From roads and railways to telegraphs and airplanes, the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area has long been the source of inventions and major “Maryland Milestones” that have linked together a growing nation.

In 1742, Bladensburg was established as a colonial port town, connecting inland tobacco farms to the Chesapeake Bay and Europe. By 1783, the road which is now U.S. Route 1 ran between Baltimore and Georgetown, becoming one of the first stage coach lines, a federally funded mail route, and, later, one of the nation’s early turnpikes. A few buildings from the period — George Washington House, Bostwick, and Magruder House — still remain in Bladensburg.

In 1835, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad chose a route to Washington that paralleled the old turnpike into Washington. By the 1850s, the B&O route faced competition by the Pennsylvania Railroad, running to Washington D.C. through Bowie. Communities such as Laurel, Hyattsville, and Bowie blossomed along rail stops.

Communication innovation was also a major part of the region with the first air mail routes at College Park Airport and the telegraph tests between Bladensburg and Beltville.

Streetcar, or trolley, lines were built in the region by the turn of the twentieth century, fueling a growth of towns and neighborhoods, all with convenient access to Washington, D.C. The former City & Suburban line (the Capital/DC Transit #83 route) has been converted into the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail through Bowie. Communities such as Montebello, Glenarden, and College Park, Riverdale Park, and Hyattsville; while the former “interurban” Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis line was converted to a trail through Glenn Dale and Bowie. These “streetcar trails,” which have been connected with the Anacostia Tributary Trail System, have become a network of routes fueling a new rebirth of local towns and neighborhoods.

Also linking the nation through our Heritage Area were communication firsts. Samuel Morse and Ezra Cornell transmitted the first experimental telegraph messages from a spot near modern Beltsville in 1844. In 1918, air mail started at College Park Airport. Today, the National Capital Radio & Television Museum provides a chance to explore the history of communication in the Heritage Area.

Finally, aviation transportation has also been a major way of linking the region to the nation. See the “From Hot Air Balloons to Steps on the Moon” brochure for more details.

With the arrival of the automobile, suburbs such as University Park, Cheverly, and Berwyn Heights developed. In Edmonton, the Carter Motor Car Company was an early innovator in automobile design. US Route 1 became a major thoroughfare with significant roadside development. The region would continue to be a crossroads with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and US Interstate 95/495. See the “Main Streets & Miracle Miles” brochure for more details.

Come and explore the unique transportation and communication heritage!

MARYLAND MILESTONES HERITAGE CENTER

4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD

One block from the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail and located in the Pyramid Atlantic Arts Center

Start your exploration of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area at the Maryland Milestones Heritage Center! With brochures, exhibits, and a rotating event schedule, the Heritage Center is a great starting place in historic Hyattsville. Our partners work to preserve and promote the history, art, culture, and natural resources of northern Prince George’s County, Maryland, located just outside Washington, D.C. With a wide variety of historic sites, arts centers, trails and rivers, and nineteen participating local governments, the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area is a unique experience for visitors and residents. Our participating communities in Maryland are:

- Beltsville
- Berwyn Heights
- Bladensburg
- Bowie
- Brentwood
- Cheverly
- College Park
- Colmar Manor
- Cottage City
- Edmonston
- Glenn Dale
- Greenbelt
- Hyattsville
- Laurel
- Mount Rainier
- North Brentwood
- Riverdale Park
- University Park
- Prince George’s County

HERITAGE ROUTES

The following Heritage Routes are tours which connect multiple sites and themes. They can be accessed by foot, bike, or vehicle. Brochures for select routes are available at the Maryland Milestones Visitors Center or find all of them at www.marylandmilestones.org.

- Linking the Nation: Transportation & Communication
- From Hot Air Balloons to Steps on the Moon
- Main Streets & Miracle Miles
- Farms & Fields: Agriculture Heritage
- Urban Outdoor Adventures
- Painting the Town: Arts & Humanities
- Festivals & Farmers Markets
- Battle of Bladensburg Walking Tour

www.marylandmilestones.org
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Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg, MD
Operating Hours: Daily, Sunrise - Sunset
301-779-0371 / www.pgparks.com

College Park Aviation Museum
1985 Corporal Frank Scott Dr., College Park, MD
Operating Hours: Daily, 10-5
Admission: $5/adults, $4/seniors/$2/ages 2-18
301-864-6029 / history.pgparks.com

Berwyn Heights Historical Museum
5700 Berwyn Road, Berwyn Heights, MD
Operating Hours: M-F, 9-5
301-474-5000 / www.berwynheightsmd.gov

Bowie Railroad Museum
8614 Chestnut Avenue, Bowie, MD
Operating Hours: Tues - Sun, 10a – 4p
301-809-3089 / www.cityofbowie.org

National Capitol Radio & Television Museum
2608 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD
Operating Hours: Fri, 9-4; Sat/Sun, 12-4
301-390-1020 / www.nrcrtv.org

WB&A Trailhead
(Prince George's County Parks and Recreation)
10100 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD 20706
Operating Hours: Sunrise to Sunset
301-699-2255 / www.pgparks.com

Maryland Milestones Heritage Center
(Located near Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail)
4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD
Operating Hours: Tue-Sat, 10-5; Sun 12-5
301-887-0777 / www.marylandmilestones.org

Other Referenced Stopping Points:
Many of the other points referenced in this Heritage Route are residential and commercial areas. We encourage you to park and walk these communities and experience their relationship to our history and culture. For more details on locations of town halls or parking, please contact Maryland Milestones.