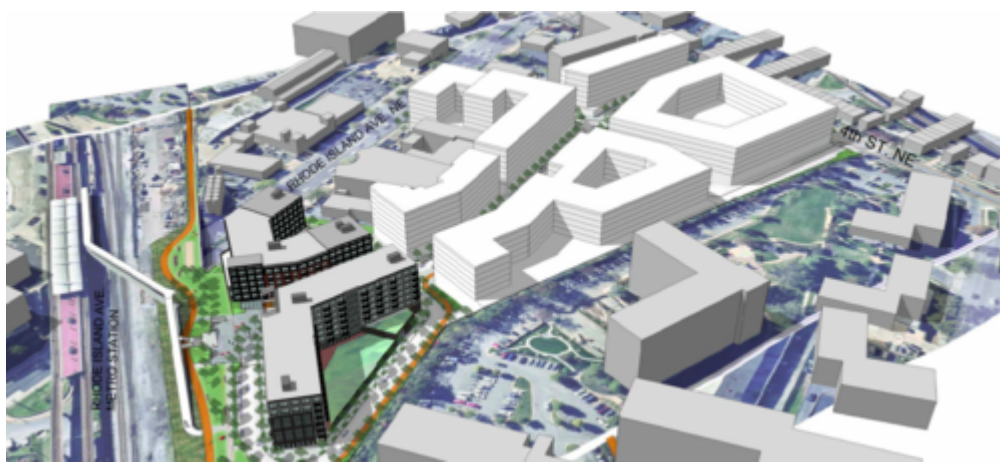




# A new bike trail could connect the Met Branch Trail to 4th Street NE

**BICYCLING** By [Edward Russell](#) (Editorial Board Alum) March 21, 2016 16

Plans for [Rhode Island Center](#), which is set to replace the Big Lots and Forman Mills at Rhode Island and 4th Street NE, include a number of changes to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The trail would move so there'd be less of a chance of cyclists and pedestrians colliding in front of the Metro, and there'd be a connector to the bike lane on 4th Street.



*The proposed Rhode Island Center development with the realigned MBT and spur to 4th Street NE in orange. All images by MRP Realty unless noted.*

The new off-street bike trail to 4th Street NE from the MBT would stretch about 0.2 miles through the proposed development, says Michael Skena, vice-president of development at MRP Realty, who is developing the Rhode Island Center project.

“We’ve made integration with the trail a big part of it,” he said at an Eckington Civic Association meeting earlier in March.



*The planned bike path to 4th Street through the Rhode Island Center development.*

Only about half of the trail will be built with the first phase of Rhode Island Center, which is scheduled for completion in 2019, says Skena. The remaining portion will go in with the rest of the development, which he cautions could take up to 20 years because the developer is allowing Big Lots and Forman Mills to remain on the site until their leases expire.

MRP will continue to try to make it easier to bike along the existing shopping center roadways during the interim, he says.



*Only half of the bike path to 4th Street will be built with the first phase of Rhode Island Center.*

The connection will improve access to the MBT for residents of Edgewood. This is in line with the trail improvements outlined in the [NoMa Business Improvement District's \(BID\) safety and access study](#) that recommends increasing neighborhood connections and awareness of the trail.

## Realigning the MBT

MRP also wants to move the MBT under the stairs to the Rhode Island Avenue station bridge where it currently goes around them, says Skena. This would cut back on pedestrian-trail conflicts at the base of the stairs, which will become the focal point of a new entry plaza to Rhode Island Center.



*The realigned MBT in orange with the planned entry plaza to Rhode Island Center.*





*The current MBT alignment past the stairs to the Rhode Island Avenue station bridge. Photo by the author.*

Cyclists will be able to safely pass underneath the existing stairs, says Skena in response to resident questions.



*The realigned MBT under the stairs to the Rhode Island Avenue Station bridge.*

MRP is also working with the local advisory neighborhood commission (ANC) on a community benefits agreement, which will likely include new callboxes and improved lighting on the MBT as well as better wayfinding to the trail, he says.

Rhode Island Center will include about 1,550 residences and 250,000 square feet of retail, including space for a large grocery store, when it is fully built out, says Skena.

MRP plans to include 8% of the residential units — or 124 units — at Rhode Island Center in Washington DC's affordable housing program. Roughly 93 units will be available to families of four that make 80% area median income (AMI) and roughly 31 units to families that make 50% of AMI.

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*Edward Russell is an air transport reporter by day with a passion for all things transportation. He is a resident of Eckington and tweets frequently about planes, trains and bikes.*

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## 16 COMMENTS

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THREADED    NEWEST AT BOTTOM    NEWEST AT TOP

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*smh on March 21, 2016 at 12:16 pm*

how long after this opens will we hear about the first case of a cyclist injured by someone throwing bricks, rocks, etc. off the stairwell? better wear a helmet.

REPLY    LINK    REPORT

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*David C on March 21, 2016 at 12:38 pm*