
Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

February, 2026 newsletter
previous issues at gpwtrails.org



Yes, Now Is the Time to Ask for Trails Funding

Deshundra Jefferson, Chair of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS), spoke at the coalition's Quarterly Meeting on January 22. She called for a "conversation," and made clear that public support for trails would affect how the elected officials would prioritize funding in the FY27 budget process.

You can express your perspective on funding trails to all of the county supervisors with an e-mail to bocs@pwcgov.org

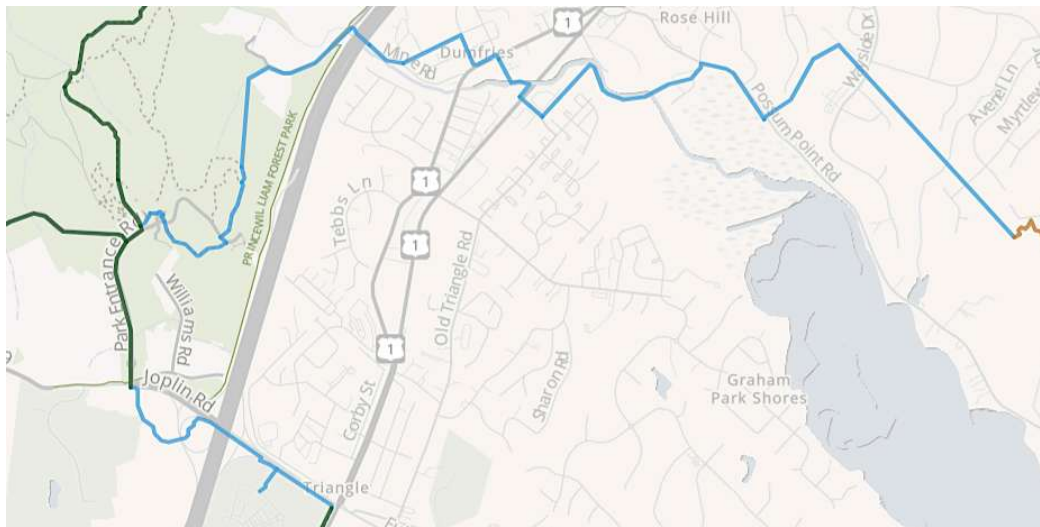
On February 3, you can **speak directly** to the supervisors at Citizen's Time, a week before the County Executive reveals the FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with whatever trail projects are proposed for the next six years... if any. There are other opportunities to speak to the BOCS as well - see the **meeting schedule**. You can also **sign up** by 5:00pm the day before a meeting to speak online.

Trail advocates have requested increasing current \$1 million/year for trails construction to \$5 million/year. That funding would be used for "low-hanging fruit" projects that do not involve

expensive bridges or right-of-way acquisition.

Advocates have also suggested BOCS request putting a \$300 million bond issue on the ballot for voters to approve in November. Funding would be used to start building a significant part of the bike and pedestrian routes proposed in the **Trails Master Plan**. An additional \$300 million bond issue for parkland acquisition would acquire some of the necessary rights-of-way.

An alternative funding option would be to dedicate a portion of the county taxes to building the long-postponed bike/pedestrian network.



Action on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail at the General Assembly

The General Assembly now meeting in Richmond will adopt a FY27-28 budget, plus a “caboose” bill for current budget year.

SB393/HB641, The Great Outdoors Act proposes to allocate \$50 million from a data center land conservation tax for trails to establish and maintain a statewide system of trails and to build regional multi-use trails pursuant to the State Trails Plan. **State Trails Office** completed a draft State Trails Plan last year, but it has not been released yet.

Del. Margaret Franklin has introduced **HB1402** directing the State Trails Office to include the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in the Statewide Trails Plan. No trail in Northern Virginia is currently included in the list of six **General Assembly-identified trails**.

If HB1402 is signed into law, closing **Gap 2 and Gap 3** of the PHNST on either side of Prince William Forest Park (*blue lines, above*) could become a state as well as local priority. If built before 2031, tourists and local residents could use those trail segments to follow the route used by the French army under the Comte de Rochambeau and George Washington’s Continental Army on the march to victory at Yorktown in 1781.

Trail advocates can send an e-mail to **their legislators** and express support for the PHNST and other trails.

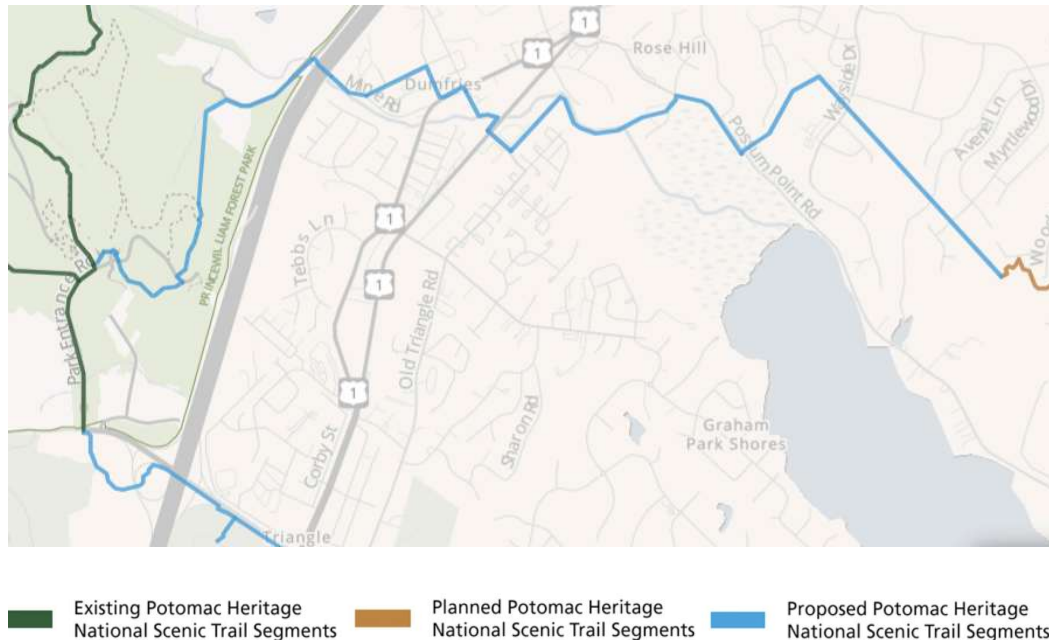


February 8: Second Sunday Hike at Leopold’s Preserve

The January 6 *Potomac Local* [paywall] article, **Leopold’s Preserve draws 20,000 visitors a year, foundation tells Haymarket officials** noted “*The preserve currently includes about seven miles of public trails and ...hosts educational programming and guided hikes.*”

Leaders at the preserve, owned and managed by the White House Farm Foundation, will guide the Second Sunday Hike on February 8 from 1:00-3:00pm. We'll go about three miles on flat ground. It's a gentle walk, but watch out for roots that may reach up and trip you.

Dogs on a leash are welcome. Register for details and to get notified in case weather forces a postponement. Join us on Second Sundays and meet some new hiking buddies.



Map Revision: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

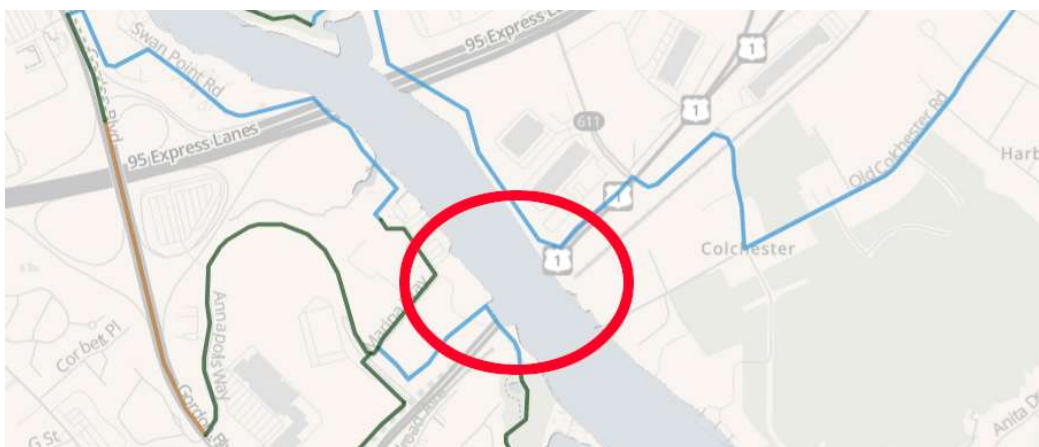
The trail maps of the PHNST published by the National Park Service and Northern Virginia Regional Commission are now consistent for segments in Prince William County. A Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant helped fund analysis of alternatives for closing three gaps. The recommended routes in that FLAP grant study are now reflected on maps by both agencies.

The County Mapper of Prince William County, has not been updated yet. A significant revision of many trail routes will occur after the Board of County Supervisors approves the Trails Master Plan. That plan, which will also identify the PHNST route between Potomac Shores and Dumfries, is currently scheduled to be presented to the supervisors in May.



Prince William County African American History Trail

Explore local history by visiting at least one site on the Prince William County African American History Trail in February. The trail features a variety of historic sites that highlight the rich African American heritage of the area. Check the [trail website](#) for public hours or contact the individual locations directly for the most up-to-date information.



Want a Bike/Pedestrian Crossing over the Occoquan River?

There is no safe way for a biker or pedestrian to cross the Occoquan River downstream from the Route 123 bridge.

The Prince William County **Mobility Chapter** in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan proposes adding a sidewalk to the Route 1 bridge. If the Virginia Department of Transportation replaces/modifies the Route 1 bridge, a bike/pedestrian component could be added. (Adding new lanes for cars would trigger a compensation event, requiring payment to the operator of the toll lanes.)

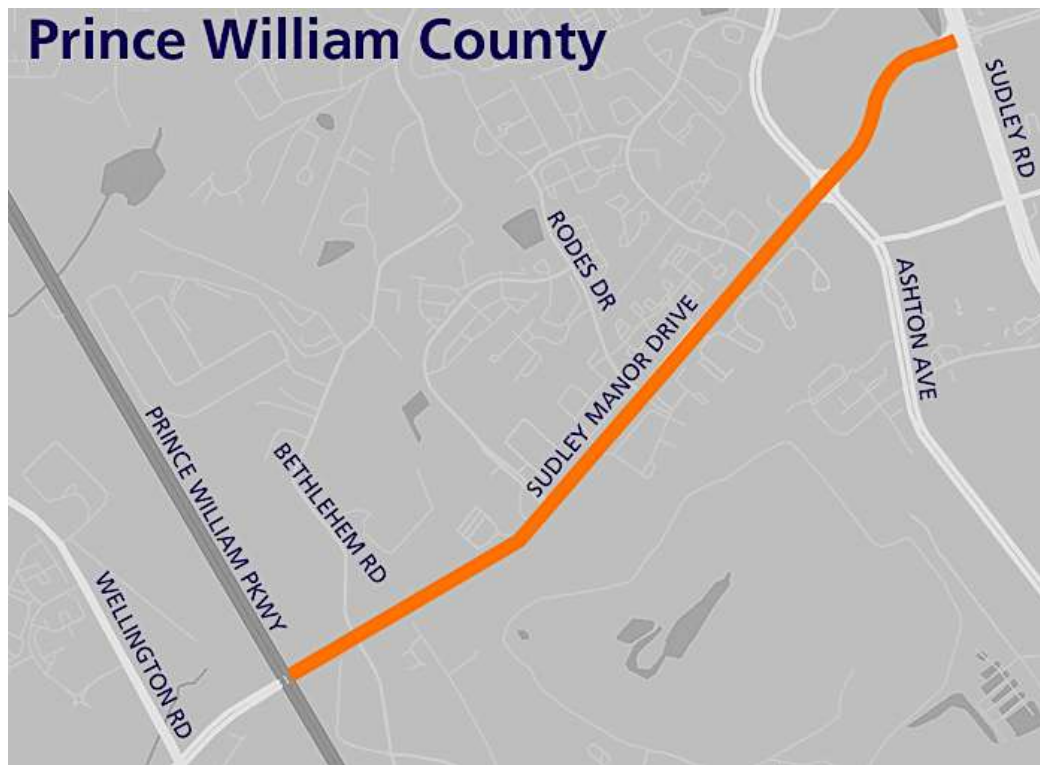
Another opportunity is to add a bike/pedestrian crossing on the new railroad bridge now being planned by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA). It will add a third track for passenger rail service by Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). That state agency is seeking a Federal grant (**see p.34**) for the design costs.

The **Active Fairfax plan** includes trail connections to both the Route 1 bridge and the railroad bridge.

Design could include widening the new supports for the track to include a parallel “mobility” bridge, separated from the tracks. That approach was done successfully at Harper’s Ferry. VPRA is now planning to provide mobility across the Potomac River, part of the Long Bridge project adding two railroad tracks, by constructing a totally separate bike/pedestrian bridge.

A bike/pedestrian crossing at either the Route 1 bridge or the railroad bridge would allow a braid of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail to cross the river. That would create a network of connected trail segments stretching up to the Town of Occoquan, and enable Belmont Bay residents to access the 13 miles of trails at the **Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area** on Mason Neck.

If you would like to share your comments on bike/pedestrian connection from Belmont Bay to Fairfax County, send e-mails to **contactus@vpva.virginia.gov**



Sudley Manor Drive Comments Due By February 6

Interested in bike lanes and Shared Use Paths along Sudley Manor Drive, connecting the Sudley Road “traffic sewer” to Prince William Parkway? Transportation planners are preparing to request funding for multi-mobility improvements.

Survey from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to gather public input closes February 6. You can comment **[online](#)** or send an e-mail to **meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov**

Changes to the intersection at Ashton Avenue are being considered. This summer, Prince William Transportation Department also plans to award a design-build contract to build an interchange that will replace the current intersections of Wellington and Sudley Manor roads with Prince William Parkway.



Maritime Study: An Opportunity to Increase Waterfront Access

Prince William County Department of Economic Development and Tourism is conducting a Maritime Study to “activate the waterfront,” including increasing water-related economic development and tourism activity.

As described in FY25 budget ([p.256](#)), “PWC’s approximate 20 miles of waterfront (Potomac and Occoquan rivers) are a competitive advantage to further diversify the economic base with attracting new industries to complement the geography as well as activating targeted areas along the waterfront for placemaking and creating tourist destinations.”

The scope of the study is not exclusively limited to just the Occoquan and Potomac rivers.

Suggestions for opening Lake Manassas to non-motorized boats and adding more canoe/kayak launching sites elsewhere can be [submitted online](#).



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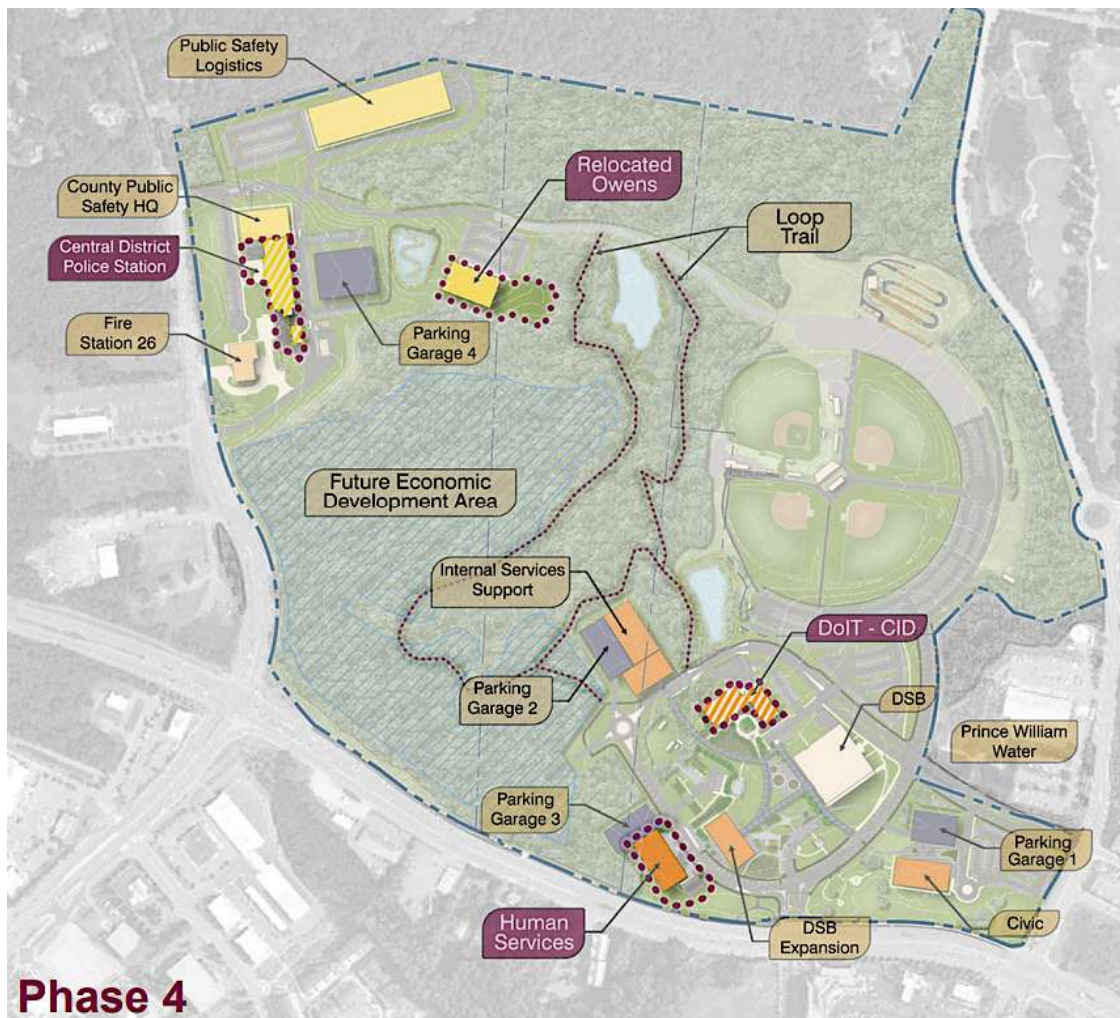
GPWTC Website is Back - Now With A Blog

The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition (GPWTC) website at gpwtrails.org is back online.

It's a work in progress, but you can check out the latest blog posts:

- **Request for 2026 General Assembly Support for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail**

- **New Bike/Pedestrian Bridge Over Route 1: Where Should It Go?**



Phase 4

In Other News...

- At its **January 13 meeting**, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors approved the nomination of Jesse Citizen to the Trails and Blueways Council (TBC). That brings the council up to its full complement of 16 members.
- The **December 9 report** on office space needs for Prince William County proposes a 20-year plan that includes replacing the McCoart Administrative Center building. Discussion at **January 15** Mid-County Civic Association (MIDCO) meeting revealed that a new civic building closer to Old Bridge Road could be seven stories high. Only after 15 years, in Phase 4, is a trail proposed (see above) within the government complex.
- The husband of Governor Abigail Spanberger is an avid cyclist. The January 19 *Washington Post* story, **In historic first for Virginia, Adam Spanberger becomes first**

gentleman includes "...Spanberger said he hopes to bring more attention to the state's cycling trails and bike tourism, as well as promote bike and pedestrian safety."

- **George Snyder Trail extension canceled by Fairfax City Council after split vote on funding** (FFX Now, January 15) The 1.8 mile trail segment would have cost over \$20 million.
- **Chesterfield residents want better ways to get around** (Axios Richmond, January 27) Chesterfield is developing similar to Prince William. When local residents were surveyed, "37% said they opted to bike or walk in the last year instead of driving, a 10 percentage point increase over those who said they did so in 2021."



construction continues in Manassas of the trail connecting the Ashberry development on Grant Avenue with Baldwin Park and the Manassas Museum

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