

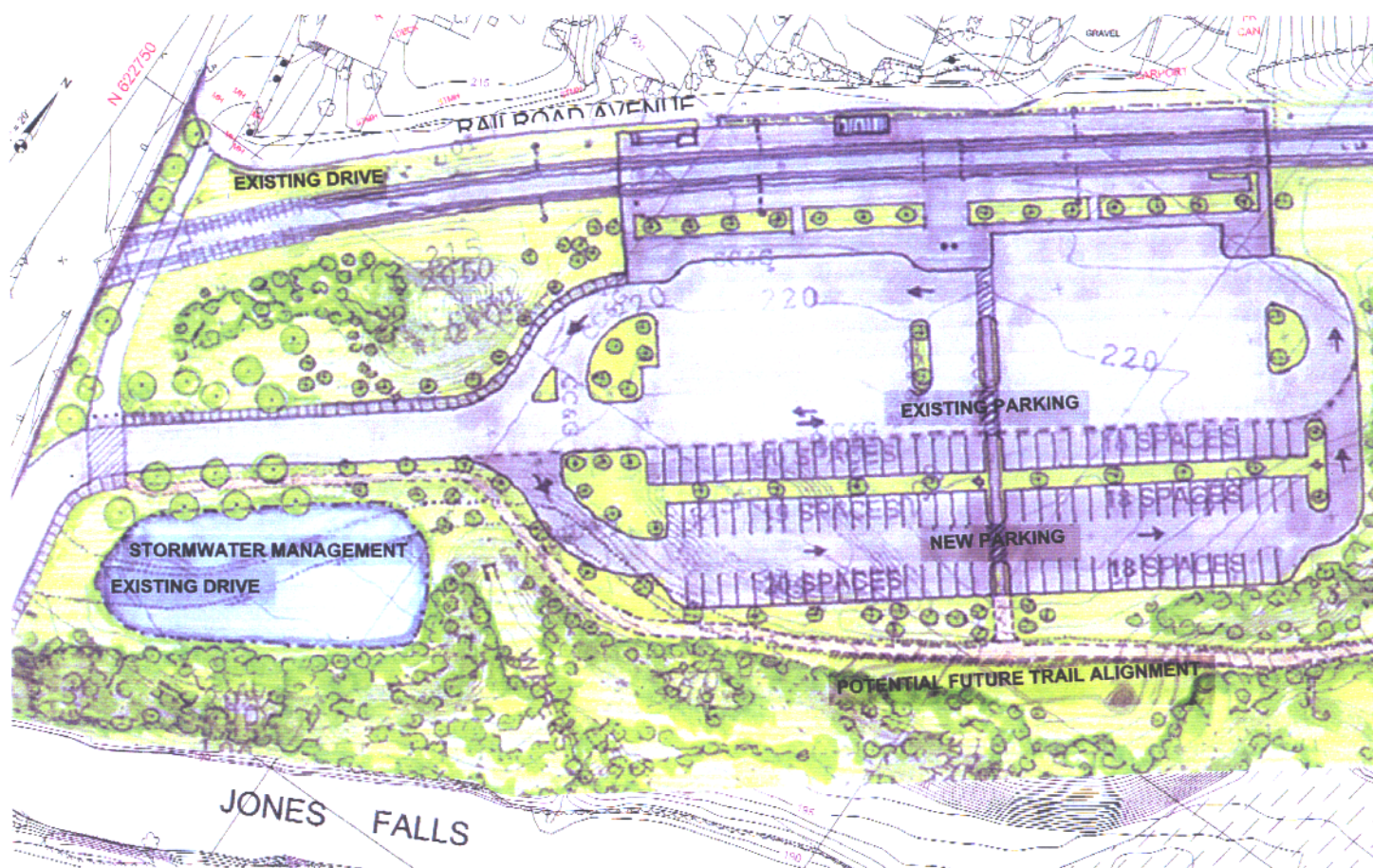
Falls Road Light Rail Stop

Parking Lot Expansion



Project Overview

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) of the Maryland Department of Transportation is planning to expand the existing 96-space parking lot and improve pedestrian access at the Falls Road Light Rail Stop. This stop is located at Falls Road, off of Old Falls Road in Baltimore County. With approximately 282 daily boardings at this station, the existing parking lot is consistently over capacity, causing MTA Light Rail riders to park on an adjacent State-owned unimproved property. Pedestrian access from both the north and the south is via Falls Road to Old Falls Road.



Project Description

The planned project involves the expansion of the existing lot by approximately 100 additional parking spaces. The expansion will occur on the adjacent State-owned property that sits immediately to the south of the existing lot. Acquisition of additional privately-owned property is also planned for this project. The expanded lot will provide parking for approximately 200 vehicles. The design will incorporate site amenities such as lighting, landscaping and pedestrian walkways.

As part of this parking lot expansion project, the MTA will seek to improve pedestrian and bike access to and from the Falls Road Light Rail Stop from Falls Road. Based on Federal and State approvals and funding availability, the expansion of this facility is planned to be completed in less than three years.

It is also envisioned that in conjunction with this expansion, the Falls Road Light Rail Stop could eventually serve as a Greenway trailhead on weekends by providing parking for users of the Robert E. Lee Park. Conceptually, access to the park could be provided via a trail connection from this location to the future Jones Falls Greenway. As this effort moves forward, it will be planned in cooperation with the surrounding communities, Baltimore City, Baltimore County and the MTA.

Environmental Process

Additional Studies Underway

The MTA is currently developing a Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document as required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The current schedule calls for the environmental document to be completed and submitted to the FTA by December 2003. The document should receive FTA approval by early 2004. Some of the preliminary findings are:

- There will be only a minor disturbance of vegetation;
- Impacts to streams and slopes will be minimal;
- Stormwater management will be designed to the most recent Maryland Department of Environment standards and will include a Bio-retention Facility; and
- Special attention would be paid to designing the lot with extra landscaping and providing surfaces that allow for drainage to occur as naturally as possible.

A traffic impact study was completed which provides additional input into the environmental document. The study provides information on current and future traffic flow in the station area as it relates to the planned expansion. The MTA project team has worked closely with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and Baltimore County regarding traffic operations and planned projects.

The MTA is also conducting a vehicular and pedestrian access study to determine access improvements that would be constructed as part of the parking lot expansion. This study will analyze vehicular access to and from the parking lot and propose concepts to improve the flow of traffic entering, exiting and traveling through the lot. Similar efforts are underway for pedestrian access and means of improving pedestrians safety.

Traffic and Circulation

As part of ongoing studies for this project, traffic flows near the Light Rail stop were analyzed during morning and afternoon peak hours. Local and regional access to the Falls Road stop is provided by MD 25 or Falls Road with Lakeside Drive providing a connection from Falls Road to Old Falls Road and into the station parking area. Lakeside Drive also provides access to Robert E. Lee Park. Below are the traffic study findings:

- The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on this segment of Falls Road is approximately 15,700 vehicles per day.
- The morning peak hour volumes on Falls Road near the station entrance are approximately 480 vehicles per hour (vph) northbound and 870 vph southbound. The evening peak hour volumes are approximately 720 vph northbound and 1200 vph southbound.
- These volumes result in relatively low levels of congestion and delay at the Lake Avenue and Lakeside Drive intersections with Falls Road.
- Traffic entering and leaving the Falls Road Station is generally spread over several hours in the morning and several hours in the evening. The additional traffic generated by 100 new parking spaces would not substantially affect traffic operations at the Lakeside Drive intersection.

MTA is continuing to work in collaboration with the Maryland State Highway Administration on additional potential projects to improve vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility in the project area.

Next Steps

The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Complete Environmental Document and Preliminary Engineering – Fall 2003
- Prepare Final Design – Fall 2003 through Fall 2004
- Advertise for Construction – Fall 2004
- Begin Construction – Spring 2005
- Expanded parking lot available for use – Spring 2006

This project schedule is subject to State and Federal agency approvals and funding availability.

Office of Planning

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FALLS ROAD LIGHT RAIL STOP



LEGEND

- Mumaw Property Line
- Stop Location
- Proposed Expansion