 allocated.

September 1999: A CCT post card has been printed for use in contribution acknowledgements and other purposes, showing a ghost locomotive emerging from the Dalecarlia Tunnel.

December 1999: The Court of Appeals of the Federal Circuit ruled that there was no “taking” of private property when the Federal Government railbanked the Trail corridor in 1988.

January 2000: The Washington Aqueduct authority cancels plans to run two large-diameter pipes and an electric duct through the Dalecarlia Tunnel. The Coalition was concerned about tunnel damage and interference with daytime use of the tunnel.

April 2000: CCT hosts a rally in support of rebuilding the trestle over Rock Creek Park in Ray’s Meadow Park, with speakers including Duncan, Leggett, and Burwell..

May 2000: Public meetings on the Management Plan for the CCT.

May 2000: The Montgomery County Council voted \$1.3 million to rebuild the trestle over Rock Creek Parking linking Bethesda and Silver Spring.

????? 2000: The Maryland Legislature approved \$6 million to pay for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Georgetown Branch Transitway/Trail.

May 2000: The Lemuelson Center of the Smithsonian Institution

sponsored a program featuring innovation, focusing on the bicycle, and sponsored a trail tour during which CCCT volunteers staffed locations with interpretive displays.

June 2000: The Public Arts Trust of Montgomery County selected artist Sally Callmer's proposal "Prismatic Passage" to be installed in the tunnel; she will be awarded \$15,000, while four runner-ups will be provided prizes of \$1000 each. One of these prizes was funded by the Coalition.

August/September 2000: Under Coalition and Parks Department guidance, volunteers conducted counts of users on the Trail, recording numbers, types of traffic, and ages of users at various times of day and days of the week. A maximum of 561 users per hour was noted at a peak period in good weather.

October 2000: M-NCPPC denies a request by Qwest Communications to bury fiber optic cable under the CCT

November 2000: The CCT was scheduled to be closed from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm to accommodate a marathon sponsored by the Montgomery Parks Foundation and the Montgomery County Road Runners Club. However, protests by the Coalition and others permitted the Trail to remain open for all users, and the marathon was conducted without significant problems. There was subsequent informal agreement with government officials that the Trail would not be closed for events.

February 2001: M-NCPPC completed and approved a study presenting plans for the 2 1/2 mile segment of the CCT from Jones Mill Road into downtown Silver Spring, and for the one-mile segment of the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the DC line, recommending that the Interim CCT be built in phases.

February 2001: Vandals seriously damaged Sally Callmer's art project installed in the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue.

April 2001: Two new rest stops on the CCT were dedicated, one near Bethesda Avenue, the other near the Dalecarlia Bridge. The kiosks containing Trail map panels, historical panels, and bulletin boards were designed and funded by the Coalition. One water fountain was funded by a Coalition member and installed by the Coalition; walls, benches, plantings, and the other water fountain were funded by the Department of Parks.

June 2001: Cherry Hill Construction Co. contracts to rehab the trestle over Rock Creek Park for Trail use at a cost of \$1.28 million for a 12' wooden trail surface; funding is insufficient to provide for scenic overlook pullouts.

June 2001: Residents of the Palisades area agreed to permit the NPS to install a wooden stairway on the embankment leading to the CCT from near the foot of Manning Street; agreement was subject to this facility appearing as inconspicuous as possible and its being omitted from maps.

(Stairway was completed in October 2001.)

July 2001: The Coalition commits up to \$55,000 to pay for scenic overlooks, the County to pick up an equal amount.

October 2001: The Montgomery County Council endorsed construction of the "Inner Purple Line", a light rail connection from Prince Georges County to Bethesda, part of which would utilize the Georgetown Branch right-of-way. The Board agreed that the Coalition should remain neutral on the question of supporting or opposing the Transitway.