



Shepherd Branch Trail

Background

March 2023

Project Origin

The 3.1-mile Shepherd Branch Trail was envisioned in 2004 as a component of the DC Streetcar Project.

The Shepherd Branch rail corridor parallels the east side of the Anacostia Freeway from C Street SE to Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling.

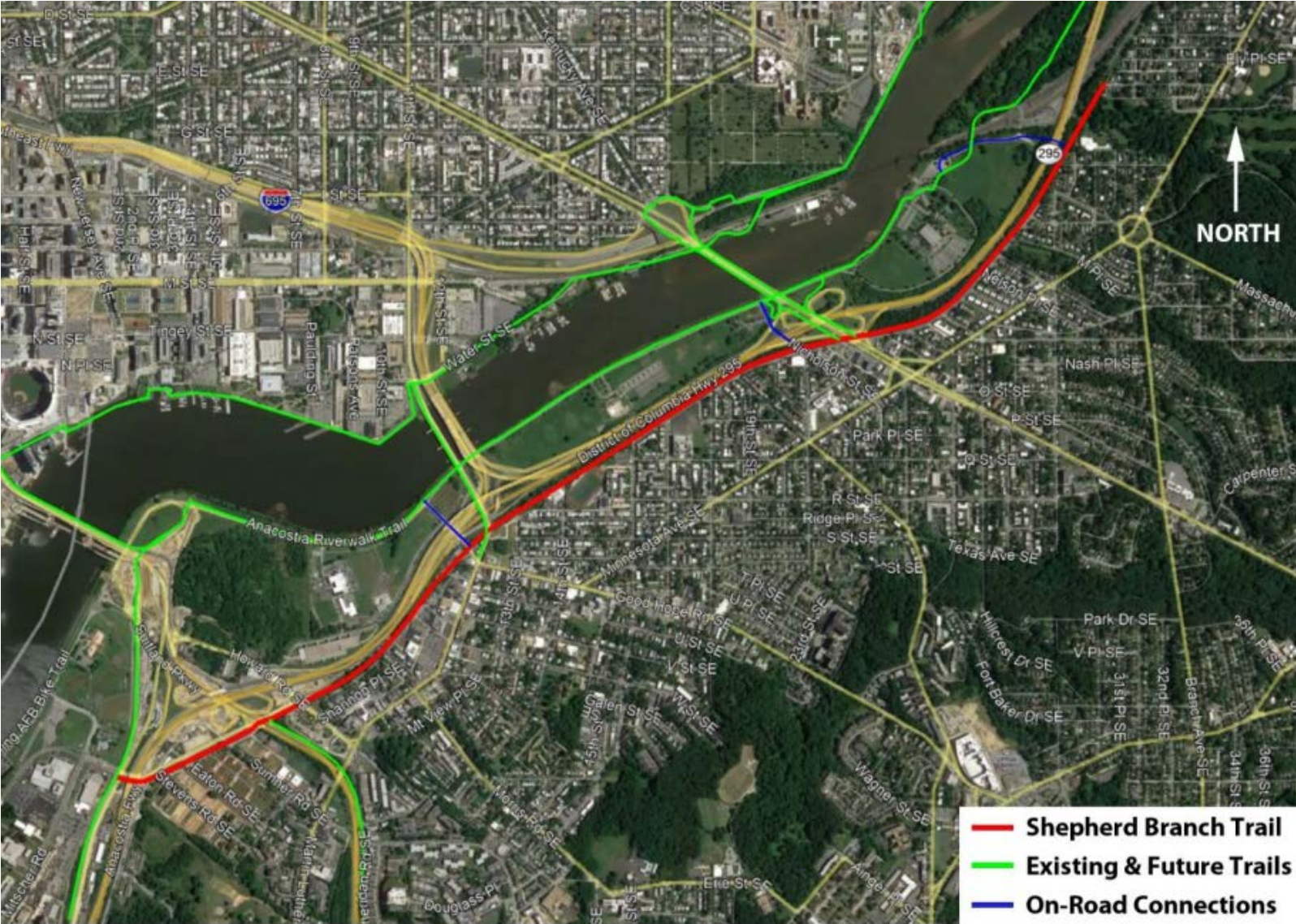


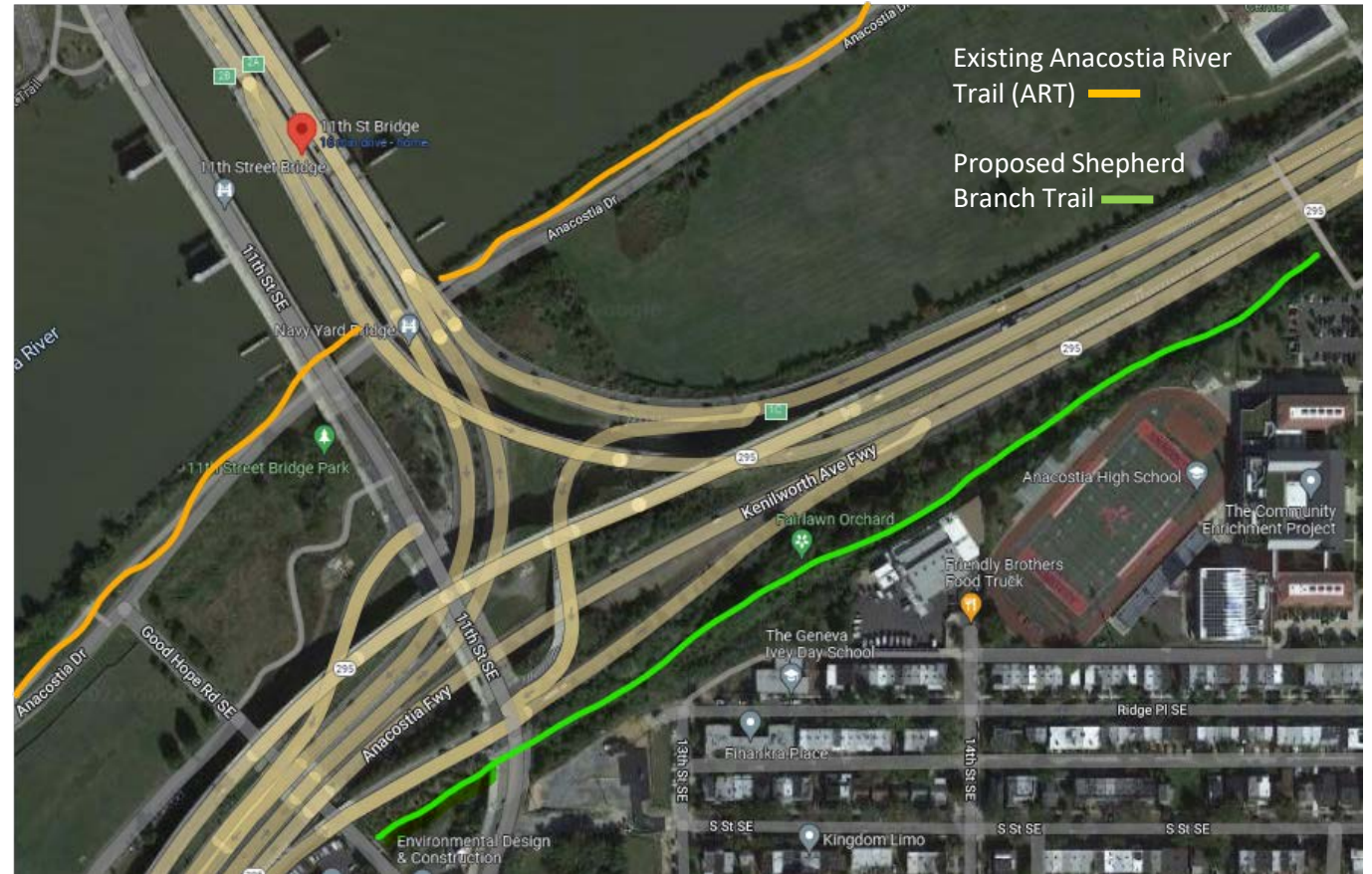
Figure 1: Shepherd Branch Trail Project Area

Current State of the Corridor



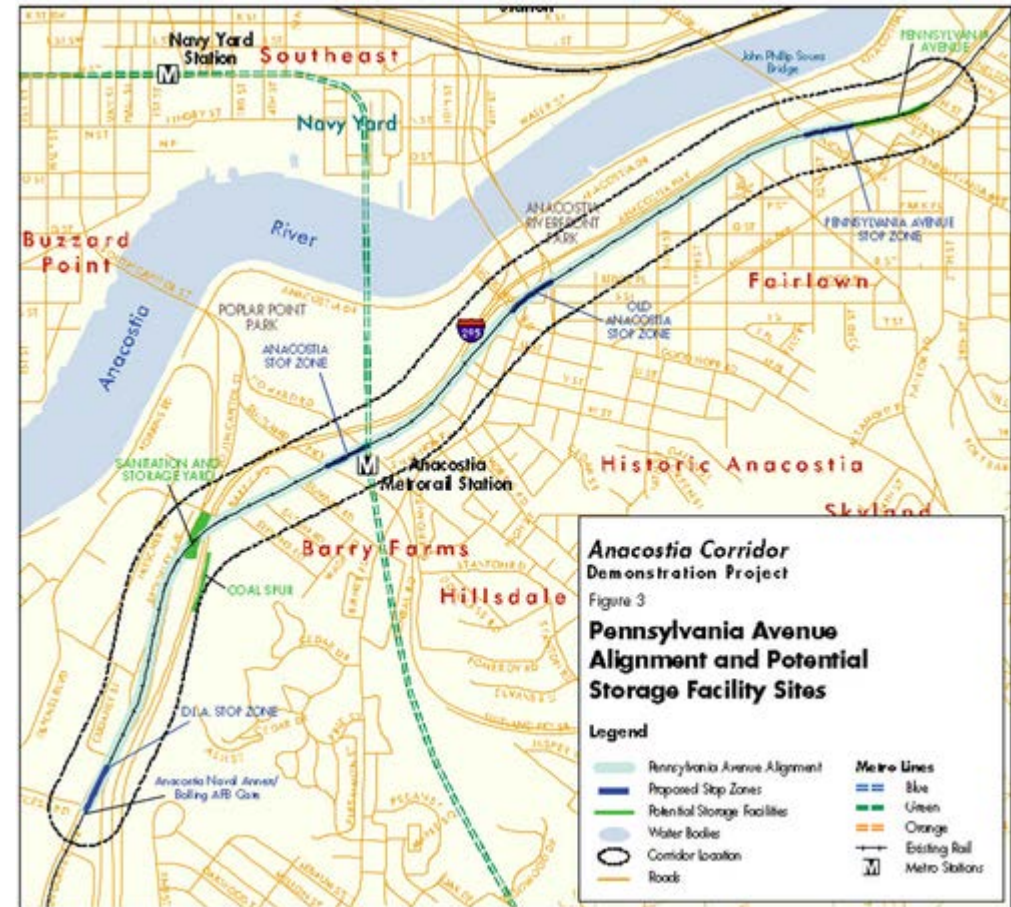
Project Benefits

- There are very few safe connections for people to walk and bike to the existing Anacostia River Trail for residents in Wards 7 and 8.
- I-295, a major highway, serves as a barrier and dividing line for residents trying to access green space in Anacostia Park.
- The Shepherd Branch Trail would run alongside the east side of the highway and would provide residents of Ward 7 and 8 a direct connection to green space, recreational opportunities, and a key transportation resource.



2004 Streetcar Project

- DDOT agreed to buy the Shepherd Branch Corridor from CSX for \$16 million
- DDOT held ribbon cutting for Streetcar
- DDOT walked away from the deal
- <https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/242265/exile-to-main-street/>



2003's *Anacostia Corridor Demonstration Project*.

Recent DDOT Efforts

- DDOT AWI Program hired Toole Design to conduct a feasibility study and 10% design in 2018.
- In 2018, DDOT developed a probable construction cost estimate based on 10% construction documents.
 - \$12.9M-\$13.03M (for construction alone)
- DDOT publishes the feasibility study in August 2020.
- DDOT puts the project on hold in September 2020 via decision document posted to the project website.
- DDOT continued to reach out to CSX in 2021 and 2022.

Joint Base Anacostia Bolling (JBAB)

- The 2.9-mile portion of the Shepherd's Branch from the south end Firth Sterling Avenue continuing south to Shepherd's Landing is located entirely within government facilities, including Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, the U.S. Naval Research Lab, and the Blue Plains Sewage Treatment Plant.
- In 2001, for security reasons, deliveries to the last rail-served customer on this line, the sewage plant, were halted and all traffic on the line was halted. CSX formally discontinued service in 2004.

Other interested Agencies

- DDOT
- Joint Base Anacostia Boiling (JBAB)
- NPS
- DPR
- DMPED
- DC Water
- HSEMA

- Non-government supporters:
 - WABA/Rails to Trails Conservancy/ CTC/Anacostia Coordinating Council/ Ward 8 Woods/ Anacostia Watershed Society/ DC Sierra Club /Trust for Public Land
 - Growing grassroots working group led by community members

Summary and Discussion

- DDOT attempted to acquire the rail corridor from CSX in 2005 for the Streetcar and a Trail
 - An agreement was in place, but the District canceled the deal
 - Attempts have been made over the years by the District to re-engage
 - Most recent formal effort was in 2021 – CSX declined to enter negotiations
- DDOT does not have the authority to take the property
- DDOT is still interested in pursuing the project and requesting funds to continue
- Public can testify at DDOT Budget hearing Thursday March 30th
 - <https://dccouncil.gov/event/budget-oversight-hearing-committee-on-transportation-the-environment-21/>
 - Written testimony must be submitted more than 24 hours in advance
 - In-person testimony must be requested more than 48 hours in advance