

Save the Foundry Branch Trolley Trestle!

The Foundry Branch Trolley Trestle, constructed in 1896 and the last remaining trestle in the District, is under imminent threat of demolition. This would be a tragic, irremediable loss not only of a great historic structure but also of the only safe non-motorized transportation linkage from Georgetown University and Georgetown Hospital to the Palisades.

Almost no one wants the trestle to be destroyed. However, because of contradictory and misaligned government agency mandates, a solution has not yet been crafted.

Specifically, the trestle is owned by WMATA (Metro) which doesn't want the liability and seeks to donate it but can't find a taker. The trestle passes over Glover-Archbold Park, which is owned by the National Park Service; NPS wants this historic artifact preserved but has no budget to renovate it or cover its liability; NPS also wants to reopen its currently fenced-off streamside trail under the trestle. The trestle could provide an outstanding transportation linkage, but the District Department of Transportation cannot move forward without funding from the D.C. Council. Before providing funding, the D.C. Council has asked DDOT for a study of the trestle's physical condition and provided \$250,000 in the current year's budget for the study. DDOT has declined to perform the study.

We believe a renovated Trestle has a *significant* transportation function even in the absence of a larger trail: creating a pedestrian and bike friendly connection between the Foxhall neighborhood and Georgetown University as an alternative to the narrow, unsafe sidewalk along Canal Road.

*Fortunately, there is one entity that has an overarching vision for this valuable relic – the **Coalition to Save the Trestle**. And the Coalition has a “get to yes” plan that aligns all the agencies:*

1. The WMATA and the National Park Service should put on hold any immediate decision regarding demolition of the trestle.
2. The D.C. Council should carry forward the already-authorized \$250,000 to study the physical integrity of the trestle. If the study is not carried out by the D.C. Department of Transportation, it should be contracted to the D.C. Preservation League.

3. If the trestle is judged stable or can be inexpensively stabilized by the simple removal of rotting trackway boards, NPS should take away the portion of the fence that currently blocks the Glover-Archbold Trail.
4. If the trestle is judged unstable, the fence should be retained and NPS should construct a detour trail for the Glover-Archbold Trail to reach Canal Road and the Foundry Branch Tunnel.
5. In order to stabilize and rehabilitate the trestle, the Coalition to Save the Trestle should undertake a public-private campaign to raise the necessary funds. Such a partnership could include the D.C. government, National Park Service, Georgetown University, Georgetown Hospital and private donors supportive of bicycling and walking.