

October 2025

Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Segment Feasibility and Design Study



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Prince George's County Planning Department

Abstract

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This document is a Feasibility and Design Study for a segment of the planned Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail in the Town of Upper Marlboro, a municipality located in Prince George’s County, Maryland (Planning Area 79, Councilmanic District 9). In Spring 2023, the Town of Upper Marlboro applied to the Prince George’s County Planning Department’s Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program to fund the trail feasibility study. PAMC funding was approved by the Prince George’s County Planning Board on June 22, 2023, and the project kicked off August 24, 2023. The study documents existing conditions of potential trail alignments; explores trail alternatives and identifies their opportunities and challenges; and anticipates logistical and financial requirements. This feasibility study is consistent with the strategies adopted in the 2014 *Plan 2035 Approved General Plan* and the 2013 *Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan*.

COVER

UPPER IMAGE

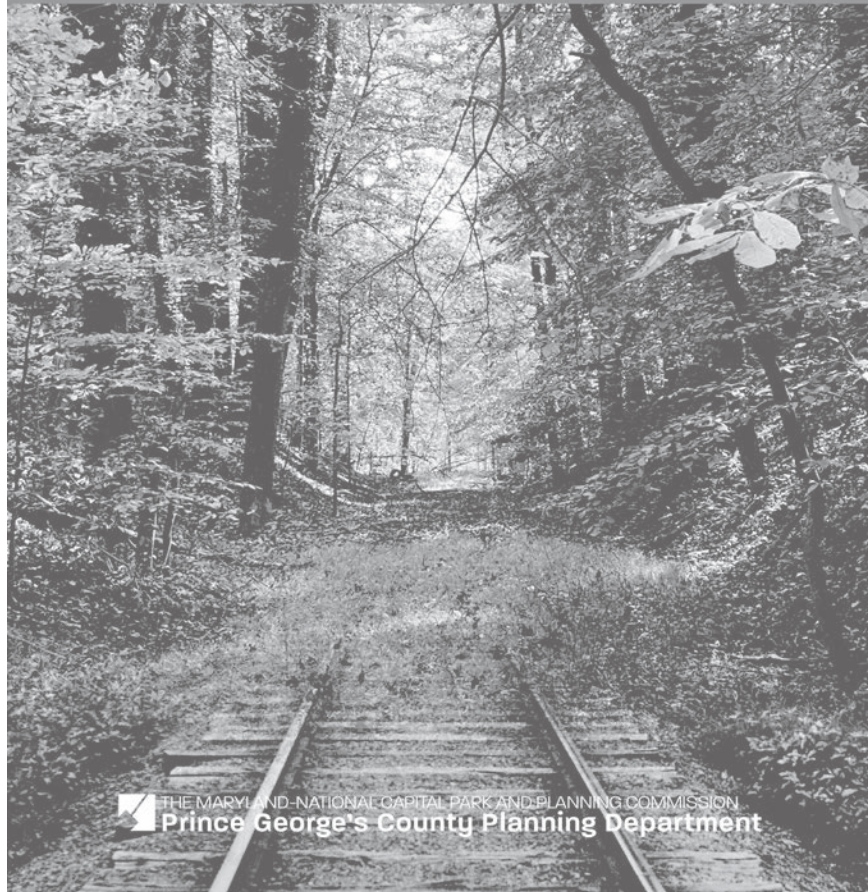
Ravine where the former Chesapeake Beach Railway once ran through, 2025
Credit: M-NCPPC

LOWER IMAGE

Chesapeake Beach Railway Tracks, n.d.
Ames William Williams, *The Chesapeake Beach Railway: Otto Mears goes East* (Calvert County Historical Society, 1981), 74.

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Prince George's County Planning Department

1616 McCormick Drive

Largo, MD 20774

www.pgplanning.org

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The Commission has three major functions:

- The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District.
- The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system.
- In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire county public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the County government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

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CREDIT: M-NCPPC

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Introduction

Project Background

In Spring 2023, the Town of Upper Marlboro applied for Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) Program funding for a consultant to develop a feasibility and design study for a segment of the planned Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail (CBRT) starting at MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and linking a portion of the planned Western Branch Trail to the Prince George's Equestrian Center and Show Place Arena (see Map 2). PAMC funding for the CBRT Segment Feasibility and Design Study was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board on June 22, 2023. AECOM, Inc., with CHPlanning, Ltd. were chosen as consultants and the project kicked off August 24, 2023.

The PAMC Program is offered by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County Planning Department, Community Planning Division, Neighborhood Revitalization Section. The program's purpose is to implement the County's approved plans, recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans. The program provides technical planning services at no cost to municipalities or community organizations using Prince George's County Planning Department expertise, and/or funds consultant services approved by the Planning Board. PAMC projects benefit municipalities and communities that may have limited planning resources but are committed to revitalization and enhancement of their communities.

CHESAPEAKE BEACH RAILWAY

In 1891, the Washington and Chesapeake Railroad Company was chartered to operate a railroad from Washington, D.C. through Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Calvert Counties to the present town of Chesapeake Beach. Envisioned as a moneymaking venture, the approximately 28-mile-long Chesapeake Beach Railway (CBR) would connect the growing population of the nation's capital to a new beach resort community in proximity (see Map 1). The first CBR train arrived in Chesapeake Beach in 1900. However, by the 1920s, CBR revenues had decreased due to the rising popularity of the automobile and modernized roads for travel. Combined with the Chesapeake-Potomac Hurricane of 1933 and the Great Depression of 1935, the last CBR train arrived in Chesapeake Beach in 1935. The CBR's tracks were removed shortly thereafter. (Maryland Historical Trust. *Determination of Eligibility Form Chesapeake Beach Railway Prism*. 2021.) <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG;72-81.pdf>

The Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Segment Feasibility and Design Study is consistent with the 2014 *Plan 2035 Approved General Plan* and the 2013 *Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan*. *Plan 2035 Transportation and Mobility Strategy* TM1.8, page 153 directs, “Coordinate future transportation and mobility improvements as outlined in the *Master Plan of Transportation*, the *Plan 2035 Transportation and Mobility Element*, and the *Star-Spangled Banner Scenic Corridor Plan* to ensure the County’s rural character is preserved. Improvements include promoting the County’s equestrian heritage—focused on trails that facilitate access to the Prince George’s Equestrian Center, Jug Bay Natural Area, and Rosaryville State Park—and preserving existing equestrian trail corridors within the Rural and Agricultural

Areas.” *Transportation and Mobility Strategy* TM4.5, page 157 directs, “Enhance bike lanes and trails connections with key population and employment areas, historic sites and recreational areas...”

The adopted 2013 *Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan’s* Policy 10, page 109 states, “Promote the equestrian heritage of Prince George’s County, focusing on trails that facilitate access to the Prince George’s Equestrian Center, Jug Bay, and Rosaryville State Park.” The accompanying strategy (p. 109) directs, “Provide high-quality, multiuse trails along critical stream valley corridors through the acquisition of land prior to development along the following corridors: Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail...”



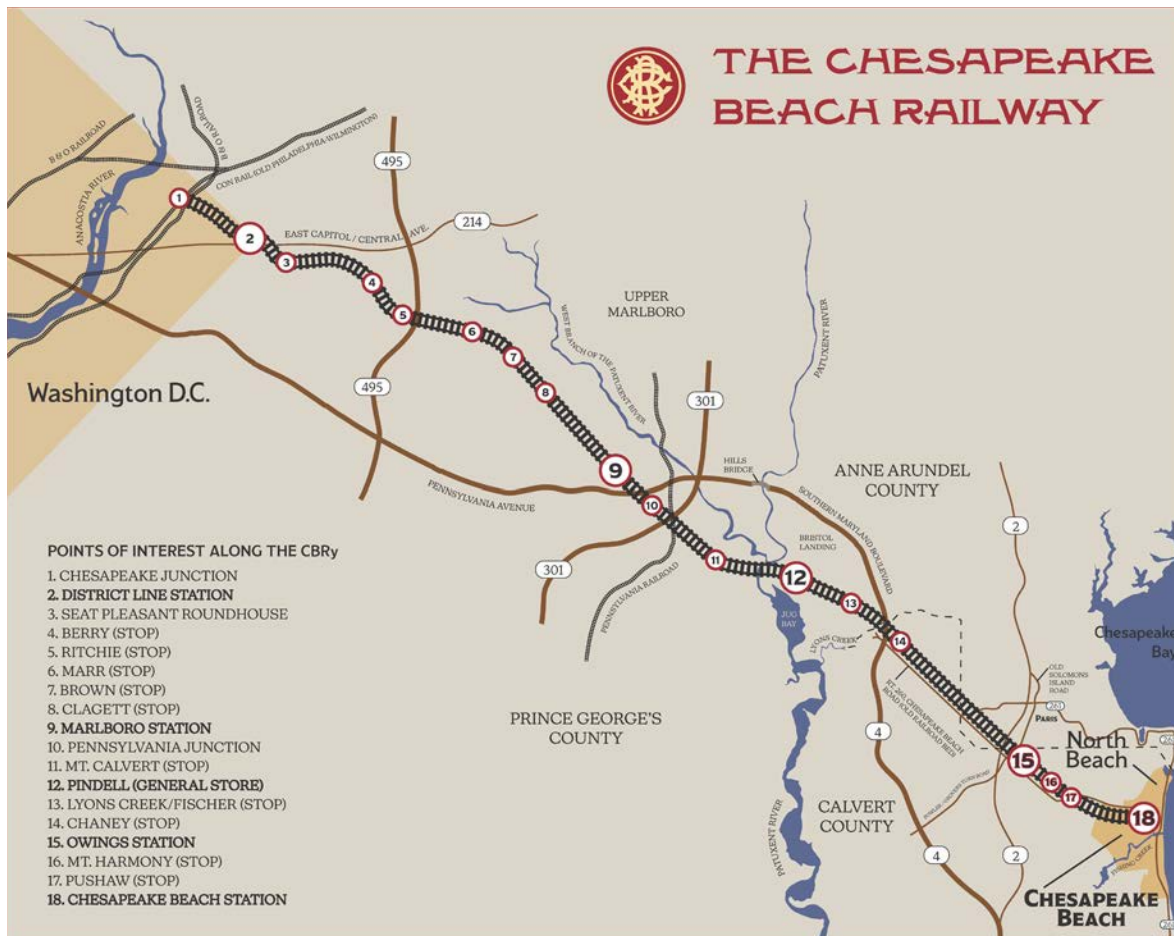
Lake Artemesia; 10-foot-wide asphalt trail with a minimum 3-foot clear zone. 2024
CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Vision

The Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail is envisioned along the former Chesapeake Beach Railway alignment connecting Washington, D.C. to Chesapeake Beach, MD. As of 2024, approximately one mile of the trail has been constructed in Prince George’s County, from Brooke Lane south to just south of Fenway Lane in Upper Marlboro.

As defined in the 2009 [Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation](#), the Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail facility is a Multiuse (hiker/biker/equestrian) Trail that runs from Seat Pleasant (near MD 704) to the Patuxent River (near Jug

Bay). The plan states, “The rail trail project will utilize the former location of the Chesapeake Beach railroad to provide a major east/west trail connection through central Prince George’s County. There are no records of right-of-way acquisition for most of the track bed of the former Chesapeake Beach Railway in Prince George’s County. . . Outside the Beltway, the trail has already been constructed through the Winshire, Kings Grant, and Fox Chase subdivisions. The trail will link residential communities with existing and planned trails in the Westphalia area and Jug Bay. Additional right-of-way acquisition is required,” (Table 2: Trail and Bikeway Recommendations, page 19).¹



Map 1. Former Chesapeake Beach Railway Alignment and Project Area

CREDIT: From the Collection of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum, Calvert County Government.

¹ Precise conformance to Master Plan of Transportation planned trails is not always possible; detailed studies have not been conducted for all proposed alignments.

Project Goals

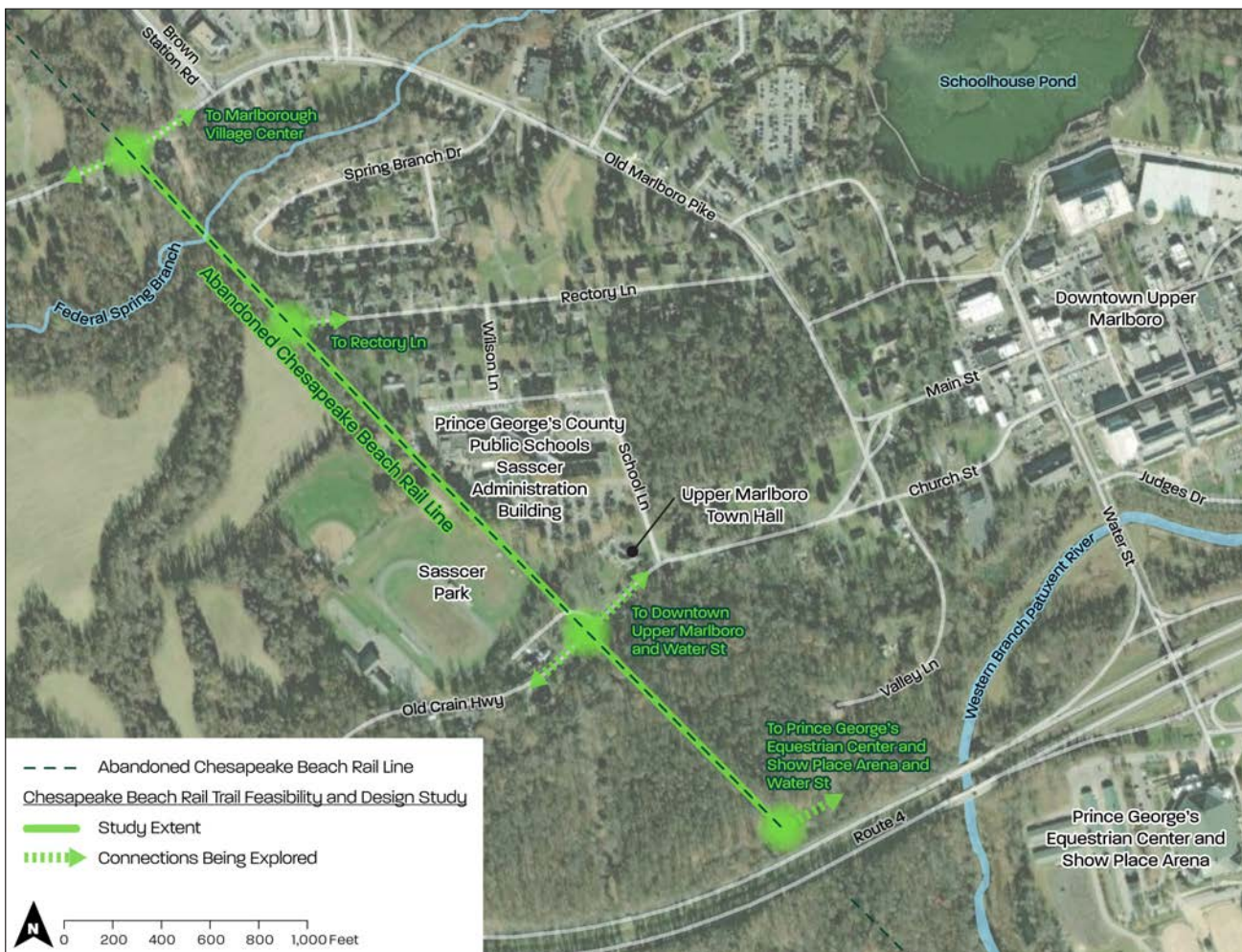
Overarching goals of constructing the CBRT segment in Upper Marlboro (see Map 2):

- Connect the town's residents and visitors to downtown Upper Marlboro and the Prince George's Equestrian Center and Show Place Arena
- Facilitate safe and easy walking and bike access between the Town's neighborhoods and destinations; especially, provided a direct walkable connection from the residential neighborhoods north of MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) to the playground, ball fields and Town Hall on Old Crain Highway

- Provide opportunities to experience nature and learn about local history
- Facilitate future extensions of the CBRT and future connections to other local and regional trail systems

Goals of the CBRT Segment Feasibility and Design Study:

- Document existing conditions of potential trail alignments
- Explore trail alternatives and identify their opportunities and challenges
- Estimate logistical and financial requirements



Map 2. Former Chesapeake Beach Railway Alignment and Project Area

CREDIT: Base aerial by Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community. Informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>). Map created by AECOM.

Process

The CBRT Feasibility and Design process began in Fall 2023 and included the steps as shown in Figure 1.

	Initial CBRT alternatives are developed and challenges identified		Project Team presents CBRT alternatives to the Town	
Site Visit	Alternatives Development	Stakeholder Interviews	Town Presentation	Feasibility And Design Study
Project team visits publicly accessible areas of the former rail trail alignment		Stakeholders are interviewed to gather their interest, ideas, and concerns about a potential trail		CBRT alternatives are refined based on comments and the final draft study is presented at a Town meeting

Figure 1. Project Process Overview

Stakeholder Engagement

A field tour of the study area was conducted on October 27, 2023. In attendance were Mayor Sarah Franklin; Darnell F. Bond III, Department of Public Works Director for the Town of Upper Marlboro; M-NCPPC staff; AECOM, Inc., staff; and CHPlanning, Ltd. staff. Stakeholder interviews were conducted to learn about prior planning efforts on this CBRT segment, gauge interest in CBRT connections, share and receive feedback on initial ideas for CBRT routes, identify route concerns and any initiatives or projects that might impact the route.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Town of Upper Marlboro President/Mayor Sarah Franklin
- M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department and Department of Parks and Recreation staff
 - Katrina Williams, Division Chief, Arts & Cultural Heritage Division

- Annette Cole, Assistant Division Chief, Southern Region Parks Division
- Cliff Driver, Recreation Maintenance Coordinator, Southern Region Parks Division
- Matt Wadsworth, Park Manager II, Southern Region Parks Division
- M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Equestrian Center and Show Place Arena staff
 - Bryan D. Anthony, General Manager, The Showplace Arena, Arts & Cultural Heritage Division
 - Richard Campbell, Recreation Enterprise Facility Manager, Arts & Cultural Heritage Division
 - Elizabeth Yewell, Equestrian Manager, Equestrian Center, Arts & Cultural Heritage Division
- Marlboro Boys & Girls Club
- Trinity Episcopal Mission vicar, staff, and congregants²

² Historic Site 79-019-15 is correctly referred to as Trinity Episcopal Church and Cemetery. In 2022, Trinity became a Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and this status is reflected when writing about the vicar, staff and congregants.

- Focus group consisting of property owners and community members
 - Steve Sonnett
 - Saundra George
 - Betsy Henderson
 - Dr. Fraser Henderson, Jr.
 - Hill Kanellos
 - Robert Sanders
 - Tracy Stone
 - Jennifer Walls
- Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highways Administration staff
 - Justin Mohr, Division Chief, Office of Structures

A stakeholder interview was sought with Board of Education Planning and School Boundaries Specialist staff as a portion of the proposed trail runs through and alongside BOE property; however, they were unavailable for comment.

On October 8, 2024, the Project Team presented the proposed CBRT segment alternatives at a Town of Upper Marlboro Board of Town Commissioners work session. The presentation included an overview of the project background and timeline; existing conditions analysis; the proposed trail alternatives, including their opportunities and challenges; and the next steps. Summarized comments received during these interviews and the work session are provided in Appendix A.



Team Field Tour. CREDIT: M-NCPPC

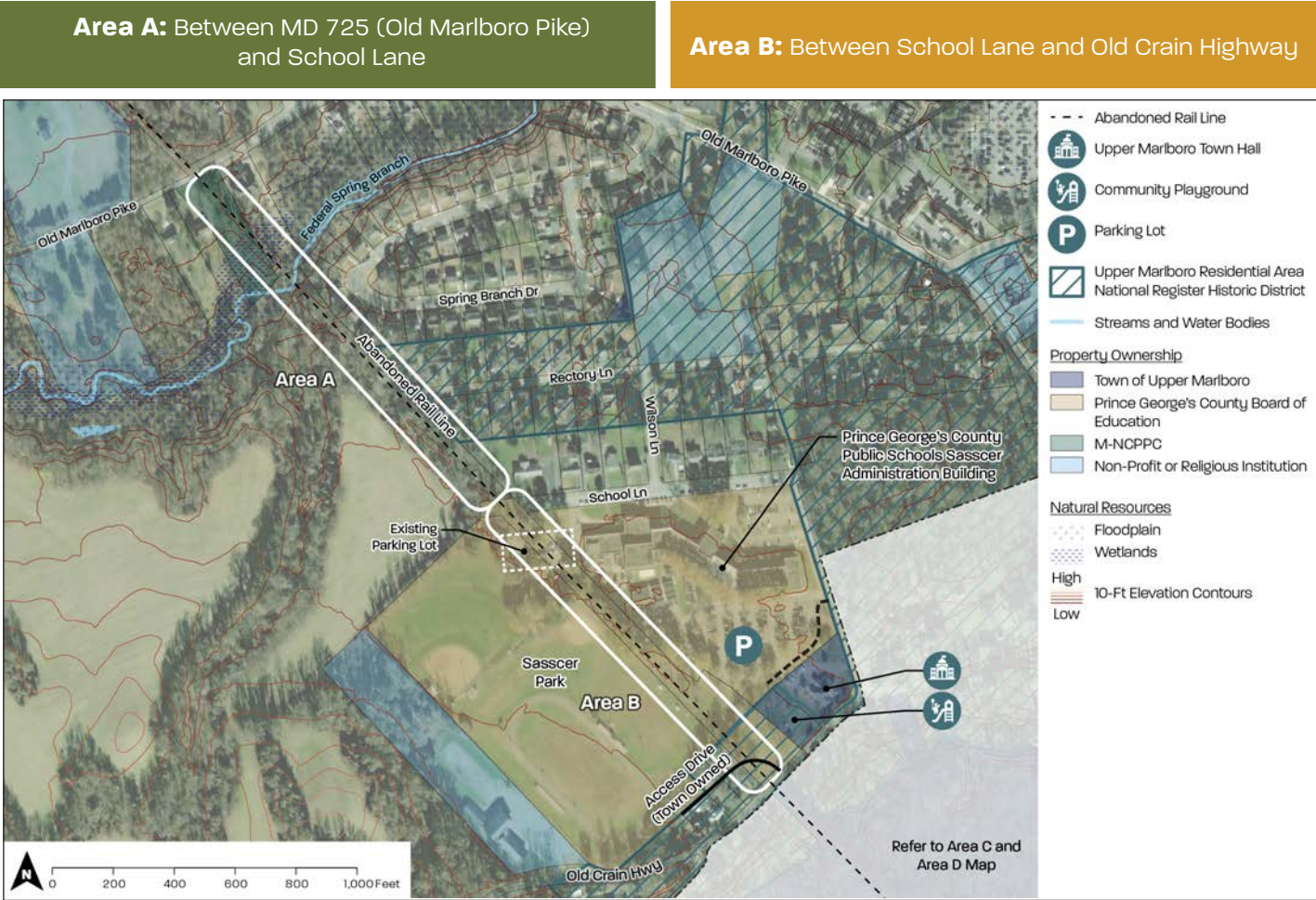
Existing Conditions

To identify opportunities and challenges associated with the proposed trail alternatives described later in this report, the project area's existing conditions are described within four focus areas (Map 3 and Map 4).

- **Area A:** Between MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and School Lane
- **Area B:** Between School Lane and Old Crain Highway

- **Area C:** Between Old Crain Highway and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue)
- **Area D:** Along Valley Lane and between Valley Lane and Water Street

The existing conditions evaluation was based on the October 2023 site visit, stakeholder interviews, and desktop mapping analysis. Data from Prince George's County GIS Open Data Portal, Maryland's GIS Data Catalog, and MEDUSA (Maryland's Cultural Resource Information System) were used in the mapping analysis.



Map 3. Existing Conditions - Area A and Area B

CREDIT: Base aerial by Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community. Informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>) and Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>). Map created by AECOM



Area A



Area B



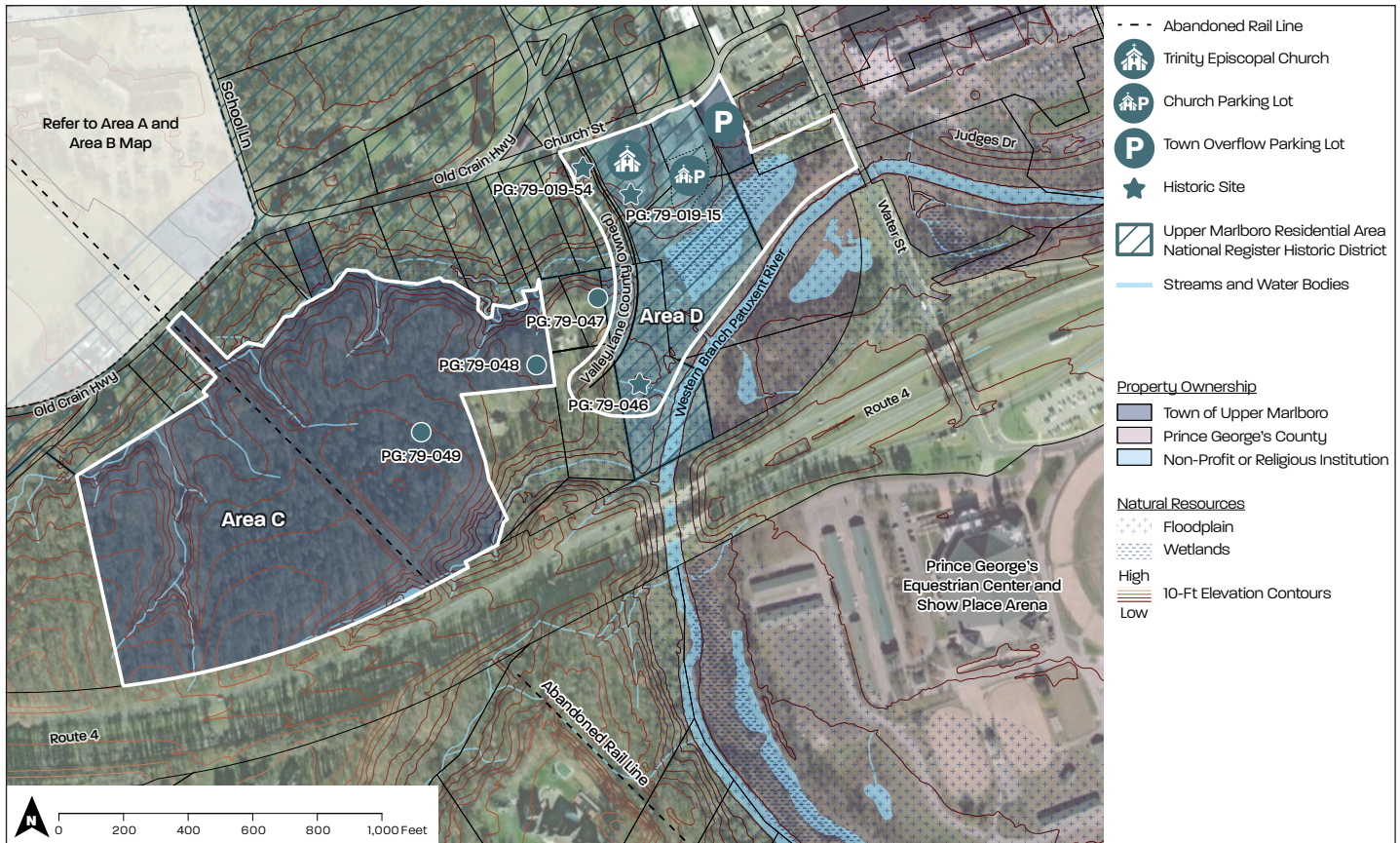
Area C



Area D

Area C: Between Old Crain Highway and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue)

Area D: Along Valley Lane and between Valley Lane and Water Street



Map 4. Existing Conditions - Area C and Area D

CREDIT: Base aerial by Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community. Informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.

Area A

Area A encompasses the abandoned rail line and surrounding area between MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and School Lane (Map 3). MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) is a two-lane roadway with no sidewalks near the potential rail trail intersection. Starting at MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and extending south, the abandoned rail line passes through an M-NCPPC-owned parcel managed by M-NCPPC's Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) before passing through two privately-owned properties. The larger of the two private properties contains agricultural fields to the west of the abandoned rail line. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located to the east of the abandoned rail line.

Area A is forested and undeveloped. Topography ranges from 40 feet to 60 feet along the length of Area A. The area between Spring Branch Drive and

School Lane is flat. Topographic data indicates the presence of two berms along the abandoned rail line on either side of the Federal Spring Branch stream, suggesting that a bridge was once present for the railway to pass over the stream. The Federal Spring Branch stream and surrounding area (approximately 0.35 acre) in the Area A are within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE). Wetlands are also present.³

The Town of Upper Marlboro Residential Area National Register Historic District (PG:79-115) overlays a portion of Area A at the termination of Rectory Lane. The district includes dwellings, cemeteries, a utility building, and a historical marker, all of which date from circa 1730 to 1961 and “represent the evolution of Upper Marlboro from a rural village . . . to a thriving small town and County seat.”⁴

³ Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>)

⁴ United States Department of the Interior. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form Town of Upper Marlboro Residential Area*. 2012. https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/Medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-1533.pdf



View looking east along Old Marlboro Pike from west of the abandoned rail line intersection.



View looking west from Rectory Lane toward the abandoned rail line.

Figure 2. Area A Existing Conditions Photos, October 2023. CREDIT: M-NCPPC.

Area B

Area B encompasses the abandoned rail line and surrounding area between School Lane and Old Crain Highway (Map 3). The abandoned rail line passes through a single parcel owned by the Prince George's County Board of Education (BOE). The properties on both sides of the abandoned rail line are also owned by BOE. The eastern parcel contains the BOE Administration Building complex, an approximately 1.8-acre parking lot, and auxiliary storage buildings. The western parcel is Sasscer Park (Park ID: R14; 14201 School Lane), which consists of ball fields, a multipurpose field, and a track. Although this land is owned by BOE, it is operated as a recreational complex by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). DPR also performs year-round maintenance on Sasscer Park. The Marlboro Boys and Girls Club uses the park year-round for football and flag football, baseball, soccer, track and field, and training. The lot for the BOE Administration Building provides parking and, according to the DPR Parks Manager, nears or reaches capacity during sports events.

Along the edge of Sasscer Park and adjacent to the BOE Administration Building's parking lot is an area of lawn. The lawn contains scattered shade trees, including several large mature trees such as willow oak. A portion of the abandoned rail line passes through the parking lot. Short wooden posts separate Sasscer Park from the parking lot. Access to the park's fields is provided along the parking lot and School Lane for emergency vehicle access and vehicles dropping off/picking up equipment. Area B is flat throughout with an elevation of approximately 70 feet. As the abandoned rail line nears Old Crain Highway, it crosses a short, unnamed service road that provides access to residential properties. The abandoned rail line also passes near a Town-owned playground and the Upper Marlboro Town Hall. Old Crain Highway is a two-lane roadway with a recently constructed sidewalk along its south side.

The southern end of Area B is partially located within the Town of Upper Marlboro Residential Area National Register Historic District (PG:79-115).



View looking west at the parking lot near School Lane and west of the Sasscer Administration Building



View of the area to the west of the parking lot near School Lane



View looking north at the abandoned rail line between Sasscer Park and the parking lot



View looking south at the abandoned rail line



View looking north from Old Crain Highway at the Town-owned road and abandoned rail line



View looking north across Old Crain Highway at the Town-owned road and abandoned rail line

Figure 3. Area B Existing Condition Photos, October 2023. CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Area C

Area C encompasses the abandoned rail line between Old Crain Highway and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue), and a 27-acre, Town-owned parcel through which the alignment passes (5510 Old Crain Highway; Tax Identification Number 02351760) (see Map 4).

Area C is mostly a deciduous hardwood forest with mature tulip poplars. The abandoned rail line is easily recognizable; the former alignment is mown and located in a small ravine framed with mature trees. The abandoned rail line is flat at an elevation of approximately 70 feet. However, the topography varies to the east and west. To the east of the abandoned rail line, the elevation rises from 50 to 90 feet from north to south before dropping to approximately 50 feet. To the west, the elevation rises from 50 to 100 feet. The northeast and southeast edges of Area C are within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE). No wetlands are present.

The remains of two houses are present east of the abandoned rail line. The foundations supporting one of the houses are estimated to date to the early- to mid-twentieth century. Considerable amounts of trash and debris were observed around the houses and adjacent to an unpaved driveway leading to the houses. The debris consisted of old tires, household waste, and a vehicle. Based on exterior observations, the condition of the houses did not appear to be sound.

One of the two houses is possibly the Jupiter Lee house (PG:79-049). The site of the Erasmus Gantt House (PG:79-048) is located closer to Valley Lane. Both of these resources are documented in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP). According to the MIHP documentation, “In 1884, two Black men of Upper Marlboro, Erasmus Gantt and Jupiter Lee, acquired tenant houses from a nearby farm, and moved them to the small Black community which was beginning to develop between Trinity Church and the Western Branch.” The houses were the nucleus of the small Black community which grew up around the Marlboro church and school. The Erasmus Gantt House was extant as of 1984, but does not exist today.⁵

The Upper Marlboro Residential Area National Register Historic District (PG:79-115) borders Area C at its northwestern edges.

⁵ Maryland Historical Trust. *State Historic Sites Inventory Form Jupiter Lee House*. 1983. <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/Medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG:79-49.pdf>



View looking east along Old Crain Highway near abandoned rail line intersection



View looking south across Old Crain Highway at the abandoned rail line intersection



View looking south from Old Crain Highway towards the abandoned rail line



View looking north from abandoned rail line towards Old Crain Highway



View of the abandoned rail line within a small ravine framed with trees



Forested area within the Town-owned parcel

Figure 4. Area C Existing Condition Photos, October 2023. CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Area D

Area D includes Valley Lane and land to the east up to Water Street, Trinity Episcopal Church and Cemetery to the north, and the Western Branch to the south (Map 4).

Valley Lane is a narrow roadway owned by Prince George's County. The roadway provides access to fewer than 10 private properties (located on the north or west side of Valley Lane) and a cemetery (located on the south side of Valley Lane).

The roadway is quiet and framed by trees and vegetation. The roadway does not have sidewalks.

The area between Valley Lane, Trinity Episcopal Church and Cemetery, Water Street, and the Western Branch is composed of multiple parcels owned by religious institutions, Prince George's County, the Town of Upper Marlboro, and a private owner. The area is forested with open space adjacent to the Western Branch. A .57-acre paved parking lot is located behind Trinity Episcopal Parish House. An unpaved overflow parking lot within a town-owned parcel is also located along Church Street.

A sizable portion of Valley Lane as well as the entire area between Valley Lane and Water Street are within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE). Wetlands are also present between Valley Lane and Water Street. The Mayor of Upper Marlboro and Trinity Episcopal Mission staff and parishioners reported that Valley Lane periodically floods, which prevents access. Flood waters have also reached the southern end of the parish house parking lot.

The elevation is lower in Area D compared to Areas A, B, and C. The elevation of Valley Lane decreases from approximately 40 feet at Church Street to approximately 20 feet and then rises back to approximately 40 feet at the end of the roadway.

The elevation decreases from Church Street to the Western Branch between Valley Lane and Water Street. The elevation starts at approximately 40 feet at Church Street, is approximately 20 feet just south of the Trinity Episcopal Parish House parking lot, and is approximately 10 feet at the Western Branch.

The Upper Marlboro Residential Area National Register Historic District (PG:79-115) overlays a portion of Area D. Also located in Area D are three Prince George’s County Historic Sites, protected by Subtitle 29, the County Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- **Trinity Episcopal Church and Cemetery (PG:79-019-15, 14515 Church Street):** “Constructed in 1846, the church is a fine example of a Victorian Gothic Revival Church, was designed by one of the most prominent architects of the period, and exemplifies the social, religious, and historical heritage of Prince George’s County.”⁶
- **Bunnell-Anderson House (Rueben Bunnell House) (PG:79-019-54, 14509 Church Street):** Constructed in 1830, this house “reflects four different periods of building construction in form and style, and retains sufficient integrity to convey its significant as an example of the progression of a rural, nineteenth-century Prince George’s County dwelling.”⁷

- **Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery (PG:79-046, 5500BI Valley Lane):** Constructed in the period immediately following the Civil War, Union Chapel was a focal point for the Black community of Upper Marlboro for more than 50 years. The chapel no longer remains, but the cemetery contains marked graves with markers that span nearly a century and an unknown number of unmarked graves. The chapel site and cemetery have significant character, interest, and value as part of the development of one of the earliest African-American churches established in Prince George’s County following the Civil War.⁸

In addition, the site of the Marlboro Black School (PG:79-047, 5505 Valley Lane) has been documented just west of Area D. “Constructed in 1877, this school operated for over a half-century. The school was demolished in 1982, but its site remains important in the history of Black education in Prince George’s County.”⁹

6 Maryland Historical Trust. *State Historic Sites Inventory Form Trinity Episcopal Church*. 1987. <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/Medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG;79-15.pdf>

7 Maryland Historical Trust. *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form Bunnell-Anderson House*. 2009. <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG;79-54.pdf>

8 The Ottery Group Inc. *Addendum Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel and Cemetery*. 2009. <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/Medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG;79-46.pdf>

9 Maryland Historical Trust. *State Historic Sites Inventory Form Site of Marlboro Colored Elementary School*. 1983. <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/Medusa/PDF/PrinceGeorges/PG;79-47.pdf>



View looking northeast along Valley Lane with the Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Cemetery on the right.



Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Cemetery along Valley Lane

Figure 5. Existing Conditions Photos, October 2023. CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Proposed Trail Alternatives

Two North Alternatives for the trail section between MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and Old Crain Highway and three South Alternatives for the trail section between Old Crain Highway and Water Street are proposed. Aspects of the north and south alternatives could be combined.

The proposed trail alternatives are based on:

- Observations made by the consultants during the October 2023 site visit
- Responses collected by the consultants through conversations with the Town's elected officials, stakeholders, the public, and M-NCPPC staff
- Existing conditions analysis

The following aspects were taken into consideration:

- Alignment on public vs. private parcels
- Proximity to residential properties
- Stream, floodplain, and wetland crossings
- Elevation changes
- Infrastructure investment
- Connections to downtown Upper Marlboro
- Trail user experience (for example, noise, safety, sightlines, developed vs. natural areas)
- Potential for interpretative signage

Additional trail alternatives beyond those presented in this chapter were explored by the consultants during the alternative development process. A description of those alternatives and why they were dismissed from further consideration is provided in Appendix C.

North Trail Alternatives

The two North Alternatives (Alternatives N1 and N2) would begin at the intersection of the abandoned rail bed and MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and continue southeast to the intersection of the abandoned rail bed and Old Crain Highway. In both alternatives, the north end of the trail would start at a trail crossing of MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike). The trail crossing would require road markings, vehicular and pedestrian signage, and potentially, lighting to ensure safe crossing. The trail's southern end connecting to Old Crain Highway would provide connections to the Upper Marlboro Town Hall, Sasscer Park, a community playground, and a potential future splash pad.

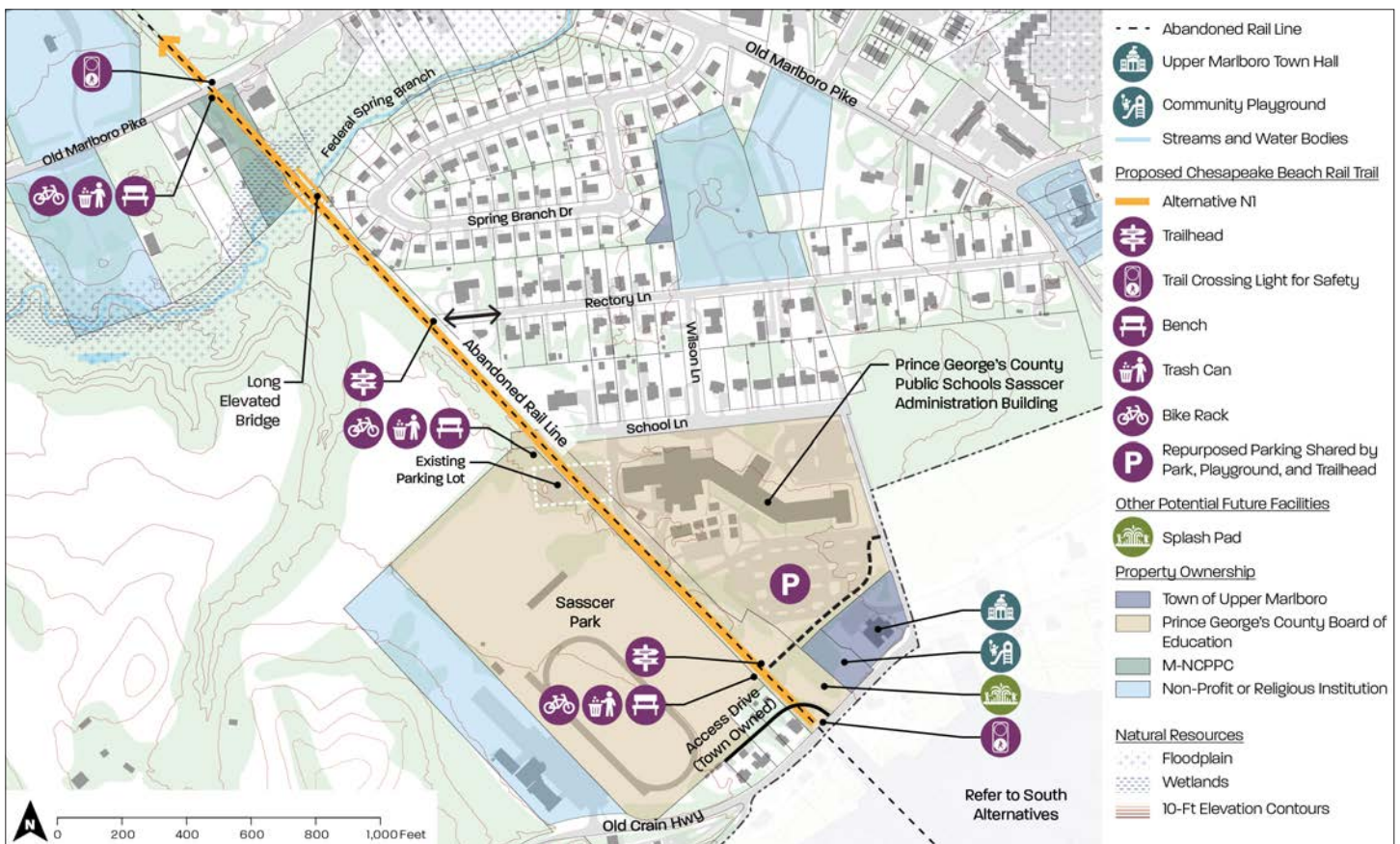
Both North Trail Alternatives, if pursued, would require additional and substantial stakeholder engagement and coordination because both alternatives pass through private parcels.

ALTERNATIVE N1

The approximately 0.52-mile-long Alternative N1 would utilize the abandoned rail line to provide the most direct connection between MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and Old Crain Highway (Map 5). Overall, Alternative N1 would avoid the floodplain and wetlands, minimize elevation changes, and provide an opportunity to re-vegetate impervious surfaces.

Following the MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) crossing at the north end, the trail would utilize the abandoned rail line through an M-NCPPC-owned parcel and a privately-owned parcel. The rail bed remains level along a man-made berm, avoiding the floodplain around the Federal Spring Branch stream. The berm is interrupted at the Federal Spring Branch stream where the

natural grade drops down to the stream. Just before the stream, a long, elevated bridge for the trail would be required to span the stream and connect to the elevated rail bed to the southeast. The trail would continue on this elevated rail bed through a wooded area along the edge of a large undeveloped private parcel (the “Sasscer Farm”). The trail along this section would also be adjacent to seven private residential parcels, which would provide an opportunity for a neighborhood trail access point connecting to Rectory Lane. The trail would then continue south into Sasscer Park following the abandoned rail line through an existing small parking lot. To accommodate the trail, the existing parking area to the west of the trail would be re-vegetated, expanding the park’s green open space. The trail would then continue south to Old Crain Highway.



Map 5. Alternative N1

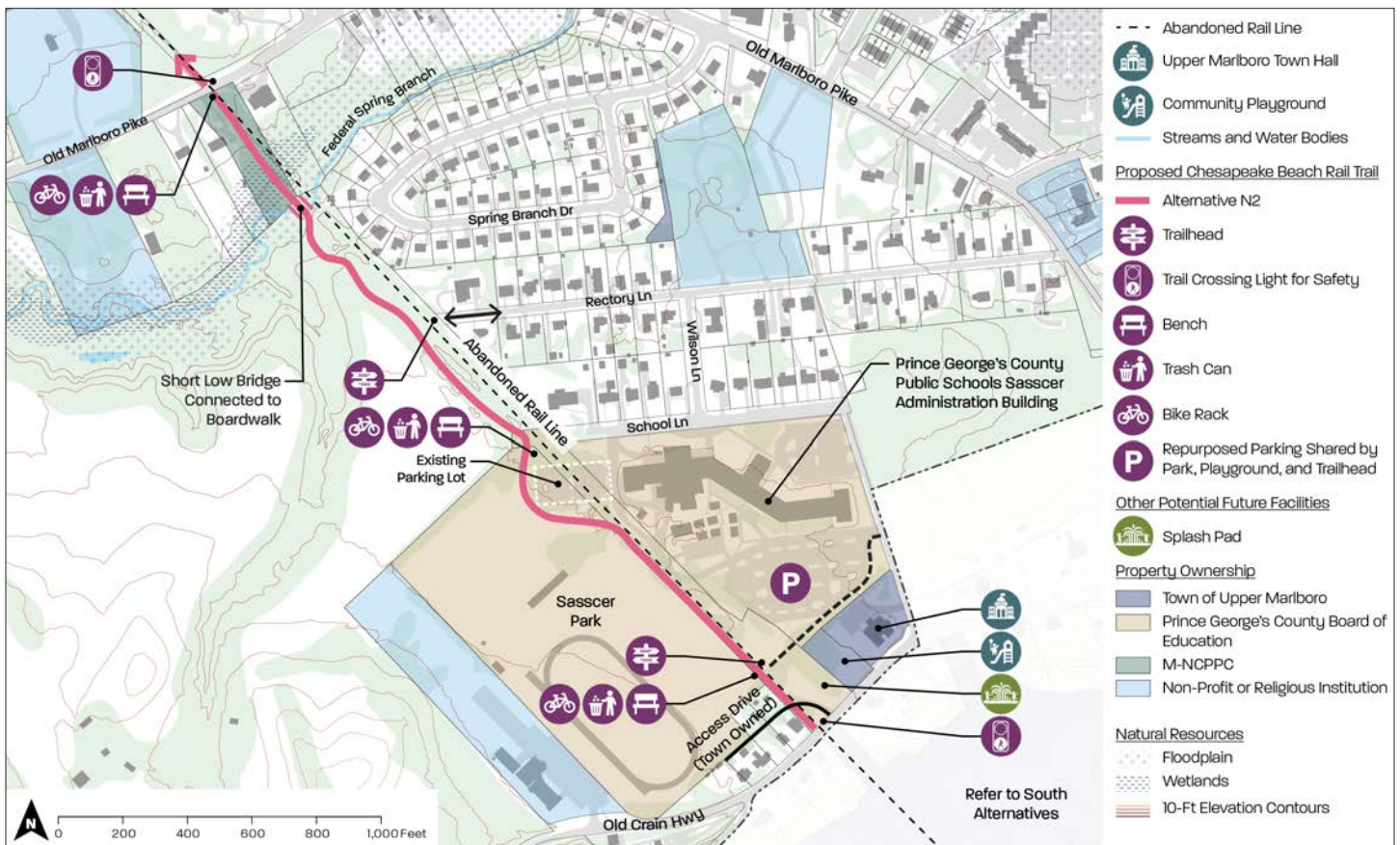
CREDIT: Base and informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.

ALTERNATIVE N2

The alignment of the approximately 0.54-mile-long Alternative N2 would be similar to Alternative N1, but the alignment would shift in key areas to maximize the trail alignment on M-NCPPC-owned land, require less infrastructure investment for crossing the Federal Spring Branch stream, increase the vegetative buffer between the trail and residences, and avoid impacting a small area of the BOE Administration Building parking lot (Map 6).

Following the MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) crossing at the north end, the trail would continue southeast through an M-NCPPC-owned parcel. Offset to the south of the elevated, abandoned rail bed, the trail would become an elevated boardwalk as it traverses into the floodplain and associated wetlands of the Federal

Spring Branch stream. A short, elevated bridge for the trail would be required to span the stream and connect to an elevated boardwalk to the southeast. The elevated boardwalk would then continue through a wooded area along the edge of the Sasscer Farm parcel, avoiding the agricultural fields to the west, and remain offset to the south of the abandoned rail bed. This offset would distance the trail from the adjacent residential parcels, allowing additional space for a vegetative buffer. A neighborhood trail access point would connect to Rectory Lane (similar to Alternative N1). The trail would then continue south into Sasscer Park and around a small parking lot before reconnecting with the abandoned rail line. As with Alternative N1, the adjacent BOE Administration Building parking lot would serve as trail head parking and provide easy access to the trail.



Map 6. Alternative N2

CREDIT: Base and informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.

South Trail Alternatives

Three South Alternatives (Alternatives S1, S2, and S3) would begin at a trail crossing of Old Crain Highway, connecting to the southern end of the North Trail Alternatives. The Old Crain Highway trail crossing would require road markings, vehicular and pedestrian signage, and

potentially crossing safety lights (see Figure 6). The alignment of the three South Alternatives vary greatly, each providing different connections, trail user experiences, and alignments on public vs. private lands.

Current



Figure 6A. Existing Conditions (October 2023). CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Future



Figure 6B. Example of what the Future Old Crain Highway Trail Crossing with the Alternative S2 or S3 Trail Entrance could look like.
RENDERING: AECOM

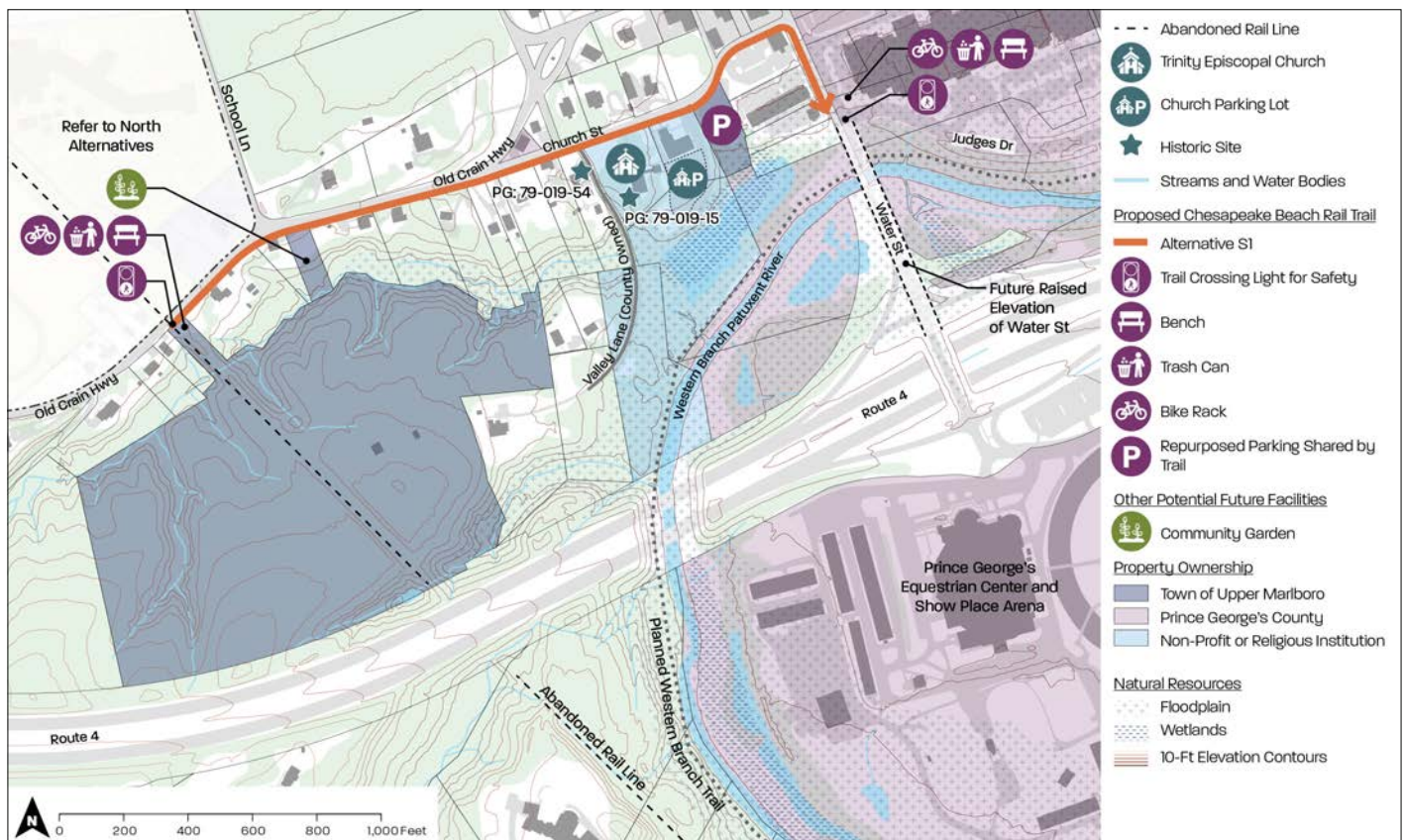
ALTERNATIVE S1

The approximately 0.52-mile-long Alternative S1 would utilize the right-of-way along the south side of Old Crain Highway and Church Street to connect to Water Street, which provides pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown Upper Marlboro to the north and the Show Place Arena to the south (Map 7). Overall, Alternative S1 would provide the most direct connection to downtown Upper Marlboro and provide an opportunity for trail interpretation of historic properties along Old Crain Highway and Church Street. Alternative S1 could connect to the planned Western Branch Trail via Water Street when or if that trail is realized.

Following the Old Crain Highway crossing, the trail would require the narrowing and shift of Old Crain Highway and Church Street to expand the existing southern sidewalk into a 10-foot-wide

multiuse trail. The trail would require plastic bollards or a mown three-foot-wide median along the road to provide a safe offset from vehicular traffic. The town overflow parking lot along Church Street could also serve as parking for the trail. A trail crossing would be required at the signalized intersection of Church Street and Water Street. New pedestrian signaling would be required to ensure safe crossing to the west side of Water Street where a Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)-planned future elevated trail and replaced bridge would provide pedestrian and bicycle access under MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) to Show Place Arena.

Alternative S1, if pursued, would impact the right-of-way along Old Crain Highway and Church Street. The right-of-way is adjacent to several private properties (5410-5506 Old Crain Highway; 14501-14601 Church Street).



Map 7. Alternative S1

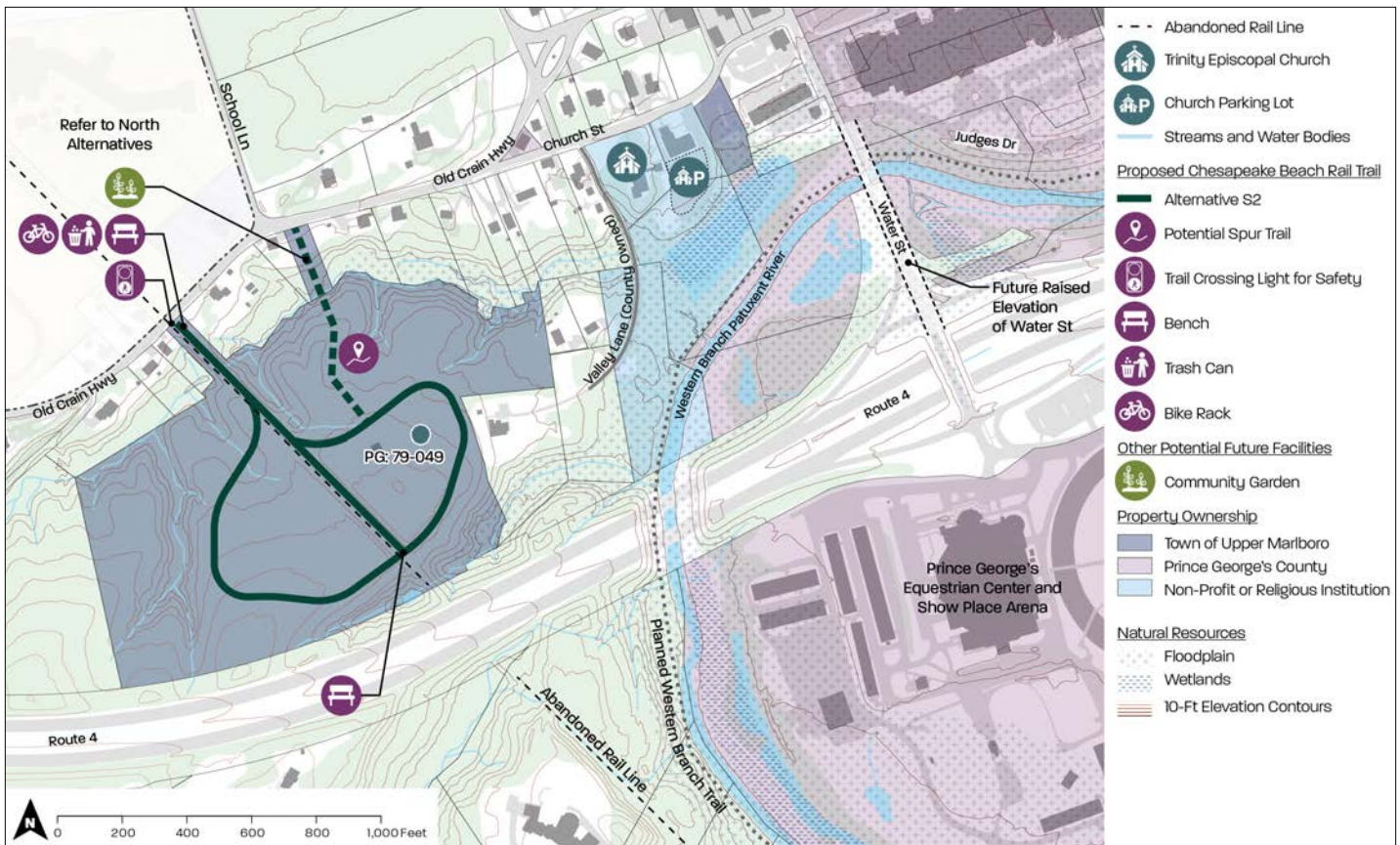
CREDIT: Base and informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.

ALTERNATIVE S2

The 0.65-mile-long Alternative S2 would connect the northern section of the CBRT to a loop trail south of Old Crain Highway (Map 8). The loop trail would maximize the trail alignment on Town-owned parcel and offer a scenic route through native forest.

Following the Old Crain Highway crossing, the trail would follow the mostly level, abandoned rail bed where it continues through a small ravine

framed with mature trees. Two loop trails, one to the northeast and one to the southwest of the rail bed would offer users options to exercise or explore natural sites in the area. A future trail spur (approximately 0.16 miles) would connect the loop to the future planned community garden on a Town-owned parcel along Old Crain Highway.



Map 8. Alternative S2

CREDIT: Base and informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.

ALTERNATIVE S3

The 0.60-mile-long Alternative S3 would utilize a Town-owned parcel and Valley Lane to connect the northern section of the CBRT to Water Street (Map 9). Overall, Alternative S3 would offer a scenic route through native forests and wetlands connecting to the downtown amenities of Upper Marlboro and provide opportunities to interpret some African American historically significant resources along or near Valley Lane.

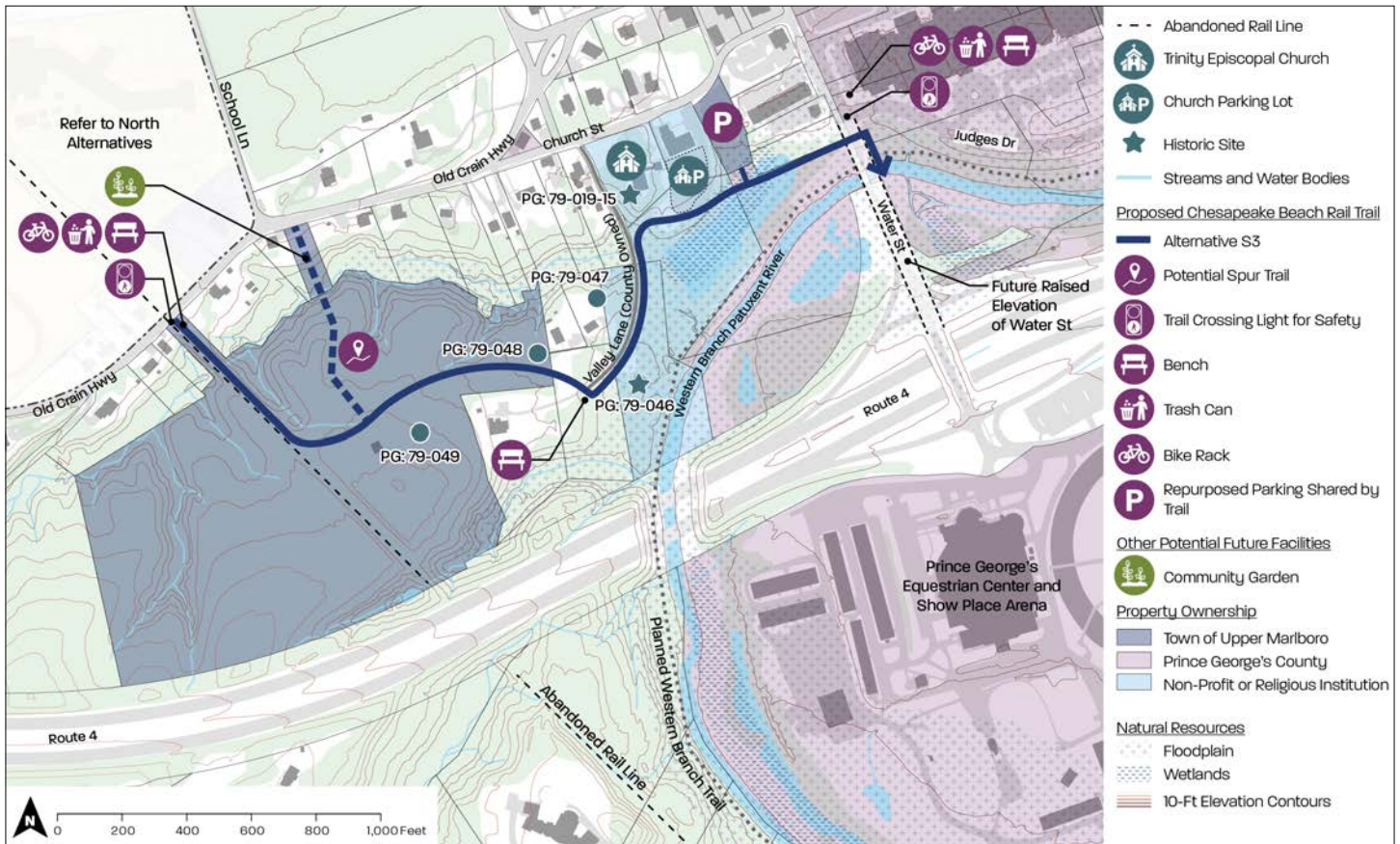
Following the Old Crain Highway crossing, the trail would follow the mostly level, abandoned rail bed where it continues through a small ravine framed with mature trees. The trail would then turn east, leaving the abandoned rail bed. The trail would then traverse through forest to connect to Valley Lane, which would require a right-of-way through a privately-owned parcel. The trail would then continue along the south side of Valley Lane before turning northeast. The trail would then cross Trinity Episcopal campus and Prince George's County properties to connect to Water Street. The trail would be south of the parish house parking lot. The trail between Valley Lane and Water Street would be elevated as it traverses into the floodplain and associated

wetlands of the Western Branch stream. The elevated trail would also connect to the southern end of the town overflow parking lot.

A future trail spur (approximately 0.16 mile) would connect the trail to the future planned community garden for a Town-owned parcel along Old Crain Highway.

A trail crossing would be required at Water Street. New pedestrian signaling would be required to ensure safe crossing to the east side of Water Street where a planned future elevated trail and replaced bridge would provide pedestrian and bicycle access under MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) to Show Place Arena. In the future, Alternative S3 could connect to the planned Western Branch Trail at Water Street.

Alternative S3, if pursued, would require additional and substantial stakeholder engagement and coordination because the alternative passes through private parcels. In addition, any ground disturbance associated with the design and construction of the trail would need to avoid negative effects to the Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery (Historic Site 79-046).



Map 9. Alternative S3

CREDIT: Base and informational layers by Prince George's County (<https://gisdata.pgplanning.org/opendata/>), Maryland Department of Information Technology (<https://data.imap.maryland.gov/>), and Maryland Historical Trust (<https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/medusa/>). Map created by AECOM.



Valley Lane, 2024
CREDIT: M-NCPPC

Trail Features

The trail alternatives would include amenities such as benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bicycle racks, and wayfinding and interpretive signage where appropriate. Table 1 describes each of these features and provides an example photo of each feature.

The surface material of the proposed trail alternatives would vary based on the location and accessibility standards. For example, according to the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Design Guidelines*,¹⁰ an asphalt trail would be more appropriate for a heavily used section of the trail in a developed area, whereas a natural trail surface material would be more appropriate for a section of the trail within a forested environment.¹¹ Descriptions of trail surface materials and structures such as boardwalks and bridges are provided in Table 2.

Regarding trail lighting, the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Design Guidelines*, recommends that lighting be considered only in areas that have proximity to high volume transit services, or where there are significant levels of dark time usage.¹² Therefore, lighting was not considered for this trail segment.

10 M-NCPPC Parks and Recreation Facilities Design Guidelines, 2025, page 77. <https://www.pgparcs.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/DEPARTMENT-OF-PARK-AND-RECREATION-FACILITIES-GUIDELINES-2025-2.pdf>.






11 Chapter 2, "Shared Use Paths and Trails," of the *Parks and Recreation Facilities Design Guidelines* states, "This chapter of the Design Manual provides guidelines for property developers, and other entities, who are designing and building path or trail facilities for public use on Department of Parks and Recreation parkland, or in other settings that will be used by the public. These guidelines will enable all public and private entities to develop high quality public paths and trails by adhering to a set of standards, guidelines and design criteria that is commensurate with current national standards and best practices," (page 74). <https://www.pgparcs.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/DEPARTMENT-OF-PARK-AND-RECREATION-FACILITIES-GUIDELINES-2025-2.pdf>.

12 M-NCPPC Parks and Recreation Facilities Design Guidelines, 2025, page 87. <https://www.pgparcs.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/DEPARTMENT-OF-PARK-AND-RECREATION-FACILITIES-GUIDELINES-2025-2.pdf>.

Table 1. Trail Surfaces and Structures

Amenity	Description	Example Photo
<p>Bench</p>	<p>5-foot recycled plastic resinwood bench with armrests anchored into a concrete pad. Option to be engraved with a donor's name.</p>	 <p>CREDIT: iStock, ID:1175678964</p>
<p>Trash / Recycling Receptacles</p>	<p>32-gallon recycled plastic resinwood trash and recycling receptacles.</p>	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>
<p>Bicycle Rack</p>	<p>Powder-coated steel tube bicycle rack embedded into a concrete pad or with sufficient below grade footers. 5-7 bike standard capacity, size adjusted to meet projected demand.</p>	 <p>CREDIT: M-NCPPC</p>
<p>Wayside Signage</p>	<p>Low-profile, high-pressure laminate, accessible wayside sign panel with two embedded posts.</p>	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>

Table 2. Trail Surfaces and Structures

Surface or Structure	Description	Example Photo
Primary Trail Surface	10-foot-wide asphalt trail with a minimum 3-foot clear zone (mown where necessary) along each side.	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>
Alternate Trail Surface	10-foot-wide flexible recycled tire porous paving with minimum 3-foot clear zone (mown where necessary) along each side. This premium surface allows water infiltration, limits tree root disturbance, and is easier on runner/jogger's joints.	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>
Boardwalk	Treated wood, native, rot resistant hardwood (i.e., black locust), or fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) boardwalk supported by helical piles. If the boardwalk is elevated less than 30 inches in height, the boardwalk requires a toe curb at minimum. For boardwalk sections that are elevated higher than 30 inches, a guardrail is required.	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>
Trail Bridges	Prefabricated bridge from fiber reinforced polymer (FRP), steel, or wood. New advances in fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) construction offer a lightweight, low-maintenance option.	 <p>CREDIT: M-NOPPC</p>
Large vehicle bollard	A single rigid fold-down bollard located at every trail interface with a vehicular road would prevent unauthorized vehicles from accessing the trail. Two additional bollards may be required along edges of the trail if natural obstructions do not exist (i.e., trees). Bollards would be brightly painted with ground markings for visibility.	 <p>CREDIT: AECOM</p>

Alternatives Analysis

Table 3. North Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative N1	Alternative N2
Property Impacts	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M-NCPPC-Owned “Claggett Tract Grant Crossing;” (0201418) • Privately owned 13905 Old Marlboro Pike; (0203281) • Privately owned Sasscer Farm, 5611 Old Crain Highway; (0235259) • BOE-Owned “Parcel B;” (0192336) <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most direct route <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easements from owners of the Sasscer Farm and 13905 Old Marlboro Pike would be required. • Sasscer family do not encourage pursuit of nor support an easement or trail (see Appendix B) • Reduces the amount of parking in the northwest corner of the BOE Administration Building complex parking lot because a portion would be converted for trail use and the parking to the west of the trail would be re-vegetated • Adjacent to seven private residential parcels with only a narrow vegetative buffer 	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M-NCPPC-Owned “Claggett Tract Grant Crossing;” (0201418) • Privately owned Sasscer Farm, 5611 Old Crain Highway; (0235259) • BOE-Owned “Parcel B;” (0192336) <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids reduction to the BOE Administration Building complex parking lot, which also provides parking for Sasscer Park and nears or reaches capacity during park events • Increases the vegetative buffer between the trail and the adjacent seven private residential parcels <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easements from owners of the Sasscer Farm would be required. • Sasscer family do not encourage pursuit of nor support an easement or trail (see Appendix B) • Less direct and meandering route not characteristic of a rail trail

Table 3 cont. North Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative N1	Alternative N2
<p>Water Resources</p>	<p>Impacted Resources</p> <p>Northern section would overlap with the Federal Spring Branch stream, the 100-year floodplain, and associated wetlands. The man-made berms associated with the former rail bed, which Alternative N1 would follow, on either side of the Federal Spring Branch stream and 100-year floodplain, are at an elevation of 54-56 feet, which is higher than the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) in this area (approximately 38-39 feet).¹³</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing the Federal Spring Branch stream would add interest to the trail and the potential for interpretation of water resources. • Avoids the 100-year floodplain and wetlands because the trail would be elevated along the man-made berms. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanning the Federal Spring Branch stream, 100-year floodplain, and wetlands via an elevated bridge would increase infrastructure costs. 	<p>Impacted Resources</p> <p>Northern section would overlap with the Federal Spring Branch stream, the 100-year floodplain, and associated wetlands.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing the Federal Spring Branch stream would add interest to the trail and the potential for interpretation of water resources. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanning the Federal Spring Branch stream, 100-year floodplain, and wetlands via an elevated bridge would increase infrastructure costs.

¹³ The Base Flood Elevation (BFE) is the elevation of surface water resulting from a flood that has a one percent chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year.

Table 3 cont. North Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative N1	Alternative N2
<p>Topography</p>	<p>Topography Impacts</p> <p>Minimal elevation changes because the trail would follow the rail line alignment, which is flat. From MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) to the Federal Spring Branch stream, the elevation would be 54-56 feet. From the Federal Spring Branch stream to Old Crain Highway, the elevation would increase from 54 to 72 feet.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal elevation changes means greater accessibility for all trail users. 	<p>Topography Impacts</p> <p>More elevation changes than N1 around the Federal Spring Branch stream. From MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) to the Federal Spring Branch stream, N2's elevation would decrease from 56 to 32 feet. From the Federal Spring Branch stream to Old Crain Highway, the elevation would increase from 32 to 72 feet.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail users desiring a more challenging route may enjoy the elevation changes. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More elevation changes could mean less accessibility for some trail users. More resources required to implement a trail design for sustainability or longevity. Sustainably designed trails are trails that will perform well for many years, will not erode from water and use, and are low maintenance. The design of these trails has to consider slopes. For example, trails should traverse along the sideslope, avoid steep grades above 50%, use switchbacks or climbing turns in steeper sections, outslope the tread, and include provisions for sheet flow of runoff.
<p>Infrastructure Investment</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) Long, elevated bridge above the Federal Spring Branch stream. This structure is anticipated to be more expensive than N2's bridge and boardwalk. 	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) Short, elevated bridge spanning the Federal Spring Branch stream and an elevated boardwalk through the floodplain and wetlands. These structures are anticipated to be less expensive than N1's bridge.

Table 3 cont. North Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative N1	Alternative N2
<p>Trail User Experience</p>	<p>Types of Trail Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion in nature through wooded areas, while being in proximity and potentially in view of residential neighborhoods (depending on location and season). Trail users would have the opportunity to view wildlife, connect with nature, and experience tranquility and/or solitude. • Travel through a developed park setting with open views through scattered trees to Sasscer Park, the BOE Administration Building complex, and Old Crain Highway. Trail users would have the opportunity to view recreation activities and events at Sasscer Park and be around other people while enjoying the trail. <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree canopy would provide ample shade along the trail through the wooded areas. Large mature and other trees would provide scattered shade along the trail through the developed park setting. • Trail users could experience birdsong, the sound of trickling water, and other sounds associated with nature and wildlife along the trail through the wooded area and near the Federal Spring Branch stream. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail users would experience traffic noise as they approach the intersection with MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and noise from recreation activities and events occurring at Sasscer Park. 	<p>Types of Trail Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion in nature through wooded areas, while being in proximity and potentially in view of residential neighborhoods (depending on location and season). Trail users would have the opportunity to view wildlife, connect with nature, and experience tranquility and/or solitude. • Travel through a developed park setting with open views through scattered trees to Sasscer Park, the BOE Administration Building complex, and Old Crain Highway. Trail users would have the opportunity to view recreation activities and events at Sasscer Park and be around other people while enjoying the trail. <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree canopy would provide ample shade along the trail through the wooded areas. Large mature and other trees would provide scattered shade along the trail through the developed park setting. • Trail users could experience bird songs, the sound of trickling water, and other sounds associated with nature and wildlife along the trail through the wooded area and near the Federal Spring Branch stream. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail users would experience traffic noise as they approach the intersection with MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and noise from recreation activities and events occurring at Sasscer Park.

Table 3 cont. North Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative N1	Alternative N2
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Trail users would need to exercise caution when crossing MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and along the BOE Administration Building's parking lot to avoid vehicle conflicts. Access to Sasscer Park's fields is provided along the parking lot and School Lane for emergency vehicle access and vehicles dropping off/picking up equipment. Therefore, trail users could occasionally experience vehicles crossing the trail in this area. Yield signage in this area could help make trail users and crossing vehicles aware of one another.</p>	<p>Trail users would need to exercise caution when crossing MD 725 (Old Marlboro Pike) and along the BOE Administration Building's parking lot to avoid vehicle conflicts. Access to Sasscer Park's fields is provided along the parking lot and School Lane for emergency vehicle access and vehicles dropping off/picking up equipment. Therefore, trail users could occasionally experience vehicles crossing the trail in this area. Yield signage in this area could help make trail users and crossing vehicles aware of one another.</p>

Table 4. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
Property Impacts	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right-of-way along the south side of Old Crain Highway and Church Street to Water Street <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impacts to private property <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easements may need to be explored depending on setback of the trail from the roadway 	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town-owned Parcel 5510 Old Crain Highway; (0235176) Town-owned Parcel, 200 Old Crain Highway; (0201186) <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entirely located on Town-owned land 	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town-owned 5510 Old Crain Highway; (0235176) Town-owned Parcel 200, Old Crain Highway; (0201186) Privately owned 5602 Valley Lane; (0202945) Privately owned Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery (Historic Site 79-046, 5500BI Valley Lane); (0199869) Privately owned Trinity Episcopal Mission Parking Lot; (0246926)¹⁴ County-owned "Marlboro Water Street"; (0229856) <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the trail would be on publicly owned land. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easements from the religious institutions and the private parcel owner would be required.

¹⁴ Parcel 238 is one of the three that comprise the campus of Trinity Episcopal Mission, but it is not part of Trinity Episcopal Church and Cemetery's Environmental Setting (Historic Site 79-015-15) and not subject to regulation by Subtitle 29, the County Historic Preservation Ordinance, although because it is adjacent to it, proposed alterations may be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission to assess any negative impacts to the Historic Site.

Table 4 cont. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
<p>Water Resources</p>	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <p>None</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids streams, floodplains, and wetlands, which would save bridge or boardwalk infrastructure costs for the overall project. 	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <p>Crosses a small stream (less than 20 feet in width according to Prince George’s County GIS data). The stream was not observed during the site visit and therefore, it is unknown if the stream is perennial, intermittent, or ephemeral.¹⁵</p> <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spur trail would cross a stream, which could require a bridge or boardwalk and would add infrastructure costs to the overall project. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure is required to cross the stream. 	<p>Impacted Properties</p> <p>Eastern section (Valley Lane to Water Street) would overlap the 100-year floodplain and wetlands. The future spur trail would also cross a small stream.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing floodplains and wetlands would add visual interest to the trail and the potential for interpretation of water resources. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing floodplains and wetlands via an elevated structure would add infrastructure costs. • This spur would be inaccessible and closed to trail users during periodic flooding of Valley Lane and along the Western Branch stream. • The spur trail would cross a stream, which could require a bridge or boardwalk and would add infrastructure costs to the overall project. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required.

15 “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) is a threshold term in the Clean Water Act and establishes the scope of federal jurisdiction under the Act. The 2019 Final Rule includes these definitions: The term perennial means surface water flowing continuously year-round. The term intermittent means surface water flowing continuously during certain times of the year and more than in direct response to precipitation (e.g., seasonally when the groundwater table is elevated or when snowpack melts). The term ephemeral means surface water flowing or pooling only in direct response to precipitation (e.g., rain or snow fall). CREDIT: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/documents/final_wotus_step_2_final_public_webcast_13_feb_2020_508c_0.pdf

Table 4 cont. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
<p>Topography</p>	<p>Topographical Impacts</p> <p>From the crossing of Old Crain Highway to Water Street, the elevation would gradually decrease from 70 feet to 34 feet.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal elevation changes means greater accessibility for all trail users. 	<p>Topographical Impacts</p> <p>The section that follows the former rail line alignment, which is flat at an elevation of approximately 70 feet, would have minimal elevation changes. The two loop trails and the future spur trail would have more elevation changes. Depending on the exact alignment of these trail sections, the elevation could range from 50 to 100 feet.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal elevation changes along the section that follows the former rail line alignment means greater accessibility for all trail users. Trail users desiring a more challenging route may enjoy the elevation changes of the loop and spur trails. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More elevation changes along the loop and spur trail could mean less accessibility for some trail users. More resources required to implement a sustainably designed trail (e.g., low maintenance, won't erode from stormwater runoff and foot traffic) due to elevation changes 	<p>Topographical Impacts</p> <p>The section that follows the former rail line alignment, which is flat at an elevation of approximately 70 feet, would have minimal elevation changes. The section between Valley Lane and Water Street is anticipated to be flat because it would be elevated on a structure. The section between the former rail line alignment and Valley Lane, along Valley Lane, and the future spur trail would have more elevation changes. Depending on the exact location, the elevation could range from 20 to 70 feet.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal elevation changes along the section that follows the former rail line alignment and between Valley Lane and Water Street means greater accessibility for all trail users. Trail users desiring a more challenging route may enjoy the elevation changes of. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More elevation changes could mean less accessibility for some trail users. More resources required to implement a sustainably designed trail (e.g., low maintenance, won't erode from stormwater runoff and foot traffic) due to elevation changes.

Table 4 cont. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
<p>Infrastructure Investment</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway and at the signalized intersection of Church Street and Water Street. • Plastic bollards or median between the road and trail to provide a safe offset from vehicular traffic. <p>The right-of-way along Old Crain Highway and Water Street contains existing above- and below-ground infrastructure (e.g., light poles, manholes, sewer drains, signage) that would need to be considered during the design process.</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway. • Potentially a short bridge or boardwalk over the stream that the spur trail crosses. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required. <p>Washington Gas Light Company signage along the former rail line alignment indicates the presence of a gas line, which would need to be considered during the design process.</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway and Water Street. • An elevated structure over floodplains and wetlands between Valley Lane and Water Street. • Potentially a short bridge or board-walk over the stream that the spur trail crosses. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required. <p>Washington Gas Light Company signage along the former rail line alignment indicates the presence of a gas line, which would need to be considered during the design process.</p>

Table 4 cont. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
Trail User Experience	<p>Types of Trail Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel along Old Crain Highway and Church Street with views of the roadway, single-family residences, and churches. <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree canopy would provide occasional shade along the trail depending on location. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail users would experience traffic noise along the entire route. 	<p>Types of Trail Experiences</p> <p>Immersion in nature through wooded areas. Trail users would have the opportunity to view wildlife, connect with nature, and experience tranquility and/or solitude.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree canopy would provide ample shade along the trail. Trail users could experience birdsong and other sounds associated with nature and wildlife. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail users would experience traffic noise as they approach the intersection with Old Crain Highway and MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue). 	<p>Types of Trail Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersion in nature through wooded areas. Travel along Valley Lane, a quiet, wooded roadway, in proximity and potentially in view of single-family residences (depending on the season). Traverse over wetlands with filtered views of the Western Branch stream (depending on the season). <p>In each of these environments, trail users would have the opportunity to view wildlife, connect with nature, and experience tranquility and/or solitude.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree canopy would provide ample shade along the trail. Trail users could experience birdsong and other sounds associated with nature and wildlife. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail users would experience traffic noise as they approach the intersection with Old Crain Highway and Water Street.
Safety	<p>Trail users would need to exercise caution when crossing Old Crain Highway, Valley Lane, the signalized intersection of Church Street and Water Street and the multiple vehicle driveways along Old Crain Highway and Church Street.</p>	<p>Trail users would need to exercise caution when crossing Old Crain Highway.</p>	<p>Trail users would need to exercise caution when crossing Old Crain Highway, Valley Lane, and Water Street.</p>

Table 4 cont. South Trail Alternatives Analysis

Analysis Metric	Alternative S1	Alternative S2	Alternative S3
<p>Infrastructure Investment</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway and at the signalized intersection of Church Street and Water Street. Plastic bollards or median between the road and trail to provide a safe offset from vehicular traffic. 	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway. Potentially a short bridge or boardwalk over the stream that the spur trail crosses. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required. <p>Washington Gas Light Company signage along the former rail line alignment indicates the presence of a gas line, which would need to be considered during the design process.</p>	<p>Required Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required Infrastructure Road markings, signage, lights, etc. at Old Crain Highway and Water Street. An elevated structure over floodplains and wetlands between Valley Lane and Water Street. Potentially a short bridge or board-walk over the stream that the spur trail crosses. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required. <p>Washington Gas Light Company signage along the former rail line alignment indicates the presence of a gas line, which would need to be considered during the design process.</p>

Next Steps

The recommendation of this study is for the Town of Upper Marlboro to conduct a public engagement program to advance the planning and design of the proposed CBRT segment. The following chapter provides an overview of potential funding sources and permitting requirements for advancing and implementing the proposed CBRT segment. This chapter also provides a rough cost estimate for the construction of one of the proposed trail alternatives, S2 (the south alternative).

Potential Funding Sources

Table 5 summarizes potential funding sources that could be used for the advancement of the proposed CBRT segment’s design, implementation (acquisition and trail construction), trail features, and maintenance required to implement the proposed CBRT segment. Note that this table is not an exhaustive list of funding opportunities. Those engaged in fundraising efforts should coordinate with state and regional agencies, especially the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD-DNR), the Governor’s Grant Office, and the Rails to Trails Conservancy, to determine if there are additional opportunities available.

Table 5. Potential Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunity	Funding Entity
Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program	US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Recreational Trails Program	MDOT SHA (on behalf of FHWA)
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (part of the FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant Program)	MDOT SHA (on behalf of FHWA)

Eligible Activities	Eligible Applicants	Match Required?	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of plans for active transportation “networks” and “spines” that have planning and design costs of at least \$100,000 • Construction of projects that provide safe and connective active transportation facilities in an active transportation “network or “spine” and have total costs of at least \$15 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local or regional government organizations • Multicounty special districts • Multistate group of governments 	Yes	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/atitp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of easements and property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors • Construction of new recreational trails • Lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment • Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails, including signage, bridges, and boardwalks • Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities • Counties • Nonprofit entities 	Yes	https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=98
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction, planning and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities • Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments • Any local and governmental entity with oversight of transportation or recreational trails • Natural resource and public land agencies • Nonprofit entities 	Yes	https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=144

Table 5 cont. Potential Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunity	Funding Entity	Eligible Activities
Community Parks and Playgrounds Program	Maryland DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new trails or extension of existing trails • Acquisition of land to create new parks
Program Open Space – Local	Maryland DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of land or partial interests in land that is beneficial or necessary for providing general outdoor recreation or open space opportunities for the public • New recreation improvements and support facilities on land owned or controlled by the applicant when such improvements or facilities are beneficial or necessary and provide general outdoor recreation and open space opportunities for the public
Transportation Land-Use Connections Program	National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small planning projects that promote mixed-use, walkable communities and support a variety of transportation alternatives • Consultant assistance up to \$80,000 for planning projects and up to \$100,000 for design or preliminary engineering projects
Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) Trail Grants	Rails to Trails Conservancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that create, connect, and maintain trails infrastructure
PeopleForBikes' Industry Community Grant Program	PeopleForBikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of permanent bike infrastructure, including trails and shared-use paths • Land or easement acquisition costs for bike infrastructure
OH! (The Outdoor Happiness Movement)	McKee Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor recreation projects

Eligible Applicants	Match Required?	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated municipalities 	No	https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/PPP-Grant-Process.aspx
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities Counties 	Unknown	https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/pages/programopenspace/home.aspx
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local jurisdictions in the National Capital Region 	No	https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/land-use-coordination/tlc-program/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments Nonprofit entities 	Unknown	https://www.railstotrails.org/grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments Nonprofit entities 	No	https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies 501(c)(3) organizations 	Unknown	https://www.outdoorhappinesmovement.com/propose-a-project

Potential Permitting Requirements

Table 6 summarizes potential local and state permits that could be required to implement the proposed CBRT segment. Note that this table is not an exhaustive list of permits that could be required. The first step to determine what permits may be required is to complete a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and submit the NRI application to the Environmental Planning Section, Countywide Planning Division of the Prince George's County Planning Department for review. More information about the NRI application process is available at <https://www.pgplanning.org/projects/natural-resource-inventories>.

Table 6. Potential Permitting Requirements

Permit Name	Regulatory Agency
Prince George's County	
Building Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince George's County – DPIE
Floodplain Management Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince George's County - DPIE
Tree Removal and Mitigation Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince George's County - DPIE
Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission

Why is the Permit Needed?	Legal Authority	Fees	Turnaround Time	Website
Required for construction projects to ensure that all work meets local building codes and regulations.	Local building code requirements	Varies based on project scale	Varies based on project scale	
Needed to ensure that construction in the 100-year floodplain will not cause flooding or environmental issues downstream or upstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) • National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements • Local floodplain management regulations 	Varies based on project scale	Varies based on scope of work	Permit Guide 3.19 (maryland.gov)
Necessary for the removal of trees in designated areas, with mitigation required to offset the environmental impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local ordinances regarding tree protection and mitigation 	Varies	Varies depending on project scale	
Required for any work impacting the exterior of a historic resource to ensure preservation of historical, archaeological, architectural, or cultural features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 29-111(b) of the Prince George's County Code 	None	Decision within 45 days of application submission	Historic Preservation Commission - Prince George's County Planning Department (pgplanning.org)

Table 6 cont. Potential Permitting Requirements

Permit Name	Regulatory Agency	Why is the Permit Needed?
Maryland		
Erosion/Sediment Control & Stormwater Management Plan Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) • Local Government 	Required to prevent pollution, flooding, and soil erosion from construction activities disturbing 5,000 sq ft of land or more, or impacting storm drains or water management systems.
Non-Tidal Wetlands Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDE 	Required because of the presence of floodplains and nontidal wetlands. Non-tidal wetlands filter pollutants, reduce flood risks, prevent erosion, and support wildlife. The permit ensures that construction impacts are managed.
General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDE 	Required for construction projects disturbing one acre or more of land to control pollution from stormwater runoff. Ensures compliance with erosion/sediment control and stormwater management plans.
Easement or Right-of-Way Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDOT SHA 	Required when construction or utility work will occur on public land or will cross into public easements or rights-of-way.
Utility Permit Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDOT SHA 	Required for construction, relocation, or maintenance of utility facilities within state highways or rights-of-way.
Bridge Construction Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDOT SHA 	Required for bridge construction to ensure compliance with safety and structural standards, especially in areas crossing water bodies.
Traffic Control Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDOT SHA 	Required for any utility work that involves impacting traffic or pedestrians on Maryland SHA rights-of-way, including sidewalk closures.

Legal Authority	Fees	Turnaround Time	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Article Title 4, Subtitle 1 & 2 COMAR 26.17.01 & 26.17.02 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fee for state/federal projects Fees vary for private/local projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 months for state/federal projects Varies for private/local projects 	3.21.pdf (maryland.gov)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Article Title 5, Subtitle 5-901 to 5-911, Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 26.23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$750 application fee for most projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor projects: 6 months Major projects: 12 months 	Nontidal Wetland and Waterway Permits, Approvals and Certifications (maryland.gov)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean Water Act Section 402, COMAR 26.08.04 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100 (1-10 acres) \$500 (10-15 acres) \$1,500 (15-20 acres) \$2,500 (20+ acres) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 days for general permits 75 days minimum for individual permits 	3.23.pdf (maryland.gov)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/state easement and right-of-way laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies based on the nature of the easement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDOT SHA regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies based on scope of work 	Utility Permit Documents & Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/state transportation regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies depending on project complexity 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDOT SHA traffic control standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on review 	Utility Permit Documents & Information

Cost Estimate

A rough cost estimate for the construction of one of the proposed trail alternatives, S2, is provided in Table 7. A cost estimate for Alternative S2 was prepared because S2 is anticipated to be the most feasible and “ready to implement” of the five trail alternatives for the following reasons:

- The Town of Upper Marlboro owns the land on which Alternative S2 is proposed.
- No special structures (bridges or boardwalks) are anticipated because Alternative S2 does not cross wetlands or floodplains.
- The former railroad alignment is distinct and clear of trees.
- In the future, Alternatives S1 or S3 could still be implemented, connecting to Alternative S2 and creating a pedestrian and bicycle connection to downtown Upper Marlboro.

The cost estimate assumes the following:

- The trail along the abandoned rail bed and the two loop trails would be a 10-foot-wide asphalt trail. This trail width and surface material were selected for the cost estimate because it would 1) provide a paved loop available for walkers, runners, and bike riders of all ages and 2) be the more expensive trail surface material (compared to a natural trail surface material) and therefore, provide a more conservative cost estimate.

- The spur trail would be a natural surface trail.
- The trail would include the following features:
 - Trail crossing infrastructure at the trail start at Old Crain Highway
 - Large vehicle bollards at the trail start at Old Crain Highway to prevent unauthorized vehicle access
 - 2 benches
 - 1 trash can
 - 1 recycling can
 - 1 bike rack
 - 3 wayside signs

The cost estimate does not include costs for:

- Bridge or boardwalk that could be needed for the spur trail crossing of a small stream. Evaluation of this trail crossing during future design process will help identify if a structure to cross the stream is required.
- The advancement of trail design and engineering
- Relevant permits
- Easements
- Ongoing trail maintenance once the trail is constructed

Table 7. Alternative S2 Cost Estimate

	Labor	Material	Equipment	TOTAL
Site Preparation				
Site Clearing	\$18,460	\$0	\$6,566	\$25,026
Site Earthwork	\$9,802	\$0	\$7,901	\$17,703
Sub-Total	\$28,262	\$0	\$14,468	\$42,729
Site Improvements				
Pedestrian Paving	\$173,312	\$133,271	\$50,177	\$356,760
Site Development	\$14,817	\$21,728	\$227	\$36,772
Landscaping	\$23,815	\$32,946	\$7,700	\$64,460
Sub-Total	\$211,943	\$187,945	\$58,104	\$457,992
TOTAL	\$240,205	\$187,945	\$72,571	\$500,721

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Acknowledgements

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Prince George's County Council

The Honorable Sydney J. Harrison, District 9

Town of Upper Marlboro

The Honorable Sarah Franklin	President/Mayor
The Honorable Derrick Brooks	Commissioner
The Honorable Charles Colbert	Commissioner
The Honorable Karen Lott	Commissioner (Treasurer)
Darnell Bond	Superintendent, Town Public Works Department
Clayton Anderson	Town Administrator
Kyle Snyder*	Town Administrator

Prince George's County Planning Department

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Community Planning Division

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State Highway Administration**

Justin Mohr	Division Chief, Office of Structures
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Trinity Episcopal Mission Upper Marlboro

The Reverend Dr. Peter M. Antoci	Vicar
Linda Pennoyer	Parish Administrator
Jackie Belton	
Teresa Gardner-Williams	

Marlboro Boys and Girls Club

Charles Owens	President
Lawrence Roderick	Vice President

Others

Steve Sonnett	Hill Kanellos
Sandra George	Robert Sanders
Betsy Henderson	Tracy Stone
Dr. Fraser Henderson, Jr.	Jennifer Walls

Appendix A

Stakeholder Interview Summaries

PUBLIC COMMENTS

On October 8, 2024, the Project Team presented the proposed CBRT segment alternatives at a Town of Upper Marlboro Board of Town Commissioners work session. The presentation included an overview of the project background and timeline; existing conditions analysis; the proposed trail alternatives, including their opportunities and challenges; and the next steps. Overall, the Commissioners expressed appreciation for the project efforts and the desire to see more detailed information on the project—now provided via this study. Members of the public also had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. In summary, members of the public expressed:

- Support for the project, noting that the proposed CBRT segment would provide much-needed connectivity for pedestrians in the Town and could provide economic benefits.
- Importance of continuing conversations with landowners and engaging the broader community about property access and potential impacts on private land.
- Concerns about how the trail might affect property values.
- Questions about land ownership and maintenance responsibility of the trail.

Members of the Sasscer family who are connected with and/or are owners of a large undeveloped parcel (referred to as the Sasscer Farm in this report) participated in the focus group consisting of property owners and community members. Family

members provided a letter dated August 1, 2024 (see Appendix B), attended the Board of Town Commissioners work session, and had follow-up conversations with the project team. Two of the trail alternatives are proposed through the Sasscer Farm and on a parcel owned by the Prince George's County Board of Education. Comments from engagement with the Sasscer family included the following:

- According to the letter, “when the rail line was abandoned in the 1930s, title to the rail bed adjacent to the farm reverted to the original owners and is now a part of the Sasscer Farm. In addition, when Lansdale G. Sasscer, Sr. and the heirs of Harold Sasscer gifted what is now Sasscer Park to the Board of Education in 1963, they reserved a right of way on that portion of the rail bed that runs from Old Crain Highway to the Sasscer Farm.” The right of way was reserved for the purposes of ingress and access to the farm. The right of way is the parcel owned by the Prince George's County Board of Education.
- The referenced right-of-way provides the only safe and functional access from the Sasscer farm to Old Crain Highway. Access at the intersection of Old Crain Highway and the MD 4 ramp is dangerous.
- According to the letter, the “family declines to dedicate either the reverted portion of the rail bed or the referenced right of way for use as a public trail.”



FOCUS GROUP MEETING – July 25, 2024

Date: July 25, 2024
To: Anusree Nair, M-NCPPC
From: Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning, AECOM
Re: Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Focus Group
 Virtual Meeting (11 participants)

The Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Focus Group occurred on July 25, 2024. The meeting purpose was to introduce the proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail (CBRT) project and gather community input and concerns regarding the proposed alignment. The following people participated in this virtual meeting:

- M-NCPPC – Department of Planning, Community Planning Division
 - Anusree Nair, Planner II, Neighborhood Revitalization Section
- Town of Upper Marlboro
 - Mayor Sarah Franklin
- AECOM
 - Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning
 - Reid Fellenbaum, Associate, Landscape / Urban Design
- CHPlanning
 - Boris Schwarzenbach, Senior Planner
- Focus Group Participants
 - Sandra George
 - Betsy Henderson
 - Robert Sanders – One of the multiple property owners of 109-acre Sasscer farm property
 - Steve Sonnett – Property owner at end of Rectory Lane
 - Tracy Stone – Resident along Old Marlboro Pike and avid cyclist
 - Jennifer Walls – Resident of Marlboro Downs (subdivision along Old Marlboro Pike)

The interview began with a round of attendee introductions and Anusree Nair and Mayor Sarah Franklin providing the project introduction and background. Lauren Tuttle then provided a map and orientation to the project area. Lauren and Reid Fellenbaum then proceeded with the interview questions. The following summarizes the major themes from the discussion with the focus group participants.

1. Property Owners' Concerns and Input:

- Mr. Sanders voiced concerns about the trail passing through the farm, which is owned by multiple families. There is a need for discussions among all landowners affected by the trail to ensure their concerns are addressed.
- Mr. Sanders highlighted the importance of considering the proximity of the trail to residential areas and the potential encroachment on their farm.
- Participants also raised questions about who owns the rail line right-of-way.



2. Trail Connectivity and Community Impact:

- There was significant interest in creating a trail environment that connects various parts of the town, to enhance engagement and attract visitors.
- Residents emphasized the importance of connecting the trail to existing recreational facilities, such as the recreation center and other town trails.
- Concerns were raised about ensuring the trail's alignment does not lead to a "path to nowhere," but rather integrates seamlessly with the town's infrastructure.

3. Environmental and Engineering Considerations:

- Attendees discussed the need to address environmental concerns, such as floodplains, wetlands, and topography, when planning the trail alignment.
- The feasibility of constructing a bridge over Federal Spring Branch was also discussed.
- The feasibility study will address environmental concerns, including floodplains, wetlands, and topography.

4. Usage and Safety Regulations:

- The trail is intended for pedestrian and bicycle use, with a prohibition on motorized vehicles for safety and noise.
- Barriers and bollards will be installed at trailheads to prevent unauthorized motorized access.
- There was a discussion about the surface material for the trail, with options including ADA-compatible hard surfaces or compact natural surfaces.

5. Community Involvement and Feedback Mechanisms:

- The importance of continuous community feedback and involvement throughout the feasibility study and planning process was emphasized.
- Plans for public meetings, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews were discussed.
- Attendees were encouraged to subscribe to newsletters and attend future meetings to stay informed and involved.

6. Long-Term Vision and Expansion Plans:

- The long-term vision includes extending the trail towards Chesapeake Beach and potentially connecting it with other regional trails.
- The trail's inclusion in the state's trails master plan was confirmed, including the construction of a bridge over significant water bodies.
- There was a discussion about the potential for the trail to enhance downtown development and attract more visitors to the area.

7. Funding and Implementation Strategy:

- The next steps involve conducting a detailed feasibility study to address environmental and engineering concerns.
- Efforts will be made to secure funding from federal, state, and local sources, as well as grants, to support the trail's construction.
- Detailed planning and design phases will follow, with continuous updates to the community.

8. Overall Next Steps:

- Property Owner Discussions:
 - Facilitate further discussions among property owners to address concerns about the trail alignment and potential encroachment.
- Feasibility Study:
 - Continue this feasibility study to address environmental concerns, flooding issues, and engineering challenges.



FOCUS GROUP MEETING – July 25, 2024

- Present the findings at a town meeting for community review and feedback.
- Funding and Planning:
 - Explore funding options from federal, state, and local sources, as well as grants, to support the trail’s construction.
 - Develop detailed plans and designs
- Community Engagement:
 - Schedule additional public meetings, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews to gather continuous community feedback.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW #2 – May 3, 2024

Date: May 13, 2024

To: Anusree Nair, M-NCPPC

From: Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning, AECOM

Re: Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Stakeholder Interview #2
Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation and
Marlboro Boys & Girls Club – Virtual Meeting (8 participants)

The Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Stakeholder Meeting #2 occurred on May 3rd, 2024 with representatives from the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Marlboro Boys and Girls Club. The meeting purpose was to introduce the proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail (CBRT) project, learn more about the use and maintenance of Sasscer Park, and gain their input regarding the proposed alignment. The following people participated in this virtual meeting:

- M-NCPPC – Community Planning Division
 - Anusree Nair, Planner II, Neighborhood Planning Section
- AECOM
 - Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning
 - Reid Fellenbaum, Associate, Landscape / Urban Design
- CHPlanning
 - Laura Connelly, Managing Planner
- DPR, Southern Area Maintenance Division
 - Annette Cole, Assistant Division Chief
 - Cliff Driver, Recreation Maintenance Coordinator
 - Matt Wadsworth, Park Manager II
- Marlboro Boys and Girls Club
 - Lawrence Roderick

The interview began with a round of attendee introductions and Anusree Nair providing the project introduction and background. Lauren Tuttle then provided a map and orientation to the project area. Lauren, Reid Fellenbaum, and Laura Connelly then proceeded with the interview questions. The following summarizes the discussion with DPR and the Marlboro Boys and Girls Club.

Can you tell us about how Sasscer Park is used?

Boys and Girls Club activities at Sasscer Park include flag football, baseball, football, soccer, track and field, and training. The Boys and Girls Club uses the fields throughout the calendar year.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW #2 – May 3, 2024

Can you tell us about maintenance for the park?

DPR provides full-service year-round maintenance including grass cutting, fertilization, pest management, weed control, irrigation services, fence replacement, and management of the existing lighting. The site is due for a life cycle replacement. However, with funding limitations, this work will not occur in the next two years.

Can you tell us about parking for Sasscer Park?

Mr. Roderick responded that the parking lot use fluctuates. In the fall, there is a homecoming event centered around football with 10-15 football teams. The parking lot reaches capacity and parking overflows into the surrounding neighborhoods.

People park illegally sometimes, which causes some concern. Mostly during events, the lots are about 75% of the full capacity.

The northernmost parking lot where the proposed alignment passes through does reach capacity. Interviewees opposed removing any parking and suggested that the parking should be replaced if the trail construction were to displace this amenity.

How do park visitors access the park?

The park is accessed mostly by walking, biking, and by car. Typically, most people access the site from School Lane and via the Board of Education (BOE) parking lot. This parking lot is in need of repair. Most people walk from the parking lot to the field area. Mr. Roderick identified a pedestrian social path that extends from the parking lot to the track area.

At times, there is a need for cars to access the areas near the fields. This is limited to equipment delivery and pick-up.

How do emergency vehicles access the park?

Emergency vehicles access to the park is provided via School Lane and through the parking lot. There is a secondary access point at a gated entrance to Sasscer Park located southwest of the track off of Old Crain Highway. The Upper Marlboro Police and Fire/Rescue do have a copy of the master key for this gate.

Do you have any concerns with the proposed trail route?

Interviewees overall expressed support for the trail. Interviewees confirmed that there would be no conflict with the proposed trail alignment and the Boys and Girls Club activities.

DPR did mention a number of mature specimen trees along the proposed alignment that should be retained and there was a brief discussion about the wooden bollards that exist near the right of way alignment.

There is a surface drain near the small western parking lot. If development were to occur, this drainage and existing conditions should be carefully reviewed and addressed as the drain does convey water. Mr. Driver suggested the swale is a ground perc situation with all surface runoff. The swale does not stay wet.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW #2 – May 3, 2024

There was also a brief discussion about the possible construction of new parking near the Town of Upper Marlboro playground. Facilities in this area could support a trail rest area, a bike repair area, and a shade structure. The new parking would also provide better and easier access to the playground.

Are you aware of other initiatives or projects or anything the park has planned that could impact this proposed trail route?

No projects were identified.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us or have questions about?

Ms. Cole asked about the southern alignment of the trail. Lauren noted that the team is exploring alternative alignments. Ms. Cole was supportive of potential connections to the Show Place Arena noting that this connection would make sense and be well used.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW #1 – March 6, 2024

Date: March 12, 2024

To: Anusree Nair, M-NCPPC

From: Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning, AECOM

Re: Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Stakeholder Interview #1
Trinity Episcopal Church – Virtual Meeting (11 participants)

The Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Stakeholder Interview #1 occurred on March 6th with members of the Trinity Episcopal Church congregation. Trinity Episcopal Church, located at 14515 Church Street in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, is within the project area. The meeting purpose was to introduce the proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail (CBRT) project to the church members and gain their input regarding a proposed alignment routed through their property between the Western Branch and the church's parking lot. The following people participated in this virtual meeting:

- M-NCPPC – Community Planning Division
 - Anusree Nair, Planner II, Neighborhood Planning Section
 - Dan Sams, Planner IV, PAMC Project Coordinator
- AECOM
 - Lauren Tuttle, Associate, Urbanism + Planning
 - Reid Fellenbaum, Associate, Landscape / Urban Design
- CHPlanning
 - Laura Connelly, Managing Planner
- Town of Upper Marlboro
 - Sarah Franklin, Mayor
- Trinity Episcopal Church
 - The Reverend Dr. Peter M. Antoci, Vicar
 - Jackie Belton, Moderator and Congregation Member
 - Teresa Gardner-Williams, Congregation Member
 - Linda Pennoyer, Congregation Member

The interview began with a round of attendee introductions and Anusree Nair providing the project introduction and background. Mayor Franklin added that construction of the trail could contribute to the economic development of the Town and provide opportunities for trail users to observe history and connect the region to its historic past. Lauren Tuttle then provided a map and orientation to the project area. Lauren, Reid Fellenbaum, and Laura Connelly then proceeded with the interview questions. The following summarizes the discussion with Trinity Episcopal Church.



Question #1 - Do you have any concerns with the proposed trail route?

Lauren explained the trail would be across the rear portion of the church property (mostly parallel to Western Branch and on the strip of land south of the parking lot). The trail would continue eastward to connect into Water Street and westward to connect into Valley Lane. There were no concerns with this alignment.

The church was supportive of the project. It was mentioned that the trail is a beneficial addition to the Town and the church.

Question #2 - We understand that there are floodplains and wetlands south of the church parking lot. We would like to hear about any past flooding (for example, how often does flooding occur? Where does the water come up to?)

The church mentioned that there were trees and wetland areas between the parking lot and the Western Branch. Recently, and as of the last rain event that happened within the past few weeks, flood waters reached the limit of the rear parking lot but did not enter the parking lot. Flooding and street closures for Water Street occur 3 to 4 times a year and the mayor added that recently Water Street was closed 3 times during the six-week period from December through January.

The church members added that Valley Lane periodically floods and residents cannot use the road. Upper Marlboro also experienced a catastrophic flood approximately ten years ago.

Question #3 - Are there any sensitive resources (i.e., old cemeteries, historic resources) that we should be aware of south of your existing parking lot?

There are no known historic resources or known records of burials behind the buildings. The property is steeply sloped behind the existing church buildings and the Vicar indicated he was not aware that there would be anything historic in this area.

The cemetery and church building on the northwest parcel of land the church holds are designated historic resources. (79-019-15)

Question #4 - We understand that there is a historic cemetery and other historic resources along Valley Lane. This could provide an opportunity for historic interpretation through wayside signage. Do you have any thoughts on potential historic interpretation along Valley Lane?

Interpretation will be beneficial, and the church welcomes the opportunity for people to learn about their contributions to the history of Upper Marlboro. The story must be told in a way that is informative and recognizes the church is a place of worship and not a museum.

The church members suggested that the project team reach out to Union United Methodist Church, who owns and maintains the historic Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery along Valley Lane to obtain their input regarding this trail being located near this historic feature and appropriate interpretation.



Question # 5 - Are you aware of other initiatives or projects or anything your church has planned that could impact this proposed trail route?

No additional projects or initiatives planned by the church would impact the alignment. Surrounding vegetation is overgrowing into the parking lot. However, clearing of this vegetation should not impact the alignment.

Question #6 - Is there anything else you would like to share with us or have questions about?

Additional comments from Trinity Episcopal Church:

How will the trail affect drainage patterns, and will the trail impede the flow of water towards Western Branch or back water onto the parking lot? Additionally, will the trail surface hold, or pond water? The church express concern about re-contouring of soil to accommodate the trail and potential flood impacts on their parking lot.

AECOM suggested the trail will feature sections of boardwalk and M-NCPPC added this feature will be like the existing trail around Schoolhouse Pond. This raised design will ensure water flows freely over and under the trail and that water is not redirected back toward the church or the parking lot. The gaps or spaces on the boardwalk will allow water to flow through the surface, which will allow the trail to dry after rain events.

Who will be responsible for trail maintenance?

Mayor Franklin suggested a right-of-way from the church is required for the trail. Maintenance will be the responsibility of the Town or be provided through an agreement between the Town and the M-NCPPC. Vicar Antoci mentioned that all property matters such as securing a right-of-way across church property are managed by the Diocese. Only the Bishop has the authority to approve any reuse of church property. However, this project is one the local Trinity Episcopal Church congregation could support. Vicar Antoci mentioned that the project will be discussed with the church committee.

When will the project be constructed and what are the next steps?

Mayor Franklin suggested that the trail construction would not occur for at least 5 years. Next steps include continuing stakeholder meetings and complete the Feasibility Study. Construction drawings and permitting will happen after funding is in place. Actual trail construction begins after permitting is completed.

Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Feasibility Study - PAMC Project

Stakeholder Meeting **SASSCER HEIRS**

October 17, 2024

The meeting with the Sasscer Heirs was held to hear the concerns they had regarding the proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail traversing their property. The virtual meeting was held on October 17, 2024, and was attended by the following people:

Robert Sanders (attorney and heir)
Dr. Fraser Henderson, Jr. (14507 Elm Street)
Hill Kanellos (6601 South Osborne Road)

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Department of Planning, Community Planning Division

- Daniel Sams, Planner IV, PAMC Program Manager, Neighborhood Revitalization
- Anusree Nair, Planner II, Neighborhood Revitalization Section

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

- Robert Patten, Planner IV, Trail Development Program Manager, Park Planning & Environmental Stewardship

Meeting Notes:

Sasscer Farm was originally called Sasscer Brothers. Farm, owned by two brothers.

Originally included the Board of Education property (building & Sasscer Park) and the Providence St. John Baptist Church property. The Board of Education administrative building and church properties were sold, while the Sasscer Park was conveyed to the County, however reserving a right of way from Old Crain Highway for the purpose of ingress and access to the farm.

The farm has no other safe and functional access to Old Crain Highway other than the easement on the road owned by Prince George's County Board of Education. The other access at the intersection of Old Crain Highway and the ramp going on to Route 4 is dangerous to use.

Primary concern for the Sasscer heirs is that the proposed trail would take away the only safe access to the farm.

Sanders: "We would vehemently oppose any use of family property. Adamant...do not want family land used for trail." "We are hopeful that there's a way that you can design the trail so that it does not encroach on either of our two property interests either the farm itself or the right-of-way."

The Sasser's expressed their intention to litigate, if necessary, if the town wants to traverse either of their property interests.

Nothing but good feelings, however, for the town going forward.

Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Feasibility Study - PAMC Project

Stakeholder Meeting Maryland State Highway Administration

March 21, 2024

Attendees:

- Justin Mohr, Division Chief, Office of Structures, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Mayor Sarah Franklin, Town of Upper Marlboro
- Anusree Nair, Project Manager, M-NCPPC

The purpose of this meeting was to learn about the upcoming MDOT SHA projects in the study area that may impact the Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail Feasibility Study. Mr. Mohr informed others about two upcoming projects that may impact the study:

MD 4 (Stephanie Roper Hwy) over MD 717 (Water St) and Marlboro Racetrack Rd - Bridge rehabilitation and deck replacement

Information provided below is from the [project page](#):

“Rehabilitation and widening of the two bridges on MD 4 over MD 717 (Water Street) and the replacement of the two bridges on MD 4 over Marlboro Racetrack Road. The project’s purpose is to remove and replace the eastbound and westbound MD 4 over MD 717 (Water Street) bridge decks, perform rehabilitation work on the substructure (supports) and widen the bridge to accommodate traffic during construction. The project will also include removing and replacing the eastbound and westbound MD 4 over Marlboro Racetrack Road bridges.

Stage 1: MD 4 eastbound and westbound bridges over MD 717 (Water Street) will be widened towards the median. The widened portions of the bridge will be used to accommodate traffic during later stages.

Stage 2: A temporary roadway and two temporary bridges will be constructed in the median to allow traffic to safely travel through the project site.

Stage 3: MD 4 westbound traffic will be shifted onto the temporary roadway in the median and the newly widened portion of the MD 4 westbound bridge over MD 717. This will allow the westbound MD 4 bridge over MD 717 substructure rehabilitation and deck replacement to take place and the westbound MD 4 bridge over Marlboro Racetrack Road to be removed and replaced. After construction on the MD 4 westbound structures is complete, traffic will be shifted back to westbound MD 4 and MD 4 eastbound traffic will be shifted onto the temporary median roadway.

Stage 4: Eastbound MD 4 bridge over MD 717 substructure rehabilitation and deck replacement will be performed and the eastbound MD 4 bridge over Marlboro Racetrack Road will be removed and replaced. After construction on the MD 4 eastbound structures is complete, traffic will be shifted back to eastbound MD 4 and the temporary roadway and bridges in the median will be removed.”

MD 717 Water Street - Replacement of Bridge No. 1610900 over Western Branch.

- Existing Structure: Built in 1900, nearing the end of its service life.
- Project Benefits: Reduced flooding frequency and improved pedestrian facilities.
- Improvements: Timber walkway to be replaced with an 8' sidewalk.
- Timeline: Advertisement in Spring 2024, construction from Fall 2024 to Summer 2025, with an estimated completion time of 3.5 years.
- Utility Relocation: Includes underground county-owned utilities, aerial electric, and sanitary sewer lines.
- Crosswalk Addition: Potential crosswalk at Judges Drive and Water Street intersection for trail connection.
- Elevation Change: Water Street to be raised to 7' to match grading near Main Street.

Appendix B

August 1, 2024 Letter regarding Sasscer Farm

**ROBERT C. SANDERS
LAW OFFICE OF ROBERT C. SANDERS**

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Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
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Admitted:
U.S. Supreme Court, U.S.
Courts of Appeals for the
Third, Fourth, Sixth and
D.C. Circuits and the Bar of
Maryland

BY EMAIL ONLY

Mayor Sarah Franklin
Town Hall
14211 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
sfranklin@uppermarlboromd.gov

August 1, 2024

Re: Proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail

Dear Mayor Franklin:

On July 25, 2024, the Town held a virtual Focus Group Meeting on the feasibility and design of the proposed Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail. I participated in the meeting on behalf of myself and nine cousins who own the Sasscer Farm. It is our understanding that the Town's consultants will be making a proposal in the coming weeks as to the location and design of the trail. We would like to present the family's position before the consultants put pen to paper.

When the rail line was abandoned in the 1930s, title to the rail bed adjacent to the farm reverted to the original owners and is now a part of the Sasscer Farm. In addition, when Lansdale G. Sasscer, Sr. and the heirs of Harold Sasscer gifted what is now Sasscer Park to the Board of Education in 1963, they reserved a right of way on that portion of the rail bed that runs from Old Crain Highway to the Sasscer Farm.

Please be advised that the family declines to dedicate either the reverted portion of the rail bed or the referenced right of way for use as a public trail. We want to make sure you have this information before the planning process proceeds further.

Respectfully,

Robert C. Sanders

cc (By Email): Anusree Nair Anusree.Nair@ppd.mncppc.org
Daniel Sams Daniel.Sams@ppd.mncppc.org
Lauren Tuttle Lauren.Tuttle@aecom.com
Reid Fellenbaum Reid.Fellenbaum@aecom.com

Appendix C

Options Considered and Dismissed

Several trail options were examined during the alternative development process. Below is a summary of those alternatives followed by reasons why they were dismissed from further exploration in this study.

Equestrian use of the trail

- The short distance of the proposed CBRT segment may not provide a meaningful experience for horseback riding because equestrians typically want to ride for longer distances (10-15 miles).
- Bicycles have the potential to spook horses, which could raise safety concerns and result in trail user conflicts.
- If equestrian use is to be accommodated a separate, parallel natural surface trail is necessary to avoid user conflicts.

Connection to the Show Place Arena

- Trail users entering at the rear could be disruptive during events hosted at the Show Place Arena due to the presence of barns, a camping area, and pedestrian and/or horse congestion.
- Bicycles have the potential to spook horses. Bicycles entering or exiting the trail at this location could raise safety concerns.

Trail routes paralleling the north or south side of the Western Branch stream from Valley Lane

- Construction of the trail could cause ground disturbance to the Union Methodist Episcopal Chapel Site and Cemetery (Historic Site 79-046), which extends from approximately Valley Lane south to the MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) bridge over the Western Branch stream.

Trail routes paralleling the north or south side of MD 4

- Trail users would experience a very noisy and less aesthetically pleasing route along MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue).
- The trail would require grading and safety barriers along MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue).
- The area to the north of MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) has steep slopes, which could make constructing and maintaining a sustainable trail challenging.

Trail routes connecting south of MD 4 west of the Western Branch stream

- The trail would not provide a connection to downtown Upper Marlboro.
- The trail would “dead end” until a connecting trail to the south is implemented.
- A trail crossing of MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) could require a pedestrian bridge over or a pedestrian tunnel under MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue), both which would require a significant investment. A bridge or tunnel would also require significant ramping/regrading to provide Americans With Disabilities Act compliance and bicycle access to the bridge or tunnel.



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department
1616 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774

www.pgplanning.org