

Fenton Street Bikeway Study

Narrative History of Project

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In January 2016, the Montgomery County Council directed the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to work together to develop a draft bike network plan for the Silver Spring CBD. While the Commission was working to develop the Bicycle Master Plan, the Council felt that work in Silver Spring should move ahead at a quicker pace, and that planning should reflect the work MCDOT was already doing to construct parts of the bike network.

This draft concept was sent to the Council in February 2016. The approved concept included separated bike lanes on Spring Street/Cedar Street (constructed 2017), Cameron Street (constructed with conventional bike lanes in 2018-2020), Second Avenue/Wayne Avenue (constructed 2019), and Fenton Street.

Based on this draft plan, MCDOT prepared to begin a Study to look into the feasibility and impacts of a separated bikeway on Fenton Street in 2016. To this end, MCDOT held meetings with residents (June 2016) and businesses (September 2016) to gather feedback about what should be included in the study.

In August 2016, MCDOT started the process of getting a consultant on board to conduct the Study. Procurement was completed in the fall of 2016, and the Study officially started in December 2016.

In April 2017, the consulting team submitted the first conceptual layouts for potential separated bikeways in the corridor (these live on today as Alternatives D and E). Work on the report continued through much of 2017, however, by fall, MCDOT made the determination to stop work on the Study temporarily.

The pause in the Study was for two primary reasons:

1. The initial scope assumed that the street would not be widened, however the current width of 44' in Fenton Village is insufficient to accommodate a bikeway and parking on both sides of the street. A cross-section of 46' would permit parking on both sides of Fenton. Public sentiment favored retaining parking, so MCDOT sought to expand the scope to look at widening.
2. At the time, Montgomery County Parking Lot 3 had closed for redevelopment, but its replacement, Garage 3, had not yet opened. There was concern from within MCDOT and the public that we were not getting an accurate picture of the parking needs with Lot 3 closed and Garage 3 not yet open.

The study was put on hold until Garage 3 opened. The garage opened in early 2019 and MCDOT began the procurement process to expand the scope and get the engineering consultant on board. The study was officially restarted in late 2019.

A community meeting was held on January 21, 2020 to introduce the community to the revised Study and update them on the project. The meeting had approximately 110 attendees.

In November 2020, the consultants released their final draft of the Study, which examined impacts such as traffic congestion, parking needs and supply, loading zone needs, utility locations, and other factors. Along with the Study, the consultants developed 7 alternatives.

MCDOT hosted a community meeting on November 18, 2020 to present the findings of the Study, present the 7 alternatives, and get community feedback. The public comment period following this meeting was open until December 4, 2020. At the meeting, we received feedback from 23 attendees verbally. Following the meeting, we received 54 written comments. Both in-person and written comments were generally favorable of the project.

The Study will go to the Planning Board in January 2021 and to the Council's T&E Committee in Spring 2021 in order to get recommendations from those bodies about which alternative to move into design.

Following selection of an alternative, MCDOT estimates that the design and permitting process will take a minimum of 24 months. Currently, construction is not anticipated before 2023, however, MCDOT is looking at options for accelerating construction in certain segments.