



Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail

Maryland & Delaware Rail Corridor and Trail Assessment



Image 1. Easton Rails-to-Trails. Credit: NPS RTCA.

A project collaboration with,



With technical assistance support from National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

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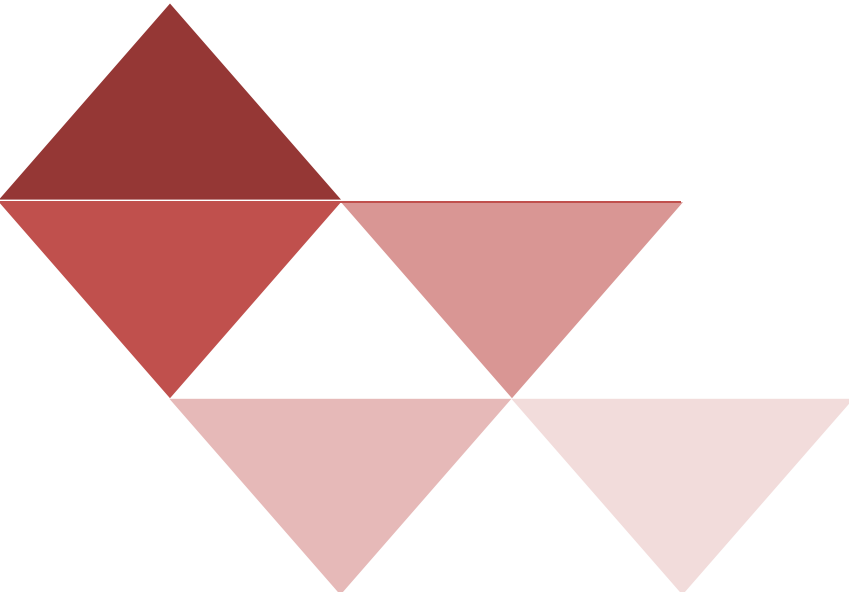
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List of Abbreviations

BIONET	Biodiversity Conservation Network
CHVC	Chesapeake Heritage & Visitor Center
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
DCLR	Delaware Coast Line Railroad
DelDOT	Delaware Department of Transportation
DNREC	Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
ESLC	Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
GIS	Geographic Information System
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (1991-1998)
LDA	Limited Development Area
LPPRP	Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan
MALPF	Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
MDDE	Maryland & Delaware Railroad Company
MD DNR	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
MD NHP	Maryland Natural Heritage Program
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MEDUSA	Maryland's Cultural Resource Information System
MERLIN	Maryland's Environmental Resources and Land Information Network
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust
MIHP	Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MPS	Maryland Park Service
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration
NPS RTCA	National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
POS	Program Open Space

PW&B	Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad
RCA	Resource Conservation Area
RTE	Rare, Threatened & Endangered
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SMRTABS	Southern Maryland Regional Trail and Bikeway System Study
SSURGO	Soil Survey Geographic Database
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century (1998-2003)
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USDA NRCS	US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Introduction



About This Assessment

There is ongoing interest from state and local agencies to explore the potential of developing a rail-trail along 32 miles of the former Maryland & Delaware Railroad Company (MDDE) route that extended between Easton (Talbot County) and Marydel (Caroline County) in Maryland. The rail corridor is owned by the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) and is no longer in use. MTA railbanked the rail corridor, and portions of the route have been leased to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) for potential development of a recreational trail. In 2020, a study process was initiated that focused on identifying how the rail-trail could spur economic development; improve residents' health and quality of life by increasing access to community assets such as parks, schools, and businesses; and bring recognition to the African American/Black historical experience, railroad history, and agricultural heritage of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The purpose of this assessment is to document the potential for trail development within and adjacent to the rail corridor in Talbot County. This section of the rail corridor is approximately 15 miles long, extending northeast from the Town of Easton to Tuckahoe State Park, and was identified as a priority because of the active support of Talbot County for the rail-trail concept, the potential demand from trail users, and the presence of key destinations. This assessment includes an inventory of historic, cultural, recreational, and natural assets along the rail corridor, and identification of physical, environmental, design and management issues and opportunities that will inform development of a trail feasibility study in the future.

The following partners formed the core planning team to help guide the rail-trail study process:

Maryland Park Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources



For the Maryland Park Service (MPS), as the prospective trail manager and lessee of the railbanked corridor, the ultimate goal is to develop the entire 32-mile rail-trail from Easton to Marydel, with the support of community residents, businesses, landowners, and local governments along the corridor. MPS sees the development of the rail-trail as a boost to the economic health of the rural communities through which it passes, a potential regional visitor destination, and as a means to enhance the health of residents through outdoor activity in underserved areas of the Eastern Shore. Economic opportunities could include tourism-related direct and indirect impacts to small businesses such as bed-and-breakfasts, restaurants, and bike rental and repair shops.

Talbot County

The Talbot County departments of Recreation and Parks, Planning and Zoning, and Economic Development and Tourism support the development of the rail-trail, which extends for 15 miles between Easton and Queen Anne. One goal identified in Talbot County’s 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) is to develop a feasibility study for the creation of a recreational bike trail from Easton through the Cordova area to Tuckahoe State Park utilizing the existing rail system. The county departments of Parks and Recreation, Planning and Zoning, and Economic Development and Tourism are actively engaged in these early stages of the trail planning process. They recognize that the development of the rail-trail can be a boon to local communities, closely linking neighbors, providing a venue to improve health and wellness, supporting economic growth, and improving the quality of life enjoyed in Talbot County.



Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) is a nonprofit land conservation organization committed to preserving and sustaining the vibrant communities of the Eastern Shore and the lands and waters that connect them. The Conservancy supports the development of a rail-trail in Talbot and Caroline counties, as such a trail would encapsulate the mission of the Conservancy by highlighting vital environmental resources, passing through the thriving Eastern Shore agricultural areas, and knitting together shore communities.



National Park Service — Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA) is a technical support arm of the National Park Service that works with communities to bring their vision for outdoor recreation and conservation to life. NPS RTCA is working with the MD DNR and other partners to help them assess the potential for the rail corridor’s use as a trail, and to assist with community engagement. NPS RTCA can draw on successful models for rail-trail planning and development around the US that show how a rail-trail may support safe and healthy communities by improving access to community assets such as parks, schools, and businesses, while respecting community needs and addressing concerns.



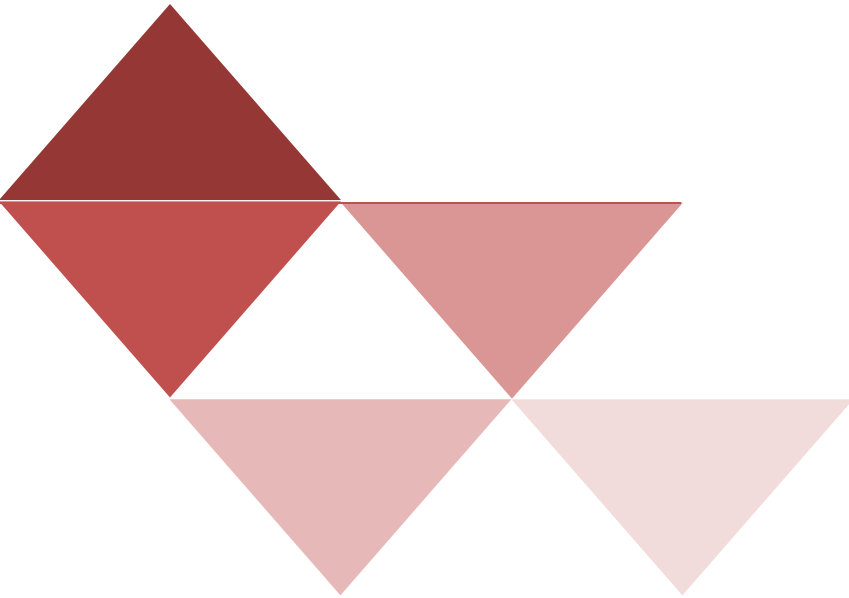
Additional support was provided to the planning team by:

Maryland Office of Tourism

The Maryland Office of Tourism develops recreational, historical, and cultural attractions to stimulate tourism and economic benefits. It promotes the state’s attractions, accommodations, and events within and beyond state borders, to US and international audiences. The development of the rail-trail would improve public access to outdoor recreation and to a unique cultural landscape that shares the stories of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and the Underground Railroad. The rail-trail would also connect the public with the cultural and natural heritage and recreational opportunities of Tuckahoe Creek and Choptank River; and stimulate economic development through tourism which is anticipated to provide new jobs and tax revenues that enhance the quality of life in the region. The Office supports the development of the rail-trail, as it would further enhance the state’s Trail System Second to None tourism development initiative.



Project Context



History of the Maryland & Delaware Rail Corridor

Chartered May 10, 1854 as the Maryland & Delaware Railroad Company (MDDE), the development of the MDDE rail corridor was led by General Tench Tilghman, a Confederate officer from a prominent Easton family. ([Source](#)) The rail line would offer passenger and freight service along Maryland's Eastern Shore and join the main north-south trunk of the Delaware Railroad at Clayton, Delaware thus providing access to the major East Coast centers of Wilmington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. Construction on the line began in 1857, and by 1859 the line was graded and bridged as far as Greensboro, Maryland. Work was interrupted by the Civil War and resumed in October, 1865. The line reached Easton in 1869 and was subsequently completed with an extension to Oxford in 1871. ([Source](#))

Heading southwest from Clayton, the line passed through Kenton, Hartly, and Slaughter, in Delaware and then through Marydel, Henderson, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Ridgely, Hillsboro, Queen Anne, Cordova, Chapel, Easton, Llandaff, Trappe, and Oxford, in Maryland (*see Image 2: Red line is the MDDE rail corridor*).



Image 2. Maryland & Delaware Rail Corridor. Credit: Transportation lines of Chesapeake Bay serving the Port of Baltimore MD (1926) - Library of Congress.

The railroad spurred significant new development in existing communities such as Meredith's Crossing (now Henderson), which changed its name to honor a railroad stockholder following the railroad's arrival in 1867. The local Gazette of March 6, 1869 tells Easton's part of the story: "The railroad between Hillsborough and Easton was in progress, and as it approached Easton it became a matter of serious discussion whether it should enter the town from the north and pass along West Street." One of the railroad's early schedules, dated May 22, 1871, indicates one passenger train and one freight train operated daily, and the freight train had a passenger car attached. The railroad soon became important to the region's economy. Nonetheless, on December 20, 1877, bondholders foreclosed on the railroad's original builders, purchasing the railroad for \$94,200, and the line was reorganized as the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad Company on July 31, 1878 (see Image 3: Yellow line is the MDDE rail corridor renamed as the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad). ([Source](#))

In 1882, the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad Company (PW&B), a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, acquired the entire capital stock of the company, and operated the line as agent for the company, guaranteeing the principal and interest on its bond. PW&B represented a consolidation of several early railroads dating back to the 1830s, including the MDDE Railroad, and was chartered in Maryland on March 14, 1832. ([Source](#)) The consolidation was intended to bring the various railroads under one management for greater economy in operations.

Among the railroad passengers in 1838 was Frederick Douglass. Douglass escaped his Baltimore owner by boarding a PW&B train at President Street station and riding it northeast to Havre de Grace, Perryville, and then

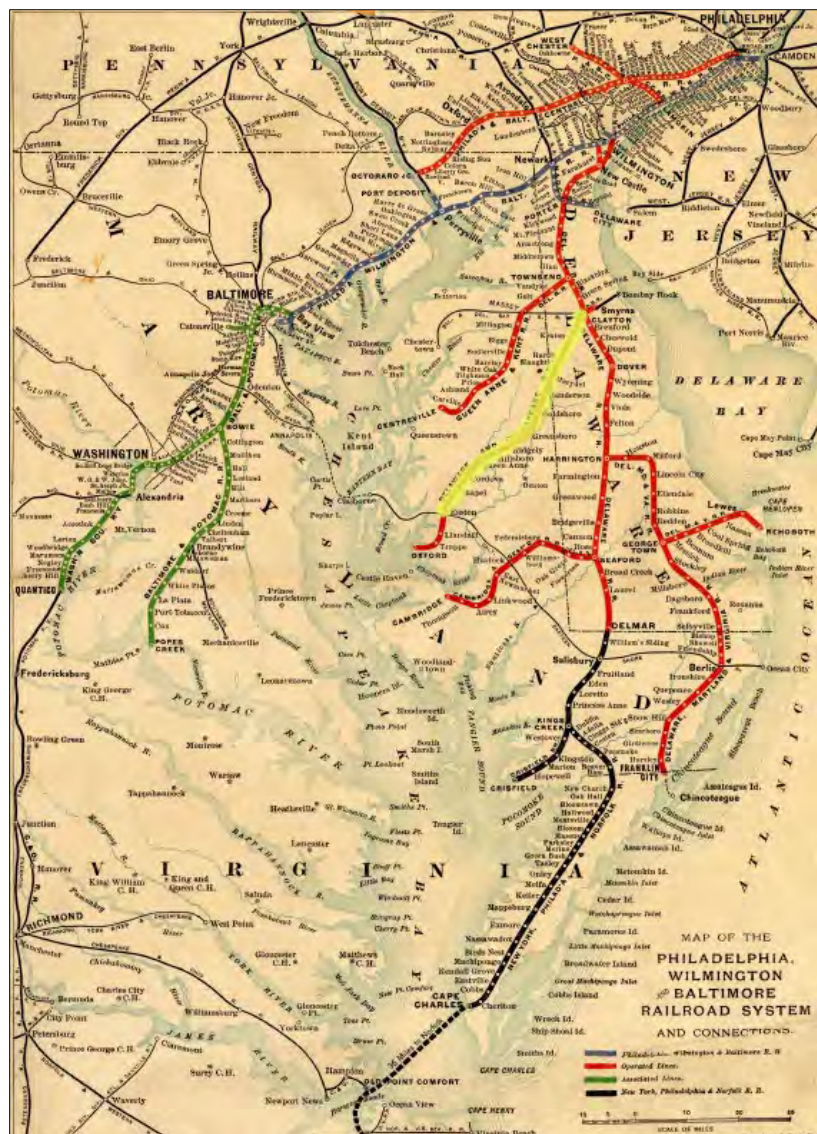


Image 3. Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad (formerly the Maryland & Delaware Railroad). Credit: Map of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad System and Connections - Delaware Public Archives.

Wilmington, taking a steamer to Philadelphia. To avoid detention, Douglass borrowed a 'seaman's protection,' a document obtained by his future wife, a free black woman. (Source) This document was normally carried by free black sailors, of which there were many in the merchant fleets and the navy. Later, the railroad would require black passengers to have 'a responsible white person' sign a bond at the ticket office before allowing them to board (see Image 4). (Source)

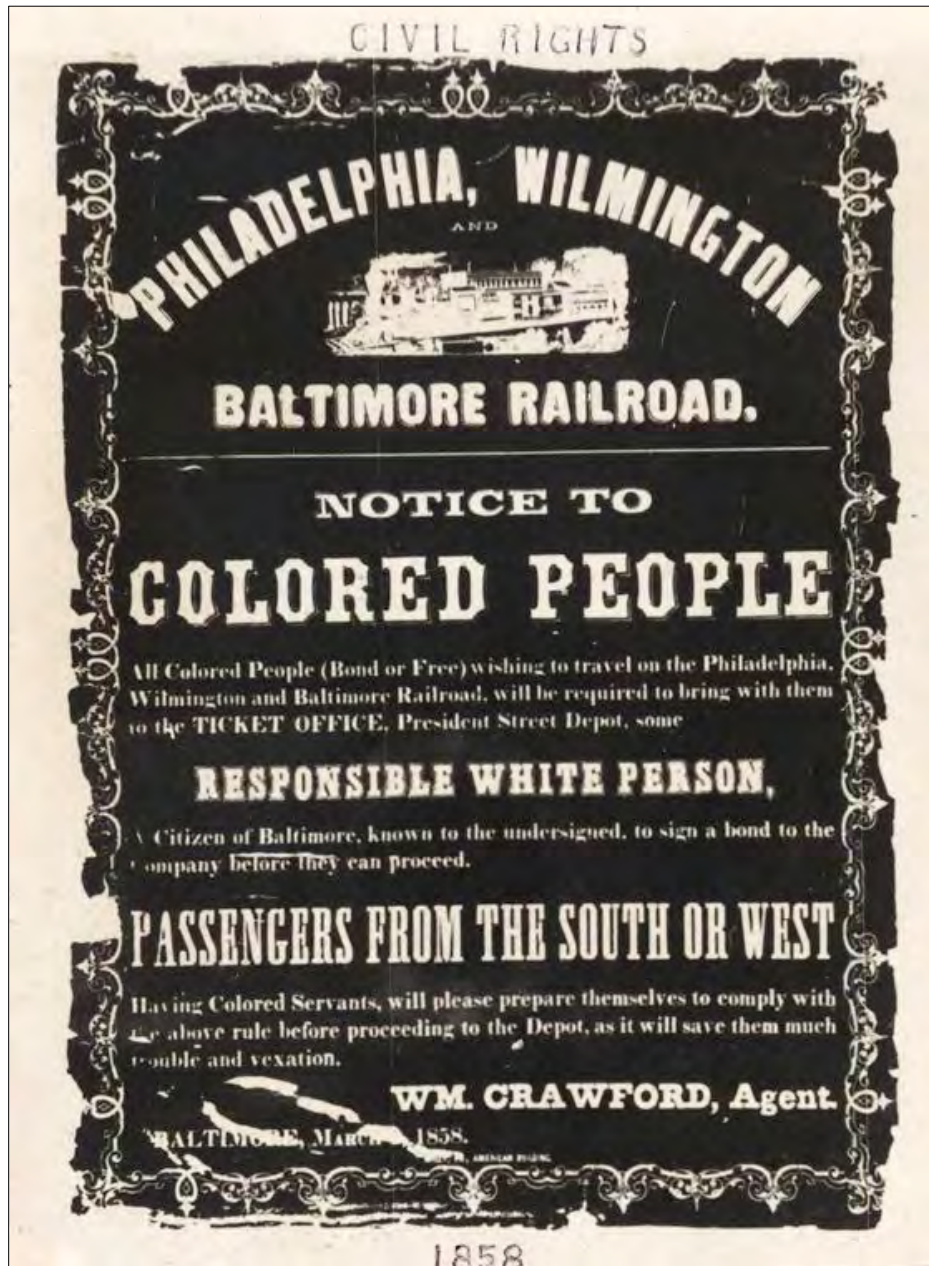


Image 4. Notice to Colored People (1858). Credit: Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad - NY Public Library.

There were many PW&B branches throughout Delaware and Maryland with various leasing and operating arrangements. The various railroad lines were operated as divisions: Main Line, Brandywine Branch, New Castle Branches, and Newark and Delaware City Railroad, comprising the

Maryland Division; Delaware Railroad, Queen Anne and Kent Railroad, Delaware and Chesapeake Railroad, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia Railroad, and Cambridge and Seaford Railroad comprising the Delaware Division. The Philadelphia and Baltimore Central Railroad operated as the Central Division. The total track mileage, not including sidings, as of October 1888 was 518.64. This total included track owned, operated, or leased by PW&B. ([Source](#))

Expansion of the PW&B Railroad was significant following the end of canal transportation in the 1840s and 1850s. Demand for freight and passenger service made it necessary to re-lay the track, to construct new stations, to replace and increase the rolling stock, and make other improvements (*see Image 5*). New freight and passenger stations were erected, and the number and capacity of the locomotives was increased. ([Source](#)) All these changes helped reduce travel time between the towns and bring communities together.



Image 5. Ridgely's First Railroad Station, built by the Maryland and Baltimore City Land Association in June, 1867. Credit: Ridgely Historical Society.

From 1881 to 1888 alone, the mileage of railroad operated quadrupled from 112 to more than 518, and miles of track extended from 262 to 332. Passengers more than doubled from just over 3,000,000 to more than 7,000,000. Freight tons moved more than doubled from slightly more than 1,300,000 to over 3,000,000. In 1888 the number of passengers between Maryland and Delaware amounted to 7,372,209. The Delaware & Chesapeake line carried only 52,761 passengers, representing less than 1% of the total. Only the Queen Anne and Kent Railroad, and Cambridge and Seaford Railroad,

carried fewer passengers. Freight tons moved in 1888 amounted to 52,446 for the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad, only 1.7 percent of the total 3,019,807 tons for all the PW&B lines. ([Source](#))

While several of the railroad lines were profitable, some operated at a loss, as did the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad. Total earnings in 1888 derived from freight and passenger service, mail, rents and miscellaneous amounted to \$87,983.51, while expenses were \$102,670.64. These expenses included maintenance of the right-of-way and the railroad cars, fuel, and other transportation-related costs. The Queen Anne and Kent Railroad, and Cambridge and Seaford Railroad, also suffered losses in 1888. The Maryland and Central divisions were relatively profitable, as they served larger population centers in Delaware and Maryland. Net earnings per mile for the entire PW&B system steadily decreased during the 1880s, with the exception of 1888, and total liabilities (mortgages, bonds due, etc.) expanded to almost \$19 million. ([Source](#))

In 1899, the newly formed 'Delaware Railroad' absorbed the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad, Queen Anne and Kent Railroad, and Cambridge and Seaford Railroad, as well as two other railroads. It was operated under a lease arrangement with PW&B. The PW&B had already become absorbed into the Pennsylvania Railroad system in the 1880s. ([Source](#))

The Delaware & Chesapeake line operated as essentially a branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad from 1882 into the 1970s. During the 1940s, the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad was known as the Oxford Branch of the Delmarva Division, with stations at Marydel, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Ridgely, Cordova, and Easton. Among the businesses served were Pet Milk Company, Phillips Packing Company, and Breyers Ice Cream. ([Source](#))

FAST, CONVENIENT SERVICE					
"THE BULLET"					
EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 25					
Read Down	Week-	Eastern Standard Time		Read Up	Mon.
Sun. Only	days			Sat. Only	to Fri.
P. M.	A. M.			P. M.	P. M.
7.05	.....	Lv.	Oxford, Md.	Ar. . . . .	.....
7.21	7.45	.....	Easton, Md.	4.46	7.02
7.46	8.10	.....	Ridgely, Md.	4.21	6.38
8.11	8.30	.....	Marydel, Md.	4.01	6.17
8.40	8.51	.....	Clayton, Del.	3.39	5.55
9.33	9.37	Ar.	Wilmington, Del.	Lv.	2.50 5.05
9.52	9.40	Lv.	Wilmington, Del.	Ar.	2.44 4.47
10.56	10.42	.....	Baltimore, Md.	1.43	3.45
11.40	11.25	Ar.	Washington, D. C.	Lv.	1.09 3.09
E 9.38	9.47	Lv.	Wilmington, Del.	Ar.	2.39 4.43
E New York train leaves Wilmington 10.02 P. M.					
9.58	10.02	.....	Chester, Pa. . . . .	.....	4.28
		Philadelphia, Pa.			
10.25	10.19	.....	Penna. Sta. (30th St.)	2.10	4.11
10.28	.....	.....	Broad St. Suburban Sta. . . . .	.....	.....
10.44	10.31	.....	North Philadelphia	2.01	4.01
11.13	11.00	.....	Trenton, N. J.	1.31	3.32
11.59	11.49	.....	Newark, N. J.	12.45	2.45
		Jersey City			
12.20	12.08	.....	(Exchange Place).	12.23	2.23
		New York, N. Y.			
12.23	12.11	.....	Hudson Terminal.	12.20	2.20
12.15	12.05	Ar.	Penna. Sta.	Lv.	12.30 2.30
A. M.	P. M.			P. M.	P. M.

Light face—A. M. time. Bold face—P. M. time
 "P" Stops only on signal.

Pennsylvania Railroad

9-19-38

Timetable for *The Bullet* in effect on September 25, 1938. (Willard H. Hart)

Image 6. The "Bullet Train" from Easton, Maryland to Clayton, Delaware (1938) was introduced as a faster, more convenient way to service passengers. Credit: Ridgely Historical Society.

Passenger service between Clayton, Delaware and Oxford, Maryland ceased in August 1949 (see Image 7). Minimal freight service continued between Easton and Oxford until 1957, when all service south of Easton ceased. Declining passenger traffic and industrial business, expensive labor costs, competition from other modes of transportation, and the effects of regulation caused the bankruptcy of several Northeastern lines in the last half of the 20th century. The Pennsylvania Railroad filed for bankruptcy in 1970. (Source)

Beginning in 1977, the Maryland & Delaware Railroad operated under the supervision of the MDDE which had been incorporated on August 1, 1977. The state governments of Maryland and Delaware decided MDDE was to serve as the designated freight operator of various branch lines on the Eastern Shore. This decision represented a lower-cost alternative to subsidizing Conrail as operator of the branch lines. (Source) The US Congress created Conrail in 1974 as a government-funded private company to address the imminent collapse of East Coast freight and passenger service.

Freight traffic on the Maryland & Delaware Railroad line decreased significantly from over 1,000 cars in 1976 to 200 in 1982. Freight service was reduced to one trip per week. The last freight train ran on February 22, 1983. The rail line became inactive from 1983 to 1991. The privately funded Chesapeake Railroad operated tourist excursions, dinner trains, and freight operations from 1991 to 1995; but the State of Maryland chose not to renew the lease at its 1998 expiration. The rail line has remained out of service since that time. (Source)

July 23rd, 1949 Price Three Cents

Passenger Trains To Be Discontinued Here

The Pennsylvania Railroad has announced that it will discontinue all passenger trains from the Oxford Branch and substitute bus service over the same territory, which will be provided by the Red Star Bus Lines, Inc. A hearing will be held before the Public Service Commission of Maryland in Baltimore on August 3, 1949, at 10 a. m.

An annual loss of \$100,000 being incurred in the operation of passenger service from Oxford to Clayton, was the reason given by the railroad officials for the discontinuance of this service.

Representatives of the railroad and bus company have been explaining the situation to business and civic leaders during the past week. Railroad representatives said the abandonment of passenger service would enable them to improve the quality of freight service being offered this area. Passenger traffic has had precedence up until now.

They indicated the proposed abandonment follows an overall effort of the company to abandon unprofitable "feeder" lines. Passenger service to Cambridge and to Chestertown were recently abandoned.

The proposed bus service from Ridgely to Wilmington via the route the railroad now follows would closely parallel present rail service. There would be a bus leaving Ridgely on week days at 7:28 a. m. and arriving in Wilmington at 9:33 a. m., in time for the 9:45 a. m. train from Wilmington which arrives in New York at 11:55 a. m.

An afternoon bus to Wilmington is already in service. Coming south, it would be possible to leave New York at 2:30 p. m. and get to Ridgely at 7:07 p. m. The bus schedule would also provide for a trip into Ridgely on Sundays.

Here is a copy of the proposed bus schedule for the Oxford Branch. All times given are Daylight Saving Time. The bus will leave and arrive at the Pennsylvania Stations along the route.

Week Days	
6:50 A.M. Lv. Easton	7:45 P.M.
7:05 A.M. Cordova	7:30 P.M.
7:15 A.M. Queen Anne	7:15 P.M.
7:18 A.M. Hillsboro	7:17 P.M.
7:23 A.M. Log Cabin	7:12 P.M.
7:28 A.M. Ridgely	7:07 P.M.
7:42 A.M. Greensboro	6:53 P.M.
7:50 A.M. Goldsboro	6:45 P.M.
7:56 A.M. Henderson	6:39 P.M.
8:01 A.M. Marydel	6:34 P.M.
8:04 A.M. Templeville	6:31 P.M.
8:11 A.M. Hartly	6:24 P.M.
8:19 A.M. Kenton	6:15 P.M.
8:35 A.M. Ar. Smyrna-Clayton	6:00 P.M.
8:45 A.M. Lv. Smyrna-Clayton	5:48 P.M.
9:33 A.M. Ar. Wilmington—	Lv. 5:00 P.M.

P. R. R. Trains To And From The North	
9:45 A.M. Lv. Wilmington	4:52 P.M.
10:15 A.M. Ar. Phila. (30th St.)	4:19 P.M.
11:55 A.M. Ar. New York	2:30 P.M.

To And From The South	
9:45 A.M. Lv. Wilmington	4:43 P.M.
11:01 A.M. Ar. Baltimore	3:02 P.M.
11:45 A.M. Ar. Washington	3:00 P.M.

Sunday bus schedule from Ridgely is as follows:
 Going south, 11:57 a. m. Going north, 7:28 p. m.

Image 7. Notice of Discontinued Passenger Service on the Oxford Branch, 1949 (formerly Maryland & Delaware Railroad). Credit: Ridgely Historical Society.

In 2013 MTA railbanked the rail corridor, and portions of the route have been leased to MD DNR for potential development of a recreational trail. In the License Agreement between MTA and MD DNR, which establishes the responsibilities and rights of MD DNR to develop recreation facilities in the rail corridor right-of-way, the MDDE rail corridor is identified as the 'Easton to Clayton Rail.' Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) also refers to the MDDE rail corridor as the 'Easton to Clayton Rail-Trail' as part of its catalog of 'Missing Links' in the Statewide trail planning network (*see Image 8*). ([Source](#))

While the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) determined that the MDDE rail corridor is ineligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status, several historic features associated with the rail corridor remain that could be used to interpret the railroad's notable role in the economic and social development of the communities through which it traveled. ([Source](#)) Ridgely's success in preserving and interpreting its railroad history in the town's Railroad Memorial Park, which includes the Ridgely Train Station and the Ridgely Rails-to-Trails, could be expanded to other venues such as Easton, Goldsboro and Marydel.

The completion of MDDE post-dates the Underground Railroad period and also Frederick Douglass' escape from Baltimore. However, the railroad's potential connection with Frederick Douglass' later years should be investigated further, as it is known that Douglass traveled extensively within the Eastern Shore and in Delaware during the 1870s. He traveled many miles by rail, ferry, and coach on his speaking tours. Douglass was an advocate for organized labor and integration of transportation accommodations. He entertained W. Wilson Byrne, President of the Dorchester & Delaware Railroad while in Cambridge, Maryland, and was involved as a stockholder in the Anacostia & Potomac River Railway Company. ([Source](#))

Why a Recreational Trail

In 2008, MDOT started an effort to develop a Statewide trail planning approach that supports trails as a practical and environmentally-friendly travel option – 'Maryland Trails - A Greener Way To Go.' ([Source](#)) In collaboration with local governments and other state agencies (including MD DNR), one of the products of this effort is identification of key trail 'Missing Links.' These Missing Links are opportunities to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between communities, destinations and other existing trails (*see Image 8*). The Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail is one such Missing Link. ([Source](#))

The Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail will form a Mid-Shore Maryland trail spine linking the commercial hub of Easton to other key communities in Talbot and Caroline Counties. Via completion of a second Missing Link toward Kent Island (known as the 'Cross County to Easton Clayton Connector'), the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail will allow safe, separated pedestrian/bicycle connections from the gateway to the Eastern Shore – the Chesapeake Bay Bridge – into the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula. ([Source](#))

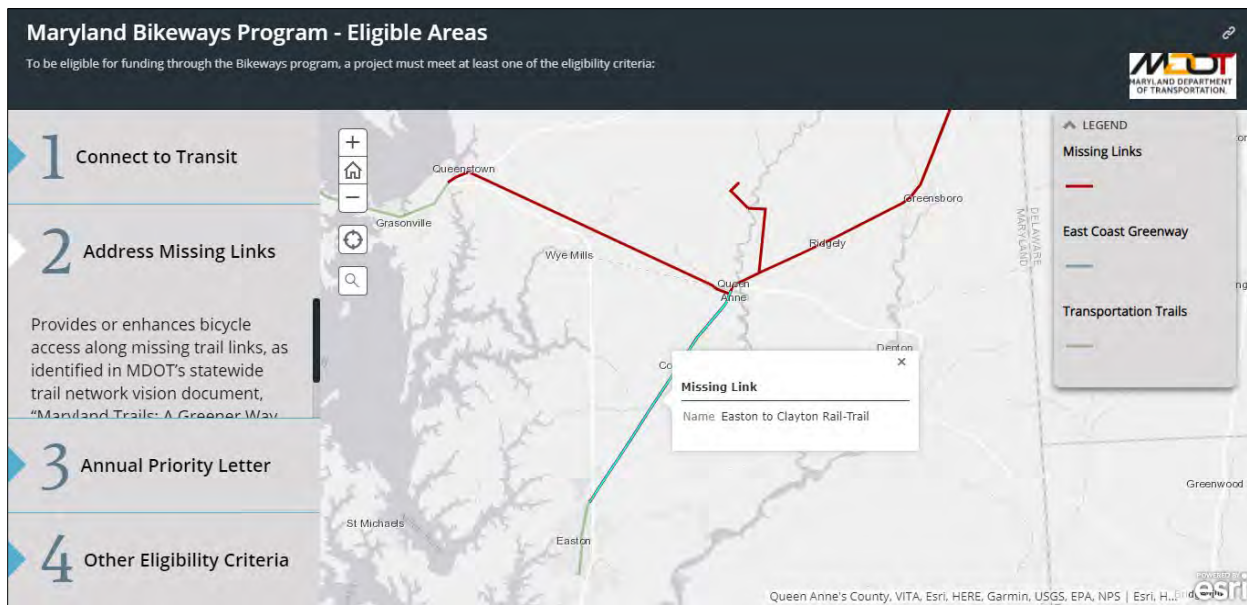


Image 8. Easton to Clayton Rail-Trail. Maryland Bikeways Program - Eligible Areas. Credit: Maryland Department of Transportation.

Centered on the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail is Tuckahoe State Park. Tuckahoe is MD DNR's signature facility in the middle Delmarva, encompassing almost 4,000 acres along the banks of Tuckahoe Creek and features camping, picnicking, paddling, and other creek-based activities. Another key facility in Tuckahoe State Park is the over 20 miles of trails available to visitors, including a completed segment of the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail inside the boundaries of the park. The vision of MPS for their facilities is to not only be a destination but to also better integrate into the local communities they serve. Easy access and connections are a key element of this integration and the pedestrian/bicycle access provided by a completed Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail is an ideal representation of that goal.

Why the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail

The rail corridor – in the vicinity of the Village of Cordova – is located near the birthplace of Frederick Douglass, the famous writer, orator, statesman and abolitionist. Douglass was born enslaved as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in 1818 and spent the first years of his life in Talbot County. In his famous autobiography, he describes the first six years of his life in great detail and notes the 'Tuckahoe River' and its surroundings as his first classroom. He was sent to Baltimore at age eight but was returned to Talbot County at the age of fourteen. ([Source](#)) As an enslaved person, he suffered both the abuse of his owner and the horror of a rural economy based on slavery.

In 1836, Douglass, who was just eighteen, and four other enslaved men plotted to escape to the North by taking a large canoe up the coast of Maryland and proceeding into Pennsylvania. Their plot was discovered and they were arrested and jailed in the Town of Easton, which is currently the planned terminus of the proposed rail-trail. ([Source](#)) The Town of Easton has two public commemorations of Douglass: a statue at the Talbot County Courthouse (*see Image 9*), and a

beautiful new public mural on the existing Easton Rails-to-Trails near the historic neighborhood of 'The Hill,' America's first free black community.



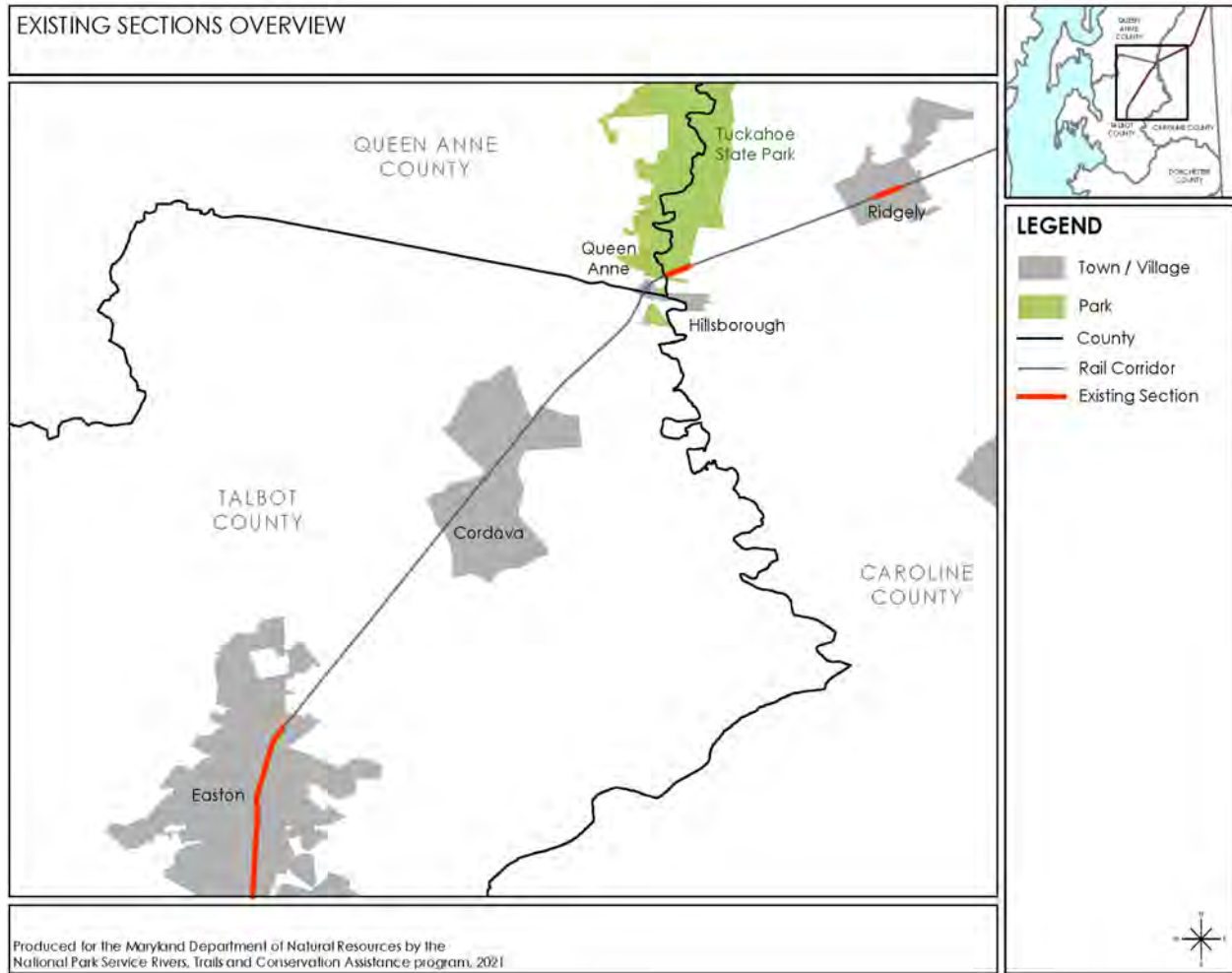
Image 9. Frederick Douglass Statue - Talbot County Courthouse. Credit: Talbot County Office of Tourism.

The rail corridor is also close to Talbot County's new Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. The new park allows visitors to see an unspoiled natural landscape, similar to the one that Douglass likely knew as a young child; as well as interpretive signage highlighting the legacy of Frederick Douglass. Further north, the rail corridor nears the historic towns of Queen Anne and Hillsboro, an area frequented by Douglass and his grandmother, who raised him.

Designating the proposed rail-trail as the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail will provide an important opportunity to tell Douglass' story as part of the history of the Eastern Shore, while bringing more attention and interest to his life and his accomplishments. Using the future rail-trail will also allow visitors to experience the quiet surroundings, natural beauty, and rural landscapes of the area in a way that brings the area's history and the many remarkable journeys of Frederick Douglass back to life.

Existing Rail-Trail Sections

Short sections of the rail corridor have already been converted to paved recreational trails. These sections are located in three separate locations: The Town of Easton in Talbot County, and Tuckahoe State Park and the Town of Ridgely in Caroline County.



Easton Rails-to-Trails

General Trail Information	
Length:	2.8 miles
Management:	Town of Easton
Start Point/End Point:	The trail extends from Wayside Avenue (southern end) to the A. James Clark Sports Complex (northern end).
Surface and Width:	Asphalt, 10 ft wide
Grade:	The trail is relatively level
Uses:	Walking, biking
Difficulty:	The trail route has a paved surface and provides easy access to town amenities.
Facilities:	Parking can be found at Idlewild Park (115 Idlewild Ave.), the A. James Clark Sports Complex (1078 N. Washington St.), and along East Avenue at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station Visitors Center and Museum.

Background

The Easton Rails-to-Trails is a 2.8-mile multi-use trail bisecting the Town of Easton from Wayside Avenue (southern end point) to the A. James Clark Sports Complex (northern end point). The Easton Passenger Station, built in 1906, is located near the trail's midpoint at Goldsborough Street and is now a visitor center and museum managed by the Easton Historical Society. The Easton Rails-to-Trails is a community asset that provides residents and visitors with access to Easton's historic downtown, community parks, schools, and commercial centers.

The trail first opened in 1998. This first segment of the trail extends for 2.5 miles, and runs south from the A. James Clark Sports Complex to Dutchmans Lane. An extension of the trail was completed in 2018 south of Dutchmans Lane along Wayside Avenue. This extension is 0.3 miles, bringing the current length of the Easton Rails-to-Trails to 2.8 miles. Since its inception, the Town of Easton and Talbot County have sought to extend the trail with the goal of improving quality of life and increasing tourism in the area.

What's Next

The Town of Easton and Talbot County continue to plan for future extensions of the Easton Rails-to-Trails to other parts of the town. The town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the county's 2016 Comprehensive Plan and 2017 LPPRP identify a number of extension priorities:

- A westward extension of the trail to connect Easton with the Town of St. Michaels
- Possible construction of the rail corridor travelling from Easton to the Village of Cordova

- Construction of trail segments within new community developments in Easton



Image 10. Easton Rails-to-Trails - View looking north near Goldsborough Street. Credit: MD DNR.

Ridgely Rails-to-Trails

General Trail Information	
Length:	0.33 miles
Management:	Town of Ridgely
Start Point/End Point:	The trail extends along Belle Street and Railroad Street, starting at Cow Barn Road and ending near Ridgely’s Industrial and Office Park.
Surface and Width:	Asphalt,
Grade:	The trail is relatively level
Uses:	Walking, biking
Difficulty:	The trail route has a paved surface and provides access to town amenities.
Facilities:	Parking can be found along Railroad Street, from Cow Barn Road to Ridgely’s Industrial and Office Park.

Background

The Ridgely Rails-to-Trails is a 0.33 multi-use trail located in the town’s historic district. The trail is located near the Railroad Memorial Park and extends from Cow Barn Road (western end point) to Ridgely’s Industrial and Office Park (eastern end point). The Ridgely Train Station, built in 1892, is located next to the Railroad Memorial Park. Today, the station is used as a museum interpreting the history of the railroad, as well as a meeting space for the Ridgely Historical Society.

The Ridgely Rails-to-Trails is more than a trail for the Town of Ridgely. The trail is one of the many community assets in the Railroad Memorial Park celebrating the history of railroad life in the town. The Park is home to an old telephone office that today serves as a tourist information center; a Reading Caboose; and the original water trough used by the horses that pulled wagons from nearby farms to the station.

Construction of the trail was completed in 2009. While much of the 0.33-mile trail paved over the railroad tracks, the trail section between Central Avenue and Park Avenue was shifted in order to preserve the 140-year-old tracks in front of the station. The Ridgely Rails-to-Trails is the first rails-to-trails project in Caroline County.

What’s Next

The Town of Ridgely and Caroline County have identified potential extensions for the Ridgely Rails-to-Trails to connect with nearby parks and open space, as well as commercial and planned developments to enhance economic opportunity for residents in Ridgely. The town’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan and 2018 Maryland’s Sustainable Community Designation, and the county’s 2017 LPPRP identify a number of extension priorities:

- A rails-to-trails project connecting Ridgely with Tuckahoe State Park and Adkins Arboretum
- An extension of the trail to connect with the Ridgely Elementary School



Image 11. Ridgely Rails-to-Trails - View of Ridgely Train Station in Railroad Memorial Park. Credit: MD DNR.

Tuckahoe State Park Rail-Trail

General Trail Information	
Length:	0.5 miles
Management:	Maryland Park Service
Start Point/End Point:	The rail-trail connects Creek-Side Cliff Trail with the Tuckahoe Valley Trail, at the southern end of the park.
Surface and Width:	Gravel,
Grade:	The trail is relatively level
Uses:	Hiking, trail running, mountain biking
Difficulty:	The trail route has a gravel surface that is relatively easy to navigate.
Facilities:	Limited parking can be found at the end of Cemetery Road, off MD Route 404.

Background

The Tuckahoe State Park Rail-Trail is a 0.5 multi-use trail located near the southern boundary of the park. The rail-trail connects the Creek-Side Cliff Trail, which extends for approximately 1.5 miles and includes the section of rail-trail, with the Tuckahoe Valley Trail. Creek-Side Cliff Trail is a shared use trail that is popular for mountain bikers. Tuckahoe Valley Trail, the park's main trail, extends for 4.5 miles and is used for trail running, horseback riding, hiking, and mountain biking. Construction of the rail-trail was completed in 2019. Construction also included the rehabilitation of the existing railroad bridge over Tuckahoe Creek.

What's Next

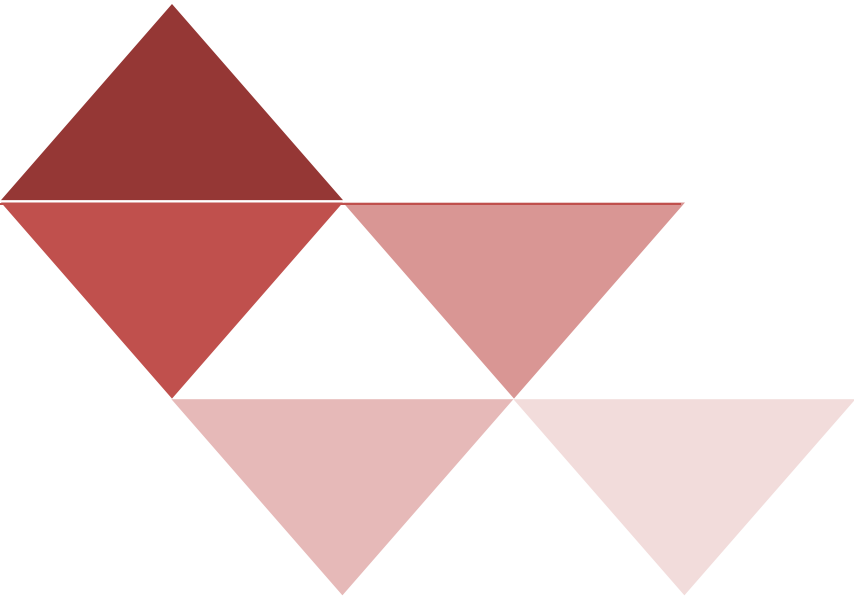
The section of rail-trail in Tuckahoe State Park is part of the proposed Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail. In 2009, MDOT identified the rail corridor between Easton and Marydel as a priority 'missing link' in the Statewide Transportation Plan.

MD DNR is currently exploring potential trailhead locations on MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway to connect with the existing rail-trail within Tuckahoe State Park. An initial assessment is underway to identify if an MPS-managed area on the northeast corner of MD Routes 404 and 309 could be a potential trailhead, parking, or access point with signage and restrooms. MD DNR is also exploring options for crossing MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway, a busy four-lane highway. Preliminary discussions include re-routing the trail to the east and crossing under the bridge on MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway that spans over Tuckahoe Creek. This option could also identify potential access points to Tuckahoe Creek and the Tuckahoe Creek Water Trail.



Image 12. Tuckahoe State Park Rail-Trail - View looking east towards Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge over Tuckahoe Creek. Credit: MD DNR.

Rail-Trail Assessment



Overview

The approximately 15-mile length of the rail corridor within Talbot County provides significant opportunities to develop, design and construct the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail as a shared use path in multiple phases. Phasing the development of the rail-trail permits the towns, counties, and state agencies to prioritize short sections within the 15-mile stretch that will provide the most benefit to local residents and visitors and that may create more competitive funding applications when applying for state, federal and other funding.

Six consecutive segments were identified and assessed between the intersection of MD Route 50 and MD Route 309/Cordova Road in Talbot County and the existing rail-trail segment in Tuckahoe State Park. These consecutive segments were based on logical start and end points. The six segments that were identified are:

Segment 1: Village Street to Black Dog Aly

Segment 2: Black Dog Aly to Old Cordova Road

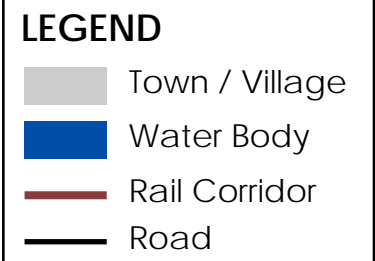
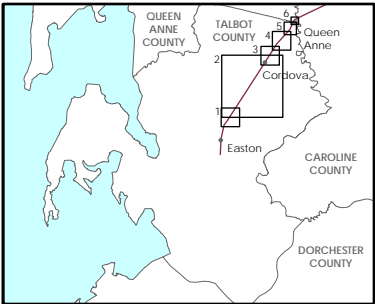
Segment 3: Old Cordova Road to Tappers Corner Road

Segment 4: Tappers Corner Road to Blades Road

Segment 5: Blades Road to Old Queen Anne Highway

Segment 6: Old Queen Anne Highway to Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge

RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT OVERVIEW



Assessment Process

An in-depth desktop review of opportunities, challenges, and alternatives for future trail development was undertaken for each segment. In-person reconnaissance was conducted on two separate occasions. Due to CDC guidelines and COVID-19 travel restrictions, limited in-person review was conducted during the assessment process.

The assessment process included an analysis of the following characteristics:

Property Owners/Tax Parcels

The Talbot County Land Use Interactive Map was used to identify tax parcels that abut the rail corridor. Property ownership information was also identified for each tax parcel.

Topography and Soils

The US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) was used to identify soils within and along the rail corridor.

Protected Lands

NPS RTCA conducted a desktop review to identify possible protected lands in the project area. Protected lands designations can include conservation easements, rural legacy properties, environmental trust easements, forest conservation act easements, agricultural land preservation foundation easements, local protected lands, coastal and estuarine land conservation program, targeted ecological areas, private conservation lands, protected federal lands and Chesapeake Bay critical areas. The desktop review also included identifying rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species on the federal and/or state level that may occur within the vicinity of the proposed alignment. NPS RTCA searched MD DNR's Maryland's Environmental Resources and Land Information Network (MERLIN) Geographic Information System (GIS) data and considered protected lands and RTE species with confirmed or potential occurrences that may occur within the vicinity of the proposed rail-trail project area.

Vegetation and Views

The existing vegetation was primarily identified through available aerial imagery.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

NPS RTCA conducted a desktop review to identify possible wetlands and streams that may occur within the vicinity of the proposed rails-trail project alignment. NPS RTCA used MD DNR's MERLIN GIS data to identify potential wetlands and streams that may occur within the approximately 60-foot rail corridor right-of-way.

Historic Resources

NPS RTCA conducted a desktop review to identify resources within 500 feet of the rail corridor that are relevant to the African American/Black historical experience, railroad history, and agricultural heritage of Maryland's Eastern Shore. NPS RTCA searched Maryland's on-line Cultural Resource Information System (MEDUSA) to identify architectural and archaeological sites and standing structures included in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) and NRHP located in the vicinity of the rail-trail project area. Resources farther afield are included in the relevant Appendices.

Utilities

Aerial imagery identified above-ground utilities such as utility poles and lines, and underground utilities identified were limited to visible drainage features.

Bridges

Available aerial imagery was reviewed to locate any bridge crossings within the rail segment and to identify the need for additional condition assessments.

In addition, the 2020 *Routine Bridge Inspection Report – Clayton/Easton Line, MD Route 303 Over Bridge No. T-NR02002* (prepared October 22, 2020 by PrimeAE Group, Inc. for the State of Maryland, Natural Resources) was reviewed. The 2003 *Cursory Safety Inspection Clayton/Easton Freight Rail Line 169 – Bridge No. 32.69 Summary of Findings* developed by MD DNR was reviewed for the bridge over Old Queen Anne Highway.

Characteristics that resulted in no findings during analysis are omitted.

Segment 1: Village Street to Black Dog Aly

Fast Facts	
Length:	Approximately 1.17 miles
Potential Trailheads:	1 existing trailhead with restroom facilities at the A. James Clark Sports Complex
Tax Parcels:	16 tax parcels abut the rail corridor
Water Features:	1 tributary of Galloway Run

Context

This segment of the rail corridor intersects with MD Route 50 and is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land.

Property Owners

Of the sixteen tax parcels that abut the rail corridor in this segment, nine are located to the east of the rail corridor and seven are located to the west. However, only a few may need careful consideration for future trail development, as the tree line on either side of the rail corridor should provide screening and privacy for property owners and subdivisions. Further engagement with property owners may be needed to identify and mitigate any potential concerns.

Industrial and Commercial Operations

There are two industrial operations on the west side of the rail corridor as it approaches Black Dog Aly owned by Clearview Warehousing LLC and J & E LLC, respectively. In-person confirmation will be needed but it is possible that existing structures on both properties may be encroaching on the rail corridor. Understanding of the operational needs of each property owner is critical to the planning, designing and management of the proposed rail-trail. The feasibility of the following interventions should be explored with these property owners in the future: eliminating some of the paved areas adjacent to the rail corridor right-of-way, installing fencing, or planting a vegetative buffer.

Topography and Soils

Segment 1 has relatively level, flat topography, with an average slope of 2.0 percent. The soils in the area are characterized by a mix of sandy and silt loam soils, which are generally moderately well drained to well drained and soils that are poorly drained. Areas with poorly drained soils along the rail corridor could be addressed through elevation of the trail, the use of appropriate all-weather materials, and surface cross-drain design features.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

A tributary of Galloway Run located ¼ mile northeast of MD Route 50 crosses the rail corridor near the residential subdivision. Wetlands can be found near or across the rail corridor within the Norris

E Taylor Contractors Inc. properties, and between the tributary and Easton subdivision across to the RLE LLC property.

Vegetation and Views

Dense vegetation appears to be present on both sides of the rail corridor, with the exception of areas near the intersection of MD Route 50 and areas adjacent to the commercial facilities. Because of the dense vegetation on one or both sides of the rail corridor, there are currently very limited views to the surrounding residential and commercial development and farm fields. From the perspective of potential rail-trail use, this segment would likely need to maintain the existing vegetation in order to screen trail users and provide a level of privacy for adjacent properties.

Opportunities

Commercial Services

There are commercial services available to cyclists and pedestrians along and in the vicinity of Segment 1 within Easton. Services include amenities such as dining and lodging near MD Route 50.

Challenges

Road Crossings

The three road crossings within this segment are located at MD Route 50, Reagan Drive, and Black Dog Aly. All road crossings will require appropriate safety features for pedestrians and cyclists.

MD Route 50

Crossing MD Route 50 is perhaps the biggest challenge in this segment. MD Route 50 has two separate two-lane highways, each travelling in opposite directions, with a median strip and an access ramp crossing over the former rail corridor. This high-volume highway has a maximum speed of 55 mph, and a 2020 annual average daily traffic count of 36,000 for the section between Matthewstown Road to MD Route 309/Cordova Road. The speed limit and sheer traffic volumes make MD Route 50 a potentially dangerous road for pedestrians and cyclists to cross at grade.

Reagan Drive

Reagan Drive extends east from MD Route 50 to the rail corridor and essentially functions as a driveway for the Easton Land Development LLC property. Reagan Drive curves as it crosses over the rail corridor to access the property and there are no traffic controls or warning signs. Sight lines are poor due to the surrounding vegetation. An understanding of traffic volumes entering and exiting the facility and timing of the operations will be necessary to formulate a plan for a safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing. Reducing vegetation along the approaches to the driveway may be necessary, along with the installation of safety features such as advance warning signs, rumble strips, striped crossing marks, and Z gates, in cooperation with Talbot County.

Black Dog Aly

The rail corridor crossing at Black Dog Aly presents a complex alignment as the rail corridor extends along an existing driveway for the J & E LLC property, a construction materials facility. The rail corridor also parallels Flemmings Siding Road, which provides access to the commercial property to the east. Additionally, on the north side of Black Dog Aly, Entrance Lane begins and intersects with both Black Dog Aly and Flemmings Siding Road. This road crossing is in essence a four-way intersection with traffic coming from various directions at once, creating a potentially unsafe situation for any pedestrian or cyclist crossing Black Dog Aly. A signalized pedestrian and cyclist crossing would be, at minimum, a needed intervention.

Utilities

There are a number of culverts associated with the trail corridor crossing MD Route 50. There is one culvert where the rail corridor crosses Reagan Drive; and an additional culvert in the field adjacent to the residential subdivision at Honeysuckle Drive. There may be culverts associated with the Galloway Creek tributary, but dense vegetation prevented identification through a desktop review in this area. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the proposed rail-trail should include additional evaluation of culverts and their condition, including a safety inspection by a structural engineer.

Alternatives

Due to the complexity of road crossings and the potential encroachments on this section of the rail corridor, trail alignments that deviate from the rail corridor must be considered.

Bridge over MD Route 50

One consideration is for the proposed rail-trail to go over MD Route 50 rather than crossing at grade. This option would also impact the Gannon Family LLC property located to the east of the highway and north of Paper Run Road, as a pedestrian bridge would need to end within the section of the rail corridor that bisects this property. MDOT would need to be included in future discussions regarding the feasibility of this alternative.

Chapel Road and MD Route 50

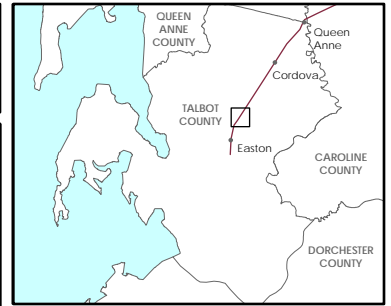
Chapel Road could be a temporary connection for the proposed rail-trail between the west and east sides of MD Route 50. A signed crosswalk on the north side of the intersection currently allows pedestrians to connect with the commercial properties to the east of MD Route 50; however, a signed bike route could potentially be installed along Chapel Road. Chapel Road is already identified as a bike route as part of the Talbot Farmland Trail but is not identified as such on the ground (*see Image 13*). There are sidewalks on both sides of Chapel Road. The sidewalk on the south side of Chapel Road comes to an end prior to the intersection with MD Route 50 and would need to be extended.

Another interim solution to crossing MD Route 50 could involve an easement through the commercial shopping center on the east side of MD Route 50 to connect to a potential extension of the Easton Rails-to-Trails. At a minimum, safety improvements would need to include the relocation of the existing curb cuts at the intersection of MD Route 50 and Chapel Road since they are not properly aligned with the street crossing; addition of a signal for pedestrians and cyclists on the west side of MD Route 50 at Chapel Road; and an extension of the existing median as a pedestrian and cyclist 'refuge' in the middle of the six-lane highway, possibly with flexible bollards protecting the crosswalk in the median. A bump out on either side of the intersection may be considered. MDOT would need to be included in discussions regarding the feasibility of any interim solution using Chapel Road.



Image 13. Chapel Road is identified as a bike route as part of the Talbot Farmland Trail - Talbot County Bicycle Map. Credit: Talbot County Offices of Tourism, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

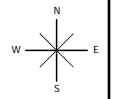
RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 1 TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND



LEGEND

- Railroad Corridor
- Neighboring Parcels
- Park
- Roads
- Water Body
- Alternate Routes
- D Driveway
- T Trailhead

MD iMAP, DoIT



Segment 2: Black Dog Aly to Old Cordova Road

Fast Facts	
Length:	Approximately 4.9 miles
Potential Trailheads:	2 potential trailheads at Chapel District Elementary School and Triple Creek Winery
Tax Parcels:	33 tax parcels abut the rail corridor
Water Features:	Tributaries of Wootenau Creek and Highfield Creek

Context

This segment of the rail corridor stretches approximately 4.9 miles north from Black Dog Aly to the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road. The rail corridor runs parallel and to the immediate east of MD Route 309/Cordova Road for most of this segment, except for approximately the first mile between Black Dog Aly and Klondike Road. The landscape around this segment is predominantly agricultural with forested areas, with a number of areas of low-density to medium-density residential near Easton and Cordova. Wootenau Creek crosses the rail corridor just south of Rabbit Hill Road, and various tributaries of Wootenau Creek and Highfield Creek cross the rail corridor throughout this segment.

Property Owners

From Black Dog Aly to Old Cordova Road the rail corridor abuts a total of 33 tax parcels. The majority of the segment is surrounded by agricultural fields to the east and MD Route 309/Cordova Road to the west.

Industrial and Commercial Operations

There are several industrial and commercial operations on either side of this segment, and while the rail corridor may be obscured from view today, future trail development has the potential to impact privacy or current operations; particularly for property owners to the east of the rail corridor and potentially located within the rail right-of-way.

Between Black Dog Aly and Klondike Road, the Hayes and the Evans properties have structures located near the corridor, although screened by vegetation. The David A. Bramble Inc. property has an active driveway that extends southeast from MD Route 309/Cordova Road and crosses the rail corridor.

The Mid-Atlantic Waste Systems commercial property owned by Hood Trustee to the north of Rabbit Hill Road has a formal driveway crossing over the rail corridor. The facility is surrounded by a metal fence that is located within the state-owned right-of-way. Engagement with the landowner should be considered to explore alternatives for enhancing the aesthetics of the proposed rail-trail crossing through the property. Alternatives can include an aesthetic treatment for the fence, or the relocation of the fence to provide space for the installment of a vegetative buffer. Another option to

consider during engagement with the landowner is the removal of the driveway crossing over the rail corridor, and the potential to open up a driveway into the property from Rabbit Hill Road.

New Begin Farm LLC, the property to the north of Mid-Atlantic Waste Systems, also has a driveway crossing over the rail corridor. Further north near the intersection with Old Cordova Road, Shortall Building Supplies & Hardware, Inc., owned by Chamberlain Limited Liability Company, has a formal driveway that crosses the rail corridor to enter the property.

Private Residences

A few private residential properties have private paved driveway entrances that cross the rail corridor throughout this segment. There are a few unpaved driveways as the rail corridor approaches the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road, and two gravel driveways that cross the rail corridor to the north of Klondike Road.

Topography and Soils

This segment of the rail corridor appears to be one of the most level of the segments; however, field verification will be needed to ensure that there are no hidden topographic hazards or constraints that would require signage, fencing or other special design considerations. The majority of soil types are moderately well drained to well drained. Because of the soil classification as either prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance, every effort should be made to minimize soil disturbance during trail construction.

Protected Lands

There are three parcels within Segment 2 that are protected through Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation easements (MALPF). One of the parcels, the Saathoff property, is located north of the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Klondike Road. The parcel encompasses both the east and west sides of the rail corridor. The other two parcels are the Sump property to the south of Three Bridge Branch Road and the Milby property to the north of Three Bridge Branch Road, where it intersects MD Route 309/Cordova Road.

There are also two parcels with agricultural district designations. These are the Hutchinson property near Klondike Road and the Callahan property at the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road in the Village of Cordova.

There are four areas along the rail corridor that are classified as significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 5; lowest tier) in the state's Biodiversity Conservation Network (BioNet) between Black Dog Aly and Rabbit Hill Road, and near the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road with Old Cordova Road. An area south of Three Bridge Branch Road is classified as moderately significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 4). Coordination with the Maryland Natural Heritage Program (MD NHP) will be required to confirm if these areas are a sensitive species project review area for state-listed species, and/or require special development and management considerations.

This segment of the rail corridor also intersects a Targeted Ecological Area as it approaches the southern end of the Village of Cordova.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

The rail corridor runs through and adjacent to the 100-year floodplain for Wootenau Creek to the south of Rabbit Hill Road. All the areas where Wootenau Creek, its tributaries, and the tributaries of Highfield Creek cross, or are in close proximity to the rail corridor, are surrounded by wetlands. The Wootenau Creek and Highfield Creek tributaries in this segment are not identified as part of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area that would require a 100-foot-wide vegetative buffer; however, the non-tidal wetlands associated with these creeks are protected by a 25-foot natural buffer.

Considering the many interactions between the rail corridor and the tributaries of Wootenau Creek and Highfield Creek, future trail development should consider flood mitigation and wetland protection to enhance the natural capabilities of the surrounding landscape.

Vegetation and Views

The vegetation along the rail corridor in this segment is predominantly woodlands, but includes a combination of mown grass, meadow, and shrubs/hedgerows as well as a tree buffer of varying width that acts as a buffer between the rail corridor and MD Route 390/Cordova Road. The dense vegetation appears to be present on both sides of the rail corridor in many locations, and seems to provide a balance between privacy and scenic views of agricultural fields, forested areas, meadows, and croplands.

Opportunities

Commercial Services

There are commercial services that may be of interest to cyclists and pedestrians on the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and could serve as stopping points or destinations for future trail users. These services include Triple Creek Winery, Family Affair Farm, and Hog Neck Golf Course. Appropriate wayfinding and road crossing safety measures would be needed to make this possible.

Trailheads

Chapel District Elementary School

The Chapel District Elementary School is located on the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road near the intersection with Old Cordova Road. There exists the potential to leverage existing programs, such as the Safe Routes to School program, that focus on providing schoolchildren safer routes to school as well as increasing recreation opportunities for students. Access to the rail corridor to and from the school should be considered as a possible destination for trail users as parking and other amenities could be made available.

Triple Creek Winery

A trail connection crossing to the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road could be considered to access Triple Creek Winery as part of a potential agritourism strategy (see *Image 14*). A trailhead at this location could offer trail users access to restroom facilities, dining, and entertainment opportunities.



Image 14. Triple Creek Winery. Credit: Triple Creek Winery.

Challenges

Road Crossings

Seven residential driveways cross this segment of the rail corridor. The low volume of traffic and lower speeds of the driveways would not pose much of a safety concern for potential trail users. Some safety measures to reduce the possibility of conflict between trail users and property owners could include installing a painted crosswalk or other highly visible material across the driveways; reducing the vegetative buffer on the approaches to the driveways to increase visibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles; and installing warning signs on the approaches to the driveways.

From a trail design standpoint, the access roads crossing the rail corridor onto industrial and commercial properties may need to be treated as though they are village street crossings, with a consideration for appropriate traffic control devices and other safety features. Alternative trail alignments that avoid these access roads could also be considered if any of the industrial and commercial operations involve high-volume truck and other vehicle traffic.

The three road crossings within this segment area located at Klondike Road, Rabbit Hill Road and Three Bridge Branch Road.

Klondike Road

The Klondike Road crossing could be problematic for potential trail users, largely due to the wide turn radius available to drivers traveling north and turning right. Here, the line of sight for drivers is likely poor as trail users would be traveling through the vegetated area enclosing the rail corridor and remain hidden from view. At a minimum, safety features such as pedestrian/bicycle warning signs and a striped crosswalk should be placed along Klondike Road near the trail crossing. Vegetation clearing along the rail corridor as it approaches Klondike Road should also be considered to open up views for drivers approaching this intersection.

Rabbit Hill Road

The crossing at Rabbit Hill Road presents more favorable conditions for avoiding conflicts between motor vehicles and trail users crossing the road. At the intersection, drivers have an open line of sight when turning right on Rabbit Hill Road and are able to see the rail corridor from the road. There is the possibility that one or two vehicles stopped at the intersection could block the proposed rail-trail as the rail corridor is located much closer to MD Route 309/Cordova Road at this intersection. A future feasibility study and preliminary designs for a rail-trail should consider potential trail realignments if traffic on Rabbit Hill Road presents frequent obstacles for cyclists and pedestrians using the proposed rail-trail. Safety measures to consider for this intersection could include warning signs and possibly a signalized intersection.

Three Bridge Branch Road

The crossing at Three Bridge Branch Road is configured similarly to Rabbit Hill Road, with a controlled approach at the intersection with MD Route 309/Cordova Road. The stop sign and stop line are located relatively close to a potential rail-trail crossing. Safety design treatments to consider for this intersection could include warning signs and a striped crosswalk, and possibly a signalized intersection.

Utilities

In many locations, a ditch runs along the west side of the rail corridor. There are a number of culverts located where the rail corridor encounters open tributaries of Wootenau Creek and Highfield Creek. There may be one or more culverts associated with the crossing of Wootenau Creek near Rabbit Hill Road, and a tributary of Highfield Creek that crosses under the rail corridor near the junction of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the proposed rail-trail should include additional evaluation of culvert locations and their condition, including a safety inspection by a structural engineer.



Image 15. Rail corridor tracks crossing over culvert drainage with no support underneath - View looking east, north of intersection with Klondike Road. Credit: GoogleMaps.

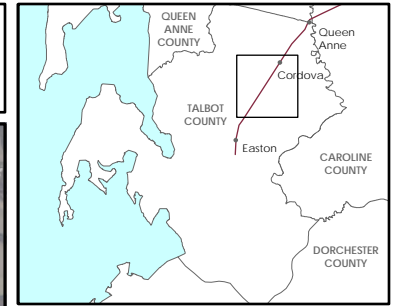
Alternatives

The number of industrial, commercial, and private properties on the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road limits the potential realignment of the rail-trail in this segment. Whether the trail utilizes the rail corridor or deviates from it, extensive outreach with the area's landowners will need to happen during the feasibility and design process.

On-Road Option – MD Route 309/Cordova Road

Rather than develop a trail within the rail corridor, a bike lane could be established on MD Route 309/Cordova Road. This would require the redesign of the road to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists.

RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 2 TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND



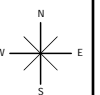
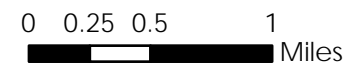
LEGEND

- Railroad Corridor
- Neighboring Parcels

- Roads
- Water Body
- Alternate Routes

D Driveway

MD iMAP, DoIT



Segment 3: Old Cordova Road to Tappers Corner Road

Fast Facts	
Length:	Approximately 1.5 miles
Potential Trailheads:	1 potential trailhead at the Cordova Volunteer Fire Station 1 existing trailhead at Cordova Park
Tax Parcels:	19 tax parcels abut the rail corridor
Water Features:	2 tributaries of Highfield Creek

Context

This segment of the rail corridor extends north for approximately 1.5 miles from the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road to Tappers Corner Road. The rail corridor runs through the heart of the Village of Cordova, which has a mix of land uses that include agricultural, residential, institutional, and commercial. Two unnamed tributaries of Highfield Creek cross under the rail corridor at Dukes Bridge Road and Tappers Corner Road. For most of the segment, the rail corridor runs adjacent to a drainage ditch to the east of MD Route 309/Cordova Road.

Property Owners

There are 19 tax parcels to the east of the rail corridor in this segment. While a number of residential parcels front the rail corridor within the Village of Cordova, very few residential buildings are located to the east of the rail corridor, or within the rail right-of-way. Most of the buildings that are adjacent to the rail corridor are agricultural outbuildings, or commercial or institutional in nature, such as the Cordova Volunteer Fire Station and US Post Office.

Six individual parcels between the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road with Old Cordova Road and Kittys Corner Road have structures near the rail corridor right-of-way. These parcels include the Callahan property, the Nagel Farm Service II LLC property (which includes two parcels), and the Cordova Volunteer Firemen’s Association Inc. property (which includes three parcels).

Between Kittys Corner Road and Dukes Bridge Road, the rail corridor abuts Railroad Avenue, a small road that extends north-south between Kittys Corner Road and Willis Street; two private residences; and a large industrial complex owned by American Aquaculture Holdings LLC. From Dukes Bridge Road to Tappers Corner Road there are two smaller private residences and two larger agricultural parcels, the West property, and the Hayward property.

Industrial and Commercial Operations

Nagel Farm Service

Nagel Farm Service is a 9.84-acre complex and consists of two parcels with large grain silos and various office and warehouse buildings associated with farm operations. The Nagel property is listed on MIHP and was originally part of the Wye Mills Feed Company, subsequently Talbot Grain, which contained twenty-eight structures in the 1980s. Nagel is also one of the few properties within this segment with remnants of the original railroad tracks. From the perspective of future trail use, the Nagel complex could become an interesting amenity for trail users, as the property speaks to the agricultural heritage of the area, with the potential to develop interpretive opportunities such as signage and other media.

There are a number of design challenges for this segment of the rail corridor that will need to be addressed in future feasibility and design studies for the trail. One is that the rail corridor extends for more than 1,000 feet alongside of and, in some areas, through the internal circulation system and parking areas of the Nagel properties. Frequent truck traffic accessing and egressing the complex poses safety concerns for potential rail-trail users, particularly at the two access roads into the complex from MD Route 309/Cordova Road and during the two times per year when the parking lot becomes a staging area for trucks to offload grain. It was noted by the property owner during an in-person conversation with ESLC that a person was unfortunately run over and killed by a truck a few years ago during the offloading process.

From a trail design standpoint, the two access roads may need to be treated as though they are village street crossings, with a consideration for appropriate traffic control devices and other safety features. Another challenge is the potential for trespass onto the Nagel property. Direct engagement with the landowner will be imperative to ensure that concerns such as safety, privacy, and efficiency of continued operations are not negatively impacted through future trail design.

American Aquaculture

In similar fashion to Nagel, the rail corridor fronts the American Aquaculture property for approximately 1,400 feet and includes two access roads into the complex from MD Route 309/Cordova Road. One of the access roads is located at the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Dukes Bridge Road. While the rail corridor does not appear to impact potential internal traffic circulation within the complex, it is possible that the parking area has encroached on the rail right-of-way. Although the American Aquaculture property is currently unoccupied, it will require the same considerations as the Nagel property in terms of trail planning and design to address safety and trespass concerns.

Topography and Soils

The existing railbed is relatively flat throughout the length of the segment; however, field verification will be needed to ensure that there are no hidden topographic hazards or constraints that would require signage, fencing or other special design considerations. Because of the soil classification as either prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance, every effort should be made to minimize soil disturbance during trail construction.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

Two tributaries of Highfield Creek cross under the rail corridor at Dukes Bridge Road and Tappers Corner Road via culverts. This segment of the rail corridor does not intersect with any designated floodplains or wetlands at either of these locations; however, potential flood impacts should be considered in the future design of the rail-trail.

Vegetation and Views

This segment extends through open, grassy areas that parallel the rail corridor to the east that make the railbed and adjacent parcels visible from MD Route 309/Cordova Road. A narrow tree buffer to the east of the rail corridor between Willis Road and Connelly Road provides privacy for two residential properties, sections of the American Aquaculture Holdings LLC property, and the West property. Future development of trail should consider additional vegetative screening for the American Aquaculture property as it approaches Dukes Bridge Road due to minimal tree canopy to the east of the rail corridor. Direct engagement with residential property owners may be needed to address any screening or privacy concerns not anticipated in this assessment.

North of Connelly Road toward Tappers Corner Road, the vegetation becomes more dense and the tree buffer widens, appearing to encompass both sides of the rail corridor. MD Route 309/Cordova Road veers slightly west in this section limiting views of the rail corridor. Due to the dense vegetation in this area, it is difficult to know if there have been encroachments along this section of the rail corridor.

Opportunities

Commercial Services

Commercial services, institutions, and parks can be found along or near MD Route 309/Cordova Road in this segment. The proposed rail-trail could provide direct access to these amenities and attractions for community residents, pedestrians, and cyclists, as well as access to other community resources such as Cordova Park to the west of MD Route 309/Cordova Road.

Connections with Existing Trails

Two Talbot County Bike Trails go through the Village of Cordova: The Joust Maryland Trail and the Talbot Farmland Trail (see Image 16). The Joust Maryland Trail connects with the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road, travels north, turns right on Kittys Corner Road, and then turns left on Coveys Landing Road. The Talbot Farmland Trail enters the Village of Cordova through Coveys Landing Road, turns right on Kittys Corner Road, and travels north on MD Route 309/Cordova Road and then Dukes Bridge Road. The Joust Maryland Trail also extends along Tappers Corner Road and Lewistown Road, creating an access route to the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe.

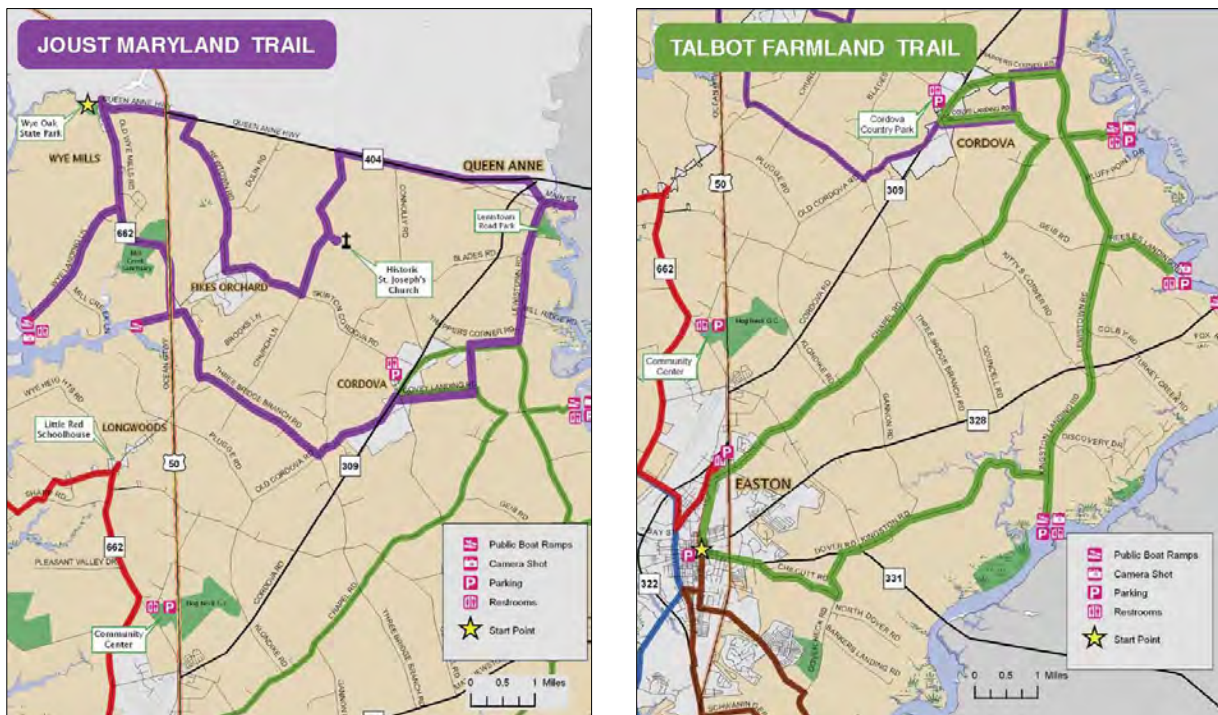


Image 16. The Joust Maryland and Talbot Farmland trails intersect with the rail corridor in the Village of Cordova. Credit: Talbot County Offices of Tourism, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

Historic Resources

The MDDE rail corridor is not an isolated feature. Any assessment of the rail corridor should consider how this feature could connect resources of architectural and archaeological significance in close proximity to the proposed rail-trail, and promote community values through the interpretation of the rich historical and cultural assets located along the extent of the MDDE.

Three historic resources within the Village of Cordova have been inventoried and are listed on the MIHP: Wye Mills Feed Company (see Image 17), Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church.

Historic Resource	Address	Area of Significance	Period of Significance
Wye Mills Feed Company (Nagel Farm Service)	11791 Cordova Road	Agricultural Heritage	20 th century
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Cordova Road	Religion	19 th century
St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church	31046 Skipton Cordova Road	Religion	19 th century



Image 17. Wye Mills Feed Company (Nagel Farm Service), July 17, 2003. Credit: Wye Mills Feed Co. Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Trailheads

Cordova Volunteer Fire Station and Cordova Park

Cordova Volunteer Fire Station is a community gathering spot adjacent to the rail corridor that could serve as a trailhead for potential trail users. Cordova Park has been identified as a trailhead for the Talbot Farmland Trail, and includes parking and restrooms. A connection between these

community and the proposed trail can provide pedestrians and cyclists with direct access to the Village of Cordova, and encourage economic opportunities in the area through the creation of bike shops, lodging and dining.

Challenges

Road Crossings

There are five road crossings along this segment of the rail corridor between the intersection of MD Route 309/Cordova Road and Old Cordova Road to Tappers Corner Road. Three of these road crossings, at Willis Avenue, Dukes Bridge Road and Tappers Corner Road, are located perpendicular to presumably low-volume, two-lane roadways. The other two road crossings, at Kittys Corner Road and Connelly Road, cross the rail corridor at an angle presenting additional safety concerns.

Most of the road crossings are across uncontrolled approaches, with few exceptions. There is a stop sign at the intersection of Kittys Corner Road and Railroad Avenue when approaching Kittys Corner Road. Dukes Bridge Road includes a stop sign on the driveway approach to MD Route 309/Cordova Road, and another stop sign at the access driveway for the American Aquaculture property where it intersects with Dukes Bridge Road. These road crossings should be evaluated by MDOT for the potential addition of safety features such as signalized pedestrian/bicycle crossings, advance warning signs, rumble strips, and Z gates. For the road crossings encountering the rail corridor at an angle, in addition to the aforementioned safety features, a realignment of the trail could be considered for the trail to cross at a 90-degree angle.

There are also four driveways crossing the rail corridor perpendicularly. One driveway provides access to a private residential property. The other three driveways include two access road into the Nagel complex, and one access road into the American Aquaculture property. Truck traffic accessing and egressing these two industrial sites may pose safety concerns for potential trail users. From a trail design standpoint, these driveways should consider the addition of appropriate safety measures.

Utilities

Two tributaries of Highfield Creek cross under the rail corridor at Dukes Bridge Road and Tappers Corner Road via culverts. There also appears to be a culvert under the rail corridor at the Cordova Volunteer Fireman's Association property near Kittys Corner Road. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the proposed rail-trail should include additional evaluation of culverts and their condition, including a safety inspection by a structural engineer.

Bridge over Tappers Corner Road

The bridge crossing over Tappers Corner Road is a one-span bridge, with two cast-in-place concrete abutments with wing walls (*see Image 18*). Chain link fencing on either side of the bridge and 'No

Trespassing' signs prevent pedestrians from accessing the bridge. An inspection report completed in 2020 detailing the bridge condition noted that the bridge deck and superstructure are in poor condition. Either significant bridge rehabilitation or demolition would need to be considered for future rail-trail development. Further details on the condition of the bridge can be found in the 2020 *Route Bridge Inspection Report – Clayton/Easton Line, MD Route 303 Over Bridge No. T-NR02002*.



Image 18. Bridge over Tappers Corner Road, East Elevation. Credit: PrimeAE.

Alternatives

The number of industrial, commercial, and private properties on the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road limits the potential realignment of the rail-trail in this segment. Whether the trail utilizes the rail corridor or deviates from it, extensive outreach will need to happen with the area's landowners during the feasibility and design process.

On-Road and Off-Road Option – Nagel Farm Service

The Nagel property has expressed their support for the proposed rail-trail, but would like for the project to prevent trail users from crossing their property due to the potential danger posed to pedestrians and cyclists from farm operations. One potential alternative shared by Nagel is to detour

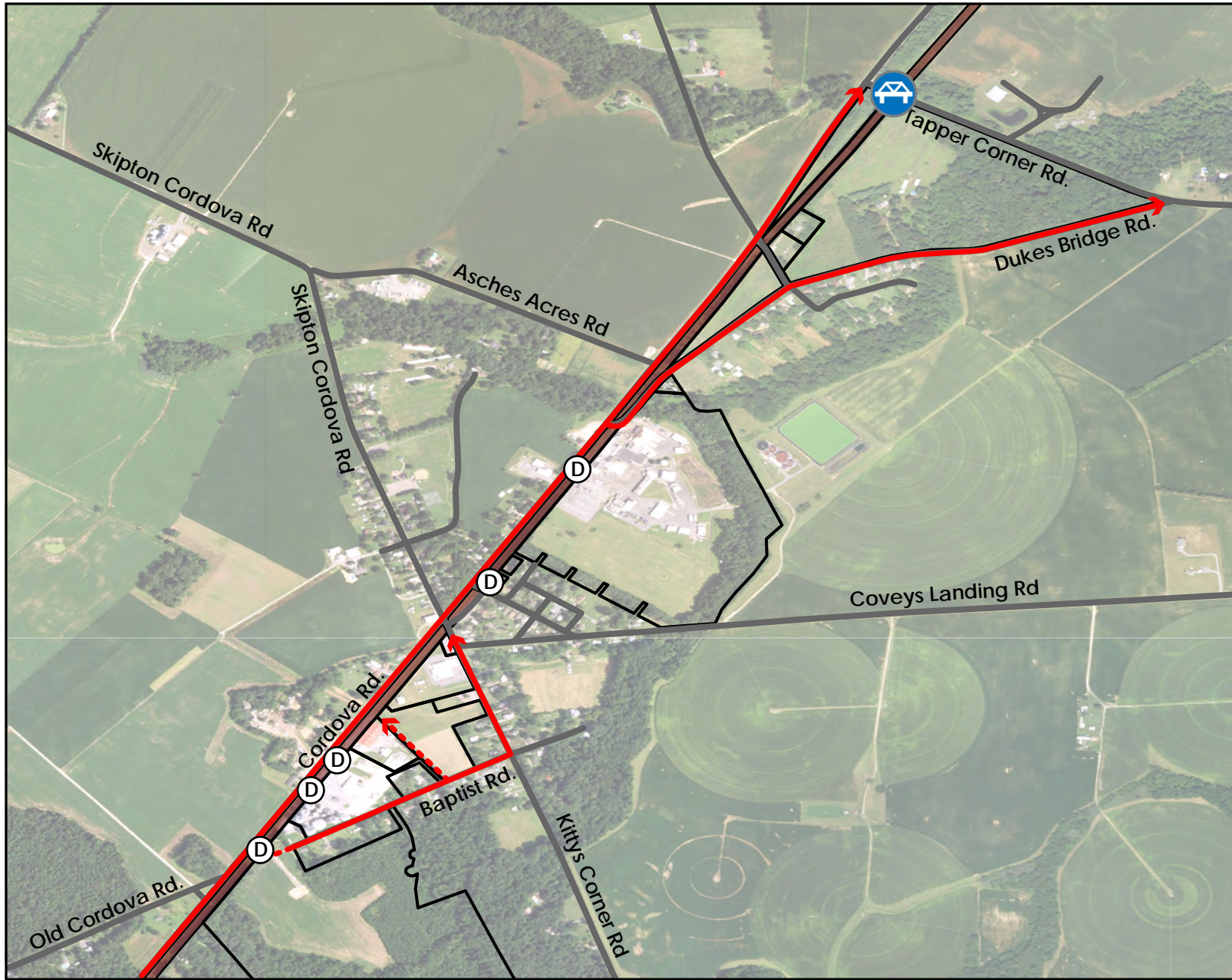
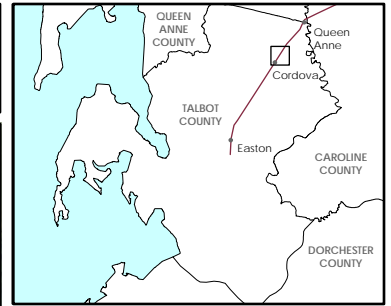
from the rail corridor south of Nagel Farm Service onto Baptist Road. This alternative could be adjacent and parallel to Baptist Road extending along the rear of the Nagel complex, and then turn northwest on Kittys Corner Road, reconnecting with the rail corridor. Another alignment could consider turning northwest from Baptist Road through the Cordova Volunteer Firemen property, reconnecting with the rail corridor to the north of the Nagel property. This trail alignment would require an easement on the Cordova Volunteer Firemen property.

The feasibility of this trail alignment will need to consider the number of driveways along Baptist Road that access private residential properties on the south side of the road right-of-way; as well as the three driveways onto the Nagel complex on the north side of the road right-of-way. Discussions with landowners in this area would need to address concerns such as safety, privacy, and efficiency of continued operations in the case of Nagel. Discussions with the Nagel property owner could include the potential to install safety measures at the driveways such as pedestrian/bicycle sign safety warnings, Z gates, and painted crossings.

On-Road Option – MD Route 309/Cordova Road

Rather than develop a trail within the rail corridor, a bike lane could be established on MD Route 309/Cordova Road. This would require the redesign of the road to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists.

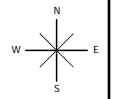
RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 3 TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND



LEGEND

- Railroad Corridor
- Neighboring Parcels

- Roads
- Alternate Routes
- Bridge
- D Driveway



Segment 4: Tappers Corner Road to Blades Road

Fast Facts	
Length:	Approximately 1.6 miles
Potential Trailheads:	Not applicable
Tax Parcels:	4 tax parcels abut the rail corridor
Water Features:	3 tributaries of Highfield Creek

Context

This segment of the rail corridor extends parallel to MD Route 309/Cordova Road for approximately 1.6 miles north from Tappers Corner Road to Blades Road. The rail corridor crosses over two driveways in this segment and is largely surrounded by farmland. Three tributaries of Highfield Creek cross under the corridor. Two of the crossings are via bridges and the third is presumably through a culvert.

Property Owners

This segment fronts five tax parcels, all privately-owned properties and zoned as agricultural conservation. From Tappers Corner Road to Blades Road, the tax parcels include the Chamberlain Limited Liability Company property; two parcels that make-up the Swann property; and two parcels that make-up the Elben property.

The main constraint for this segment is that the rail corridor is flanked by private owners on either side of the railbed in certain areas. Direct engagement with all landowners in this area would need to address opportunities for mitigating any adverse effects identified by the owner on agricultural operations, privacy, safety, and access.

Topography and Soils

The existing railbed is relatively flat throughout the length of the segment and it is assumed that the rail corridor maintains a level grade over any bridges. Given the bridges and culverts along this segment, additional barriers may be needed to negotiate the elevation changes along either side of the corridor so as to ensure the safety of rail-trail users. Most sections of existing railbed are elevated slightly above the ground; however, in some locations the railbed may have a moderate or significant slope and drop off immediately to one side or the other of the existing railbed. Field investigations will need to confirm where additional barriers may need to be installed.

Because of the soil classification as either prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance in all areas along this segment of the rail corridor, every effort should be made to minimize soil disturbance during trail construction in this segment of the rail corridor.

Protected Lands

The areas that surround tributaries of Highfield Creek in this segment of the rail corridor have been identified by MERLIN as a sensitive species project review area for state-listed species. These areas are also classified as moderately significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 4) in the state's BioNet. One of the parcels that make-up the Elben property is also protected through a MALPF easement.

Vegetation and Views

There are very few structures located near the rail corridor, providing opportunities for viewing uninterrupted scenic farmland vistas from the proposed rail-trail without impacting privacy. Throughout most of the segment a dense layer of trees acts as a buffer between the rail corridor and MD Route 309/Cordova Road (*see Image 19*). A generously forested riparian buffer is found whenever the rail corridor is intersected by tributaries of Highfield Creek. From the perspective of potential rail-trail use, this segment may need to consider eliminating some vegetation in sections with a dense tree buffer to open up views of adjacent farmland and identify key viewpoints where interpretive opportunities can promote the area's agricultural heritage.

The section of the rail corridor that fronts the parcel south of Blades Road may require the expansion of the vegetative buffer to provide greater privacy to the farmland and residence located to the east of the rail corridor.



Image 19. Dense layer of trees surrounds the rail corridor along Segment 4 - View looking northeast just north of the intersection with Tappers Corner Road. Credit: GoogleMaps.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

Three tributaries of Highfield Creek cross under the rail corridor within this segment. The first tributary crosses the rail corridor through a culvert under Tappers Corner Road, where the rail corridor crosses the road over a bridge. The second tributary crosses the rail corridor roughly at the property line where the Swann property meets the Elben property. A palustrine wetland occurs within and along the rail corridor in the area of the second tributary. This wetland is forested, broad-leaved deciduous, and temporarily flooded. The third tributary crosses the rail corridor via a culvert located just north of the second crossing.

Opportunities

Connections with Existing Trails

Two Talbot County Bike Trails are routed through sections of Tappers Corner Road to the east of the rail corridor: The Joust Maryland Trail and the Talbot Farmland Trail (*see Image 20*). The Joust Maryland Trail connects with the intersection of Tappers Corner Road and Voshell Road, travels east along Tappers Corner Road, and then turns north on Lewistown Road. The Talbot Farmland Trail intersects Tappers Corner and its intersection with Dukes Bridge Road. The trail follows the same route as the Joust Maryland Trail extending east along Tappers Corner Road, but turns south at Lewistown Road. On Lewistown Road, the Joust Maryland Trail connects with the entrance to the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, creating a potential connection for local residents in the Village of Cordova to access the site without having to rely on their cars.

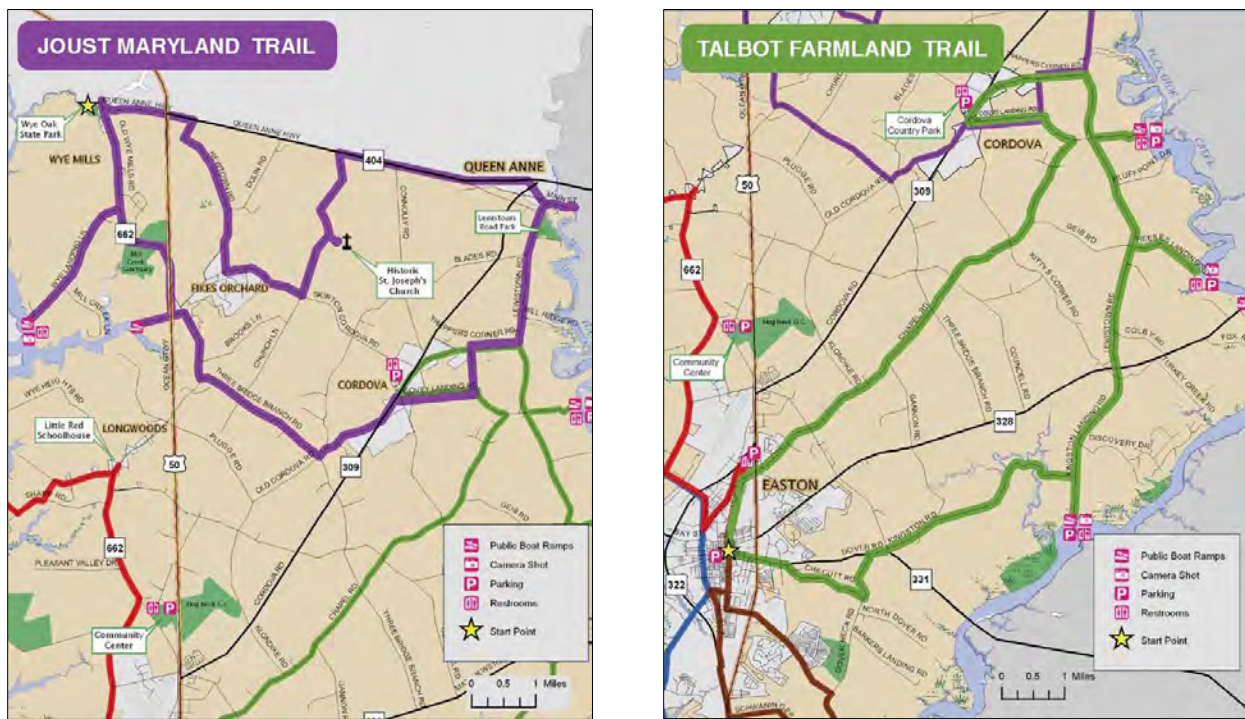


Image 20. The Joust Maryland and Talbot Farmland trails utilize Tappers Corner Road as a bike route. Credit: Talbot County Offices of Tourism, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

Challenges

Commercial Services

There are no commercial services available to pedestrians and cyclists along this segment; however, such services are located to the south of Tappers Corner Road in the Village of Cordova and approximately 1-mile north in the Town of Queen Anne.

Road Crossings

There are two main road crossings along this segment of the rail corridor at Tappers Corner Road and Blades Road. As mentioned in the previous segment, the crossing at Tappers Corner Road is through a one-span bridge, with two cast-in-place concrete abutments with wing walls. The Blades Road crossing is controlled by stop signs at the intersection with MD Route 309/Cordova Road. Blades Road crosses the rail corridor at an angle, which can present potential safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The Blades Road crossing should be evaluated by MDOT for the potential addition of safety features such as signalized pedestrian/bicycle crossings, advance warning signs, rumble strips, and Z gates. In addition to these safety features, this road crossing may consider a realignment of the trail to cross Blades Road at a 90-degree angle.

Two informal driveways cross the rail corridor to access the adjacent properties to the east of the railbed. The first driveway is located about 0.25 miles north of Tappers Corner Road and enters the Swann property. The driveway leads directly to a structure located on the property line between the Chamberlain Limited and Swann properties. The second driveway is located further north and enters the Elben property. The driveway is wider than the previous one and there appears to be heavier truck traffic utilizing this access road. This second driveway is also used by the Swann property to bring equipment onto their farm fields. In a phone conversation between the Swann property and ESLC, the property owner expressed concerns with potential trail users crossing the driveways and trespassing onto their property. As noted by the owner, the driveways have significant tree coverage and limit visibility for equipment entering and egressing the farm which increases the chances of running over a pedestrian or cyclist. The Swann property has expressed their support for the proposed rail-trail, but would like for the project to address any potential challenges their operations may face at these two crossings.

Utilities

There may be one or more culverts located where the rail corridor encounters the three tributaries of Highfield Creek; including one just south of Blades Road at the intersection with MD Route 309/Cordova Road. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the proposed rail-trail should include additional evaluation of culvert locations and their condition, including a safety inspection by a structural engineer.

Alternatives

Alternative trail realignments need to be considered for this segment, as the rail corridor is adjacent to private agricultural property on either side of the railbed. A proposed trail may impact operations, safety, and access for landowners. Whether the trail utilizes the rail corridor or deviates from it, extensive outreach will need to happen with the area's landowners during the feasibility and design process for the trail.

On-Road Option – Tappers Corner Road

One potential challenge to connecting the rail corridor with Tappers Corner Road is that the rail corridor does not cross the road at grade, but rather crosses over the road through a bridge. Because there are no means of accessing Tappers Corner Road directly from the existing railbed, connections with Talbot County Bike Trails and the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe would require alternate trail alignments.

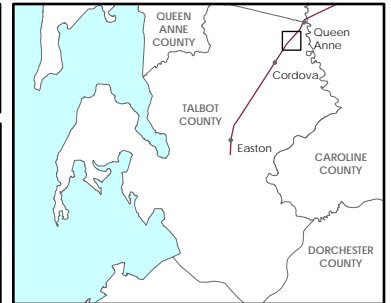
One alternative for connecting the rail corridor directly with Tappers Corner Road is to extend the proposed trail along the MD Route 309/Cordova Road right-of-way, instead of using the railbed. The trail could use the road shoulder, or a path could be established on the east side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road. At the intersection with Tappers Corner Road, this alignment would turn east and cross under the railroad bridge and continue towards Lewistown Road. Tappers Corner Road is presumably a low volume, two-lane roadway that could present a feasible alternative to this segment of the rail corridor. However, the road's lack of a shoulder and grade change presents a poor sight line, poses safety issues to all trail users and would be particularly dangerous for pedestrians, requiring them to go into the road lane under the bridge.

Another alternative is for the trail to detour away from the existing railbed at Dukes Bridge Road and follow the road northeast to the intersection with Tappers Corner Road. This alignment would avoid the bridge and grade change near the rail corridor at Tappers Corner Road and provide a safer connection. This alternative is also part of the Talbot Farmland Trail.

On-Road Option – MD Route 309/Cordova Road

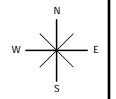
Rather than develop a trail within the rail corridor, a bike lane could be established on MD Route 309/Cordova Road. This would require the redesign of the road to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists.

RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 4 TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND



LEGEND

- Railroad Corridor
- Neighboring Parcels
- Roads
- Alternate Routes
- Bridge
- Driveway



Segment 5: Blades Road to Old Queen Anne Highway

Fast Facts

Length:	Approximately 1 mile
Potential Trailheads:	1 potential trailhead at the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe
Tax Parcels:	1 tax parcel abuts the rail corridor
Water Features:	Norwich Creek

Context

This segment runs approximately 1 mile from Blades Road to MD Route 404 Alternate or Old Queen Anne Highway. As the rail corridor approaches Old Queen Anne Highway, the segment crosses over Norwich Creek.

Property Owners

This segment of the rail corridor deviates east after running alongside MD Route 309/Cordova Road and bisects a single agricultural tax parcel, the Eaton property. The main constraint for this segment is that a future trail would cross through this private property. Direct engagement with the landowner will be imperative to ensure that concerns such as safety, privacy, and efficiency of continued operations are not negatively impacted through future trail design.

Topography and Soils

The existing railbed throughout this segment is relatively flat. As the rail corridor approaches Norwich Creek and Old Queen Anne Highway, the grade level remains flat as the railbed crosses over the creek and the road through an existing bridge. All farmland within the Eaton property is classified as prime farmland, and every effort should be made to minimize soil disturbance during trail construction in this segment of the rail corridor. Soils in the areas surrounding Norwich Creek are characterized as frequently flooded and soil disturbance here, too, should be minimized.

Protected Lands

This segment is entirely located within a Rural Legacy and Targeted Ecological area. The areas that surround Norwich Creek in this segment of the rail corridor are recognized as extremely significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 2) in the state’s BioNET, and hold plants, animals, habitats, and landscapes of ecological importance. The northeast corner of the Eaton property and the areas surrounding Norwich Creek are located within a Resource Conservation Area (RCA) under the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area designation. RCAs are characterized by natural environments or areas where resource-utilization activities take place and include uses such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture, which are considered ‘protective’ land uses. The RCA boundary is approximately 400 feet east of the rail corridor. These designations speak to the importance of

preserving rural and natural landscapes in the State of Maryland and will require a review of potential resource impact during preliminary engineering work.

Vegetation and Views

This segment of the rail corridor is clear of natural vegetation as it crosses the croplands on the Eaton property; however, dense forest vegetation is visible around the rail corridor as it approaches Norwich Creek and Old Queen Anne Highway. A number of buildings, including the landowners' residence, are located approximately 500 feet east of the rail corridor. Because of the relatively flat terrain and open vistas, the buildings and residence are visible from the rail corridor.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

The railroad corridor traverses approximately 550 feet of the 100-year floodplain associated with Norwich Creek, in addition to about 560 feet of wetlands. A palustrine wetland occurs within and along the rail corridor and is associated with the creek. This wetland is forested, broad-leaved deciduous, and temporarily flooded. Because much of the railroad corridor is elevated in this area, and the potential trail would not extend beyond the existing corridor, development of a trail should have minimal impacts to the 100-year floodplain or wetlands.

Opportunities

Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe

The main destination along this segment of the rail corridor is the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. The park is dedicated to Frederick Douglass, Talbot County's most famous native son. While the park is still in the developing stages, the site currently provides views of Tuckahoe Creek and has wayside exhibitions that interpret the life and legacy of Frederick Douglass (*see Image 21*). Future work at the park will include the development of walking trails and other park amenities. The park location presents an opportunity for trailhead development, which could include shared restroom facilities and parking.



Image 21. Wayside exhibition at the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. Credit: NPS RTCA.

Norwich Creek

Norwich Creek is a small branch of Tuckahoe Creek, which is itself a tributary of the Choptank River. A potential opportunity for this segment of the rail corridor is to interact with Norwich Creek through stream restoration work and clearing invasive vegetation to provide scenic views of the waterway.

Historic Resources

The MDDE rail corridor is not an isolated feature. Any assessment of the rail corridor should consider how this feature could connect resources of architectural and archaeological significance in close proximity to the proposed rail-trail, and promote community values through the interpretation of the rich historical and cultural assets located along the extent of the MDDE.

Two historic resources within 500 feet of the rail corridor in this segment have been inventoried and listed on the MIHP: Knotts Farm (Hiram Dudley Victorian House), located within the Eaton property (*see Image 22*), and the Queen Anne’s Railroad Corridor, which intersects with the MDDE rail corridor as the MDDE crosses Old Queen Anne Highway.

Historic Resource	Address	Area of Significance	Period of Significance
Knotts Farm (Hiram Dudley Victorian House)	Lewistown Road	Agricultural Heritage	19 th century
Queen Anne’s Railroad Corridor	Old Queen Anne Highway	Railroad History	20 th century



Image 22. Knotts Farm (Hiram Dudley Victorian House), August, 1976. Credit: Knotts Farm (Hiram Dudley Victorian House) Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Challenges

Road Crossings

This segment of the railroad corridor features two road crossings: Blades Road and Old Queen Anne Highway. As stated in Segment 4, Blades Road crosses the rail corridor at an angle which can present potential safety concerns for both cyclists and pedestrians, and drivers. Potential safety measures to be considered for the Blades Road crossing include signalized pedestrian/bicycle crossings, advance warning signs, rumble strips, and Z gates.

In addition, a private driveway within the Eaton property crosses over the rail corridor east to west at an angle. The driveway extends from the buildings to the east of the rail corridor and is used to move farming equipment to the cropland west of the railbed. An understanding of farm operations, their timing and seasonality, and the potential safety and security concerns expressed by the landowners, would need to be addressed for future development of the trail. Open lines of sight make it easier to design a safe trail crossing in this location that can accommodate occasional access by farming equipment.

Bridge over Old Queen Anne Highway

Old Queen Anne Highway crosses under the rail corridor, which features a bridge over the highway where the railbed crosses at level grade as the terrain dips toward Norwich Creek (*see Image 23*). The bridge is a three-span, 132-foot-long structure that was built in 1922. A cursory safety inspection completed by MD DNR in 2003 concluded that the bridge is in fair condition, with some elements in poor condition. The safety inspection report recommended that the timber walkway and ties be removed to prevent pedestrian access. Further details about the 2003 inspection can be found in the *Cursory Safety Inspection Clayton/Easton Freight Rail Line 169 – Bridge No. 32.69 Summary of Findings*.

A more recent evaluation conducted in 2020 stated that the bridge is in poor condition. The inspection report confirmed that minor to severe cracks and large areas of spalling are present on all faces of the piers. The report also noted that the north abutment is covered with dense vegetation and moderate debris; and the south abutment is inaccessible due to heavy vegetation growth. The inspection report recommends the removal of the superstructure and substructure at a cost of \$20,000. Further details on the condition of the bridge can be found in the 2020 *Route Bridge Inspection Report – Clayton/Easton Line, MD Route 303 Over Bridge No. T-NR02002*. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the rail-trail should include an additional safety inspection, and the estimated cost for rehabilitation or replacement of the superstructure and substructure with a pedestrian/bicycle bridge.



Image 23. Bridge over Old Queen Anne Highway, East Elevation. Credit: PrimeAE.

Alternatives

Alternative trail realignments need to be considered for this segment as the rail corridor would bisect a private agricultural property and may impact operations, safety, and access for the landowner. Whether the trail utilizes the rail corridor or deviates from it, extensive outreach will need to happen with the area's landowners during the feasibility and design process for the trail.

On-Road Option – Blades Road and Lewistown Road

The first alternative is to route the segment through a direct connection with the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. This alternative would extend east parallel to Blades Road and then travel north parallel to Lewistown Road, encountering the entrance to the park where a primary trailhead would be located. The route would continue north along Lewistown Road as it approaches and enters the Town of Queen Anne.

Blades and Lewistown roads are narrow, low volume roads with one lane in either direction. A number of safety improvements could be implemented to accommodate cyclists on both roads. The roads could be signed as bike routes in conjunction with directional signage for the park. Shared lane markings could also be applied to the road surface to indicate that vehicles and bicycles can both use the lane. If feasible, bike lanes could be established on Blades Road and Lewistown Road. Redesign of the roads would be needed to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists. Another safety improvement could be adding shoulders along Blades and Lewistown roads, both of which currently are without shoulders, to be used as bikeways. A potential advantage of adding shoulders would be the accommodation of pedestrians and not just cyclists.

Fortunately, there is only one landowner adjacent to the north side of Blades Road and the west side of Lewistown Road in this area, the Eaton property. There is also only one landowner on the south side along the entire stretch of Blades Road from MD Route 309/Cordova Road, the Elben property. Therefore the idea of a side path here may be more feasible than in some other locations along the rail corridor where coordination with many landowners would be required. Another advantage to this option is that there are no driveways for the trail to cross along the north side of Blades Road, only one on the south side of Blades Road, and two driveways on the west side of Lewistown Road prior to reaching the entrance of the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. On the east side of Lewistown Road, there are three driveways and one road, Norwich Creek Road, that could impact a trail along this alternative.

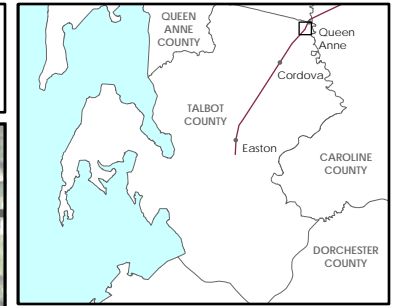
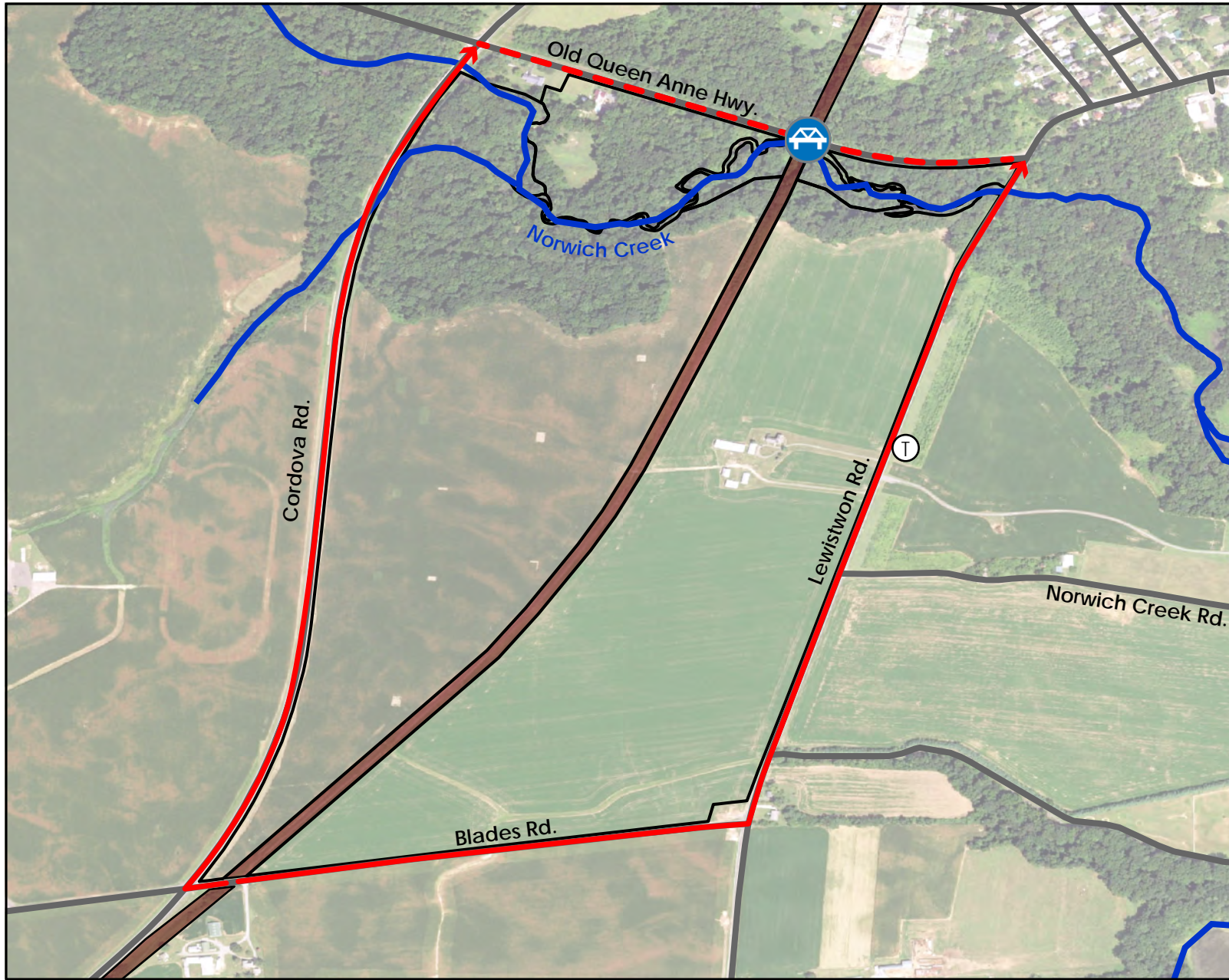
On-Road Option – MD Route 309/Cordova Road

A second alternative would be to route the segment parallel and adjacent to MD Route 309/Cordova Road. In this case, the trail would enter the northern end of the Town of Queen Anne through MD Route 309/Cordova Road with potential connections to downtown along Starr Road, for example. If feasible, a bike lane could be established on MD Route 309/Cordova Road. This would require the

redesign of the road to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists. A separate side path designed and signed specifically for pedestrians and cyclists would be more desirable from a safety standpoint and provide a higher level of comfort for more trail users. The lack of residential and commercial structures and development near MD Route 309/Cordova Road would make a side path feasible, since it would not impact the privacy or security of adjacent landowners.

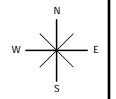
One challenge with this option is that the route would not directly connect with the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. If feasible, a potential connection to the park would need to be established along Old Queen Anne Highway going east and then south along Lewistown Road to access the park's entrance.

RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 5 TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND



LEGEND

- Railroad Corridor
- Neighboring Parcels
- Water Body
- Roads
- Alternate Routes
- Bridge
- Potential Trailhead



Segment 6: Old Queen Anne Highway to Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge

Fast Facts	
Length:	Approximately 0.7 miles
Potential Trailheads:	1 potential trailhead in Roosevelt Park 1 potential trailhead in 5 th Regiment Armory Property
Tax Parcels:	3 tax parcels abut the rail corridor in Talbot County 8 tax parcels abut the rail corridor in Queen Anne's County
Water Features:	Tuckahoe Creek

Context

This segment of the rail corridor extends approximately 0.7 miles from MD Route 404 Alternate or Old Queen Anne Highway to the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge within Tuckahoe State Park. This segment stretches between Talbot and Queen Anne's counties. As the rail corridor crosses Old Queen Anne Highway and enters the Town of Queen Anne, it abuts private and commercial properties in some areas, as well as town roads. The former path of the rail corridor crosses MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway where it enters Tuckahoe State Park and connects with the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge, and the existing section of the rail-trail within the park.

Property Owners

Talbot County

The section of the rail corridor between Old Queen Anne Highway and Park Avenue lies within the Talbot County area of the Town of Queen Anne. To the east of the rail corridor there is a single commercial property owned by 32211 Park Avenue LLC. To the west of the rail corridor there are two private residential properties.

Queen Anne's County

In the Queen Anne's County area of the town, the rail corridor extends from Park Avenue to MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway. To the east of the rail corridor, there are three private residential properties and one commercial tax parcel, the Carrick property. To the west of the rail corridor there are four commercial tax parcels. One parcel is owned by Deerfield Properties Business Trust, and the other three parcels are owned by Mountaire Farms of Delaware Inc.

The former path of the rail corridor ends at the south side of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway and picks up again on the north side of the highway, where it enters Tuckahoe State Park and connects with the existing section of the rail-trail as it approaches Tuckahoe Creek.

The main constraint for this segment of the rail corridor is that a future trail would cross adjacent to private residential and commercial properties. Direct engagement with these landowners, as well as

town and county officials, will be imperative to ensure that concerns such as safety, privacy, and efficiency of continued operations for the commercial properties, are not negatively impacted through future trail design.

Topography and Soils

The railbed throughout this segment is relatively flat, with significant changes in grade as the segment approaches the berms on both sides of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway that separate the road from adjacent land uses. The segment to the north of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway and within Tuckahoe State Park is relatively flat as it connects with the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge and the existing section of rail-trail. While none of the adjacent areas to the rail corridor have an agricultural land use, soils in this area are classified mainly as farmland of statewide importance and prime farmland. Every effort should be made to minimize soil disturbance during trail construction in this section of the rail corridor. Soils adjacent to the rail corridor within Tuckahoe State Park and near Tuckahoe Creek are not classified as prime farmland and are frequently flooded.

Vegetation and Views

Dense vegetation encloses the section of the rail corridor that lies within Talbot County. Between Park Avenue and MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway there is noticeably less vegetation surrounding the rail corridor. From the highway to the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge, vegetation once again surrounds the rail corridor. The rail corridor tracks remain in place and are visible south of Park Avenue and north of 1st Street within the Town of Queen Anne.

There are possible encroachments on the rail right-of-way from private and commercial properties adjacent to the rail corridor in some areas of the segment, which will need to be addressed during the planning and design stages of the rail-trail. Direct engagement with the landowner will be imperative to ensure that concerns such as safety, privacy and efficiency of continued operations are not negatively impacted through future trail design.

Protected Lands

This segment of the rail corridor is located within a Rural Legacy and Targeted Ecological area. The area surrounding the rail corridor between Old Queen Anne Highway and Park Avenue is recognized as extremely significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 2) in the state's BioNET, and holds plants, animals, habitats, and landscapes of ecological importance. The area surrounding the rail corridor within Tuckahoe State Park is recognized as highly significant for biodiversity conservation (Tier 3).

As the segment approaches MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway, the former railbed is located within a Limited Development Area (LDA). LDAs are characterized by low or moderate intensity development, and contain areas with natural plant and animal habitats. Maintaining and increasing forest cover is important in LDAs, and there are restrictions on the amount of impervious cover

allowed. As the rail corridor picks up again north of the highway and within Tuckahoe State Park, the segment is located within an RCA. These designations speak to the importance of preserving natural landscapes in the State of Maryland and will require a review of potential resource impact during preliminary engineering work.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

Wetlands classifications include riverine and freshwater emergent wetland for Tuckahoe Creek, and freshwater forested/shrub wetland for the areas surrounding Norwich Creek and Tuckahoe Creek. The rail corridor traverses approximately 40 feet of the 100-year floodplain associated with Norwich Creek. For Tuckahoe Creek, the rail corridor extends for approximately 500 feet of the 100-year floodplain as it connects with the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge.

Opportunities

Commercial Services

There are a number of commercial services that would be of interest to cyclists and pedestrians on the south side of the intersection between MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway and Starr Road, and that could serve as stopping points or destinations for future trail users. These services include Royal Farms, Subway and Shell gas station. Appropriate wayfinding and road crossing safety measures would be needed to make this possible.

Tuckahoe State Park

Tuckahoe State Park offers various outdoor recreation amenities to visitors, including hiking, biking, camping, fishing, boating, and disc golf, among others. The proposed rail-trail would provide a direct connection to the state park without community residents and visitors having to rely on their cars to access it. A 0.5-mile section of the rail corridor within Tuckahoe State Park was developed into a rail-trail in 2019 (see *Image 24*). Construction of the rail-trail also included the rehabilitation of the existing



Image 24. Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge over Tuckahoe Creek - View looking east towards Tuckahoe State Park Rail-Trail. Credit: MD DNR.

railroad bridge crossing over Tuckahoe Creek. Potential development of this segment would create a direct connection from the Town of Queen Anne to the existing rail-trail within the park.

Tuckahoe Creek

This segment of the rail corridor is the closest to Tuckahoe Creek and presents opportunities for developing access to the Tuckahoe Creek Water Trail (see Image 25). A potential trail connection with Tuckahoe Creek could be made at Roosevelt Park. Kayak/canoe and fishing access could be developed at the park, which is upstream of an existing boat ramp at the Town of Hillsboro in Caroline County. While there is existing water access at Tuckahoe State Park, it is nearly three miles north of the rail corridor.

Updated signage at the Hillsboro Boat Access ramp encourages visitors to paddle the Tuckahoe Creek Water Trail to better connect with the history and legacy of Frederick Douglass, and to experience firsthand the landscape that gave rise to one of the nation's great leaders. A new launch site at Roosevelt Park or near the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge can increase opportunities for community residents and visitors to interact with the area's main waterways, Tuckahoe Creek, and the Choptank River.



Image 25. Tuckahoe Creek Water Trail - Map highlights Hillsboro Landing near Tuckahoe State Park. Credit: Maryland Historic Trust & Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network.

Connections with Existing Trails

One Talbot County Bike Trail goes through the Town of Queen Anne: The Joust Maryland Trail. The trail enters the town through Lewistown Road, turns left on Main Street (also MD Route 303/Starr Road) and connects with MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway. Prior to entering the Town of Queen Anne, the Joust Maryland Trail also connects with the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe on Lewistown Road.

Trailheads

5th Regiment Armory Property

There is an opportunity to develop a trailhead at the northeast corner of the intersection of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway and Starr Road. Two parcels at this location are owned by the State of Maryland Military Department and MD DNR, and provide ample space to install trail amenities. MPS is exploring the potential to manage a portion of the MD DNR property as a potential visitor orientation with trailhead and parking area (see Image 26).

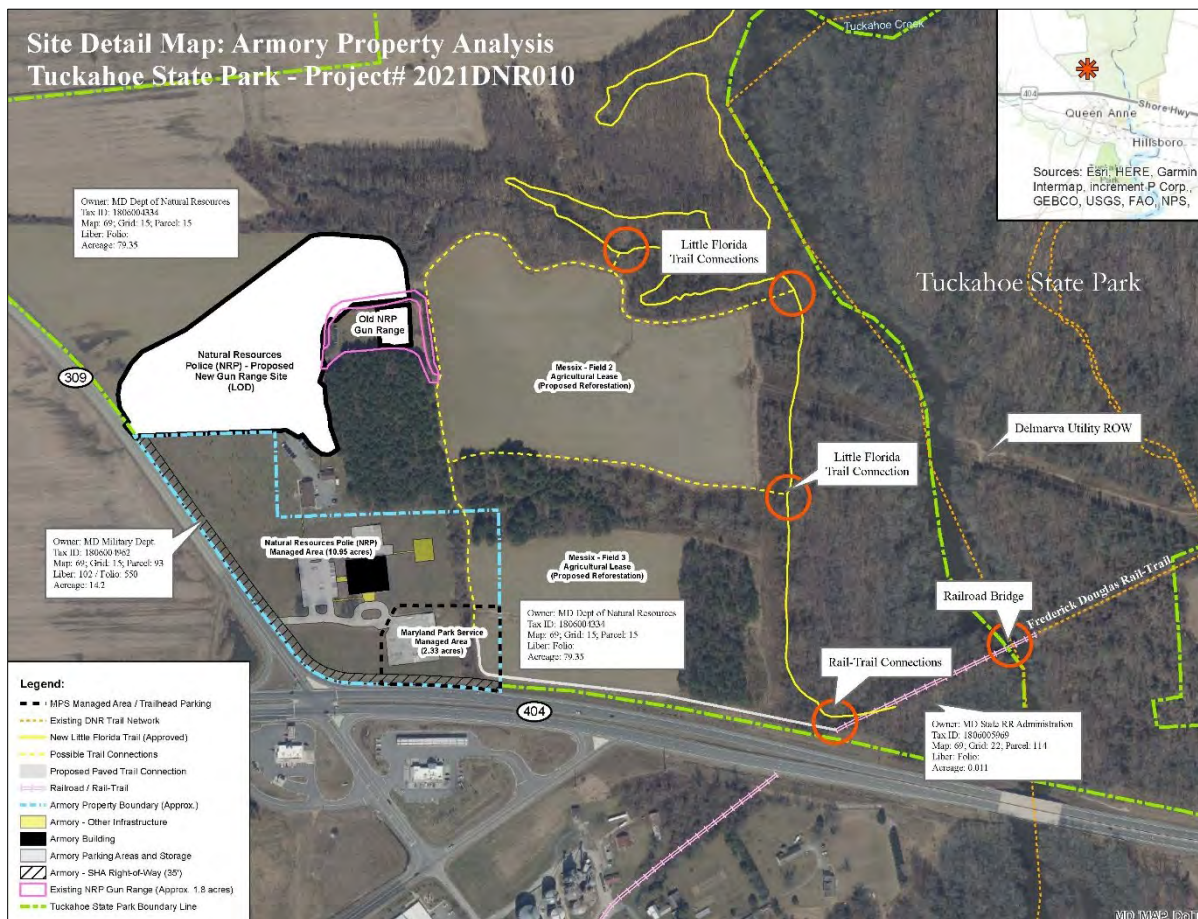


Image 26. Site Detail Map: Armory Project Analysis. Credit: MPS.

Historic Resources

The MDDE rail corridor is not an isolated feature. Any assessment of the rail corridor should consider how this feature could connect resources of architectural and archaeological significance in close proximity to the proposed rail-trail, and promote community values through the interpretation of the rich historical and cultural assets located along the extent of the MDDE.

One historic resource the rail corridor traverses through in this segment has been inventoried and listed on the MIHP: Queen Anne Survey District (see Image 27).

Historic Resource	Address	Area of Significance	Period of Significance
Queen Anne Survey (Historic) District	Multiple Addresses	Railroad History	19 th century

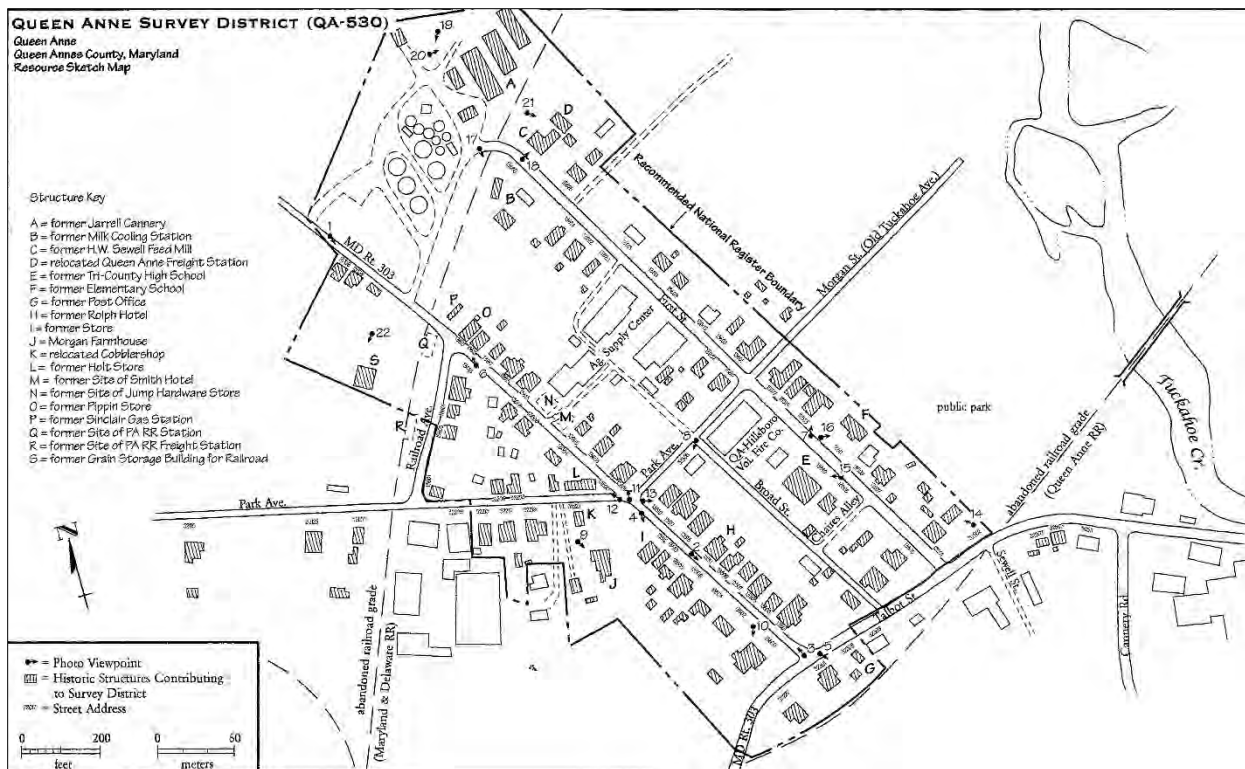


Image 27. Queen Anne Survey District Resource Sketch Map, July 2001. Credit: Queen Anne Survey District Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Challenges

Road Crossings

There are four road crossings along this segment of the rail corridor between Old Queen Anne Highway and the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge: the bridge crossing over Old Queen Anne Highway

and Norwich Creek (previously discussed in Segment 5); Park Avenue; MD Route 303/Starr Road; and MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway.

Park Avenue

Park Avenue is a low-volume, narrow residential street with one-way lanes in either direction. Presuming slow speed and limited traffic, creating a safer crossing for pedestrians and cyclists in this location should be relatively straightforward and cost effective. The addition of safety features such as pavement markings on the roadway to indicate the trail crossing, and signs from either direction of the road, can warn drivers of the approaching trail crossing and trail users of incoming traffic.

MD Route 303/Starr Road

MD Route 303/Starr Road has a higher volume of traffic and presumably a higher speed limit. This road crossing presents a number of additional challenges due to its proximity to 1st Street, the access driveway to the Mountaire Farms of Delaware property complex west of the rail corridor; and the intersection with Railroad Avenue and a private residential driveway to the east of the rail corridor.

It is not clear if the access driveway to the commercial complex has encroached on the rail right-of-way, where the railbed has either been removed or paved over. Field investigations will be needed to identify whether there are encroachments and how these may be addressed. Traffic entering and exiting 1st Street right at the railroad crossing and turning on either direction onto Starr Road presents a potential safety hazard for pedestrians and bicyclists. The same safety concerns would need to be addressed for traffic entering and existing Railroad Avenue onto Starr Road.

The MD Route 303/Starr Road and adjacent road crossings should be evaluated by MDOT for the potential addition of safety features such as signalized pedestrian/bicycle crossings, advance warning signs, rumble strips, and Z gates.

MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway

MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway is a major connector between the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the rest of the Eastern Shore. The highway is a heavily used, four-lane road divided by a median with shoulders that allow for cycling and have 'bike' pavement markings. The current average daily traffic count for the highway is 21,900 vehicles for traffic generated from MD Route 50; and 17,071 vehicles for traffic generated from MD Route 309/Cordova Road. This makes MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway the second highest trafficked road in Talbot County after MD Route 50. ([Source](#)) The crossing of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway through the path of the former rail corridor would require significant infrastructure development, such as a bridge, given the high-speed traffic flow of the highway.

An alternative to crossing over MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway is utilizing the closest road crossing at the intersection of the highway and MD Route 303/Starr Road, a quarter mile northwest

of the rail corridor. While a traffic light-controlled intersection, this crossing would need to address several design constraints. Safety features such as sidewalks, advance warning signs and pavement markings would need to be implemented to provide safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. An at-grade crossing may be developed for both user groups with these safety features, in addition to extending and widening the median.

Similar design and safety features would need to be implemented for any road crossing found in alternate connections between the Town of Queen Anne and the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge. Any extension of the trail from this intersection towards the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge would need to consider the development of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and its impact on adjacent landowners which include the State of Maryland Military Department and MD DNR.

Utilities

Dense vegetative cover and lack of physical access in some areas did not allow for a visual inspection of culverts from the rail corridor itself. Aerial imagery did not reveal the location of any culverts. A feasibility study and preliminary designs for the proposed rail-trail should include additional evaluation of culvert locations and their condition, including a safety inspection by a structural engineer.

Alternatives

Three alternate routes exist for the development of the trail between Old Queen Anne Highway and the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge. Two of these routes would depend on the alignment of past sections or use of their alternate routes. The other route considers an alternate realignment for the proposed rail-trail as it crosses MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway.

On-Road Option – MD Route 303/Starr Road

The first alternative would be to route the segment parallel and adjacent to Lewistown Road from Old Queen Anne Highway to Main Street (also Starr Road) in the Town of Queen Anne. This route would create a direct connection from the town to the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, if the previous Segment 5 – Blades Road to Old Queen Anne Highway is routed along Lewistown. As the trail enters the town it would turn northwest along Main Street (also Starr Road) and cross MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway at the intersection with MD Route 303/Starr Road.

A number of configurations would need to be implemented to make this alternate route safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and would require the redesign of Starr Road to accommodate bike lanes, as well as substantial safety considerations for cyclists.

On-Road Option – MD Route 309/Cordova Road

The second alternative is to route the segment parallel and adjacent to MD Route 309/Cordova Road from Old Queen Anne Highway to MD Route 303/Starr Road. In this case, the trail would enter the

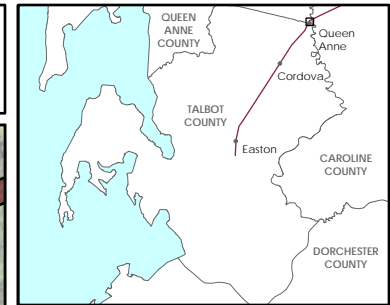
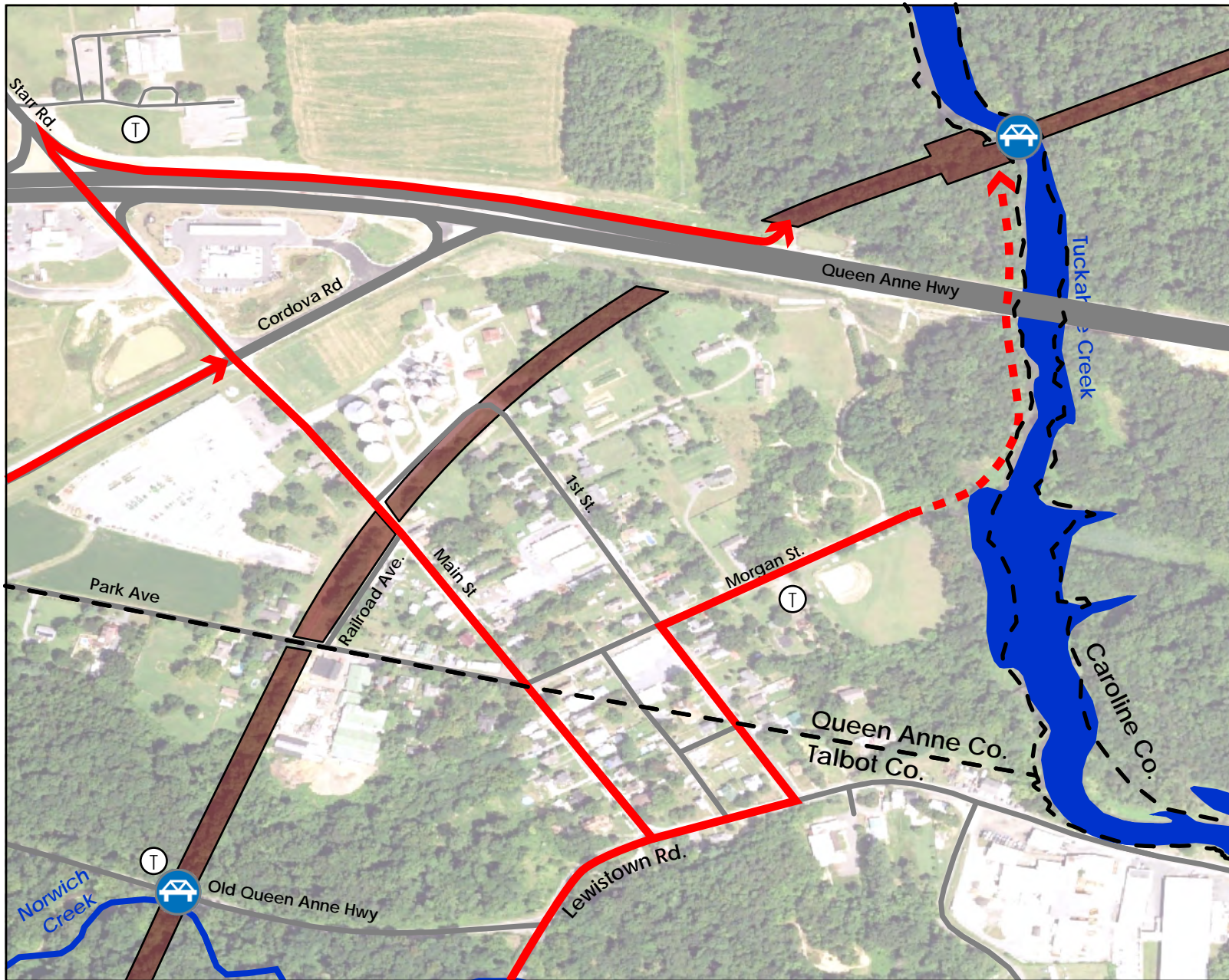
northern end of the Town of Queen Anne through MD Route 309/Cordova Road with potential connections to downtown along Starr Road. This route would cross MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway at the intersection of the highway with Starr Road.

A number of configurations would need to be implemented to make this alternate route safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and would require the redesign of the road to accommodate bike lanes and sidewalks, as well as substantial safety considerations for trail users and drivers when encountering road crossings.








On-Road and Off-Road Option – MD Route 303, 1st Street and Morgan Street

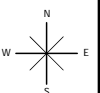
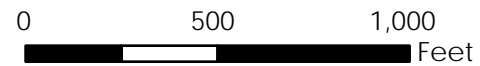
A third and preferable alternative with an off-road option would consist of extending the trail from Lewistown Road (also MD Route 303), turning left on 1st Street, and then right onto Morgan Street. At Morgan Street, trail users would access Roosevelt Park and connect with a spur trail crossing under the MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway bridge over Tuckahoe Creek. From Morgan Street, the spur trail could extend along Tuckahoe Creek without impacting the surrounding woodlands, cross under the highway using the bridge underpass that crosses over Tuckahoe Creek, and connect with the Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge and existing section of the rail-trail within Tuckahoe State Park. There are existing examples of trails designed to pass beneath vehicular bridges to create a grade separated path.

RAIL CORRIDOR SEGMENT 6 QUEEN ANNE, MARYLAND



LEGEND

-  Railroad Corridor
-  Water Body
-  Roads
-  Alternate Routes
-  County Line
-  Bridge
-  Potential Trailhead



Additional Considerations for All Segments

Railroad Track

Field investigations are needed to accurately determine the location and condition of the track.

Vegetation and Views

The removal and addition of vegetation are to be considered in the overall layout of the trail for aesthetics and views, privacy, and safety purposes. Existing vegetation should be field checked and further examined during final design to accommodate for stopping sight distance at all road intersections.

Water Resources: Floodplains, Wetlands and Streams

Additional review of the project area should be conducted during preliminary design to determine the potential of any impacts on water resources. Because the rail corridor already exists as a foundation for the proposed trail, significant impact to water resources from trail development is unlikely unless the trail alignment is relocated for reasons such as avoiding impacts to private property.

Development activities in wetland areas are regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). No development activities are allowed within wetlands or buffer areas without all required federal, state and county approvals and permits, and compliance with all mitigation requirements. Trail design for wetland areas should consider the potential need for boardwalks, culverts, ditches or crowning to either bridge the area or drain water from the trail; building in swales, dips, and berms; and the possibility of re-locating the trail to a drier area within or beyond the right-of-way.

While it is not advisable to construct a trail in the floodplain, which would require frequent maintenance, water flow can be managed through design and potential raising of the trail out of the floodplain. In fact, the railbed is already raised compared to adjacent lands in many areas. Use of suitable materials for the trail surface and adequate subsurface construction can help. These trails may require paved surfaces of either asphalt or concrete depending on frequency of flooding and expected velocity of flow. A proper trail foundation is important and will increase the longevity of the trail. No soft shoulder should be constructed due to flood considerations. Access points should be limited, and the vegetative buffer should be left intact.

Road Crossings

Conversations with local officials will need to address any proposals for existing or additional road crossings. Direct engagement with landowners will be needed to identify the specific uses of road crossings, driveways and access roads, the frequency and nature of the traffic, and whether the

crossings pose safety concerns for landowner operations and potential trail users. From a trail design standpoint, the driveways may need appropriate safety features installed.

Utilities

A detailed trail feasibility study in the future should include a survey of existing utilities and their exact locations to inform the final design of the trail. Coordination with Talbot County and any future utilities installation proposals must be continued through preliminary engineering and construction to ensure that the shared use path and future utilities will cohabitate in the railroad right-of-way.

At this time, no significant impact to existing underground or above-ground utilities is anticipated.

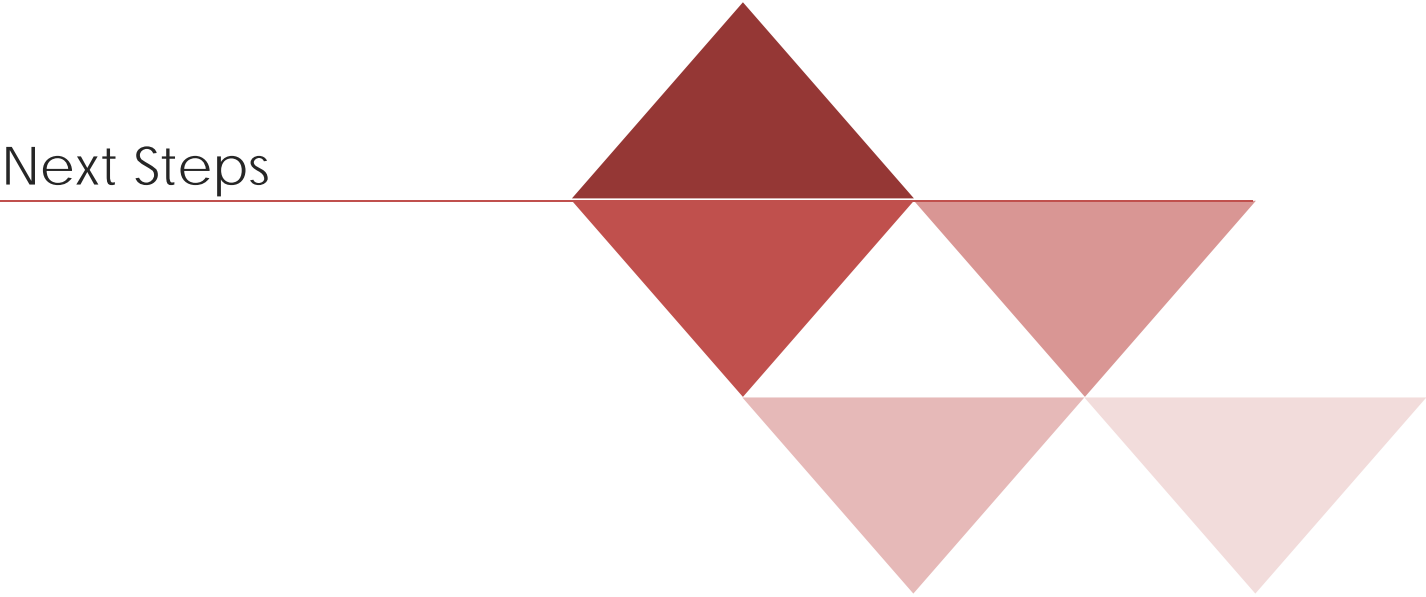
Future Utilities

The rail corridor does not currently include segments of broadband utilities, but does present an opportunity for a possible future installation of broadband utilities along the right-of-way to serve the needs of the community for improved internet connectivity. Likewise, installing a water or sewer line through this area is not anticipated at this time but could be considered for future use of the railroad right-of-way.

Culverts

Field investigations along the rail corridor are needed to identify the locations of any culverts, and when located, they should be inspected and evaluated by engineers to understand their condition, whether they are conveying water as intended or if they may be blocked by debris, failing or otherwise in need of repair. The condition of the culverts could impact drainage along the rail corridor.

Next Steps



Phasing the development of the rail-trail permits project partners and local jurisdictions to prioritize short sections within the 15-mile stretch that will provide the most benefit to local residents and visitors and that may create more competitive funding applications. It is important to note, however, that the phasing strategy outlined in the previous section represents a snapshot in time, and the priorities identified may change as the project area and its destinations develop over time.

Ideally, the rail-trail would be designed and constructed in the six segments outlined above to provide a contiguous facility between the Town of Easton and Tuckahoe State Park; however, the rail-trail assessment recognizes that funding may not be available for developing one or more complete segments, and a detailed feasibility study will be needed in the future, with substantial public input on each identified segment. Therefore, smaller sections within the six segments may need to be prioritized according to the potential benefits to the adjacent communities and the level of engineering, permitting and other complexities found during the feasibility and design process.

Taking into consideration the current needs of communities along the rail corridor and the complexities found in each of the segments, development of smaller sections could be prioritized in the following order and timeframe:

Phase 1: Towns and Connections to Community Destinations

Phase 2: Connecting the Village of Cordova to the Town of Queen Anne

Phase 3: Missing Links and Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement

At the completion of Phase 3, the permanent alignment of the rail-trail should be fully constructed and ready for users, and at least three trailheads should be in place, one at the A. James Clark Sports Complex, one at Cordova Park, and one at the state-owned facilities on or near Tuckahoe State Park. However, it is possible that not all the amenities—benches, interpretive signage, and additional trailheads, for example – may be in place along the rail-trail by the end of Phase 3. Additional amenities will be dependent on funding availability, arrangements with supportive landowners, and user demand.

Phase 1: Towns and Connections to Community Destinations

The Village of Cordova completed a master planning process with the assistance of Talbot County in 2020. Based on the needs of the community as expressed in the Cordova Village Master Plan, and potential connections with in-town destinations, *Segment 3: Old Cordova Road to Tappers Corner Road* within the Village of Cordova could be the highest priority. This segment is possibly the most practical and feasible place to start development of the rail-trail as it also has considerable public support.

The potential connections to Tuckahoe State Park, Tuckahoe Creek, and the Town of Hillsboro, and the higher population density in the Town of Queen Anne could make *Segment 6: Old Queen Anne Highway to Tuckahoe Railroad Bridge* the next priority, even with the challenges of adjacent private

property and the barrier represented by MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway. In this segment, communities can be better connected to nearby major retail establishments, and an interim solution to crossing MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway could also be addressed in this phase. A major advantage with initiating trail development within Cordova and Queen Anne is that the recent award of a \$200,000 MDOT Bikeways grant will enable assessment and design work to begin on two of the rail corridor trestles near the towns. From these two end points, design and construction could either work to the north from Cordova, or south from the Town of Queen Anne in future phases.

The demand for expanding trails in the Town of Easton, while significant, is focused on expanding to the west in the St. Michaels area and to the south of the town, rather than northeast towards the Village of Cordova. Nonetheless, an interim on-road solution for crossing MD Route 50 within *Segment 1: Village Street to Black Dog Aly* would provide safety and economic benefits for Easton residents and visitors, and could be addressed simultaneously with the development of Segment 3.

Potential Actions for Segment 3:

- Work with Nagel Farm Service, American Aquaculture and other large industrial and commercial operations along the rail corridor in the Village of Cordova to identify a preferred trail alignment, design and management strategy that addresses landowner operations, security and safety concerns. Consider the following rail-trail alignment options:
 - Crossing the driveways at grade with substantial safety measures;
 - Re-routing the trail off of the rail corridor to the rear of the properties and/or adjacent properties or rights-of-way; or
 - Aligning the rail-trail on the west side of MD Route 309/Cordova Road.
- Build on the potential rail-trail alignment and design created for the Cordova Village Master Plan, with the assistance of a landscape architect and engineer, to help the community identify the preferred trail route through the village and connections to community destinations.
- Engage community residents to review the potential trail alignments and provide input on the preferred rail-trail route and key destinations.
- Create a safe connection between the rail-trail and Cordova Park, and temporarily use the park as the trailhead for the rail-trail while investigating alternative trailhead locations.
- Work with MDOT to determine safety requirements and design options at road crossings—prioritize safety improvements at Kittys Corner Road and Dukes Bridge Road to promote connections with the regional trail system.
- Develop rail-trail design options that leave existing track in place where feasible for future interpretive opportunities.

Potential Actions for Segment 6:

- Coordinate with electric and communications utilities to appropriately locate or relocate trail alignment or utilities if necessary.

- Work with landowners adjacent to the rail corridor to resolve privacy, safety and security concerns.
- Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements to Lewistown Road, Main Street (also MD Route 303/Starr Road), and MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway to connect with the regional trail system.
- Consider a long-term, off-road trail alignment that utilizes the original rail corridor through the Town of Queen Anne, turns east along the south side of MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway, and connects with Roosevelt Park. The trail would then head north along Tuckahoe Creek, crossing under MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway to rejoin the original rail corridor in Tuckahoe State Park.
- Install a boat launch and fishing access at Roosevelt Park to expand recreational and interpretive opportunities, tying into the Civil War Trails Program and the Tuckahoe Creek Water Trail.
- Work with landowners and commercial operations on preservation and interpretation opportunities for community pride and potential heritage tourism.

Potential Actions for Segment 1:

- Work with MDOT to design and develop a safe walking and biking connection between the existing rail-trail in the Town of Easton and Chapel Road, improving the sidewalk and road shoulder and providing appropriate route and safety signage.
- Work with the landowners of the shopping center on the east side of MD Route 50 to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to and through their properties that would permit a connection with the existing rail corridor to the north of the shopping center.

Phase 2: Connecting the Village of Cordova to the Town of Queen Anne

This phase would involve filling in the missing links between the shared use path sections already constructed in the Village of Cordova and the Town of Queen Anne, and adding amenities such as trailheads. In locations with a lower anticipated demand, it may be more appropriate to construct the shared use path with minimal amenities during the initial design and construction phase. A similar phasing strategy may be applied to the trailhead locations. At the lower-demand trailhead locations, existing trailheads for Talbot County Bike Trails (such as Cordova Park) may be utilized for the Frederick Douglass Rail-Trail. As demand grows and funding allows, additional trailheads and amenities may be added.

Phase 2 would also connect the towns with the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, a key destination near the rail corridor. An initial look at developing interim, on-road trail alignments to establish level of demand, identify trail users' preferred destinations, and avoid the potentially costly rehabilitation or replacement of railroad bridges can also take place in this phase.

This phase may prioritize *Segment 5: Blades Road to Old Queen Anne Highway* for development over *Segment 4: Tappers Corner Road to Blades Road*, because of the stated desire of the Town of

Queen Anne to access the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe through a trail, and because the trail alignment options are potentially less complicated to develop in terms of right-of-way and landowner issues as there is only one landowner adjacent to the rail corridor. Rail corridor bridge crossings would represent a challenge in developing either Segment 4 or 5, and should be considered part of Phase 3.

Potential Actions for Segment 5:

- Conduct field evaluation of sight distance between the rail corridor and buildings and residence on the Eaton property, and if necessary, consider installing an evergreen vegetative buffer for privacy and reducing trespass.
- Consider Lewistown Road and Blades Road as an interim on-road solution for the trail alignment, and also as a long-term, permanent trail connection with the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe.
 - Begin by identifying these roads as bike routes through signage and shared use markings.
 - Develop a compacted dirt side path or add shoulders along Lewistown and Blades roads.
 - Consider the use of the west side of Lewistown Road and north side of Blades Road for the trail alignment, to avoid driveway crossings and simplify negotiations with landowners. A mid-road crossing would be needed to access the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe on the east side of Lewistown Road.
- Identify any plans for replacement of the bridge over Old Queen Anne Highway, for the long-term possibility of adding a pedestrian/bicycle path to the bridge and using MD Route 309/Cordova Road as an alternative trail route.

Potential Actions for Segment 4:

- Work with landowners where proximity to the rail corridor may require addressing privacy and trespass issues, and to resolve any potential encroachments.
- Coordinate with MDOT and MTA to identify legal status of two driveways crossing the rail corridor and accessing MD Route 309/Cordova Road, and consider safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and landowner access.
- Seek public input on appropriate locations for rest stops and scenic views along this section of the rail corridor that would minimize environmental or privacy impacts.
- Work with MD DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service on the design of the rail-trail to stay within the width of the railroad track to the extent possible, in order to preserve the existing vegetative buffer, wetlands, and biodiversity conservation areas, and consider restoration of native vegetation in wetland areas.
- Identify orientation signage needs for trail users along Tappers Corner Road and Blades Road, directing users to the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, in cooperation with MDOT and Talbot County.

- Explore options and develop cost estimates for rehabilitation or replacement of the bridge over Tappers Corner Road considering that the rail-trail cannot access Tappers Corner Road directly, and evaluate the bridge’s possible removal, depending on cost and feasibility.
- Develop a design and engineering plan and cost estimate for the bridge crossing the second tributary of Highfield Creek north of the Village of Cordova for options that include rehabilitation or replacement for long-term use as part of the rail-trail.
- Coordinate with electric and communications utilities to appropriately locate or relocate trail alignment or utilities if necessary.

Phase 3: Missing Links and Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement

Phase 3 would go beyond the interim trail alignment solutions to resolve the challenge of the railroad bridge crossings for the Town of Queen Anne and the rail corridor segments in between the town and the Village of Cordova. In addition, the rail corridor segments from Easton to the Village of Cordova—*Segments 1: Village Street to Black Dog Aly* and *Segment 2: Black Dog Aly to Old Cordova Road* – would be developed as funding opportunities become available and public demand grows to expand Easton’s trail system to the north. Easton is one of the largest towns of Mid-Shore Maryland, with multiple surrounding retail centers and residential areas. It is also a tourism hub, with interest in connecting to key destinations throughout Talbot County. Once the rail-trail segments between the Village of Cordova and the Town of Queen Anne are complete, interest in extending the rail-trail to connect Easton with these smaller towns and destinations such as Tuckahoe State Park and Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, can promote future development of Segments 1 and 2. Completing the approximately 15 miles through Talbot County would permit the rail-trail to be used as a long-distance active recreation and transportation facility integrated with the regional trail system.

Segments 1 and 2 should be developed as a rail-trail simultaneously, if possible, to maximize the recreational and economic benefits of connecting to commercial destinations in Easton. However, the complexities of addressing multiple landowner concerns and land use types along this seven-mile stretch, as well as the barrier represented by MD Route 50, will likely require a more piecemeal approach as compared to the other rail corridor segments from the Village of Cordova to the Town of Queen Anne. Segment 1 may be prioritized, since there are 16 tax parcels as opposed to the 33 tax parcels along Segment 2.

Potential Actions for Segment 1:

- Solicit input from residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural landowners and work to address their individual and group needs related to privacy, safety and security of operations in the design and management of the rail-trail.
- Explore the option to use the utility corridor as a potential alternate trail alignment in areas where following the rail corridor right-of-way is problematic due to environmental, private property or safety concerns. Located approximately 25 feet to the west of and paralleling the

rail corridor, the utility right-of-way may provide greater separation between the trail and existing infrastructure, residences and commercial operations.

- Work with commercial landowners to install a vegetative buffer between their properties and the rail-trail to screen trail users and provide security for landowners.
- Identify and address any upgrades needed for the existing trailhead at the A. James Clark Sports Complex, such as bike racks, interpretive and orientation signage, and benches, and explore the possibility of an additional trailhead at the shopping complex to the east of MD Route 50.
- Consider the existing power line corridor to the south of the J & E LLC property, following along the commercial driveway to the west of the facility, then crossing to the north of Black Dog Aly, and re-entering the existing rail corridor.

Potential Actions for Segment 2:

- Work with the commercial landowners, including Mid-Atlantic Waste Systems and Chamberlain Limited Liability Company, to identify and resolve possible encroachments and, if necessary, re-locate fencing and other infrastructure and install a vegetative buffer in between the trail and private property.
 - Explore with Mid-Atlantic Waste Systems the potential removal of access to the property from MD Route 309/Cordova Road and re-location of access to Rabbit Hill Road.
- Coordinate with electric and communications utilities to appropriately locate or relocate trail alignment or utilities if necessary.
- Construct rail-trail within the existing track footprint to the extent possible to protect the wetlands associated with Wootenau Creek and the tributary of Highfield Creek.

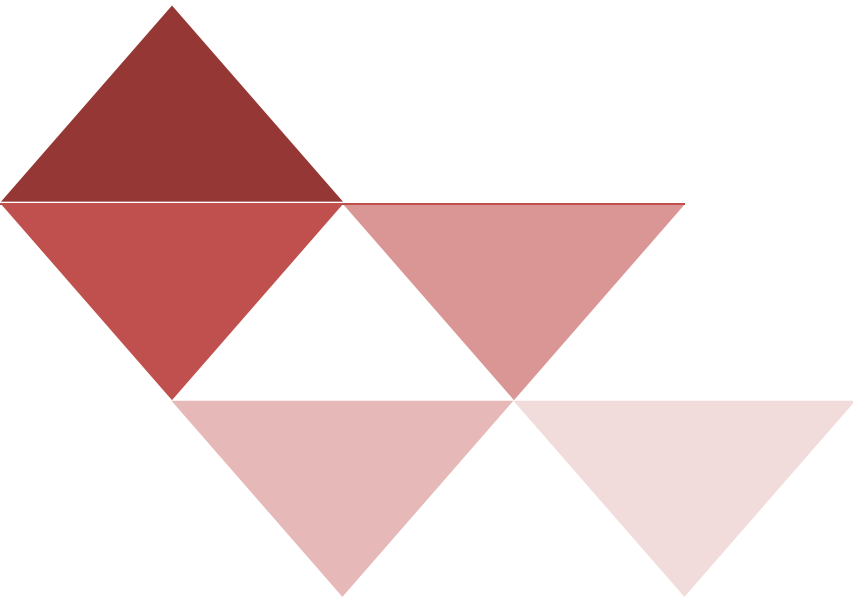
Potential Actions for Segment 5:

- Building off of Phase 2, develop a feasibility and design study that identifies the rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement of the bridge over Old Queen Anne Highway with a structure that is suitable for use as a pedestrian/bicycle crossing. Because the bridge is NRHP-eligible, coordination with MHT will be necessary.

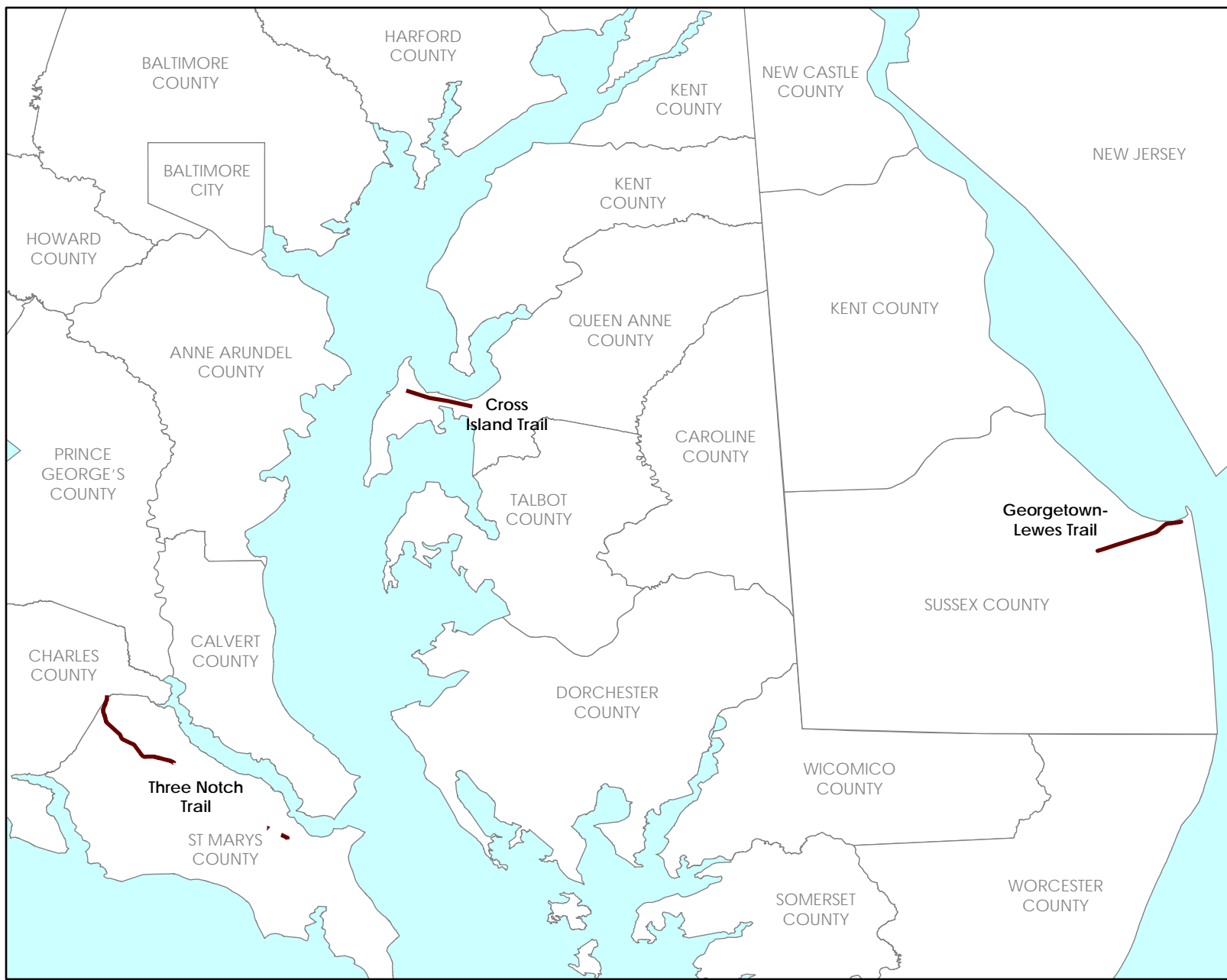
Potential Actions for Segment 4:

- Building off of Phase 2, develop a feasibility and design study that identifies the rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement of the bridge over Tappers Corner Road with a structure that is suitable for use as a pedestrian/bicycle crossing. Evaluate the bridge's possible removal, depending on cost and feasibility.

Case Studies



CASE STUDIES OVERVIEW



Cross Island Trail – Queen Anne’s County, Maryland

General Trail Information	
Length:	6.5 miles (Cross Island Trail); approximately 1.2 miles (Cross County Connector Trail)
Management:	Queen Anne’s County Parks & Recreation Department
Start Point/End Point:	The non-vehicular trail spans east to west, starting at Terrapin Nature Park on Log Canoe Circle and ending at the Chesapeake Heritage & Visitor Center (CHVC) at Kent Narrows. With the eastward extension of the trail through the Cross County Connector Trail, the trail now extends past the CHVC ending at Long Point Park, located at the intersection of Long Point Road and Jackson Creek Road.
Surface and Width:	Asphalt, 10 foot width
Uses:	Walking, biking
Facilities:	Trailheads are located at Terrapin Nature Park, Old Love Point Park, CHVC, and Long Point Park. Parking is available at the Terrapin Nature Park, Old Love Point Park, CHVC, and the public lots beneath the Kent Narrows US 50/301 bridge. Numerous benches, signage and other amenities are provided along the trail alignment.

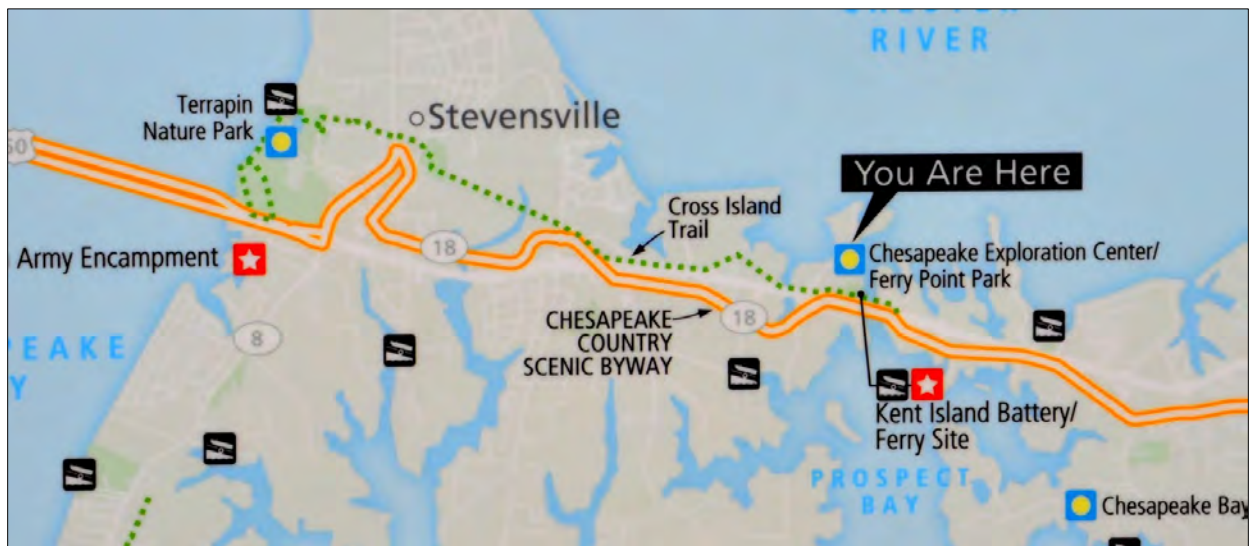


Image 28. Cross Island Trail Map. Credit: MidAtlantic Day Trips.

Background

The Cross Island Trail is a popular trail in Queen Anne’s County that traverses Kent Island, the largest of the Chesapeake Bay Islands. Development of the 6.5-mile trail began in 1996 and was completed in 2001. The trail’s popularity with residents and visitors alike stems from its success in connecting the communities, businesses, and open spaces of Kent Island.

Long divided by US Route 50/301 (extending east to west) and Route 8 (extending north to south), Kent Island residents were dependent on their vehicles to conduct daily errands. Development of the Cross Island Trail provided a safe, non-motorized mode of transportation for residents to travel to community assets such as Old Love Point Park, Percy Thomas Senior Center, and the Kent Narrows Public Boat Ramp. The trail also provides a direct link to local schools for students and their families, as the trail connects with Kent Island High School, Bayside Elementary School, and Kent Island Elementary School. For visitors to Kent Island, the Cross Island Trail is an excellent recreational facility and introduces them to the diverse natural landscape of the island, travelling through dense forests, farmlands, and meadows, over streams and creeks, which offer spectacular views of the Chesapeake Bay. ([Source](#))



Image 29. Cross Island Trail. Credit: AllTrails.

The first section of the Cross Island Trail opened to the public in 1998. The one-mile segment extended from Castle Marina Road west to Old Love Point Park and was developed on the path of the former Queen Anne’s Railroad, which originally ran from Love Point, Maryland to Lewes, Delaware. (Source) By late 2001 the trail had been extended east to Kent Narrows and west to Terrapin Park, where the Cross Island Trail connects with the walking paths within the park. (Source)

As a future countywide trail, the Cross Island Trail is expected to extend east, eventually connecting with trails located in other counties on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. (Source) The first eastward expansion of the trail began in December 2018, when construction of the Cross County Connector Trail got underway. The 1.2-mile segment extends the trail from Kent Narrows Road to Long Point Park, providing users with additional options to access parks, businesses, and the Grasonville community. The Cross County Connector Trail was completed in November 2019. The 10-foot-wide trail primarily consists of elevated boardwalk over marshlands and water, with some sections paved and at grade. (Source)

For the past 20 years, the Cross Island Trail has been considered one of the top outdoor recreation facilities by residents of Queen Anne’s County. (Source) The trail is also a nationally recognized recreation amenity, designated as a National Recreation Trail in 2003. The Cross Island Trail and Cross County Connector Trail are also part of the American Discovery Trail, a cross country trail that seeks to establish the first coast-to-coast non-motorized trail. The path of the former Queen Anne’s Railroad is one of the American Discovery Trail-affiliated trails identified within the State of Maryland (see Image 30). (Source)



Image 30. American Discovery Trail route through Maryland and D.C. Credit: American Discovery Trail.

Funding

The Cross Island Trail was developed through a combination of federal, state, and local funding from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), National Recreation Trails program, Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Maryland Open Space, and Queen Anne’s County. (Source)

The Cross County Connector Trail was developed with federal and local funding. The project was completed on an 80/20 cost sharing basis, with \$2,828,000 coming from federal sources, and \$707,000 coming from Queen Anne’s County. (Source)

Three Notch Trail – St. Mary’s County, Maryland

General Trail Information	
Length:	Approximately 11 miles
Management:	St. Mary’s County Recreation and Parks
Start Point/End Point:	The non-motorized trail runs south from Deborah Drive in Charlotte Hall to John V. Baggett Park mostly along Three Notch Road. There is a shorter, disconnected segment further south that runs from the Walmart Supercenter parking lot on Miramar Way to Chancellors Run Road in California.
Surface and Width:	Asphalt, 10 feet wide in most sections, ADA compliant
Uses:	Non-motorized pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian
Facilities:	Two trailheads are located at the Northern Senior Activity Center and John V. Baggett Park. Parking is available at both trailhead locations. Water and restrooms are located at John V. Baggett Park. There are approximately 19 information panels located throughout the continuous portion of the trail. Numerous benches, signage, and other amenities are provided along the trail alignment.

Background

The Three Notch Trail is an ongoing rail-trail project in St. Mary’s County, mostly within a county-owned railroad right-of-way that parallels MD Route 235, or Three Notch Road. The proposed Three Notch Trail will be approximately 28 miles long and run from the Charles County line to Lexington Park in St. Mary’s County. As of May 2017, approximately 11 miles of the hiking/biking trail had been constructed between Hughesville (in Charles County) to Lexington Park. ([Source](#))

The trail is being developed in nine phases and will primarily follow the existing railroad right-of-way. In the Lexington Park area, several commercial developments are located adjacent to the right-of-way and consequently, numerous driveways cross over the trail. Alternatives will be considered for relocating the trail behind the commercial developments as future sections of the trail are developed. ([Source](#))

The Southern Maryland Regional Trail and Bikeway System Study (SMRTABS), which includes St. Mary’s County, was developed, and endorsed in 2000 as the first regional bikeway plan that provides recommendations for making biking to work a viable alternative for some workers. The Three Notch Trail project is the backbone of the SMRTABS in St. Mary’s County. ([Source](#))



Image 31. Three Notch Trail Map. Credit: St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks.

For the most part, the trail will be used for recreational purposes. Conversely, the Three Notch Trail will be especially advantageous for Amish and Mennonite communities as an alternative to riding their buggies along MD Route 235, the route they use frequently to access the Charlotte Hall Farmer's Market. Also, the section of the trail through Lexington Park would be an ideal connection for bicycle commuters to the Patuxent Naval Air Station. ([Source](#))

The Three Notch Trail is the longest, most visible, and heavily trafficked multi-use trail in St. Mary's County. ([Source](#)) The trail is becoming a significant recreation, tourism, and transportation facility. Existing and future sections of the trail provide linkages between residential areas, schools, libraries and other community facilities, and farmers markets. Completion of this locally and regionally significant trail has been, and remains, a high priority for St. Mary's County. Future trail expansion will provide connections to Leonardtown, Charles, and Calvert counties. Currently, the trail is one of the most significant elements of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Southern Maryland. ([Source](#)) The county's continued expansion of the popular Three Notch Trail is an example of work already well under way to enhance opportunities for the public to walk, jog, run, hike, and cycle on a pathway separated from vehicular traffic and dedicated to these uses. ([Source](#))

A trails advocacy group, the Friends of the Three Notch Trail, recently formed to assist with promoting awareness of the Three Notch Trail project and will coordinate volunteer work on the trail once completed. The Friends group is comprised of cyclists, runners, equestrians, and hikers who are dedicated to the creation and maintenance of the non-motorized trail.

Funding

The Three Notch Trail is being funded by a combination of county (county bonds, local transfer tax and impact fees), state (Program Open Space (POS) development funds) and Federal (TEA-21 National Recreation Trails Program) funds. Other trails within county parks are funded as part of park development projects or are sometimes constructed by staff and volunteers.

Phase VII of the Three Notch Trail received \$4.1 million in state and federal funding in 2018. Phase VIII of the Three Notch Trail is an approved project for the fiscal year 2021 capital budget at a cost of \$350,000. There are portions of Phase III and IV which are still incomplete. ([Source](#))



Image 32. Three Notch Trail. Credit: AllTrails.

Georgetown-Lewes Trail – Sussex County, Delaware

General Trail Information	
Length:	Approximately 9 miles
Management:	Delaware Department of Transportation
Start Point/End Point:	Phase I runs from the northern terminus of the Junction & Breakwater Trail that connects with Cape Henlopen State Park’s trail system and the City of Lewes, from Gills Neck Road south to Savannah Road. Phase II extended the trail from Savannah Road to Log Cabin Road.
Surface and Width:	Asphalt, 10 feet wide, ADA compliant
Uses:	Non-motorized pedestrian, bicycle
Facilities:	Parking, restrooms, interpretive panels, and a bike repair station and racks are available at the trailhead directly accessible from Monroe Avenue, next to the Lewes Public Library. There is another parking facility just off Nassau Road.

Background

The Georgetown-Lewes Trail will be approximately 17 miles long and run from Cape Henlopen State Park to the Town of Georgetown, Delaware, and its historic train station. [\(Source\)](#) As of June 2019, approximately 8.5 miles of the hiking/biking trail had been constructed.

The trail is being developed in eight separate phases and will follow the existing railroad right-of-way formerly operated by the Delaware Coast Line Railroad (DCLR). The rail corridor and right-of-way are now owned by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). The existing rail corridor is close to a number of communities and recreational attractions, including Cape Henlopen State Park, the Cape May-Lewes Ferry, Gills Neck Road Trail, Junction & Breakwater Trail, and the Delaware Heritage Trail. The Georgetown-Lewes Trail stretches through residential developments and neighborhoods, commercial developments in the City of Lewes, scenic and historical byways, and farmlands. Importantly, the trail provides a much-needed safe, grade-separated crossing for residents and visitors crossing the heavily trafficked DE Route 1, going under the Nassau Bridge. [\(Source\)](#)

In October 2016, the first phase of the Georgetown-Lewes Trail opened between Gills Neck Road and Savannah Road in the City of Lewes as a rail with trail. During Phase II, the rail line was decommissioned and the rail was removed between Gills Neck Road and Fisher Road; however, the Lewes Mayor & City Council voted in favor of preserving the section of railroad between Kings Highway and Adams Avenue in December 2017. In June 2019, Phase II extended the trail to Log Cabin Hill Road. The following year, in May 2020, Phase II was extended to Cool Spring Road and Route 9. [\(Source\)](#)

Future phases will extend the trail southwest to the Town of Georgetown. Work to extend the trail from Cool Spring Road to Fisher Road is slated to begin in the Fall of 2021. Construction of a short section of trail within the Town of Georgetown is currently underway between the Georgetown Little League Complex and Airport Road. Since the rail line will remain in place and operational in the area west of Fisher Road to Georgetown, this section will be a multi-use trail located to the north side of the existing rail corridor. Future phases will all be designed as a rail with trail facility. ([Source](#))

According to Delaware’s 2003-2008 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), safe walking and hiking paths were identified as a high priority for the Georgetown and Lewes areas. The Sussex County 2008 Comprehensive Plan and DelDOT’s 2006 Statewide Rails to Trails / Rails with Trails Facility Master Plan identified the Georgetown-Lewes Trail as a priority facility for funding.

([Source](#)) The Town of Georgetown 2010 Comprehensive Plan includes the Georgetown-Lewes Trail as a component of their pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan as being “valuable for recreation, but also for bicycle transportation to the many employers along its length.” ([Source](#))

The Georgetown-Lewes Trail is the second rail-trail in Sussex County and will be, at its completion, the longest multi-use trail in Delaware. It is heavily trafficked due to its location in a major tourist area. The trail is becoming a significant recreation, tourism, and transportation facility for

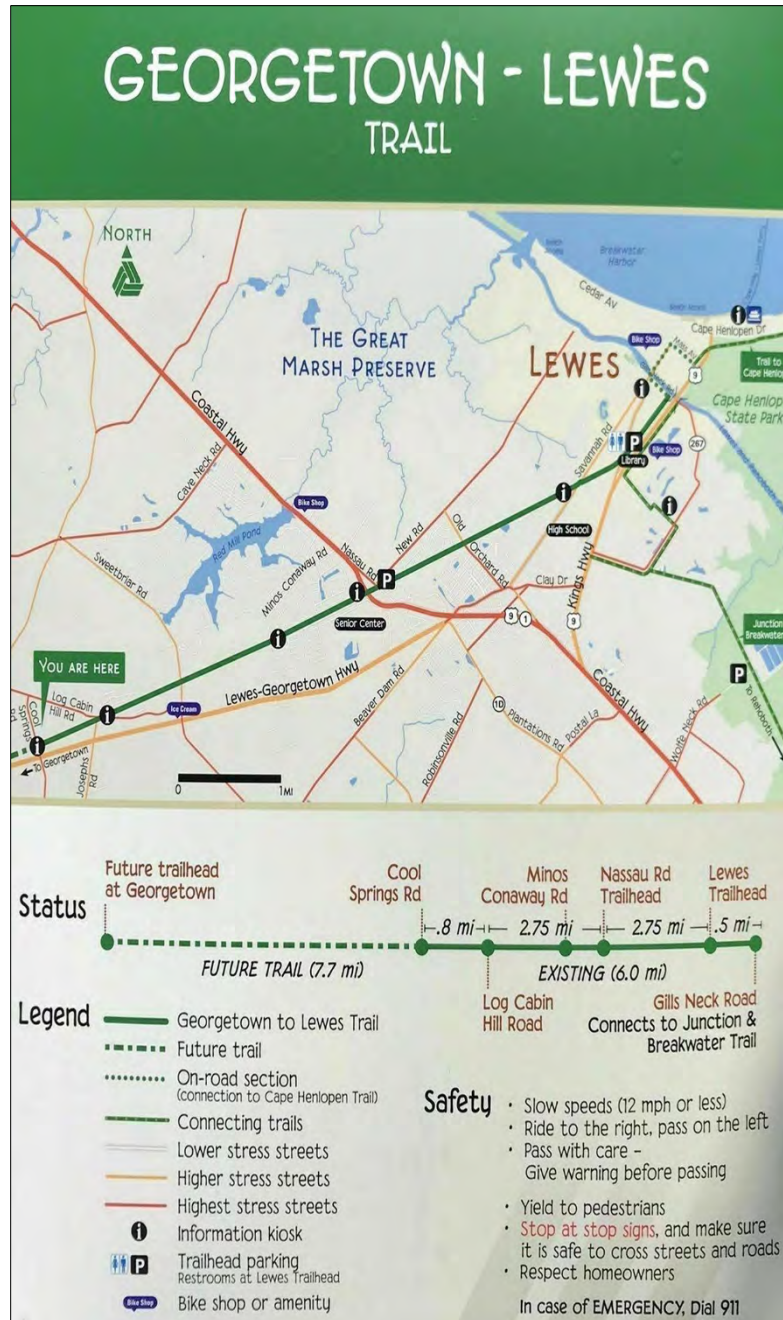


Image 33. Georgetown-Lewes Trail Map. Credit: AllTrails.

community residents and visitors alike. For residents, the trail provides a direct link between residential areas (several homes connect to the trail via walkways), businesses, libraries, and other community facilities. ([Source](#)) The trail also accommodates various land uses present in the area. A cattle crossing in the trail addresses a farmer’s needs for moving cattle between two fields on opposite sides of the trail during certain designated times (*see Image 34*). Steel grates at the crossing prevent animals from wandering off. When herbicide applications are needed, the trail is closed down and public notices are posted on the DelDOT website.

Completion of this locally and regionally significant trail remains a high priority for the State of Delaware and Sussex County. Future trail expansions will provide links to other trail systems and Delaware beach towns. ([Source](#)) The plan is to eventually connect all of the beach towns through a path system that is separated from vehicular traffic for safe walking, jogging, running, and bicycling. DelDOT will continue to maintain and manage the trail. ([Source](#))



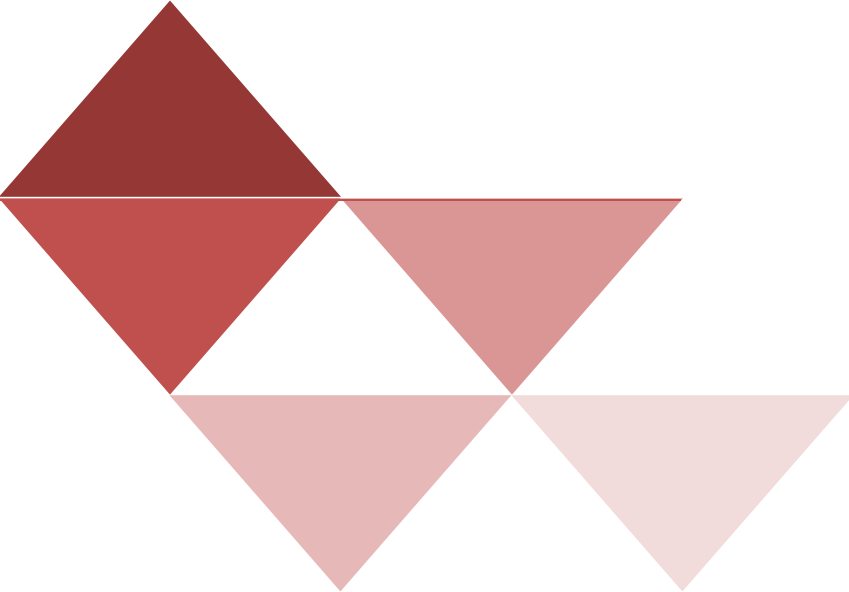
Image 34. Cattle crossing at Georgetown-Lewes Trail. Credit: Ron MacArthur.

Funding

Much of the Georgetown-Lewes Trail is being funded through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program, first implemented in the early 1990s to support surface transportation projects and related efforts that contribute to air quality improvements and provide congestion relief. ([Source](#)) Delaware’s state legislature also appropriated funding, and the City of Lewes provided more than \$700,000 to the project to build the trailhead in the Lewes Public Library parking lot. ([Source](#))

Future phases to develop the remaining eight miles of the Georgetown-Lewes Trail are anticipated to receive state and federal funding, potentially amounting to \$8-10 million.

Appendices



Overview

The MDDE rail corridor is not an isolated feature. Any assessment of the rail corridor must take into consideration the planning and implementation of local trails in surrounding communities, and how these physically connect to existing and future regional trail systems. In much the same way, any assessment should consider how the rail corridor promotes community values through the interpretation of the rich historical and cultural assets of Maryland’s Eastern Shore for local residents and visitors. Throughout the assessment process for the MDDE a number of historical and cultural assets in the vicinity of the project area were identified as potential opportunities to improve the experience of outdoor recreation and bring to life the unique cultural landscapes of the Eastern Shore (see Images 35 and 36). The assets identified fall under the following three interpretive themes: 1. African American/Black historical experience (see Appendix C); 2. Railroad history (see Appendix B); and 3. Agricultural heritage (see Appendix D).

This section of the trail assessment report also evaluates how the MDDE fits into existing and future regional trail systems by reviewing relevant local plans at the state, county, and town level (see Appendix A); as well as identifying potential connections with existing trails in Maryland’s Eastern Shore and the State of Delaware (see Appendix E and F).

MD & DE Rail Corridor & Trail Assessment

Easton, MD
Cultural Resource Inventory

- African American Village
The Hill Community
- Historic Survey Districts
Easton Historic District
- MD Scenic Byways
Chesapeake Country
- MD & DE Rail Corridor

African American Experience

- 1 Historical Society of Talbot County
- 2 Frederick Douglass Statue at Talbot County Courthouse
- 3 Former Site of Talbot County Jail
- 4 Bethel A.M.E. Church
- 5 Former Site of the Brick Hotel
- 11 Asbury United Methodist Church
- 24 Landing at Easton Point - November, 1878 Return to Easton
- 25 Former Moton School
- 26 Home of John Leeds Kerr
- 27 Tidewater Inn - Site of the Hotel Avon

Agricultural Heritage

- 1 Saint Aubins
- 6 Spring Hill Cemetery
- 16 Easton Creamery Company
- 27 St. Aubins Barn - Aubins Keep
- 30 Galloway Stock Farms
- 34 Mount Pleasant

Railroad History

- 6 Easton Railroad Station (Delaware/Penn.-Central Station)

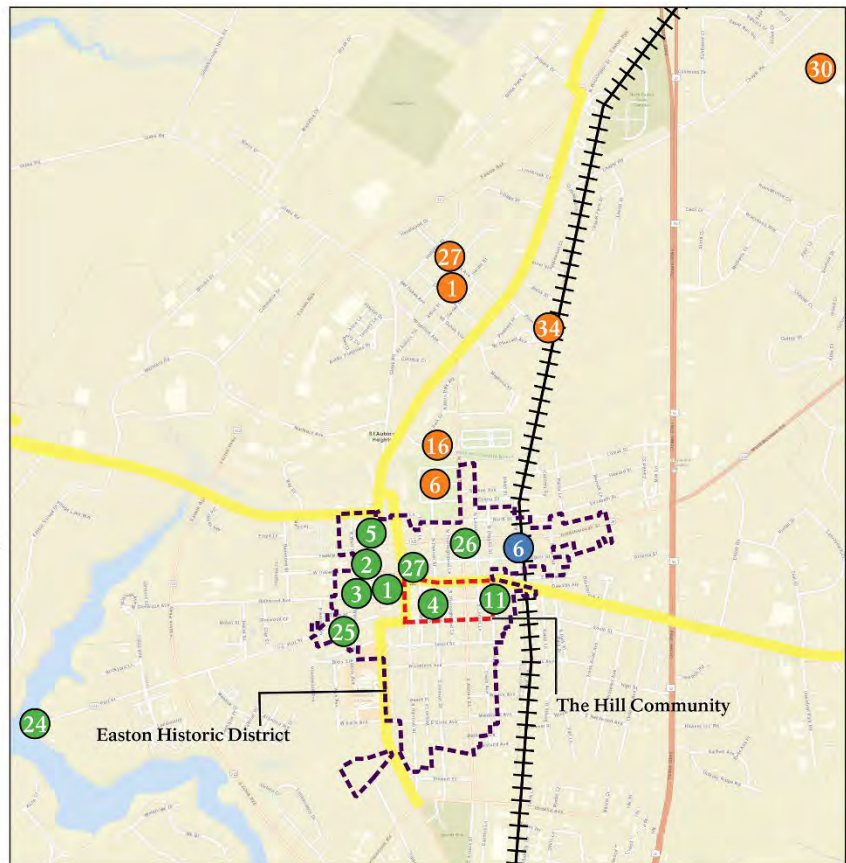


Image 35. Easton - Cultural Resource Inventory. Credit: NPS RTCA.

MD & DE Rail Corridor & Trail Assessment

*Cordova to Ridgely, MD
Cultural Resource Inventory*

	African American Village Thomas Town Survey District
	Railroad History District Ridgely Historic District Queen Anne Survey District
	Historic/Survey Districts Hillsboro Survey District
	MD Scenic Byways Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Tuckahoe State Park
	MD & DE Rail Corridor

- African American Experience**
- 12 Frederick Douglass Civil War 'Trail Marker "Tales of Horror" - Hillsboro Boat Ramp
 - 15 Covey's Landing and Boat Ramp
 - 16 Tappers Corner at Lewistown Road - Birthplace of Frederick Douglass
 - 17 Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe
 - 28 Zion Church - Boonsboro Colored Church
- Agricultural Heritage**
- 2 Kleczynski Farm
 - 3 Wye Mills Feed Company - Talbot Grain
 - 4 Voshell Farm - Hopkins Home Farm
 - 25 Lindemann Farm - Pleasant Acres
 - 24 St. Paul's M.E. Church
 - 31 Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Cordova Church
 - 32 Knotts Farm - Hiram Dudley Victorian House
- Railroad History**
- 5 Ridgely Railroad Station
 - 7 Queen Anne Freight Station

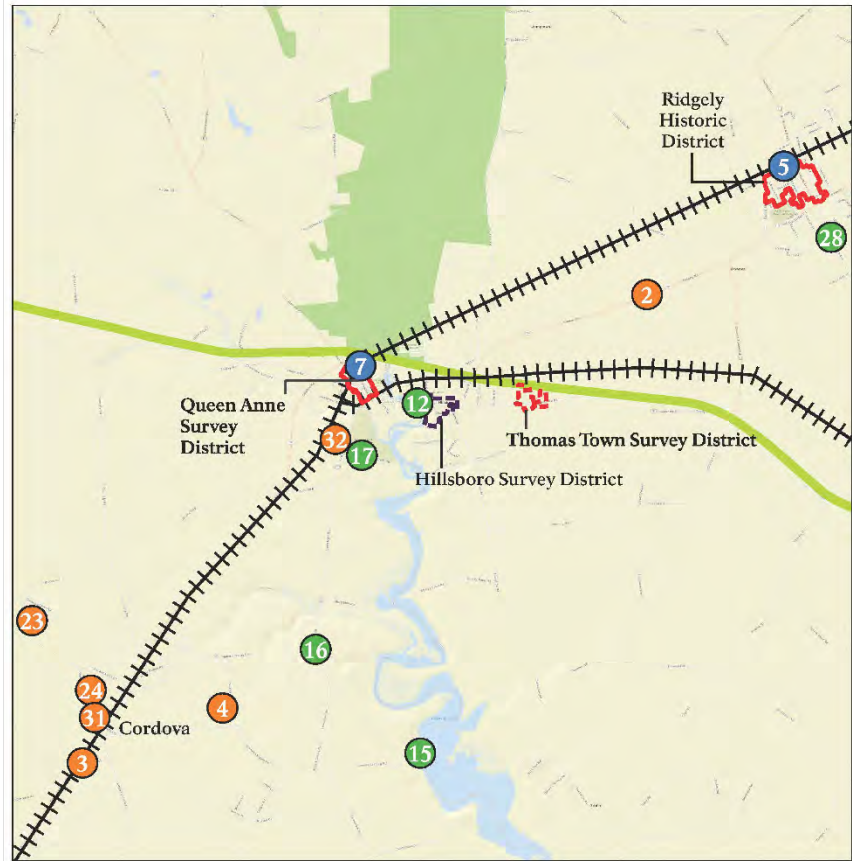


Image 36. Cordova to Ridgely - Cultural Resource Inventory. Credit: NPS RTCA.

Appendix A: Relevant Local Plans

Maryland Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2019-2023)

Trail-based activities, especially walking, continue to be the most popular outdoor recreation and fitness activities overall; therefore, many state and local agencies are investing in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and recreational trails to meet demands for more walkable/rideable communities and diverse trail-based experiences. The inter-related health, environmental, and economic benefits of outdoor recreation, including something as simple as going for a walk outside, have become a greater focus of parks and recreation agencies statewide over the past five years.

(Source)

While the Eastern Shore region of Maryland tends to lead in the participation of most outdoor recreation activities (Water, Historical & Cultural, Nature/Wildlife-related, Fishing, Winter, Hunting/Shooting-related), it lags behind the rest of the state when it comes to trail-based recreation participation. A 5-mile proximity analysis to trails in the Eastern region reveals that access to trails can be improved in both Talbot and Caroline counties (see *Image 37: Areas in orange are further than 5 miles from trail infrastructure*), especially along the MDDE route. The MDDE route has been identified as a key strategic missing link, meaning it could both increase opportunities for trails as regional transportation networks and increase access to trails in Eastern Shore communities.

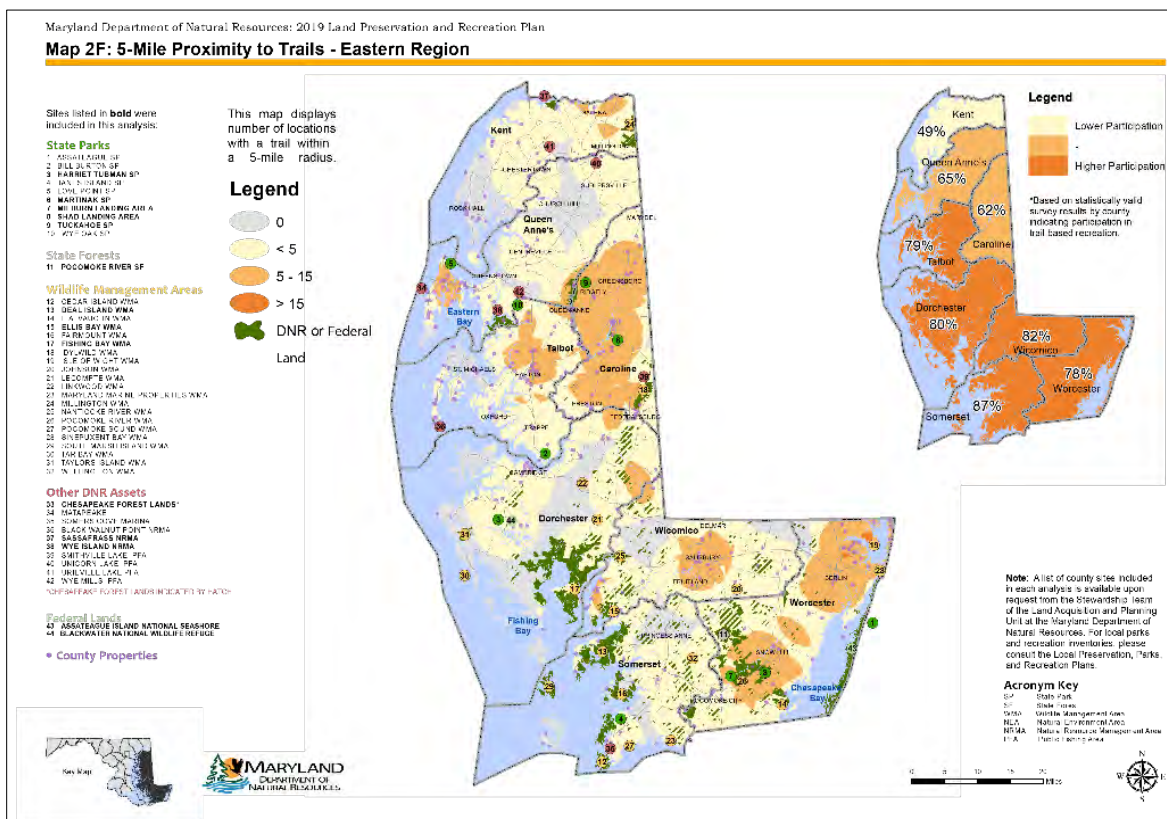


Image 37. 5-Mile Proximity to Trails - Eastern Region. Credit: MD DNR

Talbot County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2017)

Talbot County's 2017 LPPRP recognizes the need and desire to continue the development of a trail system in and around Talbot County, giving residents and visitors a safe, structured means of exercise and leisure. Talbot County has established and advertised six bike routes through both urban and rural areas (see Image 38). In 2013, Talbot County conducted a needs assessment to indicate what types of recreational facilities are needed for the future. The assessment was modelled after the 2013 MD DNR process for updating the state-level LPPRP, which identified the top five most popular outdoor recreation activities statewide: walking, visiting historical sites, picnicking, visiting natural areas and participating in outdoor special events.

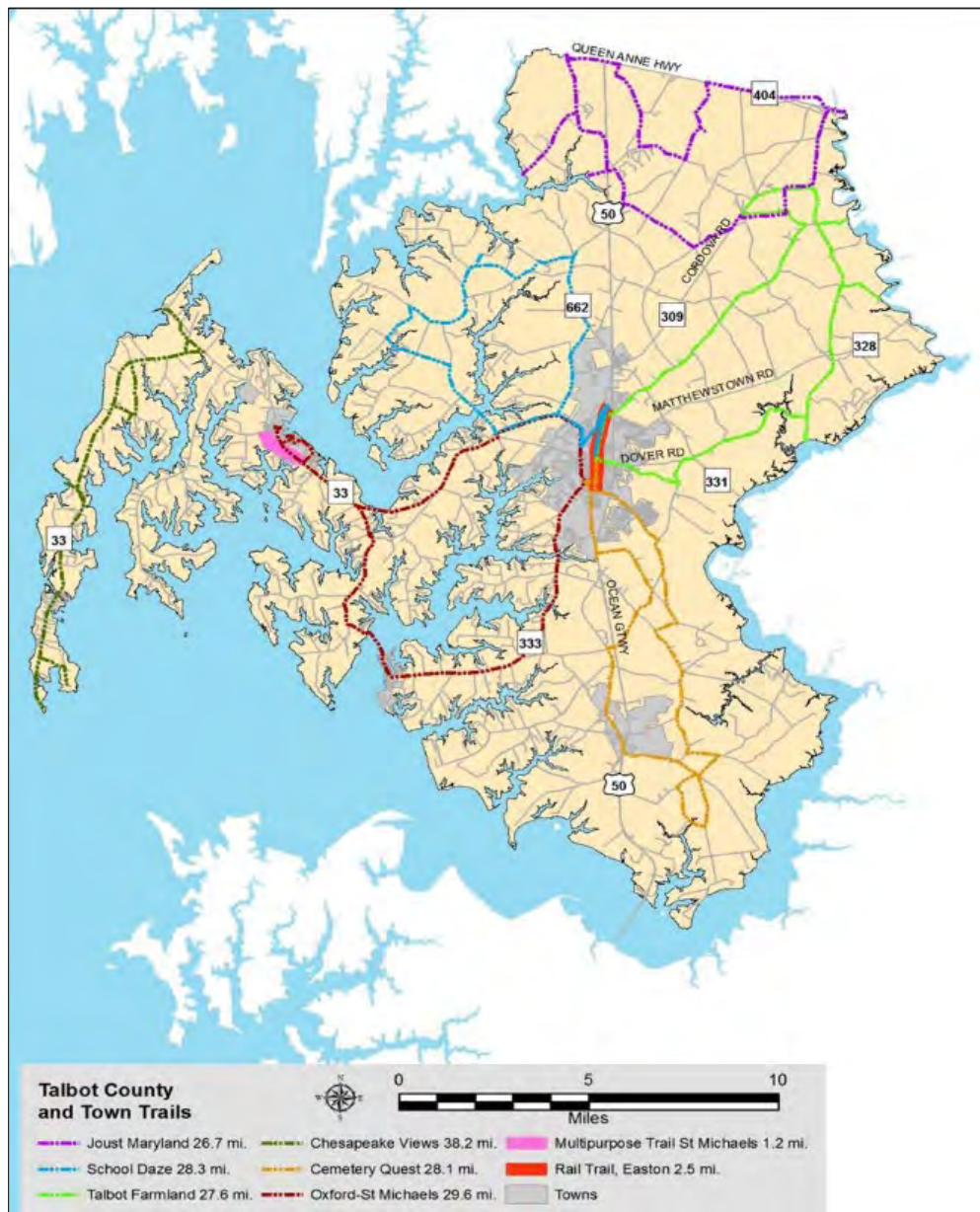


Image 38. Talbot County and Town Trails. Credit: Talbot County Offices of Tourism, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

Building on these statewide findings, the Talbot County assessment found that residents want walking trails. The county had completed three walking paths by 2016 and is planning on a future walking path to connect Easton, Cordova, and Lewistown Road Park. As the population continues to age, the need for more walking trails, passive parks and open green space will also increase.

Aging Population

Talbot County has a higher than state-average median age of approximately 47 years. This relatively high median age is a function of a population that is aging in place, in-migration of retirees and out-migration of younger people. ([Source](#)) The percentage of the population that is 65 and older in Talbot County is almost twice that of the state average. ([Source](#)) In recent years, increased leisure time, a rise in the standard of living, and a growing and increasingly elderly population have contributed to changes in the demand for recreational sites and activities. These changes in individual and community recreation needs should be considered in the planning for parks, recreational facilities, and programs.

Non-motorized Transportation

The scenic views and rural roads of Talbot County are especially appealing to recreational bicyclists. These routes traverse scenic rural areas, form loops through varied terrain, and appeal to bikers at all levels. With the advent of designated trails, especially in the incorporated towns, and the establishment of wide cycling shoulders on major routes in the county, bicycling is beginning to provide an alternative method of commuting. Bicycle traffic, whether recreational or for commuting, has increased along with motorized transportation. Considering this, joint planning between the county and incorporated towns should be undertaken to ensure safe cycling. ([Source](#))

Talbot County has worked with, and will continue to work with, local municipalities in order to obtain grants, state funding and federal resources to better their recreational facilities and parks. If fully developed, the rail-trail could provide much needed recreational opportunities to enhance the health of residents in under-served Eastern Shore communities, and provide safe access to schools, businesses, services, and parks within those communities.

Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan (2010)

In consideration of future needs, the Town of Easton's 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified a shortage of the more passive elements of a park system, which include amenities like walking trails. ([Source](#)) As a transportation goal, the plan identified the need to expand the town's trail system and create more and safer opportunities for people to walk and bicycle throughout the town. ([Source](#)) The town's 2009 Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan recognizes that investing in walking and biking facilities helps local businesses and is an investment in the local economy. In summary, the key guiding principles for Easton are to provide quality pedestrian and bicycle accommodations that provide access to all citizens, regardless of age or ability; that promote environmentally-friendly transportation options; enhance quality of life; support livable, intown land use; and encourage neighborhood preservation.

An approximately 2.8-mile rails-to-trails path has been built within the railroad corridor extending north-south through Easton. The town intends to continue to work with Talbot County to expand this trail in several directions, with the hope of eventually connecting to a wider-scale county-initiated trail system.

Village of Cordova Master Plan (2020)

The Village of Cordova recently completed a master planning process with the assistance of Talbot County. This process led to the acknowledgement that there are almost no sidewalks or paths in Cordova. It is not practical to create sidewalks or paths everywhere in the village; therefore, the plan recommends making improvements at locations where there is a lot of pedestrian activity. ([Source](#)) Pedestrian safety and a potential crosswalk over MD Route 309/Cordova Road has been raised as a need. The proposed location for the crosswalk would intersect with the rail corridor.

Bicycling, especially recreational cycling, is reportedly common but there are no dedicated bicycle lanes or off-road trails. The traffic volumes on most streets in the village are relatively low, such that bicycles can comfortably share the road with motor vehicles. Cordova is featured on several bicycle maps. ([Source](#))

Improving the abandoned rail line as a rail-trail could help connect Cordova with surrounding communities while also providing a great way to experience the local landscape. Trails serve as recreation and transportation amenities to residents, and are also an attraction to visitors, who can visit destinations in and around Cordova. While the concept is still in its early stages, with plenty of public input to be considered, expressions of support have focused on the increased opportunity for walking, biking, and alternative modes of transportation, and the additional tourism activity and spending by trail users that could help support local businesses. ([Source](#))

Caroline County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2017)

According to Caroline County's 2017 LPPRP, there are 57 miles of biking, walking, and riding trails throughout the county; however, similar to Talbot County, the majority of trail mileage is on-road. Off-road trail mileage is primarily located in Tuckahoe State Park, Adkins Arboretum, and Idylwild Wildlife Management Area. Additionally, there are Maryland State Highway-signed bicycle routes (313, 328, 404) that span the county to allow for alternative modes of transportation. The bike trails go beyond the county borders. They intersect with the MDDE route at the Town of Queen Anne and the Town of Goldsboro. It is interesting to note that these trails were seen as appropriate for transportation use rather than recreational use in the 2006 LPPRP. The MDDE is briefly noted in the plan as a potential trail to link Ridgely with Tuckahoe State Park's trail system. The county is focused on trails inside of towns and parks, although hiking, walking and biking trails were noted as a primary deficit throughout the county. The plan does support the acquisition of easements to support the connection of state park hubs to the towns, and the benefits of developing paved, accessible trails that connect existing parks and recreational resources.

Queen Anne's County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2017)

Forming a wedge in between Talbot and Caroline counties, Queen Anne's County includes a short section of the MDDE. The county's 2017 LPPRP identifies a six-mile long greenway from Roosevelt Park in the Town of Queen Anne running north through Tuckahoe State Park, and an on-road bike trail heading northwest from the Town of Queen Anne along MD Route 309. The plan does not identify the MDDE as a potential trail, although the possibility is there for a rail-trail to connect to the existing bike trail and greenway as part of a regional trail system.

Appendix B: Railroad History & Historic Sites

Little physical evidence of the former railroad remains in Caroline and Talbot counties. Much of the original railroad track has been removed or paved over. The deteriorating single line track survives in few areas along with some associated road crossings and signage (*see Image 39*). Railroad-related historic structures remain in Ridgely and Easton. The Town of Goldsboro has been determined NRHP-eligible because of its importance as an Eastern Shore railroad town (*see Image 40*). The former Henderson passenger station, dating to about 1920, was once an office for the Caroline Acres Trailer Park. It has now been relocated to Goldsboro where it sits abandoned. The Marydel passenger station was relocated further south of the town and is being used as a junkyard office. None of the former freight depots remain, except for a freight station in the Town of Queen Anne that was relocated from another part of the town to the cannery complex at First and Main streets. ([Source](#))



Image 39. Existing railbeds in the Town of Queen Anne - View looking north from Park Avenue, November 22, 2010. Credit: Maryland & Delaware Railroad Corridor Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Twelve railroad bridges survive in Maryland, spanning the years 1897 to 1968. With the exception of the bridge in Easton, which is a component of the town's pedestrian trail, each of the surviving bridges is in an advanced state of deterioration. The three-span thru girder bridge which carried the

railroad over MD Route 404/Queen Anne Highway was demolished in March 2010. ([Source](#)) MD DNR was recently awarded a \$200,000 MDOT Bikeways grant that will enable assessment and design work in preparation for construction of two of the rail corridor trestles. One bridge is just north of the Village of Cordova and one is located on the outskirts of the Town of Queen Anne (Business Route 303/309).



Image 40. Goldsboro Railroad Station, January, 1977. Credit: Goldsboro Railroad Station Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

While MHT determined that the MDDE rail corridor is ineligible for NRHP-status, there are sufficient historic features remaining that could be used to interpret the railroad's notable role in the economic and social development of the communities through which it traveled. The Town of Ridgely's success in preserving and interpreting its railroad history could be expanded to other communities along the rail corridor.

Appendix C: African American/Black Historical Experience & Historic Sites in Maryland's Eastern Shore

Slavery was not legally established in Maryland until 1664, and most blacks arriving before that time were considered indentured servants who could work a specified number of years and then were granted freedom. ([Source](#)) The last enslaved peoples were freed at the end of the Civil War. While Maryland developed similarly to neighboring Virginia, slavery declined as an institution in Maryland earlier, and Maryland had the largest free black population by 1860 of any state.

As early as 1788, free blacks in Talbot County formed 'The Hill' community in Easton, near what is now the southern terminus of the trail along the former MDDE. There, they purchased properties, established two African American churches, and hired out their work to locals. By 1800, the Eastern Shore's free black population had grown to an all-time high. Part of this increase had to do with the region's significant number of Quakers, who started freeing their enslaved people during the Revolutionary War period and went on to be agents of the Underground Railroad. ([Source](#))

By 1860, the free black community that developed in Maryland was nearly equal in size to the enslaved community. From the earliest days of colonial Maryland, populations of free blacks existed throughout the state, including quite a few with mixed race heritage, and many blended families with both free and enslaved members. ([Source](#)) The sale of enslaved family members to landowners in the Deep South was a constant threat, particularly with the reduced use of enslaved labor in Maryland.

The large free black population was in part due to the decrease in the use of enslaved labor, which was the result of a shift away from tobacco production to wheat. Wheat production required less labor, only needing large workforces twice a year, for planting and harvest, unlike tobacco which required labor for most of the year. Plantations took different approaches to reducing their slaveholdings. Some freed their enslaved people, while others rented them to other plantations or to various industries as far away as Baltimore. Some sold their remaining enslaved holdings either to counties in Southern Maryland or to Southern states, where the demand for enslaved labor was growing. Talbot County in particular, had the highest percentage of free blacks out of any slaveholding state's counties in the United States heading into the Civil War.

The Eastern Shore was an incubator of African American leaders and was an Underground Railroad 'hot spot' because of several factors:

- A large free black population, interwoven with an enslaved population in mixed families;
- Small, enslaved holdings;
- Mobility due to the practice of hiring out enslaved labor, such that some enslaved families were scattered amongst different owners living in different locations and would know more of the geography;

- African American watermen ('black jacks') as a source of information and sometimes assistance for enslaved peoples escaping on waterways;
- The threat of sale to the Deep South making an escape more urgent;
- The proximity of free states just over Maryland's border, making the Underground Railroad journey seem more feasible and tempting; and
- The Eastern Shore's free black populations and significant numbers of anti-slavery Quakers, who helped inspire and assist numerous freedom seekers across the waterways and back roads to liberty in Philadelphia and areas in the North. ([Source](#))

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born and raised for the first part of his childhood in the surrounding area of the potential rail-trail, returning multiple times over the course of his teen years and adult life (*see Image 41*). While no historic structures exist from Frederick Douglass' early childhood, there are a number of sites near the rail corridor that can provide visitors with views that Douglass himself would have recognized and referenced in his autobiographies. The main sites near the rail-trail associated with Frederick Douglass include: Covey's Landing boat ramp, Tapper's Corner, Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, and Hillsboro boat ramp. ([Source](#))

As was common in the period for enslaved families, Douglass was separated from his mother in infancy. He was sent to live with his grandmother, and at the age of six was taken to live at Wye House Plantation northwest of Easton. ([Source](#)) The Wye House dates to the mid-18th century and survives to this day as private property, passed down in the same family for many generations. The current locations of fields and woods are largely unchanged from 1824 when Frederick Douglass (then Frederick Bailey) arrived. The overseer for the plantation, Aaron Anthony, officially owned Frederick Douglass. ([Source](#)) Douglass wrote extensively about his experiences on the Wye House Plantation.

Douglass was handed over to the Auld family after Aaron Anthony died, since the two families were interconnected through marriage. Douglass was sent to live in Fells Point, Baltimore at around twelve years of age with Hugh and Sophia Auld. Sophia Auld taught Douglass some rudimentary reading and writing but stopped once her husband expressed concern. Douglass continued to teach himself secretly while in Baltimore working at the shipyards. As Douglass learned to read



Image 41. Frederick Douglass, 1845 - Photograph. Credit: Library of Congress.

newspapers, pamphlets, and books of every description, he began to question the institution of slavery. ([Source](#))

Douglass was hired out to a William Freeland and began to teach other slaves on the plantation how to read and write; however, Douglass' owner Thomas Auld took Douglass back from his Baltimore relatives in retaliation for the teachings. Thomas Auld sent Douglass to work for Edward Covey, a poor farmer who lived on a rented farm of 150 acres located about seven miles from St. Michaels. Covey had a reputation as a 'slave-breaker' and whipped Douglass regularly. The sixteen-year-old Douglass finally rebelled against the beatings, however, and fought back. After Douglass won a physical confrontation, Covey never tried to beat him again. On Christmas Day of 1834, Douglass' term of service with Covey ended, and he returned to the home of Thomas Auld. ([Source](#))

Not long after his return to Thomas Auld's, Douglass met and fell in love with Anna Murray, a free black woman in Baltimore. With her aid, he planned his escape to the North, and in 1838 he successfully rode the PW&B Railroad from President Street station in Baltimore as far as Wilmington, Delaware. Since the railroad had not yet been completed beyond Wilmington, Douglass instead took a steamboat along the Delaware River northeast to the City of Philadelphia, an anti-slavery stronghold. Soon after his arrival in New York City, he sent for Anna and they were married. The couple eventually landed in Lynn, Massachusetts, where Douglass honed his oratorical skills, becoming a licensed preacher in 1839. While living in Lynn, Douglass engaged in an early protest against the segregation in transportation. In 1841, at Lynn Central Square station, Douglass and a friend were thrown off an Eastern Railroad train, which connected Boston, Massachusetts to Portland, Maine, because Douglass refused to sit in the segregated railroad coach. ([Source](#))

Along with writing his best known work, his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), Douglass traveled extensively throughout Europe and the United States, drawing large crowds for his anti-slavery lectures. By the time of the Civil War, Douglass was one of the most famous black men in the U.S., known for his speeches on the condition of the black race and on other issues such as women's rights.

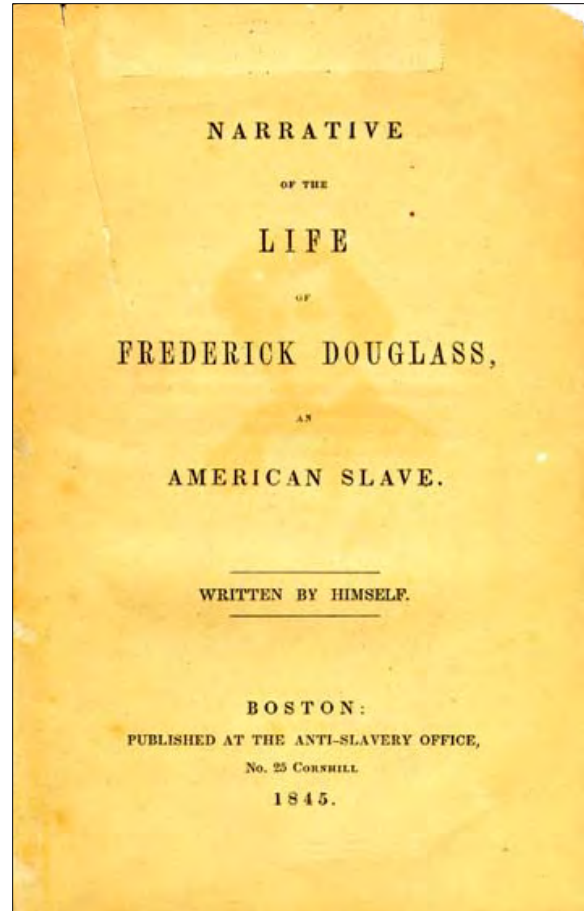


Image 42. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave - Book cover. Credit: Documenting the American South, Beginnings to 1920 - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Eastern Shore portion of his story picks up again during the 1870s. In 1877, Douglass visited Thomas Auld, now on his deathbed, in St. Michaels, and the two men reconciled. Douglass had met Auld's daughter, Amanda Auld Sears, some years before. She had requested the meeting and had subsequently attended and cheered one of Douglass' speeches. Her father supported her reaching out to Douglass. While the visit may have brought closure to Douglass, some criticized his effort. ([Source](#))

As United States Marshall for the District of Columbia, Douglass visited his birthplace and Easton in 1878, staying in the best hotel in Easton as well as a stateroom on the steamer that brought him from Baltimore. In both cases, he flouted the conventional color barrier for public accommodations. His final trip to the Eastern Shore was to visit St. Michaels and the Lloyd family of Wye Plantation in 1881. ([Source](#))

While written documentation of a direct connection between Frederick Douglass and the MDDE route has not been located, it is possible that Douglass may have taken the railroad during the 1870s to travel within and beyond Maryland's Eastern Shore for his many lectures and visits with friends and relatives in the area. Further investigations of his writings and other contemporary source materials should be undertaken to identify the potential existence of this connection.

Relevant passages in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* that highlight places familiar to Frederick Douglass located in Talbot County and in the immediate vicinity of the potential rail-trail ([Source](#)):

"I WAS born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland." (p. 1)

"MY master's family consisted of two sons, Andrew and Richard; one daughter, Lucretia, and her husband, Captain Thomas Auld. They lived in one house, upon the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. My master was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. He was what might be called the overseer of the overseers. I spent two years of childhood on this plantation in my old master's family. It was here that I witnessed the bloody transaction recorded in the first chapter; and as I received my first impressions of slavery on this plantation, I will give some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed. The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot county, and is situated on the border of Miles River. The principal products raised upon it were tobacco, corn, and wheat." (p. 8)

"The home plantation of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like aspect very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, conspired to give it

advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the Great House Farm.” (p. 12)

“The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly allowance for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were peculiarly enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness.” (p. 13)

“IN a very short time after I went to live at Baltimore, my old master’s youngest son Richard died; and in about three years and six months after his death, my old master, Captain Anthony, died, leaving only his son, Andrew, and daughter, Lucretia, to share his estate. He died while on a visit to see his daughter at Hillsborough. Cut off thus unexpectedly, he left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property, that it might be equally divided between Mrs. Lucretia and Master Andrew. I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. I had now a new conception of my degraded condition. Prior to this, I had become, if not insensible to my lot, at least partly so. I left Baltimore with a young heart overborne with sadness, and a soul full of apprehension. I took passage with Captain Rowe, in the schooner Wild Cat, and, after a sail of about twenty-four hours, I found myself near the place of my birth. I had now been absent from it almost, if not quite, five years. I, however, remembered the place very well. I was only about five years old when I left it, to go and live with my old master on Colonel Lloyd’s plantation; so that I was now between ten and eleven years old.” (p. 44-45)

“I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael’s, in March, 1832. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd’s plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other.” (p. 51)

“My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very pernicious effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for every thing which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law’s farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael’s. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master’s father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey.” (p. 56-57)

“Our house stood within a few rods of the Chesapeake Bay, whose broad bosom was ever white with sails from every quarter of the habitable globe.” (p. 64)

“On the first of January, 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael’s.” (p. 77)

“During the scuffle, I managed, I know not how, to get my pass out, and, without being discovered, put it into the fire. We were all now tied; and just as we were to leave for Easton jail, Betsy Freeland, mother of William Freeland, came to the door with her hands full of biscuits, and divided them between Henry and John. She then delivered herself of a speech, to the following effect: -- addressing herself to me, she said, “You devil! You yellow devil! it was you that put it into the heads of Henry and John to run away. But for you, you long-legged mulatto devil! Henry nor John would never have thought of such a thing.” I made no reply, and was immediately hurried off towards St. Michael’s.” (p. 90)

Underground Railroad

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway follows the roads, waterways, trails and hiding places used by enslaved people to find their way to freedom prior to the Civil War. The Byway runs to the east of the Choptank River, taking in MD Routes 404 and 313 and locations along the MDDE route. ([Source](#)) These locations include the Adkins Arboretum in Tuckahoe State Park and the towns of Greensboro and Goldsboro, as well as sites in Denton on the eastern end of a spur to the main railroad branch. The Adkins Arboretum offers programming about outdoor survival and navigation on the Underground Railroad, common to both the Harriet Tubman (*see Image 43*) and Frederick Douglass stories. The Town of Greensboro includes the cemetery where abolitionist Peter Harrington is buried and the Christian Park at Red Bridges, a potential crossing point on the Choptank River for freedom seekers entering the State of Delaware to travel north.

Denton includes several historic sites relating to the Underground Railroad, and that are interpretively linked to both the Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass stories: the Caroline County Courthouse, the Moses Viney & Daniel Crouse Memorial Park, steamboat wharf, and Tuckahoe Neck Meeting House.



Image 43. Portrait of Harriet Tubman, 1868 - Benjamin F. Powelson, Photographer. Credit: Library of Congress.

Free African American/Black Communities of the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries

There are other noteworthy sites of African American/Black heritage located near the former MDDE route that can be included as part of an educational immersion, either on site or virtually (or both), illustrating the rich African American/Black history of Maryland's Eastern Shore. These sites can enrich a trail experience and foster community pride with stories of free black individuals and communities in Talbot and Caroline counties and their struggles and triumphs to overcome economic and social hardships within a segregated society.

The Hill:

By the 1790s, there were more than 400 free blacks living in 'The Hill' community, located adjacent to Easton's current rail-trail. At the same time, there were 250 free blacks living in Baltimore City. The size of the free African American community of the Hill may be related to the strength of the Quaker community in this area, and the self-initiated efforts of individuals to buy their own freedom. ([Source](#)) The community survived through slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras. Frederick Douglass grew up not more than twelve miles from Easton and returned to visit 'The Hill' during the 1870s. He dedicated two of the churches, which the community continues to use. ([Source](#))

Thomas Town:

Just under two miles east of the MDDE, past Hillsboro in Caroline County, lies the African American/Black community of Thomas Town (see Image 44).

Thomas Town is a small, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century village settled by free blacks in the 1870s. The story of Thomas Town is one of initial promise in building a strong free black community after the Civil

War, only to see it decline throughout the 20th century as villagers moved away, most likely to look for better economic prospects. There were once more than two dozen households on small lots, with at least two churches and a schoolhouse along both sides of Hillsboro Road. Today, only nine historic residences remain, including two congregations, the Allen African

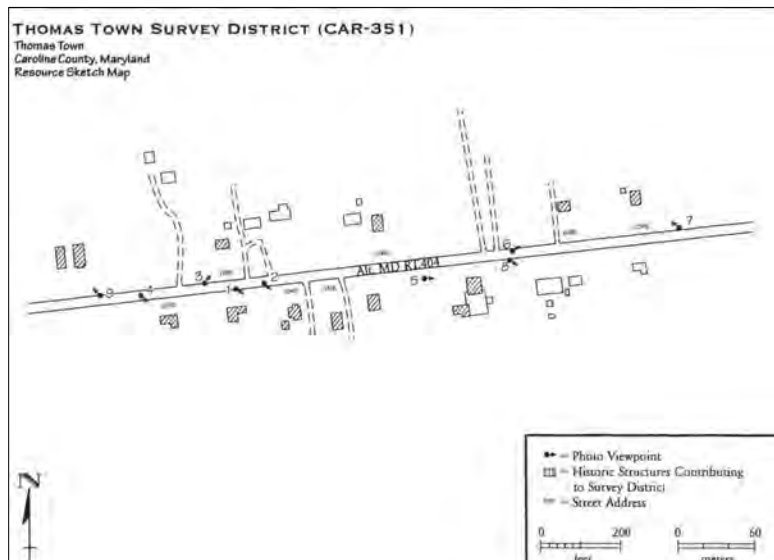


Image 44. Thomas Town Survey District Resource Sketch Map. Credit: Thomas Town Survey District Architectural Survey File - Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Methodist Episcopal Church and United Church of Lord Jesus Christ, which remain active. ([Source](#))

Unionville:

Unionville in Talbot County, located just northwest of Easton and close to Wye Plantation, was founded in 1867 by eighteen veterans of the US Colored Troops who fought in the Civil War. Unionville is believed to be the only such community in the United States founded by formerly enslaved soldiers. Originally named Cowgilltown for its Quaker benefactors, the founders eventually renamed it Unionville—a bold statement for freedom and equality at a time and in a place where most of the landed gentry had been strongly secessionist. ([Source](#))

The eighteen veterans who founded Unionville were emancipated enslaved peoples from the nearby Lloyd plantations and free persons who had worked for Quaker abolitionist Ezekiel Cowgill. The Cowgills began leasing half-acre lots to the veterans, who later owned the lots outright after 30 years. The Cowgills also sold them a parcel for a schoolhouse, and then another for a church, which became St. Stephens AME and survives to the present. The cemetery behind the church houses the remains of the original eighteen founders. In time, forty-nine families lived in Unionville. ([Source](#))

Copperville:

Not more than half a mile west of Unionville, the small crossroads ‘Village of Liberty’ (later named Copperfield after one of its founders) was established by emancipated enslaved peoples of the Lloyd and Skinner families. The village is located near the Andrew Skinner Farm now known as Fairview, which has been associated with Frederick Douglass’ Bailey family ancestors since the 17th century. The first lots were purchased by Civil War veterans Solomon Deshields and John Copper in 1867. Several dozen lots were purchased over the following decades, including the lot acquired by the Trustees of the Asbury Church at Miles River Neck (constructed in 1895), later Deshields United Methodist Church and now a private residence. Six historic residential properties located along Copperville Road, along with the Deshields United Methodist Church and an early 20th century schoolhouse, remain to this day. ([Source](#))

Relevant Driving and Walking Tours in the Area

Frederick Douglass in Talbot County, Driving Tours: Much of the landscape of Douglass’ youth in Talbot County, which he so vividly describes in his writing, remains intact today. Of particular interest are the county’s waterways which were the primary highways of 19th-century Talbot County, and so important to Douglass’ early experiences. Canoes and kayaks are perfect for further exploration of these areas. ([Source](#))

Maryland's Frederick Douglass Driving and Walking Tours: The Maryland Office of Tourism promotes unique historic experiences across the state, with a particular focus on African American heritage and the Underground Railroad. The state sponsors several driving tours and walking tours on the Eastern Shore and beyond, including the 'Following in His Footsteps' driving tour (see Image 45), 'Before Frederick Douglass: His Life in Baltimore' walking tour, and the Frederick Douglass Walking Tour of St. Michaels. According to the Maryland Office of Tourism, "These walking and driving tours... on Maryland's Eastern Shore reveal the character-defining moments in Douglass' life and his return as a respected national leader." ([Source](#))

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS – MARYLAND'S FREDERICK DOUGLASS DRIVING TOUR
 FROM HIS BELOVED BIRTHPLACE TO HIS SELF-LIBERATION AND TRIUMPHANT HOMECOMING, DISCOVER THE REAL FREDERICK DOUGLASS IN THE PLACES THAT SHAPED HIS CHARACTER.

#FREDERICKDOUGLASS

DRIVING TOUR SITES:

- 1 EASTERN SHORE**
Beloved Birthplace and Triumphant Homecoming
 - Historical Society of Talbot County
 - Frederick Douglass Statue at Talbot County Courthouse
 - Former Site of Talbot County Jail
 - Bethel A.M.E. Church
 - Former Site of The Brick Hotel
 - The Inn at Perry Cabin
 - Mitchell House at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
 - Former Home of William and Louisa Bruff
 - Frederick Douglass Park-St. Michaels
 - Former Site of Thomas Auld Home and Store
 - Asbury United Methodist Church
 - The Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe
 - Frederick Douglass Civil War Trail Marker
 - "Frederick Douglass Stitched in Time"
 - Quilt Exhibition at the Bay Country Welcome Center
 - St. Michaels Museum at St. Mary's Square
- 2 ANNAPOLIS**
Inspirational Orator
 - Banneker-Douglass Museum
 - Strike for Freedom: Slavery, Civil War and the Frederick Douglass Family
 - Maryland State House
- 3 BALTIMORE**
Empowerment and Self-Liberation
 - National Great Blacks in Wax Museum
 - Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture
 - Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park
 - Baltimore Civil War Museum-President Street Station
 - Frederick Douglass Statue at Morgan State University
 - Douglass Row in Fells Point
- 4 COLLEGE PARK**
Maryland Roots and International Acclaim
 - Frederick Douglass Square and Statue at University of Maryland College Park
- 5 WASHINGTON, D.C.**
Tireless Struggle for Inclusion
 - Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
 - The Frederick Douglass Statue at National Harbor
 - National Museum of African American History and Culture
- 6** Star-Spangled Banner
- 7** Old Main Streets
- 8** Roots & Tides
- 9** Historic National Road
- 10** Falls Road
- 11** Horses & Hounds
- 12** Chesapeake & Ohio Canal
- 13** Chesapeake Country
- 14** Baltimore's Historic Charles Street
- 15** Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad
- 16** Booth's Escape

Many of these sites are along Maryland's exciting collection of Scenic Byways. For more information on all of Maryland's Scenic Byways, go to: VisitMaryland.org/byways

Image 45. Frederick Douglass Driving Tour Map. Credit: Maryland Office of Tourism.

Maryland Network to Freedom: Sites, programs, and tours as part of the National Park Service-administered National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. The program commemorates the places and people who shaped the journey to freedom. Network to Freedom sites are documented locations and routes associated with the escape of enslaved peoples, including places of refuge, and hiding where they found help, or places where they suffered hardships and trials on the way to freedom. The Maryland Office of Tourism also promotes other tours related to the Underground Railroad on the Eastern Shore. ([Source](#))

Great Chesapeake Bay Loop: A 419-mile long driving tour from Chesapeake City to Crisfield, Maryland that promotes the scenic beauty of the Bay and the maritime heritage of the Eastern Shore. The Great Chesapeake Bay Loop also includes the Chesapeake Country Tour. The Mid-Shore section of the Chesapeake Country Tour stretches from Wye Mills to Vienna and includes MD Routes 50, 313, and 331. The Mid-Shore section intersects with the former MDDE route only at Easton, continuing along MD Route 328 to Denton rather than along MD Route 309 adjacent to the former rail corridor. The tour route does take in areas north and west of Easton associated with the State of Maryland's and Talbot County's Frederick Douglass driving tours. The Chesapeake Country Tour includes a couple of the same sites – Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, with its working boatyard and restored Chesapeake Bay lighthouse, and Tilghman Island. In addition, sections of the Mid-Shore driving tour intersect with the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway at Bucktown Road, the Byway's southern terminus, and at MD Route 404 near Denton, further north.

Continuing west on MD Route 33 to Tilghman Island, a maritime village, the visitor experiences views of the Chesapeake Bay that would have inspired Douglass to plan his first and unsuccessful escape attempt. The last stop is a church (New St. John's) that, while not associated with Douglass' life and times, provides the visitor with a view of the former Covey Farm, home to the infamous slave-breaker Edward Covey. ([Source](#))

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway: The Byway stretches through 223 miles of roadways on Maryland's Eastern Shore and parts of Delaware, commemorating Harriet Tubman's important role as an agent of the Underground Railroad. The Byway is a "self-guided, scenic driving tour [that] includes more than 30 sites, many of them with outdoor markers or interpretive signs that share the story of that place. Highlights include the Harriet Tubman Memorial Garden, the Harriet Tubman Museum & Educational Center (home of the Harriet Tubman Mural), and Webb Cabin."

The Byway also includes the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center; Broadess Farm, where Harriet spent her early years; the Bucktown General Store, where Harriet's life changed forever; Tuckahoe Neck Meeting House, gathering place for Quaker abolitionists; and Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, which honors Tubman and Thomas Garrett, two of the Underground Railroad's most dedicated agents." ([Source](#))

Appendix D: Agricultural Heritage & Historic Sites

Agriculture has played an important role in Maryland since the state's founding in 1634 and has gone through numerous changes over the centuries. While tobacco was originally the main crop, wheat, corn, fruits, and vegetables were also farmed. Maryland's Eastern Shore was once known as the 'Breadbasket of the Revolution' during the Revolutionary War, because of its critical supplies of flour for the Continental Army. Later, grains would become the primary crops in Maryland and were an important and valuable export for the state. From the 1870s on, the advent of the railroad became critical to the success of agricultural production and distribution. ([Source](#))

Agriculture in Maryland was historically tied to the emergence of the slave trade, just as in nearby Delaware and other states farther south. The need for labor on agricultural fields led to the enslavement of African Americans. During the later 18th and into the 19th centuries, however, Maryland agriculture transitioned away from tobacco and gradually toward wheat, reducing the need for enslaved labor. This transition is true for Talbot and Caroline counties, where tobacco had been the mainstay of the economy. ([Source](#))

Following the Civil War, and the end of slavery, Maryland's agriculture shifted dramatically as competition from Midwestern farmers did not permit Maryland to remain a primary supplier of grains for the nation. Tobacco production also decreased, the result of a depression in the 1870s, as well as the advent of flue curing. This new technology allowed tobacco farmers in North Carolina and Virginia to produce cheaper tobacco leaf at a greater rate, while it negatively affected the taste of Maryland's unique leaf. Maryland's already decreasing tobacco production dropped. ([Source](#))

Maryland focused instead on producing perishable goods such as meat, dairy, fruits, and vegetables. With the development of branch railroads on the Eastern Shore, farmers were able to efficiently ship products to major urban centers such as Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Caroline County became a major producer of fruits and vegetables in the 19th century, responding to the growing demand for canned goods as the nation's population grew and the canning technology evolved. Due to demand and railroad access, Caroline County became the largest produce canning area on the Eastern Shore, with sixty-two canneries in the county by 1920. The rapidly-increasing output of the region's canneries was shipped by rail through Baltimore, which became the national center of the produce canning industry by 1880. Maryland continued to dominate the industry through the 1920s. ([Source](#))

Today, Maryland's agriculture is diverse and includes not only crops, but also dairy and livestock, honey, horticulture and nurseries, poultry, and wineries and vineyards. Small farms in Talbot and Caroline counties are also sustained by diverse types of agriculture, including crops such as soybeans, corn, and fruits. Also important in Talbot County is the harvesting and processing of seafood.



Image 46. Farmstead near the Town of Goldsboro, November 2, 2018. Credit: Farmstead, Architectural Survey File (25799 Bridgetown Road) – Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

The landscape along the MDDE route has retained its rural, agricultural character providing for interpretive opportunities along the rail corridor and within the towns of Talbot and Caroline counties. Historic farmhouses and related agricultural structures are represented along the entire rail corridor from Easton to Marydel. Twenty-six farmhouses and agricultural properties have been identified in MHT's online database as located within 2,000 feet of the rail corridor. These structures span a time period from the late 18th through the mid-20th century. ([Source](#))

In addition to the farmhouse properties, there are historic sites related to agriculture within the towns themselves, including Marydel, Greensboro, Ridgely, Queen Anne, and Hillsboro. The agricultural history of the area is also highlighted in educational exhibits and programming associated with the Museum of Rural Life and the Choptank River Heritage Center in Caroline County, and the Rural Life Museum of Trappe, south of Easton in Talbot County. The Tuckahoe Steam and Gas Museum, a 70-acre complex in Easton, includes a Rural Life Museum with a general store and farmhouse kitchen, and buildings that feature antique farm equipment. Other museums and historical societies that focus on agricultural and rural history include the Greensboro Historical Society and the Talbot County Historical Society Museum in Easton.

Appendix E: Existing Trails and Potential Connections to the Maryland & Delaware Rail Corridor

Taking a more expansive regional view, one of the goals from Talbot County's 2017 LPPRP was to develop a feasibility study for a recreational bike trail from Easton to Cordova and Tuckahoe State Park utilizing the existing rail corridor. The LPPRP also mentioned the planning for a long-term walking path to connect Easton and Cordova and Lewistown Road Park. The bike trail/rail-trail was seen to be not only of recreational value, but also of historic value because it would access the planned Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe. The proposed feasibility study would also consider potential connections with two of the Maryland Scenic Byways that travel through Talbot County. The Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway intersects with the former MDDE route at Easton. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, also an All-America Road, intersects with the rail corridor at the Town of Queen Anne.

The proposed feasibility study should also consider potential connections with the trail system in Queen Anne's County, and explore future opportunities for connecting with Caroline County.

[\(Source\)](#)

The following bike trails in Talbot County highlight available connections between recreational, historical, and cultural resources throughout the county. Future development of the MDDE route in Talbot County can seek to establish direct linkages with key destinations in the area. [\(Source\)](#)

- ***School Days*** (28.3 miles) – Highlights include Little Red Schoolhouse, Unionville Cemetery, and the Pickering Creek Audubon Center.
- ***Joust Maryland*** (26.7 miles) – The trail celebrates the sport of jousting, Maryland's state sport. Highlights include Wye Oak State Park, St. Joseph's Church, and Wye Landing.
- ***Talbot Farmland*** (27.6 miles) – Highlights include the Choptank River and the King's Creek bridge.
- ***Chesapeake Views*** (38.2 miles) – Highlights include views of the Chesapeake Bay waterfront.
- ***Oxford/St. Michaels*** (29.6 miles) – A top bike trail in the region, with highlights including the towns of St. Michaels, Oxford, Royal Oak and Easton.
- ***Cemetery Quest*** (28.1 miles) – Highlights include Easton, historic cemeteries, and wetland forests for birding.

Appendix F: Connection to the State of Delaware

In 2006, DelDOT studied the State of Delaware's section of the MDDE, known locally as the Clayton-Easton Line, as part of a statewide Rail-to-Trail & Rail-with-Trail Facility Master Plan. The plan reviewed eleven railroad corridors to identify abandoned, inactive, and publicly owned active rail corridor segments for their potential suitability as shared use, off-road rails-to-trails and/or rail-with-trail facilities. The plan also evaluated the interconnectivity of these potential rail-trails with the existing and proposed statewide trail systems, greenways, and pedestrian/bicycle networks. Of the eleven railroad corridors studied, six were recommended for further evaluation and prioritization for Capital Improvement Programs within the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan. One of the six corridors recommended for further study is the Clayton-Easton Line (*see Image 47*). ([Source](#))

This rail corridor starts at the border with Smyrna, a sprawling urban area in Kent County just north of Dover, and extends 14.4 miles through Kenton and Hartly to Marydel, at the Maryland/Delaware border. According to DelDOT, there are several opportunities in developing the corridor as a rail-trail:

- Kent County has fewer recreation facilities than other counties; however, the area is rapidly developing and the demand for trails is growing.
- The rail corridor has the potential to be an interstate rail-trail facility serving the needs of a large population center associated with the Capital City of Dover, with continuation into Maryland.
- The rail corridor intersects with four existing recreational bicycle routes: State Road 42, Sudlersville Road, Lockwood Chapel Road and Hourglass Road; one existing statewide bike route (State Road 300); and one proposed regional bicycle route (State Road 6).
- Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Division of Parks & Recreation, would operate and manage the trail.
- There are parks and protected lands along the rail corridor that have the potential to become desired destinations for trail users.

DelDOT also noted potential constraints facing future development, including:

- The original bridge or crossing structure in Marydel has been removed or destroyed.
- The rail corridor has seventeen roadway crossings that would require significant re-design work for pedestrian/bicycle crossing.
- The cost of developing the rail corridor as a trail would be anywhere from \$2 to \$4 million in 2006 dollars, including the base construction cost for the trail, 10% preliminary engineering fee, 15% construction engineering fee, 5% land acquisition and easement fees, preliminary structure improvement costs and a remainder of contingency costs for typical rail-trail construction.

Currently, there are no plans for additional studies of the Clayton-Easton Line. While the Clayton-Easton Line project was included in the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2017 Regional Bike Plan, it was not ranked highly enough to submit to DelDOT for potential funding. (Source) There exists the possibility that DelDOT will reconsider funding for the project as work gets underway in developing Maryland's section of the rail-trail.

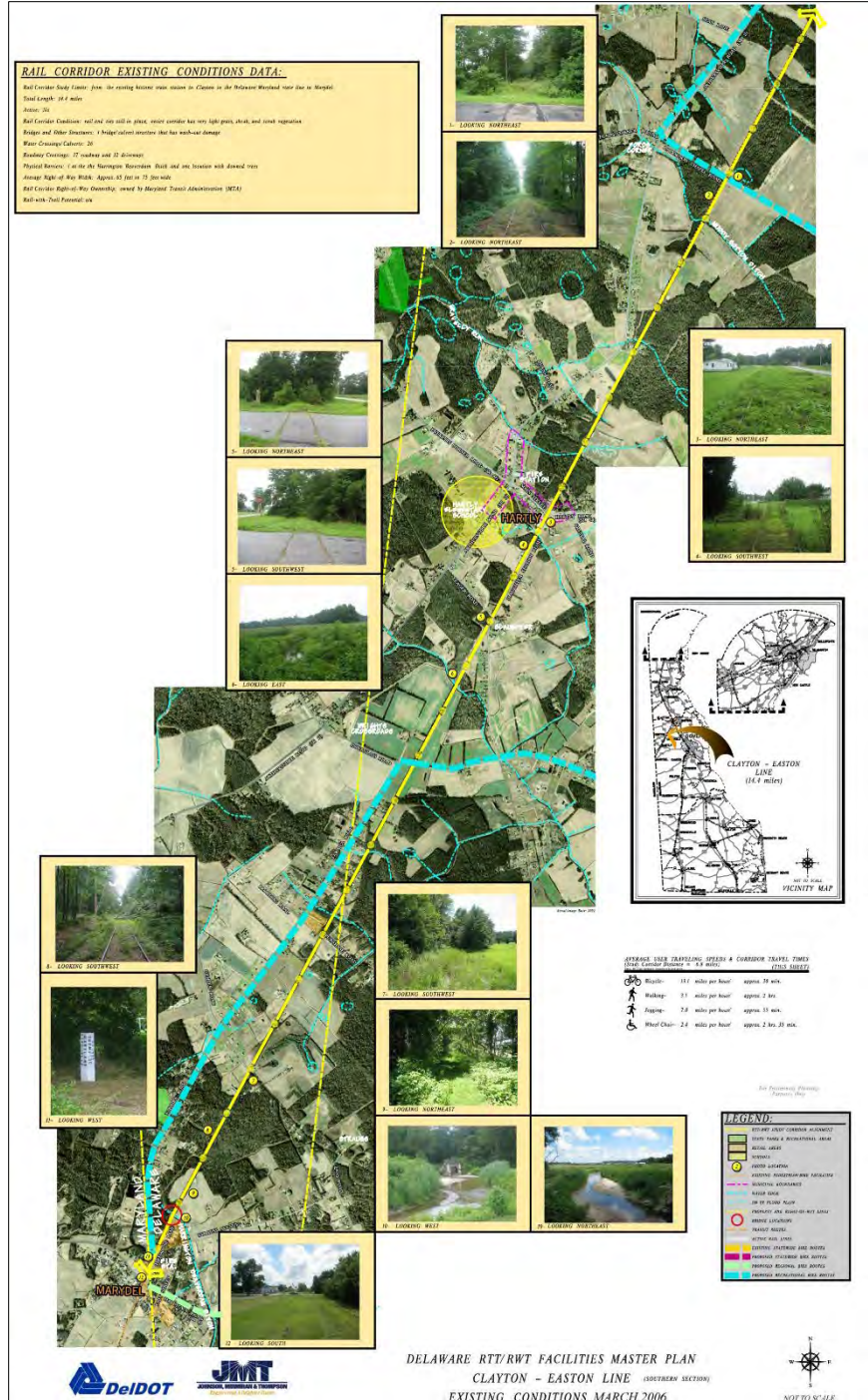


Image 47. Clayton - Easton Line Existing Conditions, March 2006 – Southern section from Town of Maryland, Maryland northeast towards Town of Hartly, Delaware. Credit: Delaware Department of Transportation.

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