



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: March 2, 2017

PROJECT Metropolitan Branch Trail Extension Fort Totten Metrorail Station Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7861
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service and the District Department of Transportation	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 10.12(70.00)44506
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d) District Projects Outside the Central Area per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept design
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments on concept design
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in conjunction with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), has submitted concept design plans for a new section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) for concept review. The section will extend from John McCormack Drive, NE, adjacent to Catholic University, to the Fort Totten Station area at 1st Place, NE. The project will also re-pave an existing trail spur between 1st Place and Gallatin Street, NE. In general, the project will construct 3,800 linear feet of new 10-foot wide, pervious asphalt trail, with new LED lighting, security cameras, two retaining walls, wayfinding signage, landscaping, and a bio-retention area.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a planned eight-mile, multi-use trail between the Silver Spring Metro Station (in Maryland) and Union Station in downtown Washington, DC. When fully constructed, the facility will help complete a regional network of trails by linking the Capital Crescent Trail (Silver Spring, Maryland) to the National Mall, near Union Station, and the proposed Fort Circle Parks Trail.
 - NCPC has advisory review authority over the trail section between Catholic University (John McCormick Drive, NE) and National Park Service-Fort Totten property, and approval authority over the section that crosses NPS property, adjacent to the Fort Totten Metrorail station.
 - The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) will construct the trail over NPS land (Fort Totten) through an NPS "Special Use Permit," and maintain the trail under agreement with the NPS.
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RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design plans for the Metropolitan Branch Trail extension between John McCormick Drive, NE and 1st Place, NE, extending across federal property in Fort Totten Park, as well as refurbishment of the trail spur between 1st Place, NE and Gallatin Street, NE.

Requests the applicant agencies provide additional information regarding the proposed retaining walls, including their height, materials, façade texture and pattern, along with renderings, at the time of preliminary review.

Recommends that the NPS consider locating signage or placards along the trail near Fort Totten, considering the site's historic significance.

Notes the tunnel embankment area in Fort Totten as a potential memorial site in the NCPC *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, and **recommends** that the National Park Service consider the trail as an opportunity to enhance the site for potential future commemoration.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	Preliminary and final review of site development plans

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The new Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) extension between John McCormick Drive NE and 1stPlace NE will provide an important link in the larger planned eight-mile facility between Silver Spring, Maryland and Union Station (District of Columbia), and facilitate local access between the Fort Totten Metrorail station, Catholic University, and the surrounding community. The project seeks to preserve the integrity of the Fort Totten Park and its resources; to minimize ground disturbance; to minimize the loss of trees/vegetation and stormwater impacts and to improve bicycle/pedestrian safety through the area. In addition, the project will enhance opportunities for interpretation of the Park's history and support the needs of diverse user groups who enjoy the trail.

Overall, the project is consistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. In particular, the project meets the goals and objectives of the Transportation;

Federal Environment; Historic Preservation; Visitors and Commemoration; and Parks and Open Space Elements. The project is also consistent with various policies from the 2010 CapitalSpace Plan, the District's moveDC Plan, and the National Park Service's Fort Circle Parks Management Plan. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **comment favorably on the concept design plans for the Metropolitan Branch Trail extension between John McCormick Drive, NE and 1st Place, NE, extending across federal property in Fort Totten Park, as well as refurbishment of the trail spur between 1st Place, NE and Gallatin Street, NE.**

Analysis

Project Description

Starting in the south, the 10-foot wide trail extension will be constructed over a section of existing asphalt sidewalk (across John McCormick Drive NE from Catholic University) and along a grassy strip of land between the roadway and WMATA Metrorail Right-of-Way (ROW) fence. As John McCormick Drive NE bends to the west, the trail alignment continues northward, between a concrete factory (Aggregate Industries) and the WMATA ROW fence, until reaching Fort Totten Park (NPS) property, which is more heavily forested. Shortly after entering upon NPS property, the trail extension bends to the west (rising in elevation) and then continues to the north, over a Metrorail Green Line tunnel embankment, adjacent to a lower open-air platform area. The alignment then decreases in elevation, reaching 1st Place, NE, which provides vehicular access to the Fort Totten Metrorail Station. Once at street-level, the trail extension will turn northwest, parallel to 1st Place and its adjacent sidewalk, continuing roughly parallel to 1st Place, NE until ending as a connection to the roadway. In addition, the project will re-pave an existing paved asphalt trail "spur" that provides access to the Fort Totten and Petworth neighborhoods from 1st Place, NE, via Gallatin Street, NE.

The trail extension will require two separate retaining walls – one for a parking area adjacent (west side) to the alignment on the Aggregate Industries property and one along the new trail (west side) alignment along the 1st Place, NE sidewalk. Currently, there is a forested hill directly adjacent to the 1st Place NE sidewalk, leading up to the Fort Totten Park earth-works (Slide 8), which will be "pulled back" to accommodate the new trail. Both wall designs will be in accordance with District Department of Transportation (DDOT) standards, with input from the NPS for the wall located at Fort Totten (adjacent to 1st Place NE). The current submission shows the Fort Totten wall with vegetative vine (Virginia Creeper and Coral Honeysuckle) panels, constructed of textured sandstone and ashlar stone form liner pilasters. However, the exact pattern of the stone liner form, wall relief, and size of the stones will be determined as the design process continues in the future. With the retaining wall's highly-visible location on NPS property, facing the Fort Totten station area, staff recommends that the Commission **request the applicant agencies provide additional information regarding the proposed retaining walls, including their height, materials, façade texture and pattern, along with renderings, at the time of preliminary review.**

Additional project elements include wayfinding and operational signage, security cameras, call boxes, lighting, and landscaping. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is managing the project's design-build process, in conjunction with NPS for the portion of the alignment located

on federal property (Fort Totten), with future construction and maintenance managed by DDOT. DDOT will maintain the Fort Totten Park portion of the trail under an NPS Special Use Permit.

Regional and Local Accessibility

The project will complete an important off-road link in the larger eight-mile Metropolitan Branch Trail facility, which will provide north/south, regional, pedestrian-bicycle access between Silver Spring, Maryland and Union Station. The MBT is comprised of different trail type sections including shared road, striped bicycle lanes, sidewalks shared with pedestrians and off-street shared use paths. The current project will construct 3,800 linear feet of fully off-road paved trail between Catholic University (John McCormick Drive NE), the Fort Totten Metrorail Station, and the Fort Totten/Petworth Neighborhood, which is located along the west side of Fort Totten Park. In turn, the MBT is part of a larger 3,000-mile (4,800 km) network of urban greenways and “rail trails” that link the major cities of the Atlantic coast of the United States, from Calais, Maine, to Key West, Florida. The MBT is consistent with multiple trail, park and open space, bicycle, and pedestrian policies from the Comprehensive Plan.

Environmental Stewardship

The proposed trail extension will minimize tree and vegetation removal, stormwater impacts, and wildlife impacts based on its alignment over previously-disturbed property and near existing areas of human activity (i.e. across the street from Catholic University and adjacent to 1st Place, NE). The trail alignment bends around the opening of the Metrorail tunnel embankment as closely as possible on NPS property to minimize any sort of impacts to the Park's closest historic earthworks, situated approximately 1,000 feet to the west. In addition, the project will construct the trail using permeable asphalt to allow direct rainwater infiltration into the soil rather than resulting in rainwater runoff, and re-grade the land along the trail edges to minimize runoff. Lastly, the project will install a bio-retention area near the trail's meeting with the Gallatin Street, NE spur.

A number of protective measures are also included in the project as conditions of the NPS Special Use Permit. These include requirements related to erosion and sediment control, re-vegetation, and direction lighting to reduce impacts on wildlife. NPS will include other conditions in the Special Use Permit as needed, and the NPS will implement an appropriate level of monitoring throughout the construction process to ensure that protective measures are carried out and achieve their intended results.

Trail User Experience

The proposed 10-foot wide trail extension is adequate for pedestrian and bicyclist use based on industry standards, with lighting, safety measures, including cameras and call boxes, and signage to be situated in appropriate locations. Furthermore, the following Special Use Permit conditions will be included in the project agreement between DDOT and NPS:

- Signage, trail markings, lighting, and call boxes will comply with NPS standards.
- Outdoor recreation accessibility standards will be followed, including the Rehabilitation Act (1973) and Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), where applicable, in order to minimize impacts on natural (currently unpaved) portions of park land.

- Disruptions to visitor use and enjoyment of park land will be minimized by not permitting trail construction work to occur on weekends and evenings and/or mandating that staging areas on park land are small and fenced.
- DDOT will provide and maintain proper signs, barricades and/or other means of warning the general public of dangers inherent in the project.

The trail design and conditions attached to the NPS permit will ensure that user experience is as pleasant as possible, which will encourage trail use and potential additional visitation to the Fort Totten Park and Metrorail use.

Fort Totten Park Resources

As previously noted, the proposed trail alignment is as close as possible to the Metro tunnel embankment (safety fence) to maximize the distance between pedestrians/bicyclists and Fort Totten's historic earthworks. In addition, the NPS Special Use Permit will require the project compliance with the following conditions related to the discovery of archaeological resources and discouraging users from detouring from the trail onto adjacent land. The planned alignment and conditional permit will ensure that Fort Totten resources are shielded from potential adverse construction and post-construction impacts to the maximum extent possible, thereby preserving the historic nature of the Park.

With Fort Totten's historic significance to the defense of Washington during the American Civil War, the planned trail extension may provide a good opportunity to help educate trail users about the area and to encourage visitation to the Park. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **recommend that the NPS consider locating signage or placards along the trail near Fort Totten, considering the site's historic significance.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, this project meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

The 2M Plan identifies a potential memorial site (page 150, Site 84) within Fort Totten as follows:

The station's major retaining wall area above the open air tunnel entrance is a distinctive landscape feature that would be highly visible to passengers and suitable for a commemorative element. A medium sized feature could be incorporated within the open sloping areas above the station tunnel wall, where a wooded background would accentuate the natural setting. Other areas within the park would be suited to a small scale memorial that could be appreciated by Fort Totten Park visitors.

As commemoration continues to evolve from permanent fixed forms (i.e. statues) into other types of permanent, temporary, and virtual forms, future physical commemoration may be located near, around, or over the trail on the identified tunnel embankment site, or in another Park location. Therefore, the NPS should plan the trail extension with consideration of the site's potential for future commemoration as the project development process continues. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **note the tunnel embankment area in Fort Totten as a potential memorial site in the NCPC Memorials and Museums Master Plan, and recommend that the National Park Service consider the trail as an opportunity to enhance the site for potential future commemoration.**

CapitalSpace Plan

The joint federal and District CapitalSpace Plan provides a vision for a beautiful, high-quality, and unified park system for Washington and offers six action-oriented ideas focused on key areas to help make the vision a reality. The six Big Ideas identify recommendations to maximize existing assets, address current and future needs, and capitalize on existing opportunities, one of which is, "Link the Fort Circle Parks by implementing a greenway and making the parks destinations." With its connections to Catholic University, the Fort Totten Park, Fort Totten Metrorail Station, and the surrounding neighborhoods, the project will satisfy many of these CapitalSpace strategies.

National Historic Preservation Act

In 2010, the District Department of Transportation transmitted a letter to the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), requesting consultation for the project through the Section 106 process. The DC SHPO responded with a letter (in 2010), which stated a determination that the Metropolitan Branch Trail will have "no adverse effect" on historic properties as long as the following conditions are carried out:

1. DDOT will forward any historic preservation-related comments received through the EA public comment process so that we can consider the comments and respond, as appropriate;
2. DDOT will consult further with our office if any solar lighting is to be installed within the Takoma Park Historic District or if the bridge near the landmark Cady-Lee Mansion is proposed; and
3. DDOT will consult further with our office if any trail segment outside of the preferred alignment is selected that would be off existing streets and sidewalks in undisturbed/undeveloped property, specifically the segment east of 1st Street and north of Riggs Road in Reservation 497, Fort Circle Parks. Trail construction in these areas has the potential to adversely affect unidentified archaeological resources.

NCPC does not have a responsibility under the NHPA when providing comments on concept plans.

National Environmental Policy Act

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the lead agency, in conjunction with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate a range of alternatives for siting sections of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) on National Park

Service (NPS) land within the District of Columbia, concluding with a FONSI. Due to the project location within the District of Columbia, NCPC does not have a NEPA responsibility when providing comments on concept plans.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its February 8, 2017 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the State Historic Preservation Officer; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The US Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project at its meeting on January 23, 2017 and stated "No objection" to the project's Concept Design submission.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Environmental Assessment
- Historic Preservation Documents
- Project Narrative
- Project Plans
- Project Synopsis
- Public Comments
- Submission Letters

Prepared by Michael Weil
02/22/2017

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Project # 7861

Metropolitan Branch Trail Extension

John McCormick Drive NE / Aggregate Industries / Fort Totten Metrorail Station

Submitted by the District Department of Transportation &
United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

Concept Review

Project Synopsis

Commission meeting date: March 2, 2017

NCPC review authority: Approval (*NPS section of trail*) – Federal Project in the District of Columbia (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1) and (d)) / Advisory (*District-WMATA section of trail*) – District project outside of the Central Area (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1))

Applicant request: Concept Review of site development plans

Delegated / consent / open / executive session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Michael Weil

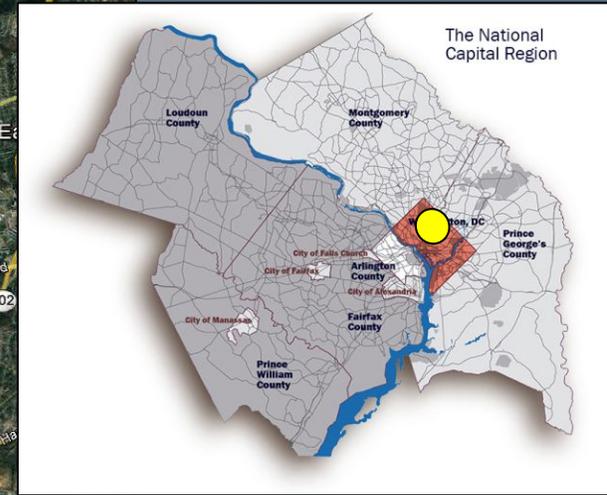
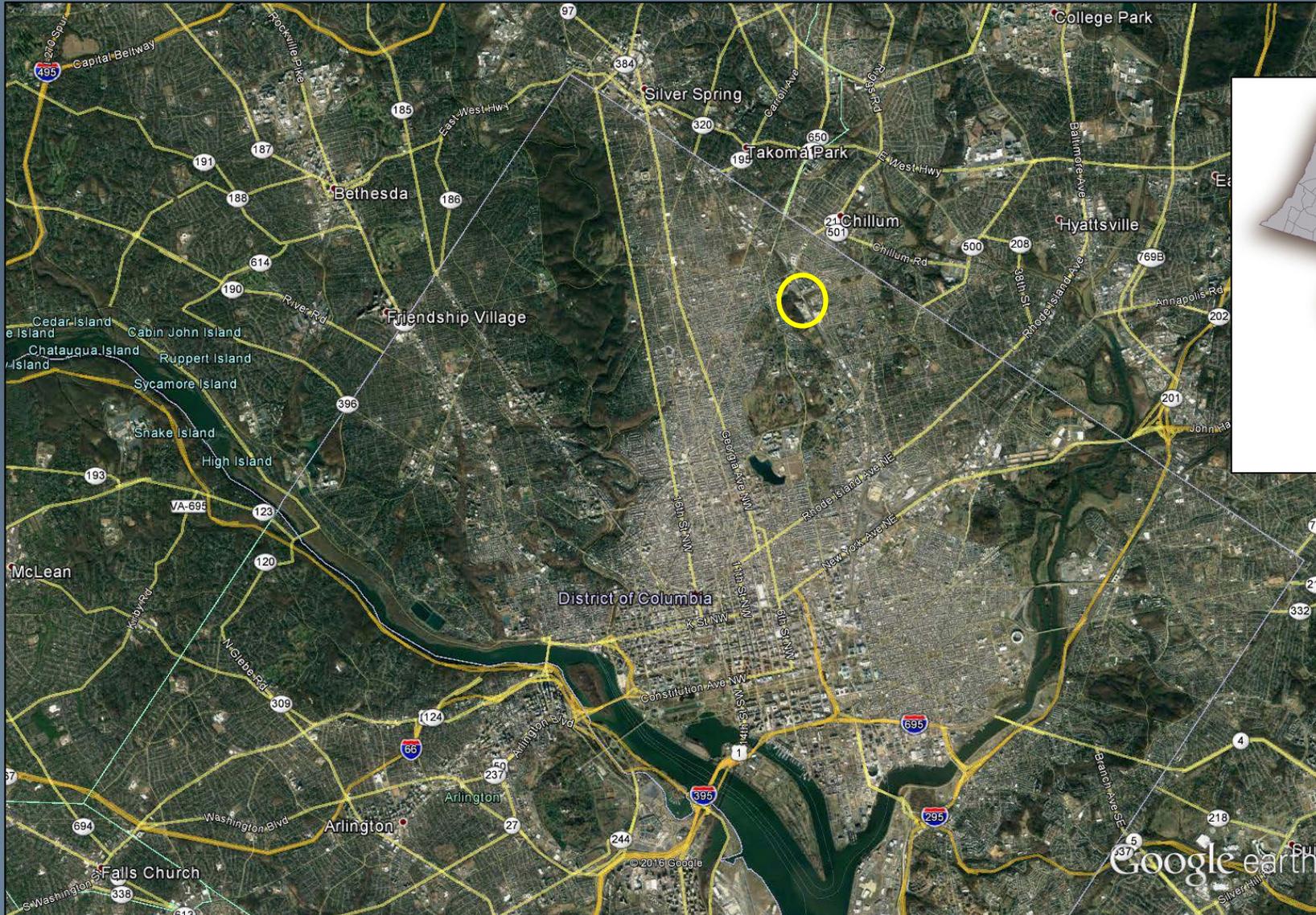
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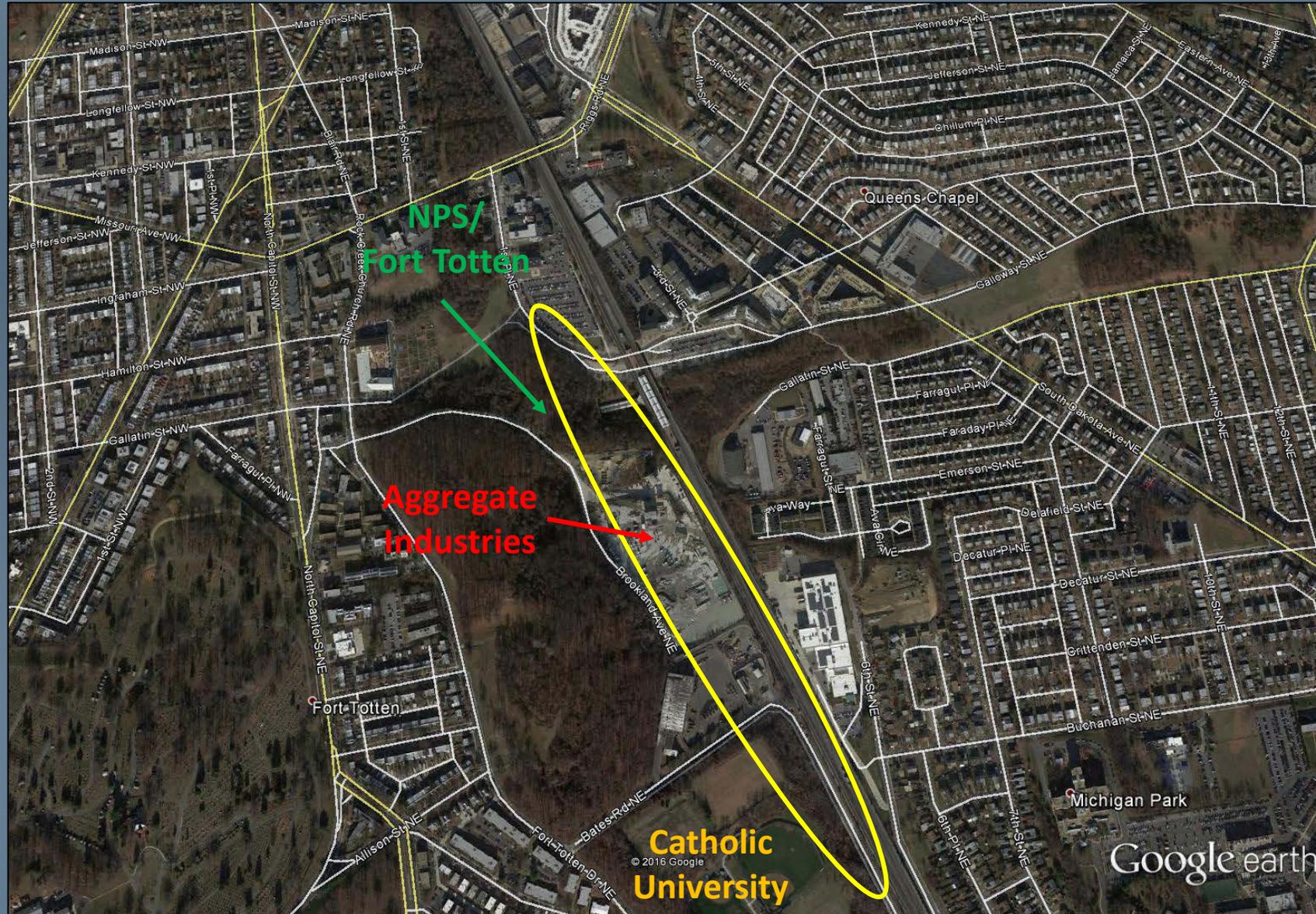
Project Summary:

The National Park Service (NPS), in conjunction with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), has submitted concept plans for a segment of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) to NCPC for review. As background, the MBT is a planned 8-mile, multi-use trail between the Silver Spring Metro Station (in Maryland) and Union Station, generally along the route of Metrorail's Red Line. The Trail will help complete a regional network of trails by linking the Capital Crescent Trail (Silver Spring, MD) to the National Mall, near Union Station, and the proposed Fort Circle Parks Trail. In addition, the proposed spur of the MBT at Fort Totten will form a section of the East Coast Greenway network of trails.

The trail extension is aligned from John McCormack Drive, between the Red Line tracks, past the Aggregate Industries Cement Plant, onto NPS-Fort Totten property, around the Metrorail Green Line tunnel opening, to connect to the Fort Totten Station area at First Place NE. An existing paved trail between the Metrorail station area parking lot and Gallatin Street, NE will also be rehabilitated. The project will construct 3,800 linear feet of new 10-foot wide, pervious asphalt trail, with new LED lighting, security cameras, retaining walls, wayfinding signage, landscaping, and a bio-retention area. The new retaining wall on NPS property will have vegetative vine panels to help create a greener, more visually-pleasing wall.

NCPC has advisory review authority over the section of trail that will cross WMATA-controlled land (along the Aggregate Industries property) and District-controlled land (along John McCormick Drive NE), with approval authority over the section of trail on National Park Service land (Fort Totten), adjacent to the Metrorail station.





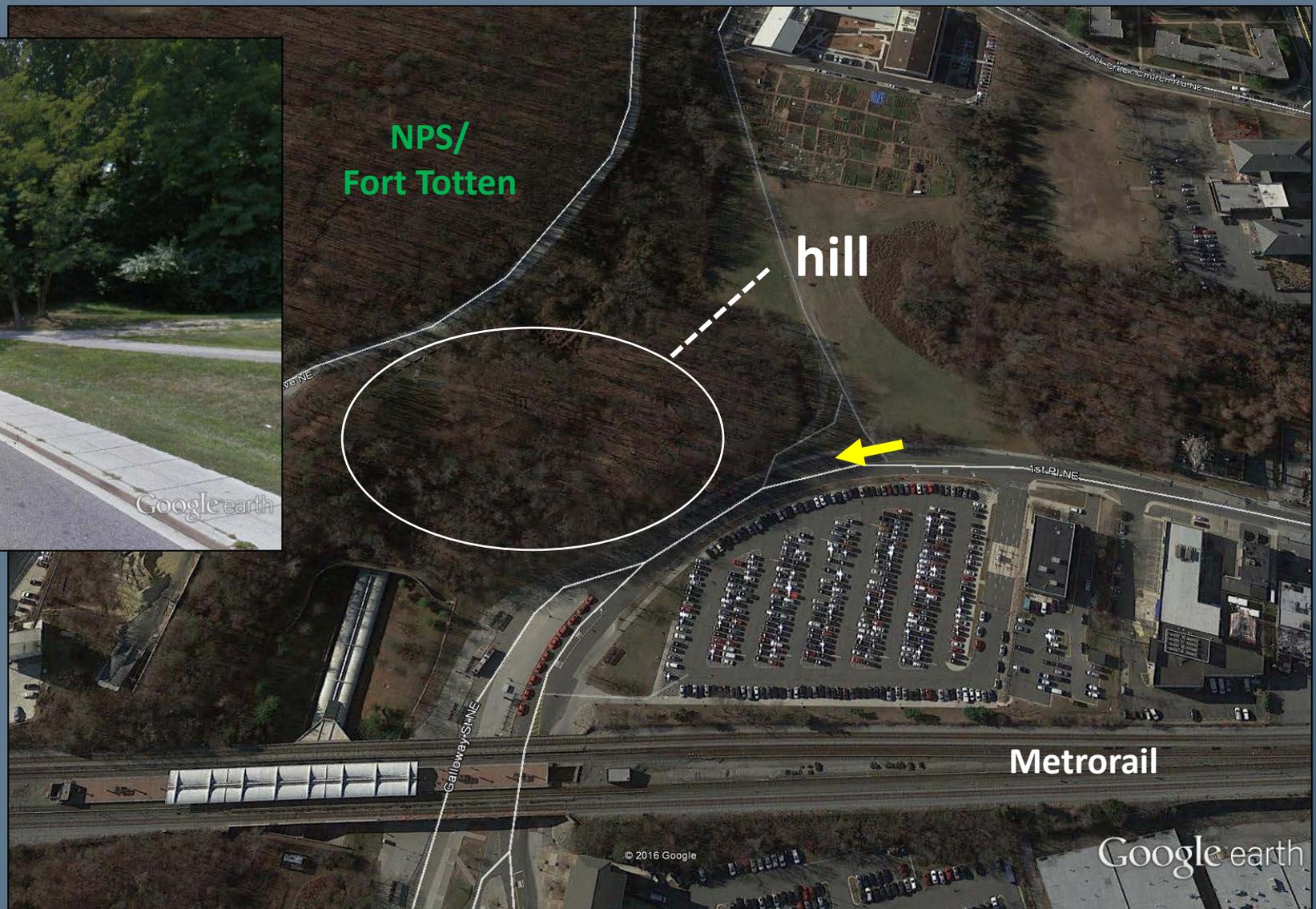


Project Area

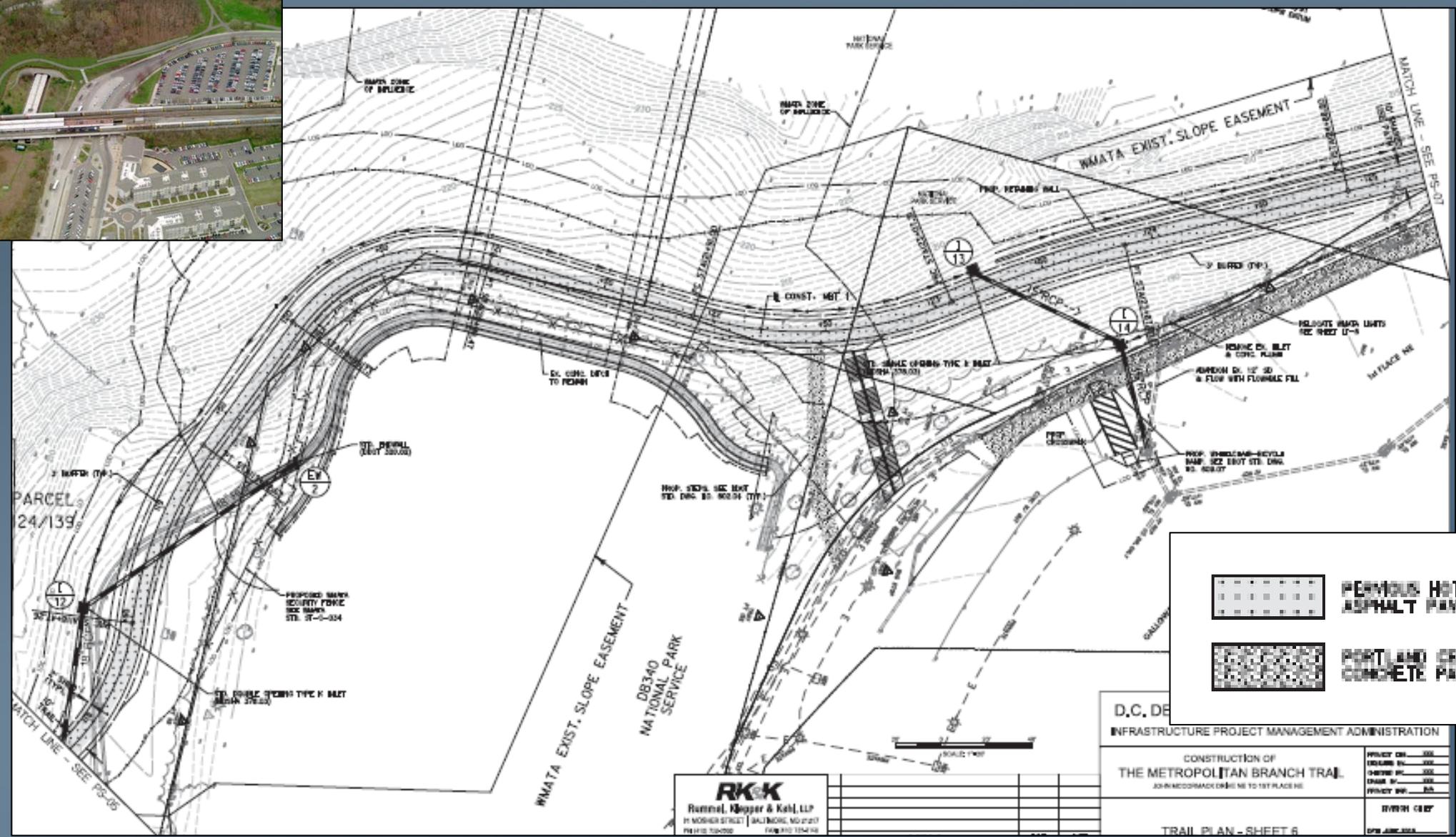












	PERFORMED HOT MIX ASPHALT PAVEMENT
	PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT

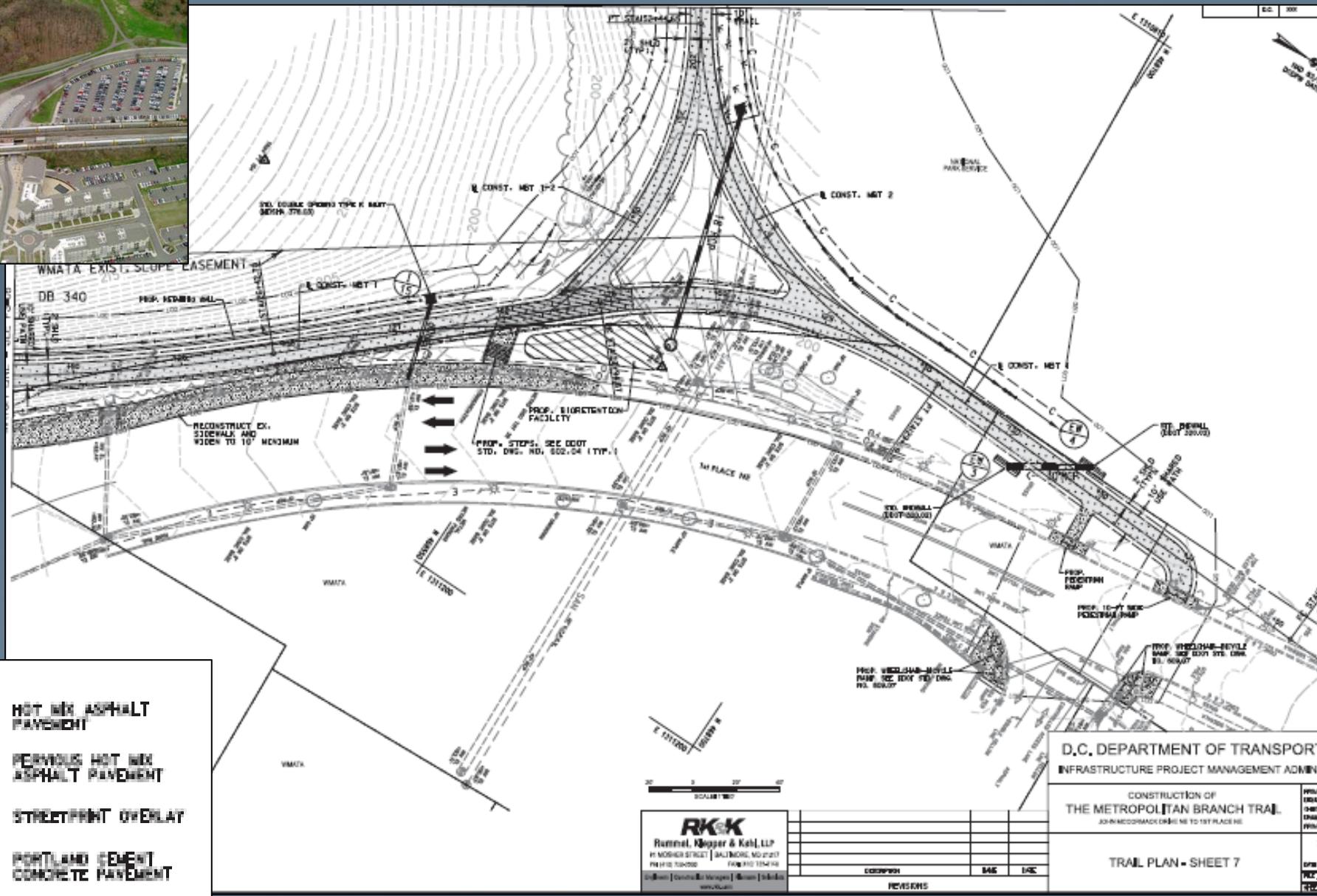
D.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION

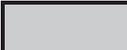
CONSTRUCTION OF
THE METROPOLITAN BRANCH TRAIL
JOHN MCCORMACK DRIVE NE TO 1ST PLACE NE

RK&K
Rummel, Kopper & Koh, LLP
11 MOSKOW STREET | BALTIMORE, MD 21201
PH 410 528-2200 | FAX 410 528-1414

PROJECT CHG.	XXX
DESIGNED BY	XXX
CHECKED BY	XXX
PROJECT MGR.	XXX
DATE	07/20/11
DATE	07/20/11

TRAIL PLAN - SHEET 6



	HOT MIX ASPHALT PAVEMENT
	PREVIOUS HOT MIX ASPHALT PAVEMENT
	STREETPRINT OVERLAY
	PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT

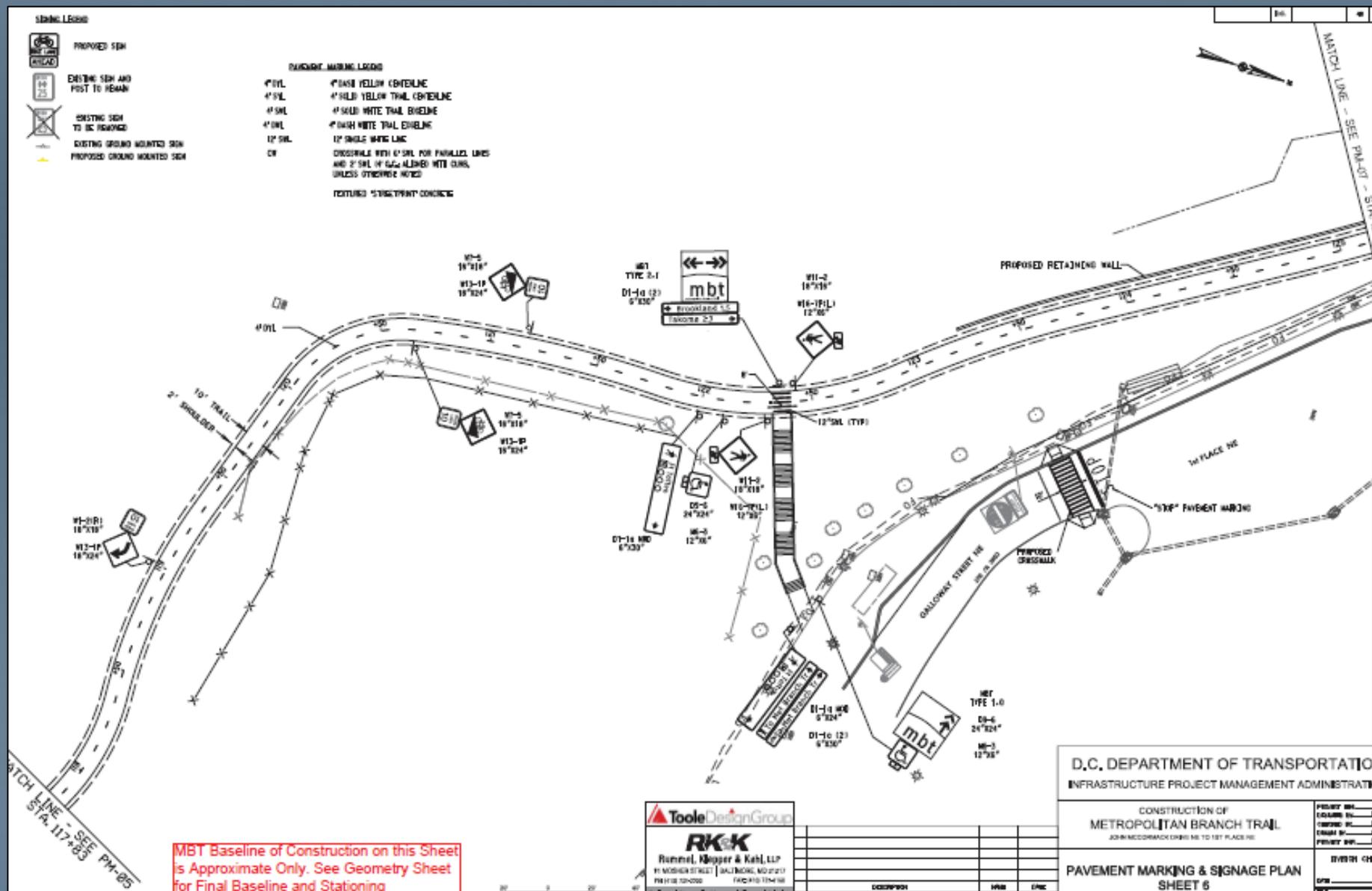
RK&K
 Rammel, Kasper & Kohl, LLP
 1110 N. STREET | BALTIMORE, MD 21207
 PH 410 784-0000 | FAX 410 784-0000
 www.rk&k.com

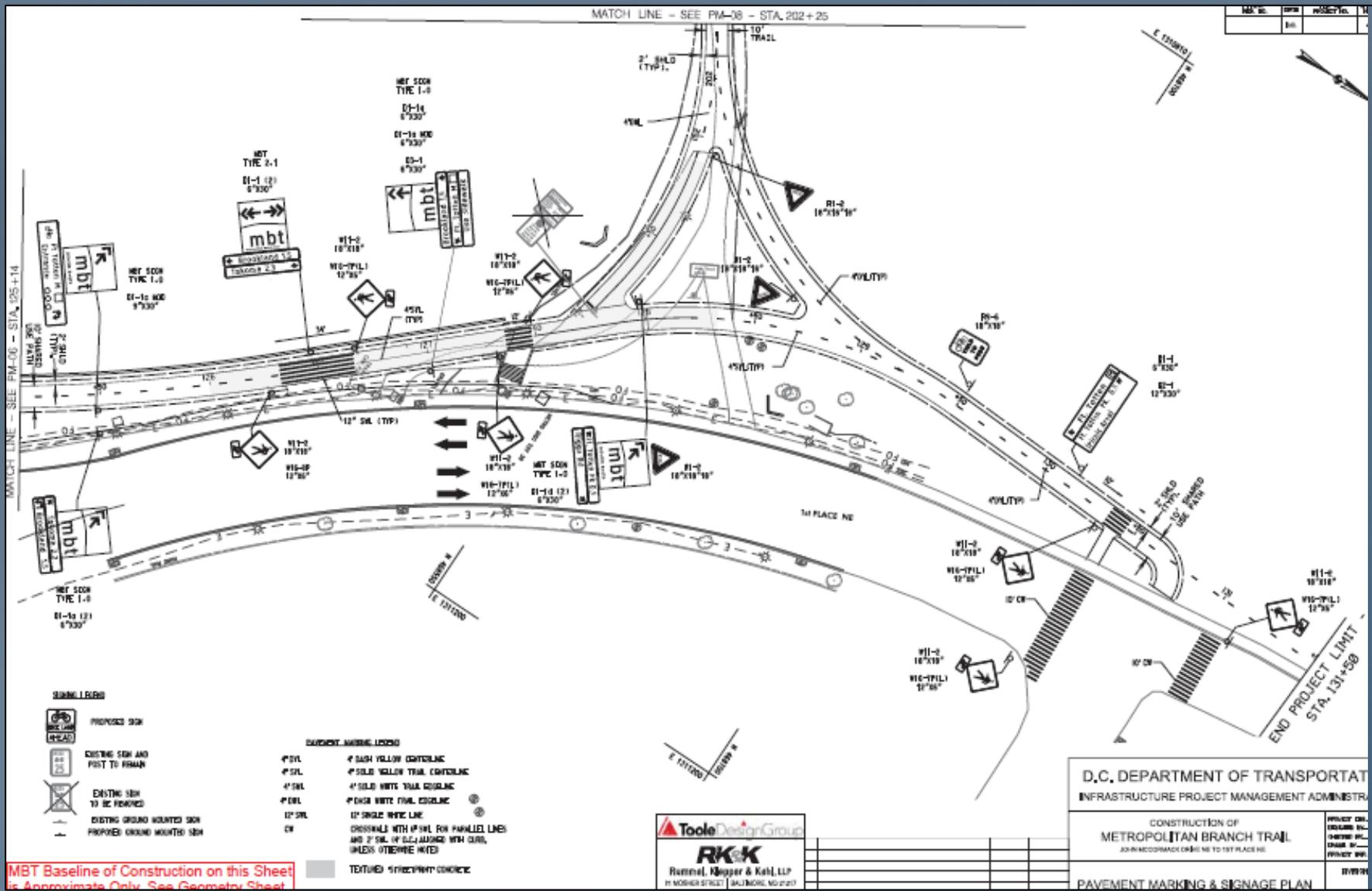
NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY

D.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION

CONSTRUCTION OF
 THE METROPOLITAN BRANCH TRAIL
 ADVANCE CONSTRUCTION FROM E 1ST PLACE NE

TRAIL PLAN - SHEET 7





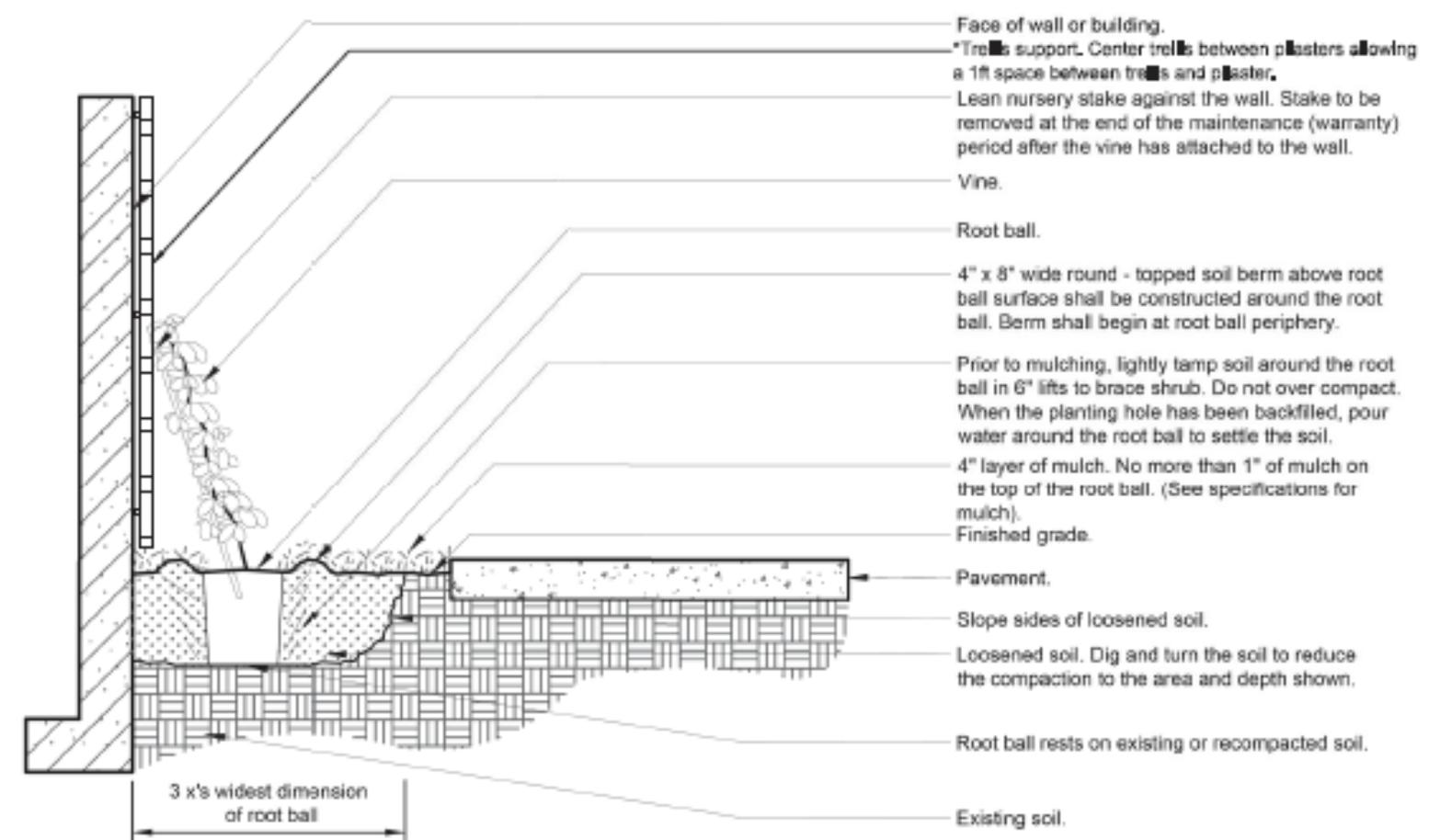
MBT Baseline of Construction on this Sheet is Approximate Only. See Geometry Sheet



retaining wall





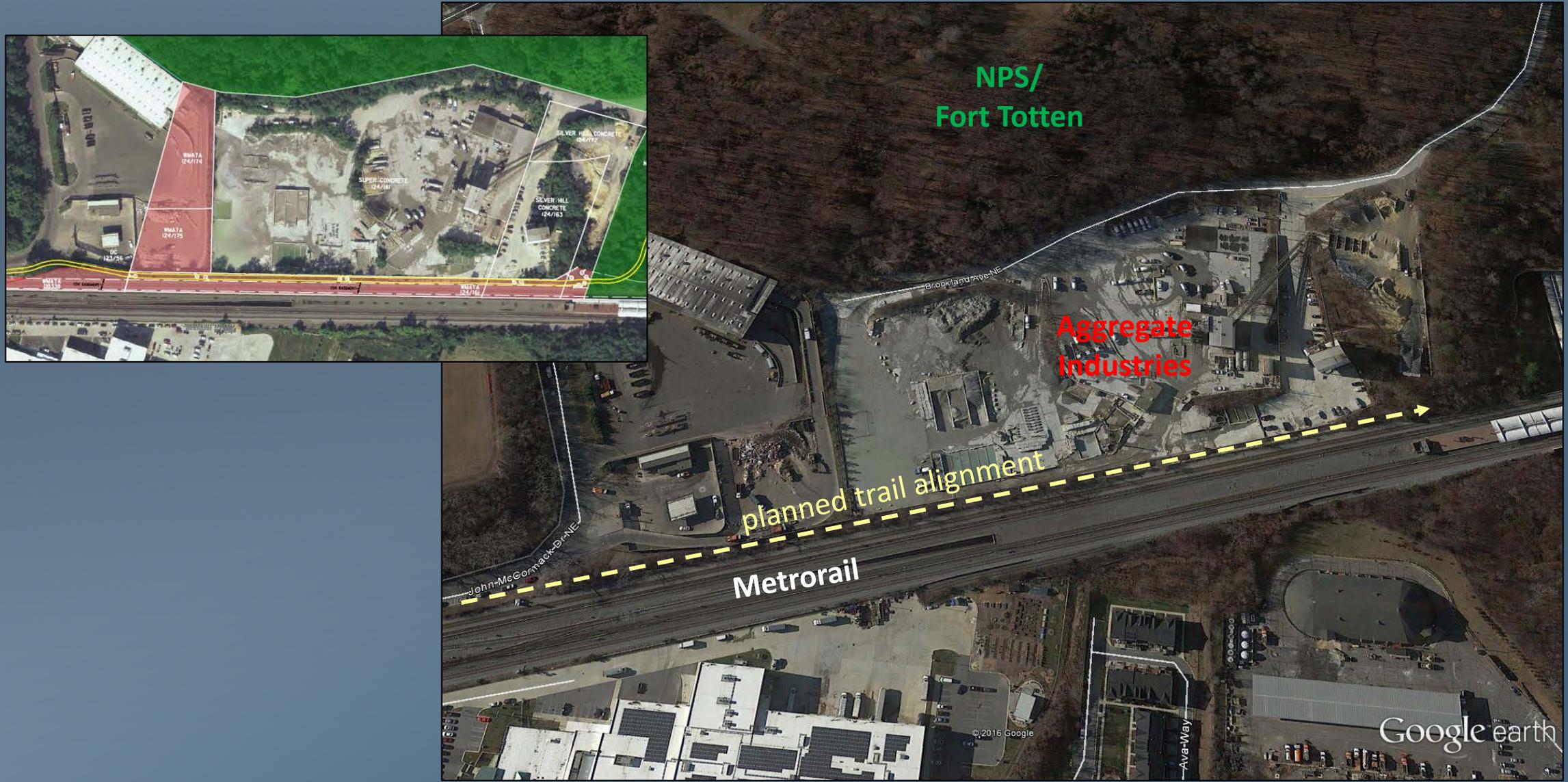


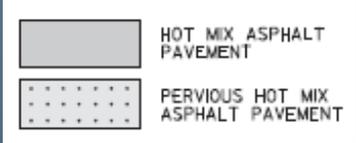
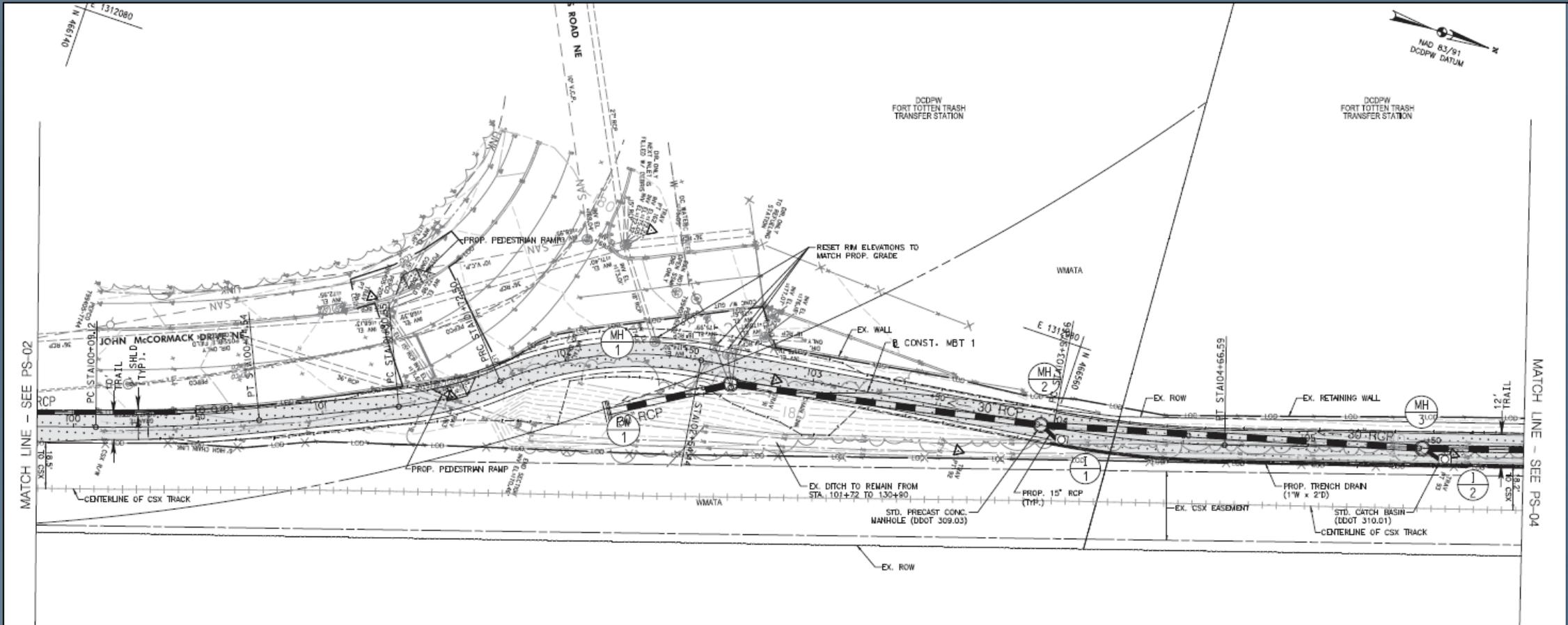
- Face of wall or building.
- *Trellis support. Center trellis between plasters allowing a 1ft space between trellis and plaster.
- Lean nursery stake against the wall. Stake to be removed at the end of the maintenance (warranty) period after the vine has attached to the wall.
- Vine.
- Root ball.
- 4" x 8" wide round - topped soil berm above root ball surface shall be constructed around the root ball. Berm shall begin at root ball periphery.
- Prior to mulching, lightly tamp soil around the root ball in 6" lifts to brace shrub. Do not over compact. When the planting hole has been backfilled, pour water around the root ball to settle the soil.
- 4" layer of mulch. No more than 1" of mulch on the top of the root ball. (See specifications for mulch).
- Finished grade.
- Pavement.
- Slope sides of loosened soil.
- Loosened soil. Dig and turn the soil to reduce the compaction to the area and depth shown.
- Root ball rests on existing or recompact soil.
- Existing soil.

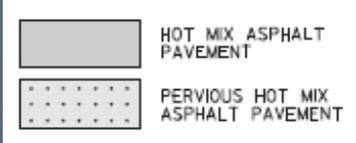
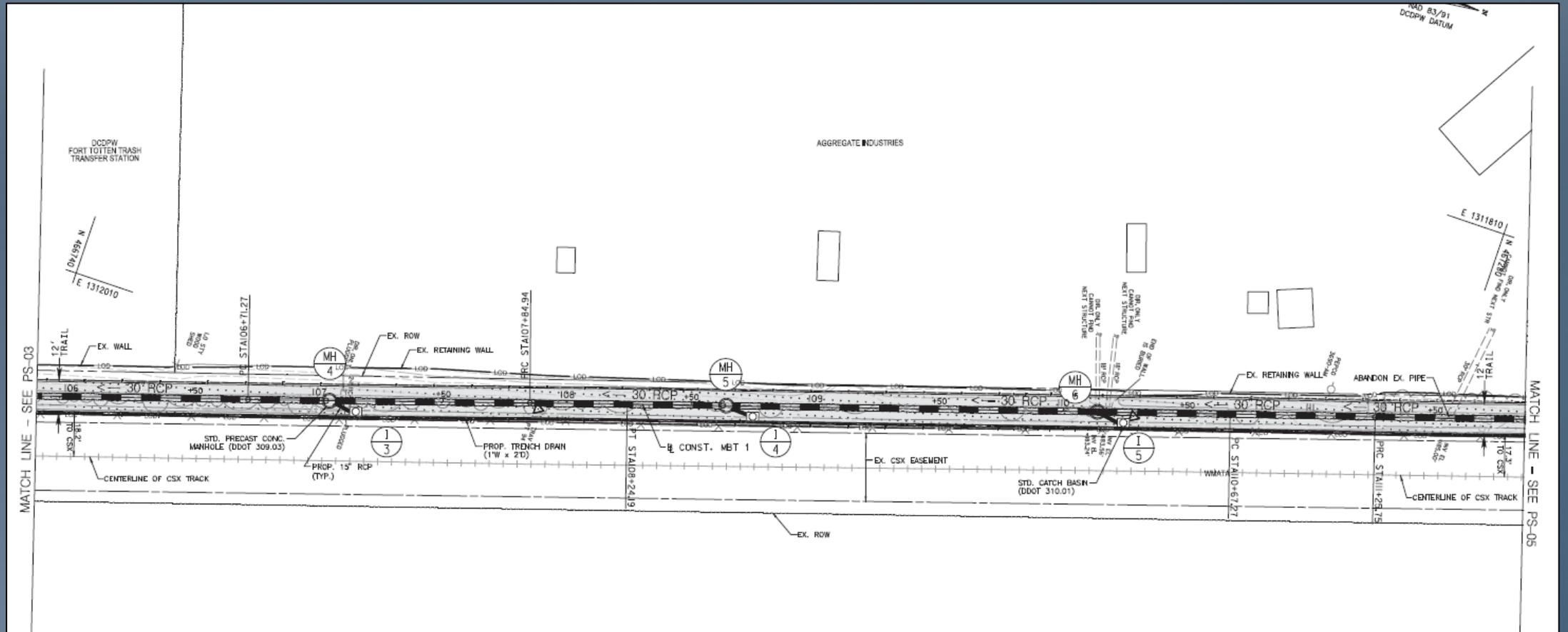
VINE PLANTING ALONG WALL DETAIL

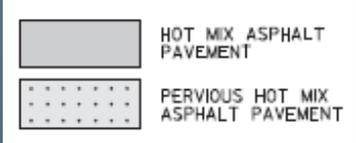
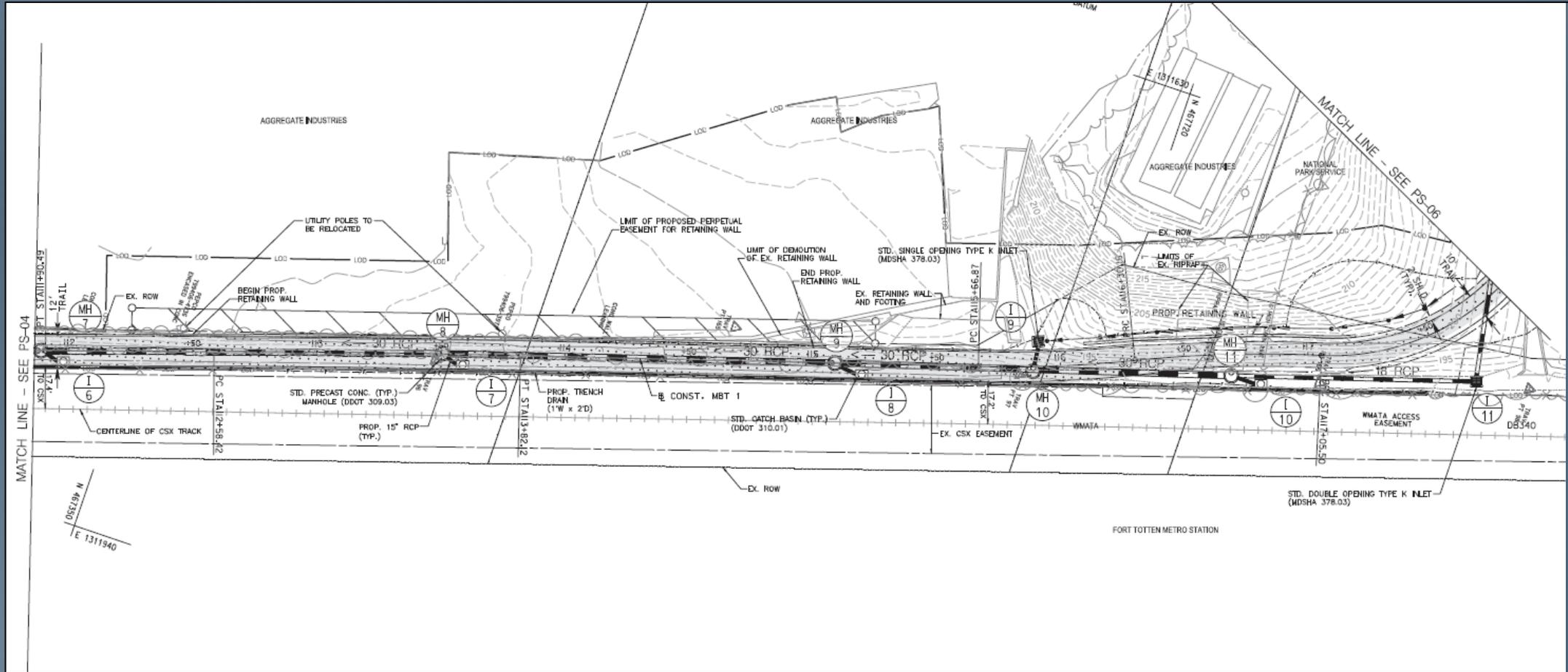
N.T.S.

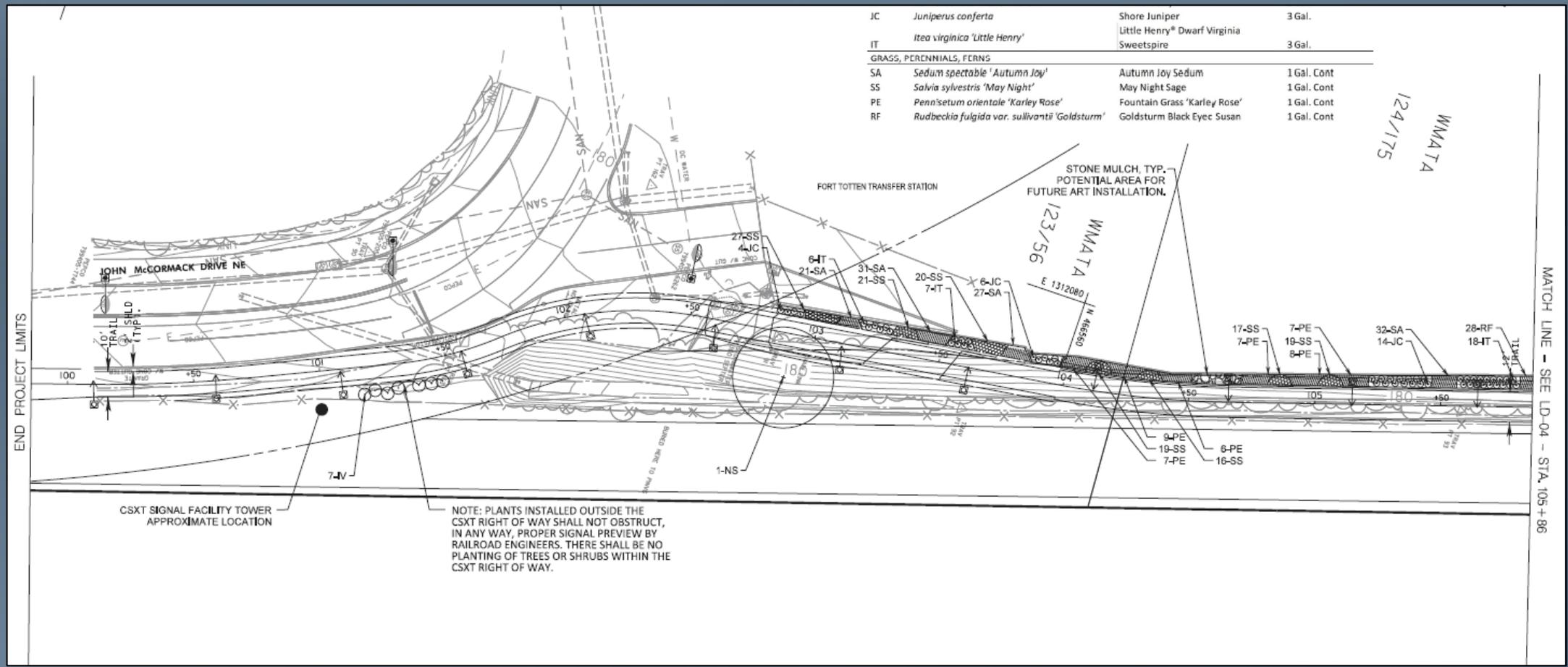
*NOTE: TRELLIS SUPPORT REQUIRE FOR LONICERA SEMPERVIRENS VINE ONLY. REFER TO PLANS FOR PLANTING LOCATION.











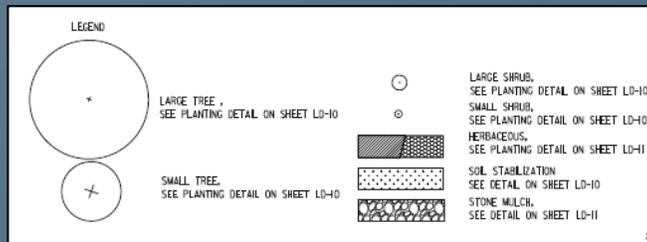
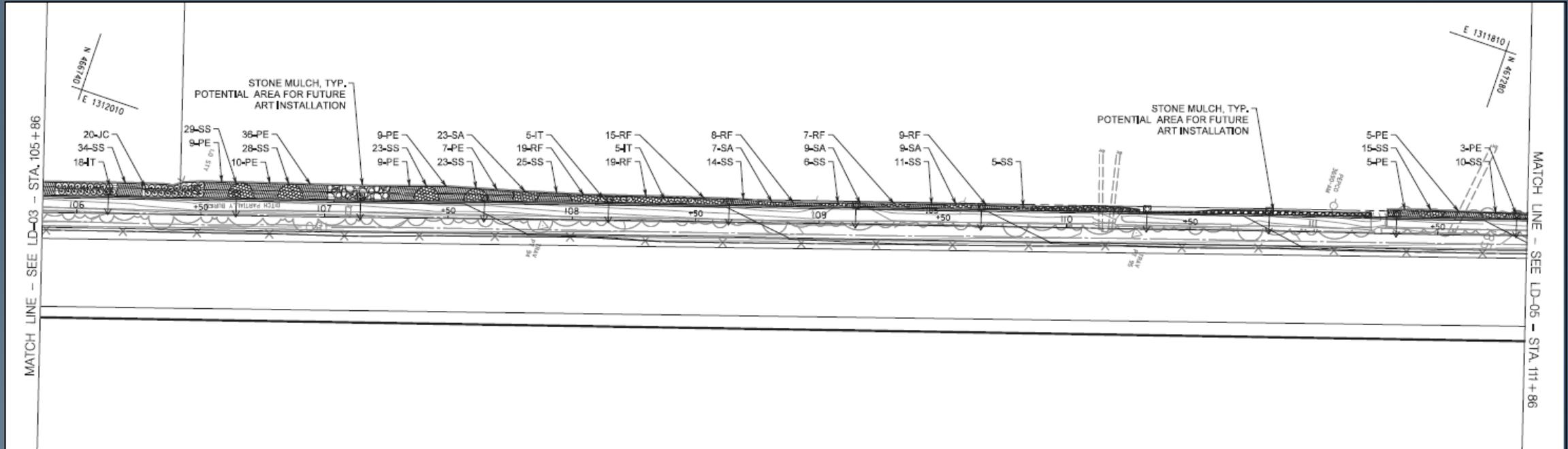
JC	<i>Juniperus conferta</i>	Shore Juniper	3 Gal.
IT	<i>Itea virginica</i> 'Little Henry'	Little Henry® Dwarf Virginia Sweetspire	3 Gal.
GRASS, PERENNIALS, FERNS			
SA	<i>Sedum spectabile</i> 'Autumn Joy'	Autumn Joy Sedum	1 Gal. Cont
SS	<i>Salvia sylvestris</i> 'May Night'	May Night Sage	1 Gal. Cont
PE	<i>Pennisetum orientale</i> 'Karley Rose'	Fountain Grass 'Karley Rose'	1 Gal. Cont
RF	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var. <i>sulivantii</i> 'Goldsturm'	Goldsturm Black Eyec Susan	1 Gal. Cont

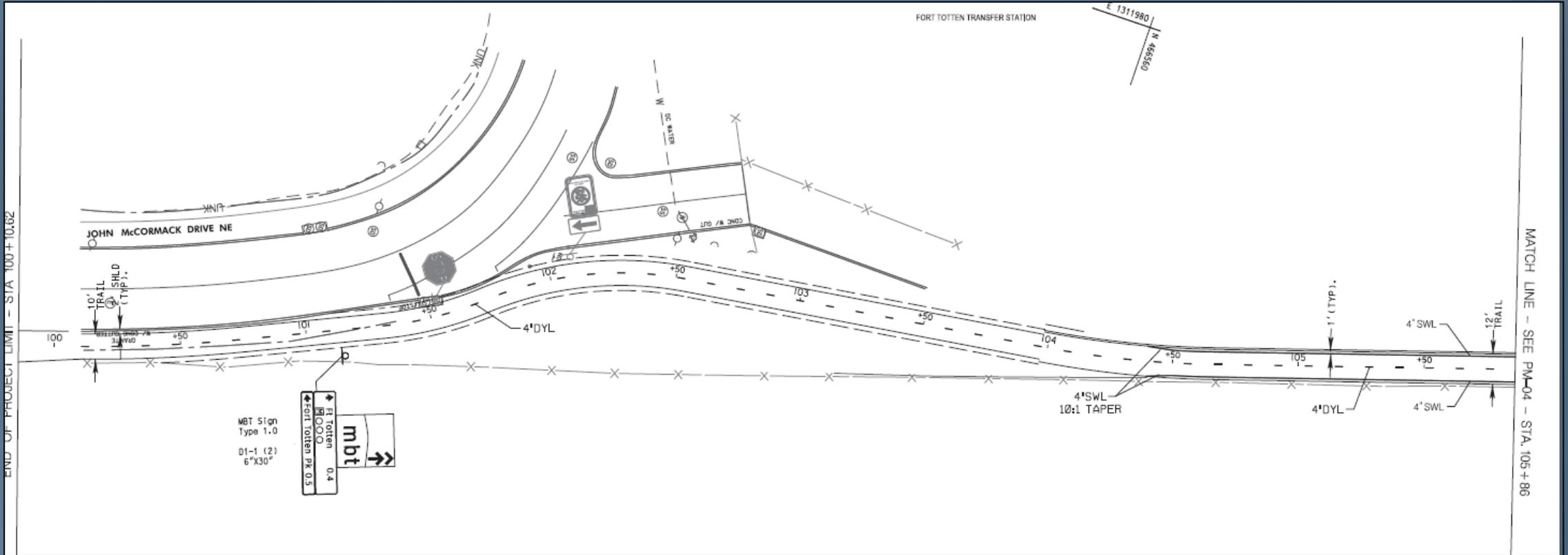
NOTE: PLANTS INSTALLED OUTSIDE THE CSXT RIGHT OF WAY SHALL NOT OBSTRUCT, IN ANY WAY, PROPER SIGNAL PREVIEW BY RAILROAD ENGINEERS. THERE SHALL BE NO PLANTING OF TREES OR SHRUBS WITHIN THE CSXT RIGHT OF WAY.

LEGEND

- LARGE TREE, SEE PLANTING DETAIL ON SHEET LD-10
- SMALL TREE, SEE PLANTING DETAIL ON SHEET LD-10
- LARGE SHRUB, SEE PLANTING DETAIL ON SHEET LD-10
- SMALL SHRUB, SEE PLANTING DETAIL ON SHEET LD-10
- HERBACEOUS, SEE PLANTING DETAIL ON SHEET LD-11
- SOIL STABILIZATION, SEE DETAIL ON SHEET LD-10
- STONE MULCH, SEE DETAIL ON SHEET LD-11

MATCH LINE - SEE LD-04 - STA. 105 + 86





SIGNING LEGEND

	PROPOSED SIGN
	EXISTING SIGN AND POST TO REMAIN
	EXISTING SIGN TO BE REMOVED
	EXISTING GROUND MOUNTED SIGN
	PROPOSED GROUND MOUNTED SIGN

