

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Action <input type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number: 100614	Resolution: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Easements for Ped/Bike Bridge at Rhode Island Ave.

PURPOSE:

To obtain Board approval to negotiate and execute an Easement Agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation to construct, operate and maintain a pedestrian/bicycle bridge (the "Bridge") partially on Metro property at the Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood Metro station.

DESCRIPTION:

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (the "District") is constructing the Metropolitan Branch Trail ("MBT"), a shared-use walk and bicycle path, along an eight-mile section of rail right-of-way from Silver Spring, Maryland to Union Station, Washington, DC. The MBT will be an important transportation route providing direct access to seven of Metro's Red Line stations and connecting to the Washington area's regional trails at the Capital Crescent Trail and the East Coast Greenway. Based on counts on similar regional trails, the District expects more than 1 million users per year.

There is currently a significant safety hazard at the Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood station where Metro customers cross the operating CSX tracks to get to the station from the west side. At the same time, the District is constructing a portion of the MBT on the west side of the CSX tracks. To eliminate this hazard, and to achieve one of its key purposes of facilitating bicycle and pedestrian access to Metro stations along the MBT's length, the District has funded construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that will cross the CSX tracks and provide a direct and safe connection to the station for current and future trail users and Metro customers. The \$4 million cost of the bridge will be funded entirely by the District and the District will assume all operating, maintenance and repair costs as well as liability for the bridge.

To build and operate the bridge as proposed, the District requires access to Metro property in the form of permanent and temporary easements. The estimated fair market value of these easements is approximately \$135,000, as

determined by a Metro appraisal. It is proposed that the required easements be granted to the District at no cost as the bridge meets the six conditions for a no-cost transfer of Metro property for a jurisdictional transportation project as contained in Board Resolution 2008-29:

1. The project will improve Metro or regional transit facilities;
2. The property will be permanently maintained for transit purposes;
3. There is no cost to Metro other than the real estate contribution;
4. The transfer will not adversely affect Metro`s operations, or its regionally funded annual operating or capital budgets;
5. The enhanced benefits of the transit improvements is commensurate in value to the real estate that is being contributed; and
6. The transfer receives the approval of the Board of Directors and, if required, the Federal Transit Administration.

Staff has determined that the trail could generate at least \$190,000 annually in new ridership due to improved walk and bike access to the four Metro stations along the route - including Rhode Island Ave -Brentwood - where current walk and/or bike mode shares are low. The value to Metro of new and much safer access for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as the potential for increased ridership revenue of at least \$190,000 per year, greatly exceeds the estimated fair market value of the easements.

The design of the bridge and its construction has been coordinated with activities related to the joint development at the Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood station. Staff has determined that there are no conflicts between these two separate projects. Granting the no-cost easements to the District for the pedestrian/bicycle bridge supports Metro`s goals of using every resource wisely and delivering quality service.

This action is one of a series of related actions that will provide access to Metro stations along the MBT. The Board previously approved a no-cost easement to the District to support construction of a portion of the trail at the New York Ave-Florida Ave-Gallaudet U Metro station.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Granting no-cost easements to the District of Columbia, worth approximately \$135,000, will facilitate completion of the MBT which has the potential to generate at least \$190,000 in yearly ridership revenue, at no cost or liability to Metro, while providing an immeasurable safety benefit to Metro`s customers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the negotiation and execution of a no-cost Easement Agreement with the District of Columbia for construction, operation and maintenance of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge partially on Metro property at the Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood Metro station.