

# The Third MARC Rail

## Where would it go in Rockville?

Mark Pierzchala

Former Rockville Councilmember

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Rockville's revised Town Center Master Plan is scheduled to be adopted January 27, 2025. This set of slides illustrates the impact of the placement of a third MARC rail through Rockville. This set of slides illustrates why support for a third MARC rail in Rockville should be eliminated from the Town Center Master Plan and anywhere else it appears in the overall Master Plan.

The draft Town Center Master Plan is seen in the Mayor and Council Agenda for January 27. Link: [01272025-7389](https://www.rockvilleva.gov/Agenda/01272025-7389) . Page 140 starts the plan. Page 186 of the agenda (page 47 of the draft TCM), is where there is support for this third rail.

# From the draft TCMP – page 47 – see previous slide for the link to the Master Plan Draft

Rockville Station is also served by Amtrak and Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail. The Amtrak Capitol Limited provides daily service between Washington, D.C. and Chicago and serves Rockville Station. Other notable stops along the route include Pittsburgh, PA and Cleveland, OH. Rockville is on MARC's Brunswick Line, which connects Union Station in Washington, D.C. to Martinsburg, West Virginia, with a branch to Frederick, Maryland. Service only operates southbound in the morning and northbound in the afternoon and evening. As of January 2023, the average weekday ridership at Rockville station is 165 people<sup>7</sup>. This is down from 483 people in 2019, meaning that Rockville ridership is at about 34% of pre-pandemic levels<sup>7</sup>. A study of the Brunswick Line completed in 2023 calls for 2.3

miles of additional track between Rockville and Washington Grove, a portion of which is within the planning area. This Plan is supportive of this third track, should funding and feasibility analysis show it is possible.

See the next 2 slides for an illustration of exactly where this 2.3 miles of track would go.

See the next slide for a link to this study.

# From the 2023 MARC Expansion Study – page 27

[Brunswick Line Technical Report - Jan 2023.pdf](#)



Link to the MARC study.



Lincoln Park and East Rockville.

What would a turnback facility look like at Rockville?

# From the 2023 MARC Expansion Study – page 27

Required Capital Investment	Description	Estimated Range of Costs
<b>Barnesville Hill Third Track</b>	4.5 miles of track between Barnesville and Boyds	\$
<b>Frederick Junction Second Track</b>	8.1 miles of mainline track on the Frederick Spur and 2.2 miles between Point of Rocks and Frederick to increase maximum operating speed	\$\$
<b>Derwood Third Track</b>	2.3 miles of additional track between Rockville and Washington Grove	\$
<b>Silver Spring/Rockville Turnback Facility</b>	New Station track, interlocking and platform at Silver Spring or Rockville to terminate additional train frequencies.	\$\$\$
<b>Capital Subdivision Siding</b>	2.8 miles of siding track on the capital subdivision	\$\$
<b>Germantown Third Track</b>	1.9 miles of additional mainline track between Washington Grove and Germantown	\$

What would a turnback facility look like at Rockville Metro?

And, how would it impact Metro's and Rockville's planned redevelopment of Rockville Metro?



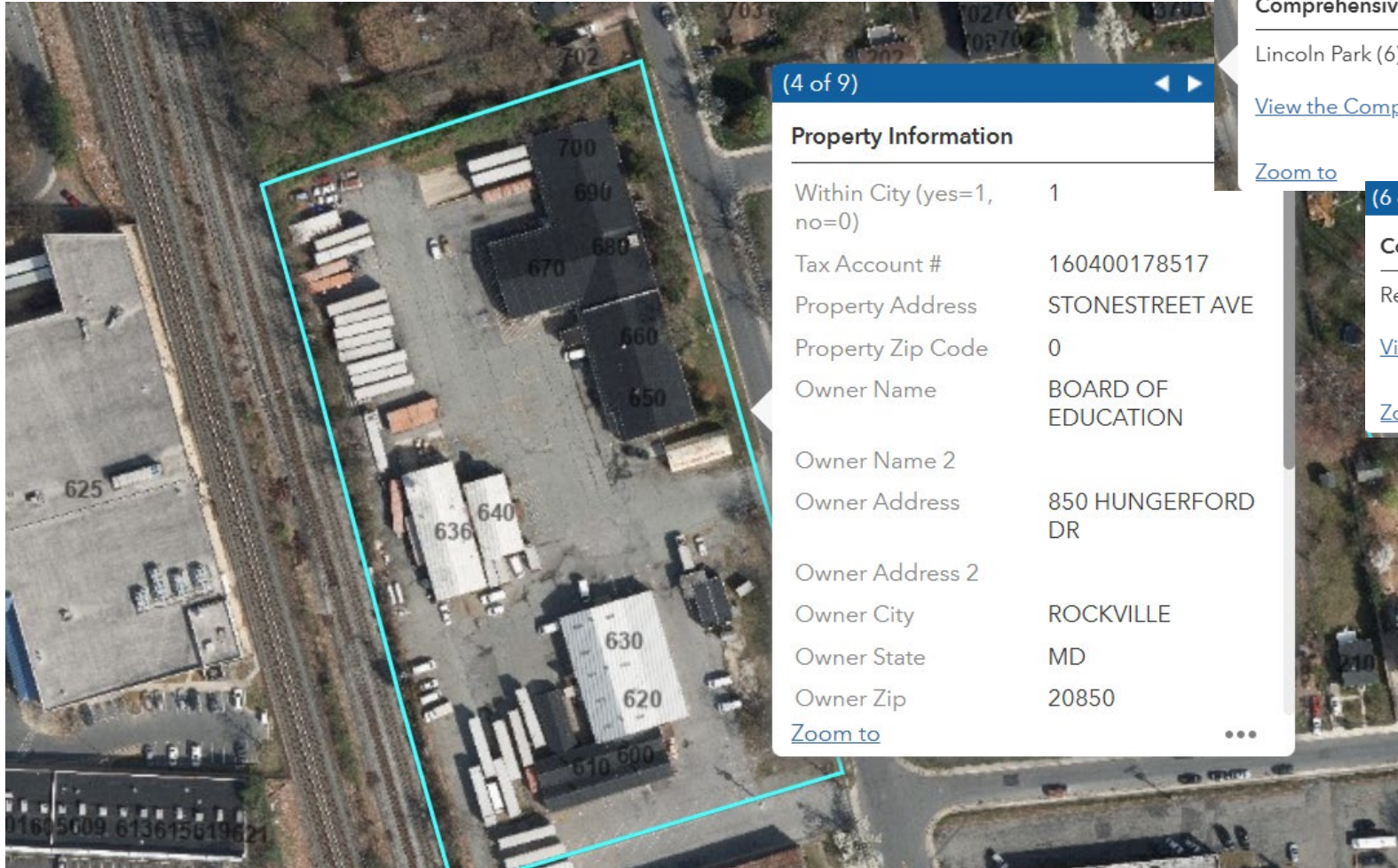
# Impact Areas of Rockville

- The MARC tracks are east of the Metro tracks. It appears to me that any third rail would have to also be east of the Metro tracks, and indeed, east of the existing rail tracks.
- Since the proposal for additional track ends at Rockville Station for the additional 2.3 miles, the major areas impacted would be:
  - The west edge of the industrial area north of Lincoln Park, Westmore Road.
  - The western edge of Lincoln Park
  - The Board of Education Property recently replanned and rezoned by the previous Mayor and Council.
  - The western edge of East Rockville especially by North Stonestreet.
  - Rockville Metro area east of the tracks.



# Lincoln Park Area

## Board of Education Property



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### Property Information

Within City (yes=1, no=0)	1
Tax Account #	160400178517
Property Address	STONESTREET AVE
Property Zip Code	0
Owner Name	BOARD OF EDUCATION
Owner Name 2	
Owner Address	850 HUNGERFORD DR
Owner Address 2	
Owner City	ROCKVILLE
Owner State	MD
Owner Zip	20850

[Zoom to](#)

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### Comprehensive Plan Planning Area

Lincoln Park (6)

[View the Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Zoom to](#)

(6 of 9)

### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation

Residential Flexible (RF)

[View the Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Zoom to](#)

(7 of 9)

### Zoning District

Zoning District	RMD-15 (Residential Medium Density)
Ordinance Link	<a href="#">More info</a>

[Zoom to](#)

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### Zoning Overlay

Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District

[View the Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Zoom to](#)

# Lincoln Park Area

Board of Education Property – Zoned Residential recently

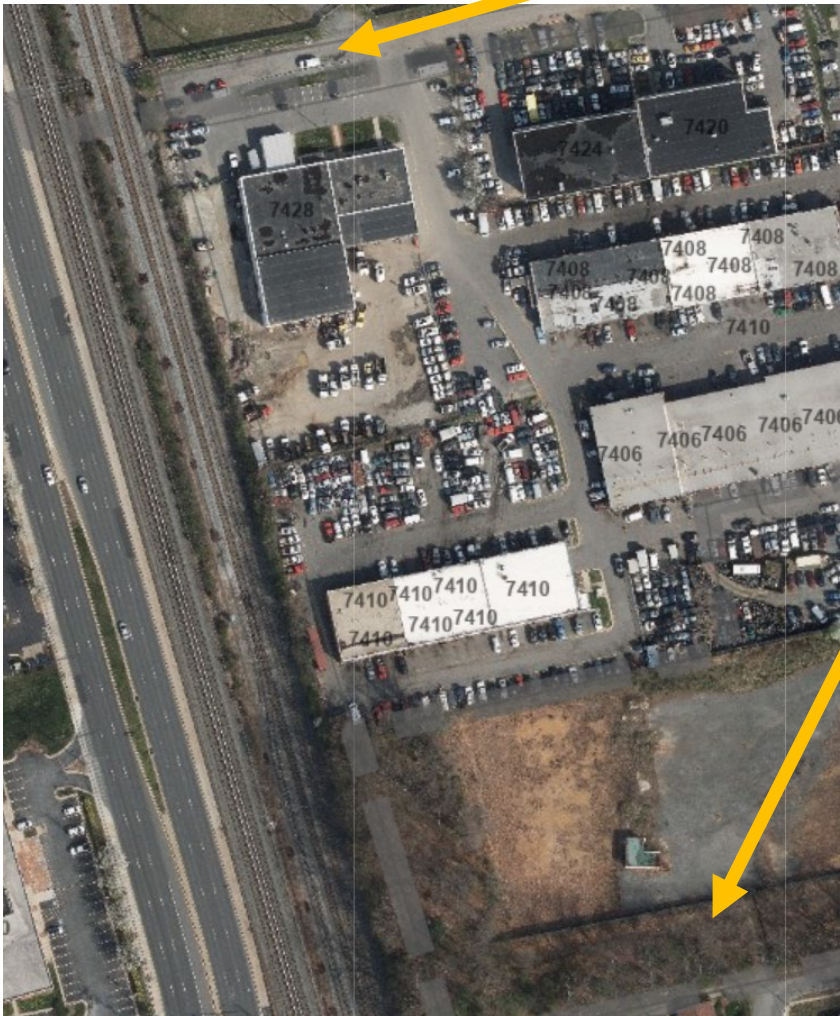


Rockville wants to convert this Board of Education Property to housing. This is a great idea and a previous Mayor and Council revised the plan for this area. Would a developer venture here if there is a possibility of losing part of the property for a new track?



# Lincoln Park Area

Industrial area from Westmore Road to Ashley Avenue to north of Elizabeth Avenue





# Lincoln Park Area

Unity Bridge at the end of Frederick Avenue





# East Rockville Area

North Stonestreet at Park Road



# Rockville Metro Area



# Discussion

A paragraph and single sentence in the master plan can cause potential grief to a future Rockville Mayor and Council and residents of Lincoln Park and East Rockville, and to businesses along the tracks.

“This plan is supportive of this third track, should funding and feasibility show it is possible.” p 47.

When I look at the January 2023 MARC study and where this track would go, and then see that Rockville Metro area is a candidate for the train turnaround area, I see large and sometimes massive impacts. These include 2 Mayor & Council initiatives.

The BOE area and the Metro station (including parking lots and bus transfer areas) are Mayor and Council priorities for redevelopment.



# Discussion - Continued

We learned from the I-270 affair that one entity's (SHA) feasibility can be devastating for other people, entities, and businesses.

My take on a third rail is that it would have to go to the east of the existing rail tracks. In certain areas this may mean right-of-way acquisition. There needs to be a buffer area between existing tracks and a new track and a buffer between the new track and properties to the east. For some houses this means losing some back yard or side yard. For some businesses, this may mean losing an entire building.

For Rockville's planned redevelopments, how do you entice developers when at the same time your plan keeps open the possibility of this MARC rail expansion.

# Discussion - Continued

The fact that a feasibility study has been conducted, and that organizations such as Action Committee for Transit (ACT) and Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG) support it, this means it is on the table. (Note: I donate to both organizations.)

This City does these organizations no good by supporting this third rail in this plan only to see a future Mayor and Council and residents rise up when it is time to implement it.

The turnaround area could only go in the Metro Parking lot east of the station. This kind of pavement is just so scrumptious do transportation planners. Additionally, as the tracks near Rockville Metro, the ground rises to go over Park Road. That entire raised area would have to be widened.

# Discussion - Continued

Best now to either (a) be silent on this third rail in this plan and anywhere else in the Master Plan, or (b) state that impacts of this third rail would interfere with Mayor and Council priorities and negatively impact its businesses and residents and therefore Mayor and Council oppose the third rail. Option (b) is better than (a).

If an item is in the plan, then it is expressly Rockville policy. This is an item we all may regret in the future.

Mayor and Council should emphatically state that the turnaround area at the Rockville Metro station is expressly against its wishes.

Mark Pierzchala