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# Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

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*Mid-January, 2026 Newsletter*



## January 22 Quarterly Meeting (Hybrid)

We co-alish from 10:00-11:30 am, in person and via Zoom. [Register](#) to get the details.

Agenda:

- 1) GPWTC 2026 Budget Report
- 2) Planned Second Sunday hikes, other possible outreach events in 2026
- 3) Potomac Heritage Trail Association (PHTA) award to Kevin Costello, Tourism Department
- 4) Tourism Office's "Maritime Strategy" and blueway access points
- 5) Department of Parks and Recreation DPR update regarding multiple topics, including Trails Master Plan and Davis Ford Park Master Plan development
- 6) Prince William Transportation Department update regarding multiple topics, including planning//constructing trails when new Department of Transportation and Capital Projects becomes official on July 1 and updating trail standards
- 7) "Opportunities" for funding trails
- 8) 2026 General Assembly actions that could affect trails in Greater Prince William area
- 9) Updates from member organizations in Greater Prince William Trails Coalition

## Countywide Trails Network:

FACILITY	TERMINI	FACILITY TYPE
Lomond Drive	<del>Route 28 Bypass</del> <del>Flat Branch</del> to City of Manassas Park CL	Shared Use Path
Route 28 Bypass / Godwin Drive Extended	<del>Sudley Road (Route 234) to</del> <del>Fairfax CL</del>	<del>Shared Use Path</del>

## Flat Branch Trail, Redux

In the afternoon of January 20, the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors will vote on [CPA2025-00007](#) to finalize removal of the Route 28 Bypass from the 2040 Mobility Chapter.

The staff proposal does not include replacing the Shared Use Path along the now-cancelled road with a recreational trail along Flat Branch between Sudley Road and the Fairfax County line. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) only changes the name of one terminus of the proposed Shared Use Path along Lomond Drive (see *above*).

To add the Flat Branch trail to the Countywide Trails Plan, the supervisors will need to amend the CPA proposal prepared by county staff.

<b>Magisterial District</b>	<b>Designated Capital Projects</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Chair	Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail	\$5,002
Brentsville	Nokesville Park Improvements	77,944
Coles	Cannon Branch Trail Improvements	34,058
Gainesville	Heathcote Boulevard/Legend Drive Crosswalk	43,354
Neabsco	Earl Cunard Park Improvements	39,558
Occoquan	BMX Improvements Charlie Boone Memorial Park Improvements	3,500 117,289
Potomac	Graham Park Road Improvements	19,817
Woodbridge	Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Wetlands Preserve Boardwalk	137,967
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$478,489</b>

## Trails Funding and Planning Update

Supervisors can dedicate year-end savings from magisterial district office operations to capital projects. For FY25 savings, [several supervisors](#) are designating bike/pedestrian projects (see *above*).

Trail advocates for the past year have been proposing the county start to balance the investment in roadway vs. bike-pedestrian networks by increasing trails construction funding from the \$1 million/year which started in FY25 to \$5 million/year. With \$5 million/year, there are enough low-cost, "low hanging fruit" projects in the county's [2040 Mobility Chapter](#) to complete roughly 25 miles of trail in just 2-3 years.

Funding for more expensive trail segments would come from a \$300 million bond issue that voters could approve in November 2026, in parallel with a separate \$300 million bond issue to acquire parkland. New county parks would acquire some of the rights-of-way needed for trails in the Trails Master Plan, which is scheduled for adoption by the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) in March.

An alternative approach would be to dedicate a significant percentage of tax revenue from a particular source, such as the Computer and Peripherals tax, to capital projects that expand walkability.

Prince William County starts the public phase of its FY27 budget process with the **Finance and Budget Committee** meeting on January 20 at 10:00am. That meeting will discuss the potential of creating a tax on Commercial and Industrial (C&I) property as a new revenue source.

The agenda does not include revelation of the FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) recommended by the County Executive. The public will see what funding for bike/pedestrian projects will be proposed by county staff later in the budget process.

The Featherstone segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST), one mile of stone dust and natural surface trail, is expected to cost \$3.5 million. That segment includes 1,300 linear feet of boardwalk and two bridges to cross wetlands and streams.

The construction contract had to be modified twice, once to protect exposed tree roots and once to sink the helical piers foundation system for the boardwalk to a deeper depth. Because the modifications raised costs for the construction contract over 25%, the BOCS is being asked on January 20 to authorize the new cost and to accept \$400,000 of additional grant funding from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP).

In the City of Manassas, City Council is requesting \$1.5 million from Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to 1) add 0.6 miles to the Nokesville Trail between Godwin Drive and Dean Drive, and 2) to close the Godwin Trail gap along Godwin Drive between Nokesville Road and University Boulevard at the baseball fields opposite the Micron facility.

Closing the current gap between Sudley Road and Wellington Road is already funded with nearly \$12 million from the state's Smart Scale program. Construction is scheduled for FY28-29.



## Omnibus Bicyclist Safety Bill in 2026 General Assembly

Nearly two-thirds of bicycle-vehicle crashes happen at intersections. Virginia law lets people biking in a crosswalk go on a walk signal, but bikers in a bike lane or travel lane must wait at a red light next to cars and hope drivers notice them before turning. Letting bikers cross the intersection a few seconds earlier increases visibility and gets the attention of drivers.

The [Virginia Bicycling Federation](#) is advocating for [HB661](#) in the 2026 Virginia General Assembly session:

*This year could be the year for the [Safety Yield](#) (sometimes referred to as Safety Stop), allowing bicyclists to [proceed with the WALK signal](#) at intersections, and allowing parents to ride next to their children (i.e., [ride two-abreast](#)) on neighborhood streets. We need 1,000 signatures of supportive Virginians by January 20th – add your name right now!*

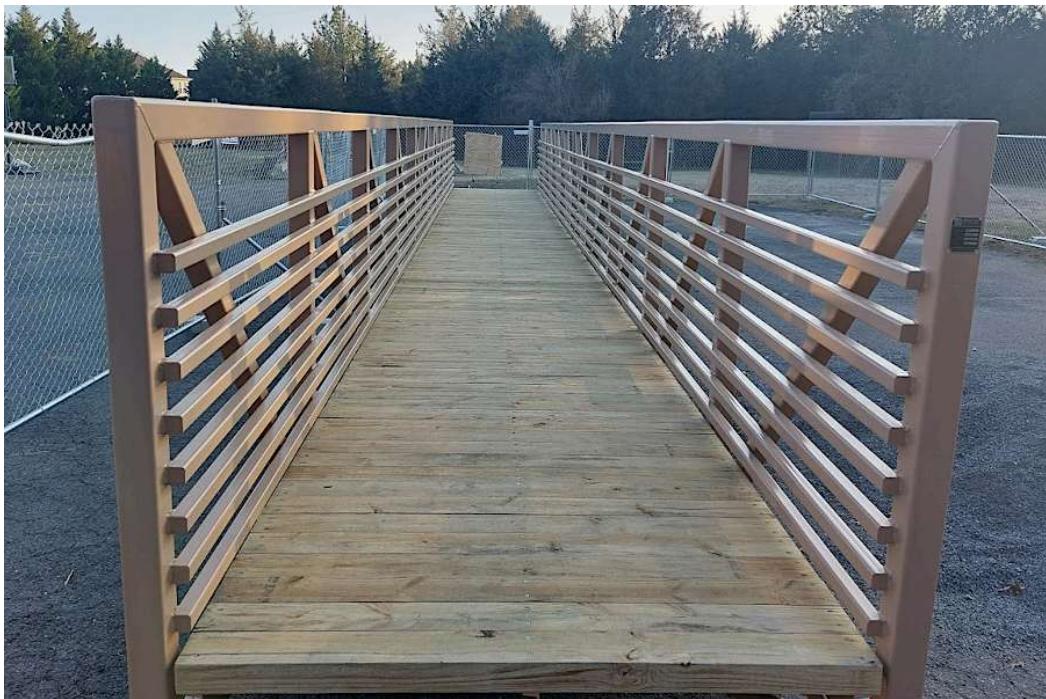
[Get more details](#) and, if you wish, sign the petition.



## Stargazing at the Neabsco Boardwalk, January 17

Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation is offering a night walk: *“Turn your eyes skyward and enjoy the spectacular night sky from the beautiful Neabsco Creek Boardwalk. Start the evening with a hot chocolate around a warm firepit, followed by a stroll along the boardwalk where instructors will show you constellations, nebulas, planets, and other night sky favorites with the use of telescopes and astronomy binoculars. This is one winter program you won’t want to miss.”*

More details and [registration link](#) online.



## Rocky Run Bridge Replacement

The bridge replacement is underway, with bridge on site and DuraBase mats laid down. [Project](#) was budgeted to cost \$778,000. More pictures [online](#).



## 50th Anniversary of America's Walking Club

The American Volkssport Association (AVA) is 50 years old this year. It started in 1976 as a non-competitive sports organization committed to Fun, Fitness and Friendship.

The Virginia Volkssport Association is sponsoring the 2026 Atlantic Regional Conference in Williamsburg to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route. Washington-Rochambeau Trail walks include Leesylvania State Park, National Museum of the Marine Corps and Prince William Forest Park.

The 25th US Freedom Walk will be in Arlington on October 16-18. Check out the other Wood and Dale Wanders club walks as well.



*exploring Broad Run trail on January 12 Second Sunday hike, in the shadow of a data center*

## And in Other News...

- **Catching up: The Fall Line Trail is finding its way through Richmond** (*The Richmonder*, December 28) “...in the next few months we’re going to have ... about 20 miles under construction or at least under contract.”
- The **January 2026 Virginia Active Transportation Newsletter** notes that the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) 2026 Winter Hybrid Meeting will be January 27, 10:00am-noon. Register to get **Teams link** or to attend **in person** at VDOT Central Office Lockwood Building, 9120 Lockwood Blvd, Mechanicsville, VA 23116.
- **Consultant: Virginia has the outdoor assets. What we’re missing is the will** (*Cardinal News*, January 13) “...outdoor recreation is about more than dirt and water. It’s about keeping young people in the commonwealth and attracting workers and entrepreneurs who can choose to live almost anywhere. It’s about creating space for small businesses to grow and stay rooted locally. It’s also about health, resilience and the long-term stewardship of the places we love.”
- **Town of Dumfries Secures \$240,000 USDOT Grant to Improve Sidewalk Accessibility and Advance Safer, Walkable Streets** (*Prince William Living*, January 7) Grant will fund a sidewalk accessibility audit to identify accessibility barriers and compliance needs, plus connectivity mapping to highlight missing sidewalk links and priority routes.
- **Richmond launches new street safety office after 6 pedestrian deaths** (*Axios Richmond*, January 8) Driver and pedestrian behavior are factors, but the city’s main prevention strategy is to redesign streets to make them less deadly.
- **“TConn” Trails Plan Earns State Recognition** (*Virginian Pilot*, January 10) The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association honored the City of Chesapeake for its **Trails and Connectivity Plan**, with 300 miles of trails and bike paths. “*Its focus on equity, community-driven development, and regional integration makes TConn a model for communities across Virginia and beyond.*”
- **Safe Sidewalks, Clean Water: Smart Salting for DMV Residents** webinar (part of **Winter Salt Week**) Most of the salt used to de-ice sidewalks for safety in our region runs off into the Occoquan Reservoir, where sodium levels **now exceed** the threshold for people on low-sodium diets.

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While we are updating our **website**, contact us at **trails@gpw@gmail.com**

Greater Prince William Trails coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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