

**Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge
Consulting Party Meeting #4 Notes
October 25, 2024**

In attendance (virtually):

Brian Joyner (NPS-ROCR)
Nick Bartolomeo (NPS-ROCR),
Jamie Euken (NPS-ROCR)
Cortney Cain Gjesfjeld (NPS-ROCR)
Autumn Cook (NPS-ROCR)
Jay Theuer (NPS-NCRO)
Sam Tamburro (NPS-NCRO)
Kirsten Kulis (NPS-ACHP)
Jim Ashe (WMATA)
Jeff Winstel (WMATA)
Greg OHare (WMATA)
Elvio Caporuscio (WMATA)
Karen Hutchins-Keim (WMATA)
Charlie Scott (WMATA)
Lee Webb (National Capital Planning Commission)
Chris Berger (CFA)
Hana Fouladi (Office of Ward 3 Councilmember Matt Frumin)
Alan Salas (DC Water)
Carlos Cuneo (DC Water)
Louis Arguello (DC Water)
Ogechi Okpechi (DC Water)
Vahid Bilvardi (DC Water)
Rebecca Miller (DC Preservation League)
Zach Burt (DC Preservation League)
Betsy Merritt (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
Robert Woltjen (Georgetown University Student Association)
Nick Keenan (Palisades Community Association)
Hunter Johnston (Colony Hill Neighborhood Association Inc.)
Kalli Krumpos (Washington Area Bicyclist Association)
Ernie Brooks (private citizen, former Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail)
Madeline Carter (private citizen)
Peter Harnik (private citizen)
Tim Huson (private citizen)
Alec Graham

Questions and Comments:

- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #1:** Please add to the project timeline the estimate prepared by BELL Architects and SGH, which demonstrates that architectural and engineering services can be utilized to develop construction documents for \$205,000 (less than the budgeted \$250,000). This would potentially result in a shovel ready project. Ultimately, the assertion that design work cannot be done with available funds is incorrect.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #2:** Are WMATA lands associated with the Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge going to be transferred to NPS? **NPS Response:** As noted in the presentation, the undertaking itself is the issuance of an NPS Special Use Permit to WMATA; discussions of other potential NPS undertakings are beyond the scope of this consultation. While NPS is open to a land transfer, several things need to happen, including approval by WMATA. In advance of any land transfer, NPS would require that an environmental hazard assessment be completed for the parcels.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #3:** What is missing in the mitigation is the acknowledgement that the bridge has significant potential to serve as a transportation asset. If the bridge is lost, this connection is lost. Building a replacement transportation asset in this location would be difficult. Would it be possible as a mitigation to also include an easement that the transportation use be retained in some way?
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #4:** Demolishing a bridge to deal with WMATA budget shortfalls is a tragedy, contrary to the founding principles of the National Park Service. We need leadership and we need to preserve the bridge until we have the resources to fix it.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #5:** A representative from DC Water noted that if the bridge is demolished, WMATA needs to be aware that there is significant water line infrastructure located within the LOD and APE. A WMATA representative acknowledged the presence of the infrastructure and said they would coordinate with DC Water on this matter.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #5:** Has anyone found WMATA's letter to the judge for acceptance of bridge? WMATA will review trestle bridge files for confirmation but indicated that they believe it was ultimately transferred for disposition. If the demolition occurs, will any of the bridge fabric be retained? **NPS Response:** NPS would generally not support retention of bridge fabric due to potential safety hazards.

- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #6:** Consulting party stated they are appalled by that NPS is proposing to demolish the bridge and noted that we need to have time to try to work through a preservation solution. **NPS Response:** Note of clarification was provided that the bridge is not owned by NPS, and that the undertaking itself is the issuance of an NPS Special Use Permit to WMATA for demolition of the bridge.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #7:** Resolution of adverse effects does not have a timeline. Questions regarding the undertaking and land transfer: NPS and WMATA need to provide clarification for land transfer timeline so that we can understand how to prepare mitigation. Minimization: it would be helpful to know/understand spatial relationship of bridge footers. It would be helpful to know more about potential grade changes occurring as a result of the proposed demolition. **NPS Response:** As noted in the presentation, the undertaking itself is the issuance of an NPS Special Use Permit to WMATA; discussions of other potential NPS undertakings are beyond the scope of this consultation.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #8:** Residents of the local neighborhood are disappointed that bridge may not be preserved but noted that the community needs resolution so that they can utilize the trail system, which has been closed since circa 2016 due to unsafe conditions under the trestle bridge.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #9:** Leadership is lacking from the city. Councilmember Frumin's office has previously engaged in the project but we need some time to implement a plan to get a shovel ready project in place. What's occurring is demolition by neglect and WMATA needs to take some responsibility.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #10:** Will the presentation be available? Consulting party also expressed interest in other trestle bridge demolition projects to be carried out by WMATA. **NPS Response:** The presentation and meeting notes will be uploaded to the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website shortly.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #11:** The Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP) considers best practice that decision makers be part of Section 106 consultation so that we can reach a consensus. We need clarification by WMATA of land transfer options. Follow-up needed on \$250,000 money previously allocated for further study out there. **NPS Response:** As of October 2024, the FY25 DC budget has been

approved. The final budget reverted back to the Mayor's budget, which had cut and redirected all \$250,000 of the funding from the trestle. It is likely that the money was reallocated into small dollar amounts in various places, but we are still waiting on details from Chairman Phil Mendelson's office and the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (T&E) as to the disposition of this funding. **Representative from Office of Ward 3 Councilmember Matt Frumin Response:** T&E moved funding due to difficult budget year and Councilmember Frumin is working to get it back into the budget next year. The office will need to look for new money next year to get this funded.

- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #12:** The Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge has been listed as a most endangered property in DC since 2009.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #13:** The Georgetown University Student Association is in support preservation of the bridge. It is the last remaining streetcar trestle in DC and the mitigation measures discussed during the meeting are not commensurate with the loss.
- **Consulting Party Question/Comment #14:** Please describe more about the conservation easement. **NPS Response:** NPS is still in early discussions with WMATA. **WMATA Response:** Any transfer or easement would need to go through the necessary approval process. WMATA's primary objective is to make the area safe.