

The Lafayette Trail



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Surely by now you've seen the white line going down the sidewalk, wriggling around the Lighthouse area, and sometimes along the curb throughout historic downtown Havre de Grace. You might have even figured out by now that the white line has a name, "The Lafayette Trail."

Allow me to fill in the details. The Lafayette Trail was the brainstorm of the Havre de Grace Historic Preservation Commission. After researching a number of other cities including Boston's red-lined Freedom Trail, Carson City, NV's blue-lined Kit Carson Trail and even Hannover, Germany's Red Thread (which is actually painted on the road), they decided that the Walking Tour they had created years earlier would fit nicely with a marked trail that meandered through town.

Their goal was to have a self-guided trail for walkers, joggers, hikers and bicyclists that could be also be used for educational trips by schools and tour guides, and enjoyed by lovers of history and architecture. Stretching nearly four miles, the 4-inch wide white stripe takes you from the Lock House area on the north end of the city to the Promenade and waterfront to the south. The trail also guides you through the business district of Washington and St. John streets and along Union Avenue. It presently highlights the 35 sites in their Historic Walking Tour brochure.

Originally hoping for a blue line, which generally relates to historic sites, the final decision was white. Ron Browning, commission chair, thanks the city for including this project as a line item in their budget. He especially thanks the Dept. of Public Works for painting the 4-inch stripe. Then volunteers (presently Ron) would paint the stenciled letters. Keep in mind that 4-miles is a long distance with a spray can and on your knees! In addition, they will be adding 18-inch diameter, red circles highlighted with duck feet numbered to match the 35 Walking Tour sites.

This trail is a wonderful historic addition to our city. Kudos to the commission for an excellent plan that also includes the museums, city parks, and North Park Trail that lie within the area covered by The Lafayette Trail. This makes it a lot of fun for the kids who can run and burn off energy in the parks, and adds the North Park Trail for walkers, hikers and cyclists.

In the future, the dream of the commission is to replace the red circles with bronze medallions permanently placed in the cement as markers for the numbered locations. Of course, this would eliminate painting every couple years! (This puts a great smile on Ron's face.)

I highly recommend that you stop by the Havre de Grace Visitors Center on Pennington Avenue between Washington Street and Union Avenue. (See our map) Pick up the Historic Walking Tour brochure and enjoy a sunny day in historic, downtown Havre de Grace.

Note: A DVD can be purchased at the Visitors Center that complements the Walking Tour brochure. Visit www.HavredeGraceTheMeetingPlace.com for follow-up articles and photos for the walking tour as well.