

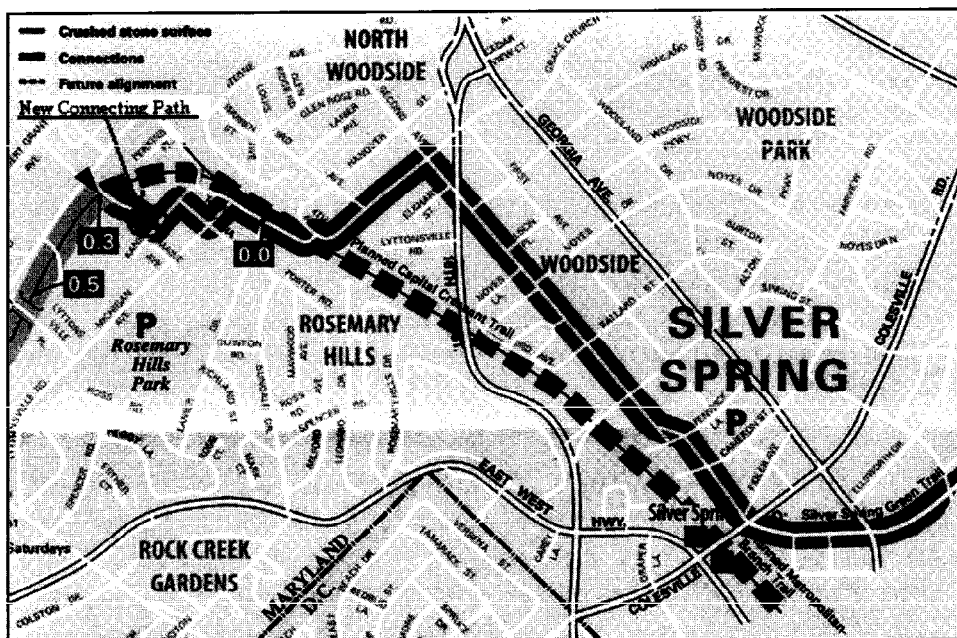
THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Fall 2004

Vol. XII No. 6

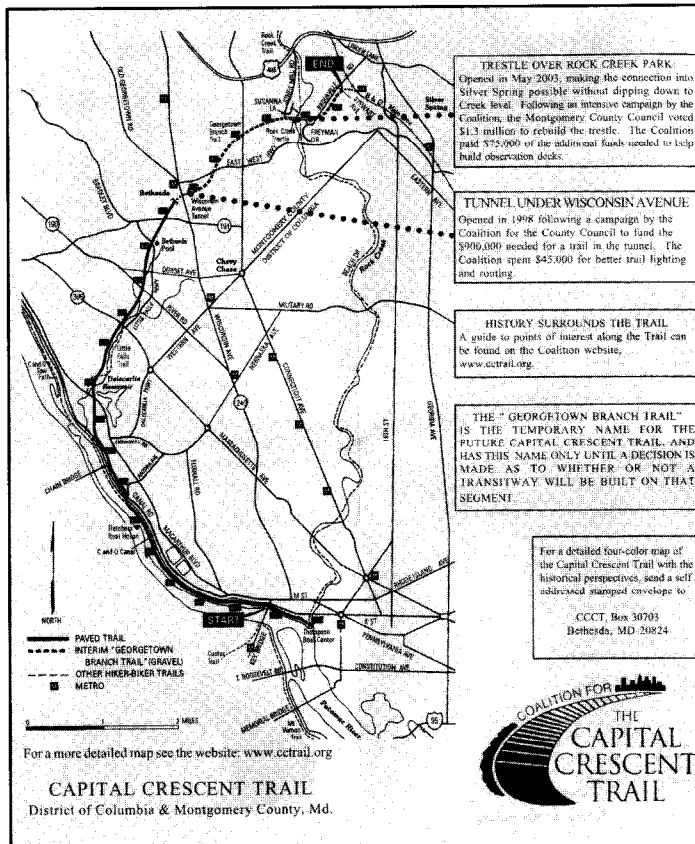
CCCT Maps the Way for the Interim CCT



A portion of the new CCT Map showing the connecting route to Silver Spring. Map by Equator Graphics, Inc. for the CCCT.

The trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring has seen some improvements this season, due in part to the steady advocacy of the CCCT. We have reported on the funding issues and on resurfacing of a section of the trail east of the trestle in our Spring and Summer issues of the Crescent. Now we are pleased to report that DPWT has made substantial repairs to the eroded section of the trail immediately east of the Bethesda Tunnel, and has completed construction of a new off-road connecting path between Stewart Avenue and Kansas Avenue (see upper left corner of map). This new path is near the east end of the off-road Interim CCT at Stewart Avenue. Completion of this path now provides public access to the Interim CCT for the neighborhoods of Rosemary Hills and Lyttonsville. This new connector path also opens a new on-road bike route to downtown Silver Spring that is more direct and inviting than is the Georgetown Branch Trail route on Brookville Road. But at the time this article was submitted for publication, Montgomery County DPWT had not erected any signs to show the new route into Silver Spring and trail users continued to be directed onto busy Brookville Road.

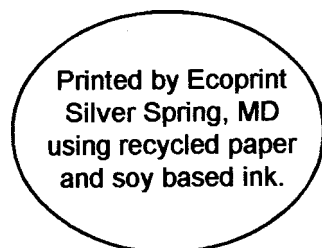
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The Crescent is published three times a board year (June-June) by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824, phone (202) 234-4874. CCCT is a non-profit citizen's group promoting development of the 11.2 mile rail-to-trail conversion from Georgetown, D.C. to Silver Spring, MD for multi-purpose, recreational use.

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We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent via e-mail to: jcamp213@foxtv.com, or by mail to CCCT.

CCCT Testimony on the Countywide Bikeways Master Plan

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) is in general agreement with the Planning Board Draft Report on the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, and we encourage the Council to continue to expand opportunities for both recreational and purposeful biking in the County through increased funding for the Bikeways program.

We do have a few comments to make concerning the two routes comprising the CCT between Bethesda and Silver Spring: SP-6 (Georgetown Branch/Future CCT); and SR-63 (Interim Capital Crescent Trail).

In Table 2-2 of the Report, Route SP-6 is the designation for the section of the CCT system between Woodmont and Stewart Avenues. Its status is given as existing, with a temporary crushed stone surface, and under Discussion it is noted that the ultimate (paved) trail is to be implemented as part of the Bi-County Transitway. While we have no disagreement with that characterization, we do have some concerns that it may, if taken literally, impose some unnecessary limitations while we await the final resolution of the Transitway. For example, does the “existing” status in any way preclude the County from going forward with its plans to establish a trail connection at Pearl Street? Further, there are a couple of areas where the crushed stone surface has faced repeated erosion problems, and we would like to make sure that limited paving, to remedy those maintenance problems, is not ruled out by the designation in the report.

Route SR-63 is the designation given the Shared Roadway section of the CCT between Stewart Avenue and the Silver Spring CBD. That route can be found in the Facility Plan for the Capital Crescent Trail (Lardner/Klein, Jan. 2001), and we are in agreement with the route as outlined in the Discussion column of Table 2-2. We strongly encourage the Council to move forward on funding that plan as expeditiously as possible. We believe that route will have obvious advantages for CCT users while we await the resolution of the Transitway issues, and that it will continue to provide significant access to the CCT even after its ultimate implementation. We also see no conflicts between route SR-63 and any of the proposals for the Transitway.

As the Council may know, the first small piece of SR-63 (a connector between the eastern end of Stewart Avenue and Kansas Avenue) has just been opened, providing a vital link in getting the Shared Roadway trail off Brookeville Road. We thank the Council for allocating the funds for that project, and as soon as we can get the new Interim Route signed, we will have a much safer Shared Roadway trail. Unfortunately, we’ve heard that getting the signs switched from Brookeville Road to the Kansas Ave./Grace Church Road route may take as long as the construction process itself (more than a year) and we would greatly appreciate any help the Council can provide in expediting this process.

Now that the first piece is in place, we would like to have the Council move forward on phasing in other needed pieces of SR-63. Perhaps the biggest bang for the buck would come from building Option 1 in the Talbott Ave. Bridge – 16th St. section of the Jan. 2001 Facility Plan. This involves constructing a short trail link between Grace Church Road and Lyttonsville Road along an unbuilt public road ROW, and the WSSC water line easement at 3rd Ave. This link on its own will provide better access to the CCT, and if a signaled crossing could go in at 16th Street & Lyttonsville Road (as is proposed in the Facility Plan), it would remove the need for the much longer crossing of 16th Street at the diagonally oriented 2nd Avenue. While this connection wouldn’t resolve all the issues we currently see for getting trail users from Stewart Ave. to downtown Silver Spring, in conjunction with the new Stewart Ave. connector, it would go a long way toward removing some dangerous situations, and truly open up access to the Capital Crescent Trail system for residents of Silver Spring.

Editor's note: This letter addresses the issue on the development of Lot 31, the parking lot that abuts the CCT at the Bethesda trail head.

Bruce R. Meier, Management Services Supervisor
Department of Public Works and Transportation
Montgomery County
101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: RFP for Mixed Use Development on Public Parking Lot 31 Bethesda Parking Lot District

Dear Mr. Meier,

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) would like to comment on the proposals for development of Public Parking Lot 31 in the Bethesda Parking District.

CCCT is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization with over 1600 members. We are an advocacy group formed in 1986 to support a high quality trail suitable for a variety of users. The CCT has become the most heavily used trail in Montgomery County. It enjoys tremendous support both in the adjacent neighborhoods, and among its over one million users per year.

The portion of the CCT which abuts Lot 31 is an important central gathering point for trail users with a rest area and information Kiosk located steps from the parking lot. CCCT appreciates the attention paid to the trail by the RFP requirement 2.3 that proposals accommodate trail users; and 6.5 which states that proposals will be evaluated on how they address "Ease of access for users of the Capital Crescent Trail."

Of the proposals submitted to you, three developers contacted the CCCT, met with our representatives, walked the site, and solicited our suggestions for ways in which the trail needs could be met. Officials from the Donohoe Companies, Inc., Western Development Corporation, and Lemer Enterprises/Smith Payes, LLC, were attentive to our concerns and showed great interest in advancing the needs of trail users in formulating plans for the site. The plans submitted by Western Development (Plan A) and by Lemer Enterprises/Smith Payes, show great sensitivity to our issues, and each have designed innovative and creative approaches to addressing the serious problems encountered by CCT users in crossing the Woodmont Ave./Bethesda Ave intersection. Also, we were especially impressed with the design proposed by the Lemer Enterprises/Smith Payes regarding screening and enhancements to the trail, and the provision of an elevator from the underground parking located to maximize convenience to trail users transporting bikes.

Our discussion with these developers, and our examination of several of the plans, convinces us that a first-rate development is compatible with the trail and that additional important improvements to the adjacent intersection can be accomplished. Evaluation of proposals should give special credit to those which understand and address the importance of improving the intersection for all pedestrians, but especially those who may need to cross over to connect to the Georgetown Branch portion of the trail to the east.

Finally, we have a concern about the CCT during the construction phase of any development. It is essential that the trail remain open and accessible continuously to trail users. Use is heavy year-round, with this part of the trail being an important link to downtown Bethesda and to the trail as it continues east. In addition, it affords commuters a bike friendly route both to Metro and to end destinations.

CCCT wishes to thank you for including in the RFP attention to the needs of the trail and its one million annual users. As you proceed to select a final developer, CCCT stands ready to assist your office, and the chosen developer, as final plans are drawn up. While we have long enjoyed the surface parking afforded by Lot 31, we believe that this development offers an opportunity to improve the trail and to remedy the design and safety problems at the adjacent intersection.

Sincerely,

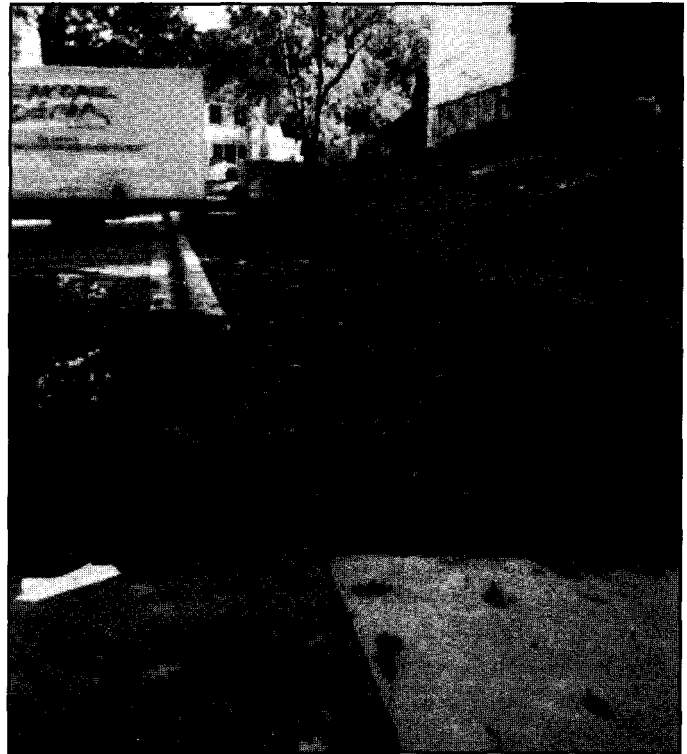
Ernie Brooks

Chair, The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

CCCT Maps the Way for the Interim CCT

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The CCCT has stepped forward to commission a new CCT Map that shows the changes in the trail alignment between Bethesda and Silver Spring. It has been several years since the CCT map was last revised, and the opening of the trestle and the completion of the new connector path near Stewart Avenue has rendered the last edition obsolete. The new map, showing the open trestle and the new on-road connecting route into downtown Silver Spring, is on the CCCT website www.cctrail.org, Map Page. CCCT is also donating new 3' by 4' poster maps for the map cases at all of the rest stops along the CCT, and these should be appearing on the Trail very soon. New folding pocket trail maps are also being printed now, and CCCT will distribute them soon. Publication of the new map will help trail users find their way east of Rock Creek. But proper signing of the trail remains important. CCCT has expressed its frustration to the County Council on the slow pace of signing the route to Silver Spring, and as a direct result Councilmembers Floreen and Leventhal have personally requested of Mr. Arthur Holmes, the new DPWT Director, that DPWT sign the new on-road connecting route ASAP. We will continue to press this issue.



The new off-road connector between Stewart Avenue and Kansas Avenue in Silver Spring.

Those who use the Interim CCT are well aware that much more must be done before it will be an effective off-road trail connecting the Bethesda and Silver Spring urban centers. CCCT Chair Ernie Brooks brought this to the attention of the Montgomery County Council in testimony presented at the September public hearing on the Draft Countywide Bikeways Master Plan. Mr. Brooks reminded the Council of the heavy use the Interim Trail enjoys and asked that the Draft Master Plan designation of the Trail as "Interim" not be permitted to block further improvements to the trail. While Mr. Brooks reiterated the CCCT's respect for the Council's position that the trail must be "interim" until Bi-County Transitway issues are resolved, he pointed out that a final transitway decision will take many years. Sensible improvements to the Interim CCT should be made now wherever there are significant, cost effective benefits. These include providing a connection between the trail and Pearl Street just east of the Bethesda Tunnel and providing a more durable surface for the several short sections that have chronic erosion problems. Further, the County should implement the recommendation of the Trail Facility Plan to develop a safer trail crossing of 16th Street by opening a short trail between Grace Church Road and the west end of Lyttonsville Road in North Woodside. The County should also provide safe-crossing at 16th Street with a new pedestrian light at the east end of Lyttonsville Road. (Go to our website www.cctrail.org, Action Page to see the Facility Plan recommended Interim Trail alignment.)



Let's Keep It Green - and Clean!

The Capital Crescent Trail is beautiful and has been nearly litter-free. The National Park Service and The Montgomery County Departments of Parks and of Transportation have no regularly scheduled clean-ups of the Trail due to personnel limitations. CCCT is aware of a number of unsung heroes who pick up litter on a regular basis, and they do a great service to the beauty and maintenance of the Trail. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

Carrying a plastic grocery bag with you when you're out on the CCT and taking your trash with you makes their efforts easier.

Summer rains challenge the Interim CCT

The frequent heavy thunderstorms of this summer have caused erosion damage to several areas of the Interim CCT. DPWT repaired one of the worst areas in early August - between the east end of the Bethesda Tunnel and mile marker 3.0. There remain two short sections between the Rock Creek Trestle and Stewart Avenue that need repair. The trail is passable but cyclists should be alert for deep ruts in the trail east of the trestle. DPWT had just resurfaced this area this spring.

On August 11, 2004 CCCT Chair Ernie Brooks and Board Members Andy O'Hare and Wayne Phyllaier met with the new Acting DPWT Director Mike Hoyt. CCCT wished to meet the new Director and to thank Mr. Hoyt on behalf of the CCCT for DPWT's recent resurfacing and weed mowing along the Interim CCT.

CCCT also pursued several Interim CCT issues with Mr. Hoyt and DPWT staff at the meeting:

- The need for "spot" repairs of the eroded sections east of the Rock Creek Trestle.
- The feasibility of using other surface materials to reduce maintenance costs for the Interim Trail, especially in the chronic erosion areas.
- Continuing efforts at DPWT and Councilmember Floreen's office to get a right-of-way between Pearl Street and the Trail, to clear the way for a trail access ramp.
- The need for covering the coarse gravel surface at either end of the trestle with stonedust, to create a smoother trail surface.
- The status of the funded DPWT project to build an access path to Rosemary Hills at Stewart Avenue.

Mr. Hoyt and his staff expressed their strong support for accommodating the Trail needs as much as possible within their budget and staff constraints. CCCT will continue to work on these issues with DPWT.

TRAIL EVENTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

In conjunction with the OASIS organization, a non-profit group that provides educational and other opportunities to enhance the quality of life for mature adults, the Coalition has sponsored several events on the Trail. Recognizing that many older citizens have not ridden bicycles for years, and that exercise is critical to their continuing health, eight seniors were given the opportunity to ride rental bicycles on the Capital Crescent Trail between Bradley Boulevard and the District Line, with a view toward their continuing to bike. They were accompanied by Coalition board member **John Dugger**, who offered individual guidance in the operation of a modern bicycle and in trail safety.

Another OASIS event was an October history walk along the Capital Crescent Trail from Massachusetts Avenue to the District line and return, with more than 20 OASIS participants. As with the bike ride, board member Dugger accompanied this group and, after giving safety guidance, took the group along the Trail describing the Civil War fortifications nearby, the history of the Georgetown Branch and of the Trail, and the Washington Aqueduct water facilities and their development.

Please designate
THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
In the United Way/Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area.
CCCT'S CFC NUMBER IS 7221.

Safety on the Trail

For bicycle commuters who use the CCT:

It is important that all bicyclists carry a good lighting system and wear reflective clothing if you commute before dawn or after dusk. Generally, there are a fair number of bicycle commuters who use the trail after dusk, but with lights and reasonable caution, commuters should not have any problems.



Trail safety and courtesy means:

- ALL USERS should stay to the right side of the trail except when passing.
- Passing other trail users to their left, allowing at least two feet clearance.
- Always look ahead and behind before passing.
- Give an **audible voice or bell warning** at least two seconds before passing.
- Travel at reasonable speed in a consistent and predictable manner.
- Keep all pets on a short leash (required by law).
- Move off the trail when stopped to allow others to pass.
- Yield to others when entering or crossing the trail.
- Use lights and reflectors after dusk or before dawn.

Is IT TIME FOR YOU TO RENEW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE CCCT? . . .

Yes! I want to help complete the Capital Crescent Trail and make it safer and more pleasant to use!

Name(s) _____ (H) _____ (W) _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____

NEW MEMBER

RENEWING MEMBER

Individual Contributions:

- ☐ \$10 Basic Individual
- ☐ **\$30 Contributor**
- ☐ \$60 Path Finder
- ☐ \$100 Patron
- ☐ \$200 Trail Blazer
- ☐ \$500 Benefactor

A DETAILED FOUR-COLOR MAP OF THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL WITH HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IS FREE TO ALL NEW MEMBERS.

Donors of \$60 or more will receive a CCCT T-shirt upon request (if desired, PLEASE CIRCLE SIZE: S M L XL).

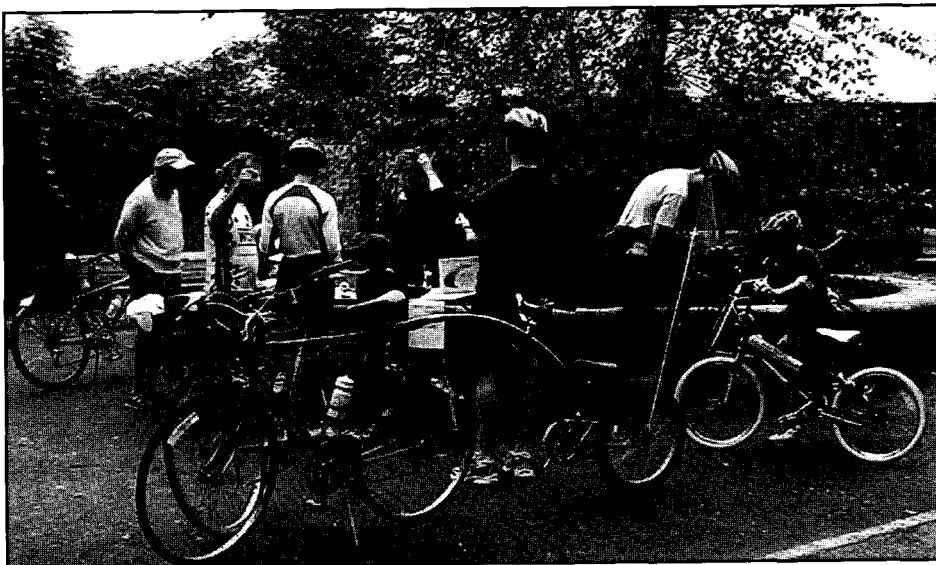
Make your tax-deductible contribution checks payable to: The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail.
Mail to CCCT, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD. 20824.

Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Trail! Here's an additional contribution of \$_____.

Membership is good for one year from the 15th day of the month that you join.

We are an all-volunteer organization. ☐ I am interested in volunteering, contact me for:
☐ Advocacy ☐ Events ☐ Trail Maintenance

We do not share our membership list with any organization except our affiliate organization, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. CCCT is exempt from federal taxation under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRS Code and is qualified to receive tax-deductible contributions. VISIT OUR WEB SITE, www.cctrail.org, FOR ACTION ALERTS and TRAIL UPDATES.



On Saturday, October 2, the CCCT held another "Bells & Whistles" safety event at the Bethesda rest stop near the 3.5-mile marker of the Trail. The event encourages all trail users to display courteous behavior and share the trail with all users. For more safety tips see page 7.

CCCT
P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824

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