



# Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 12, 2023

## Agenda Item 1

### **Presentation**

Presentation on Metropolitan Branch Trail (RK&K)

### **Recommended Council Action**

Listen to the presentation.

### **Context with Key Issues**

In April 2022, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) awarded the City a grant to start the process to upgrade the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) to meet current standards for safe, comfortable, and connected bikeways. The \$60,000 grant funded technical assistance for preliminary design work on the trail. Possible improvements could include resurfacing and widening the trail, adding lighting for evening riding, and creating new pedestrian crossings to nearby parks and community institutions.

Commonly referred to as the “Met Branch Trail”, the partially completed trail uses rail right-of-way to create a multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path. When complete, the Metropolitan Branch Trail will be an 8.5-mile multi-use trail from Union Station in the District of Columbia to Maryland’s Silver Spring transit hub.

The City of Takoma Park is responsible for the care and maintenance of 0.45 miles of the MBT, running along Takoma Avenue and Albany Avenue, between DC and Silver Spring. In 2003, this half-mile stretch became one of the first alignments of the MBT. Today, the trail looks similar to how it did nearly two decades ago, but time has revealed the design to be inadequate and the condition of the trail to be deteriorating.

RK&K was selected as the contractor for this project to develop a preliminary design concept (30%). The final products are preliminary design drawings and cost estimates for implementation. The preliminary drawings were designed with multiple points of input from City and County staff, as well as community engagement. The opportunities for community input included a community site walk, a public meeting, and a virtual survey advertised with yard-signs along the route and door-to-door canvassing.

### **Council Priority**

Advancing a Community of Belonging

Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

### **Environmental Considerations**

Not applicable for this presentation; however, any improvements or redevelopment that may occur as a result of a Metropolitan Branch Trail project would be evaluated on their environmental impacts, including stormwater impacts, tree canopy impacts, and value toward the City’s climate resilience goals.

**Fiscal Considerations**

Not applicable for this presentation; however, in order to achieve final (100%) designs and construction, the City will need to appropriate budget funds and/or receive grant funds.

**Racial Equity Considerations**

Not applicable for this presentation. The Metropolitan Branch Trail is the primary, protected link for bikers between Takoma Park, Silver Spring and the District of Columbia. The important connection between high-capacity transit hubs, regional job centers, and high-opportunity neighborhoods with a growing pipeline of dedicated affordable housing make this project an important project for improved transportation equity.

**Attachments and Links**

Metropolitan Branch Trail Upgrade Webpage:

<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/metropolitan-branch-trail-upgrade/>