

Silver Spring B&O Station History

- 1873 Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad opened
- 1878 Silver Spring Station built, one of four brick stations on the line
- 1936 Silver Spring became B&O stop for all passenger through-trains
- 1945 Original station replaced by existing Colonial Revival station
- 1945-53 President Harry Truman met family at Silver Spring station
- 1997 Car severely damaged front of the station; CSX applied to demolish
- 1998 MPI purchased Station from from CSX & began planning
- 1999-2002 MPI volunteers directed restoration, raising \$500,000+ in public and private funds thru grants, in-kind support and contributions
- 2000 Last train stopped at the historic Station
- 2002 Station listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated on Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation
- 2002 Restored Silver Spring B&O Station reopened to the public as a meeting place and museum of 20th century railroad history



Planning the MBT Trail

MPI has always welcomed the planned Metropolitan Branch Trail, and has worked with MCDOT since 2001 to select the most compatible trail alignment for Station visitors and trail users. The Station site is only ¼ acre with limited access and parking.

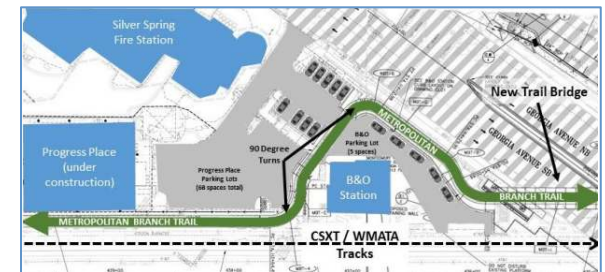
The original proposal ran the Trail behind the Station, under the passenger canopy, and across the narrow B&O pedestrian bridge. This alignment was not feasible as the bridge was too narrow. The second proposal, a new bridge across Georgia connected to the canopy, was not a viable option for MPI for many reasons:

- The mix of bicycles, pedestrians, and trains would produce dangerous conditions behind the station
- MPI does not own the platform canopy, but has CSX permission to use it for programs
- The trail would require fence separation from the station to prevent exit into high speed use
- It would eliminate train viewing and event use, and compromise the historic railroad theme
- The rear door onto the platform is the handicapped access into the building and a code-required means of egress
- The Maryland Historical Trust concluded (as did MPI) that this alignment had unacceptable adverse impacts on the historic setting
- Losing visitor access to the tracks adversely impacts the rail history significance of the site

After the County rejected an at-grade crossing at Georgia and Sligo that MPI supported, MPI proposed the final Trail alignment in front of the Station. While minimizing the impacts of the bridge across Georgia Avenue, it comes at a steep price to MPI, which is losing outdoor space for programs and 2/3rds of its current parking.

The development of Progress Place brings additional challenges that, along with the Fire Station and new trail, leaves space at a premium and must be carefully coordinated.

Detailed construction and operational negotiations with MCDOT will continue, with construction anticipated in 2018. MPI, as owner and steward of the property, will continue to coordinate with the Maryland Historical Trust to protect the historic integrity and viability of the Silver Spring B&O Station as a community asset.



Challenges and Opportunities at the B&O Station

The Station serves an important role as a beloved historic landmark and a community resource... welcoming young and old to experience the joys of train travel. Through monthly open houses and public and private activities, the role of the Station in the community has expanded since MPI completed restoration and re-opened the building in 2002.

With the positioning of the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the new Georgia Avenue bridge entrance on the property, the Station is losing a major portion of its available parking – a significant obstacle. MPI will work to continue to keep the Station accessible for events for all and to keep rental rates low as a community service.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail will bring many new visitors to enjoy the Station, who will be welcomed with open arms. With new visitors will come a need to identify new parking options, to attract additional volunteers at the station, and to carry the burden of increased maintenance costs.

No other private property owner along this portion of the Trail is being asked to make the level of sacrifice that MPI is making to protect the historic integrity of the Station. MPI has always considered the Trail an asset to the community and has worked diligently to welcome it in a manner that is respectful to the Station and complies with all laws that govern the property.



Visit the Silver Spring Station

The B&O Station is a museum of 20th century rail history in Silver Spring. The exterior and interior of the station have been meticulously restored to December 1945 appearance. The waiting room, with inlaid terrazzo floor, original ticket counter, chrome furniture, photographs and decor, returns visitors to the mid-20th century heyday of rail travel. Additionally the Station features a model train set-up in the baggage area for the enjoyment of guests of all ages. At monthly open houses the public is welcome to tour the Station, to relax with entertainment and refreshments, marvel at the model trains and videos, and stand on the back platform watching Metro trains, MARC rail, and freight trains pass by.

The B&O Station hosts many public and private events:

- First Saturday Open Houses
- Community and group meetings
- Children's birthday parties
- Private parties and celebrations
- Wedding receptions
- Dances and Graduation parties
- Concerts, lectures, book clubs
- Outdoor festivals and events
- Documentary & feature film location
- Montgomery County Heritage Days

For rental info, contact John Sery at rentals@montgomerypreservation.org

Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station

and the

Metropolitan Branch Hiker-Biker Trail

The Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station is a National Register historic property and a Montgomery County-designated historic site.

The Station is owned, managed, and operated by Montgomery Preservation Inc. MPI is a private non-profit organization founded in 1984 to preserve, protect, and promote Montgomery County's architectural heritage and historic landscapes.

MPI is the sole support of the B&O Station and its public programs, which it mounts in partnership with the Silver Spring Historical Society. The Station receives no funding from County, State, or Federal sources.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a County-funded hiker/biker trail. A 1.1 mile stretch of the Trail includes the section crossing the Station property along with a new bridge across Georgia Avenue and a tunnel under the Burlington Street Bridge. The Trail will connect the Silver Spring Transit Center to the north with Montgomery College and the Trail to the south. This \$18 million project is scheduled to begin construction in 2018.