

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Action <input type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number: 100906	Resolution: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Easements to DC for Metropolitan Branch Trail

PURPOSE:

Board approval to negotiate and execute an Easement Agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (District) for construction, operation and maintenance of portions of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) on Metro property near the Brookland-CUA, Fort Totten and Takoma Metrorail stations.

DESCRIPTION:

The District is constructing the MBT, a shared-use walk and bicycle path, along an eight-mile section of rail right-of-way from Union Station, Washington, DC to Silver Spring, Maryland. When completed, the MBT will be an important transportation route providing direct access to seven Metro Red Line stations and one Green Line station, also 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.

Surface easements for the MBT on three Metro properties have previously been approved by the Board and the remaining three parcels are submitted for approval in this action. The District is currently in the design stage for these sections of the trail but to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant requirements, the real estate must be acquired and agreements entered into, prior to allocation of FHWA funding.

Easements are required on the following properties: Brookland-CUA (10,036 square feet); Fort Totten (65,154 square feet); and Takoma (10,683 square feet). The order of magnitude estimate of the fair market value of these easements is: Brookland-CUA (\$120,000); Fort Totten (\$975,000); and Takoma (\$215,000). Granting these easements to the District will not impact Metro's ability to sell the development rights to adjacent property owners should they be required for future development.

Staff has analyzed ridership data for the four middle stations (New York Ave-Florida Ave-Gallaudet U, Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood, Brookland-CUA, Fort Totten) with currently low walk/bike mode shares along the existing trail by mode of access. It has been determined that the trail could generate at least \$229,500 annually in new ridership due to improved walk and bike access to these stations. This is a conservative estimate, as there may be additional increases in ridership from the trail connection at Union Station, Takoma and Silver Spring, where walk and bike shares are now relatively high. The value to Metro of new access for pedestrians and bicyclists to the Metrorail system of approximately \$229,500 per year would, in just over six years, exceed the estimated fair market value of the Metro easements provided for this portion of the trail of \$1,310,000.

It is proposed that the required easements be conveyed to the District at no-cost as the pedestrian and bicycle paths satisfy 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.

Conveying these easements to the District supports Metro`s strategic goals of delivering quality service and using every resource wisely by using Metro property to improve access to the Metrorail system thereby increasing rail ridership.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Granting no-cost easements to the District of Columbia, worth approximately \$1,310,000, has the potential to generate at least \$229,500 in yearly ridership revenue, at no cost or liability to Metro.	
Project Manager:	Mark K. Meister
Department/Office:	PLJD/SAAM

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval to negotiate and execute an Easement Agreement with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation for construction, operation and

maintenance of portions of the MBT on Metro property at Brookland-CUA, Fort Totten and Takoma Metrorail stations.