Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Help Refine the County's Trails Planning on March 31/April 12

In 2025 the Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation will prepare a "master plan" to refine the alignments of trails in the **Countywide Trails Plan** - including bike paths along roadways.

In advance of the official public input process, the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition (GPWTC) is getting ahead of the game. We are holding two work sessions to identify possible revisions to the bike/pedestrian, equestrian, and blueway routes that were included in the **Mobility Chapter** of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In addition to refining planned alignments, work sessions will discuss where new trail segments could be proposed when the county begins to accept public comments at an official stakeholder meeting on May 29.

GPWTC's March 31 work session will be virtual, starting at 7:00pm. **Register** to get the Zoom link. April 12 session will be in-person at Chinn Community Center. **Register** for more details.

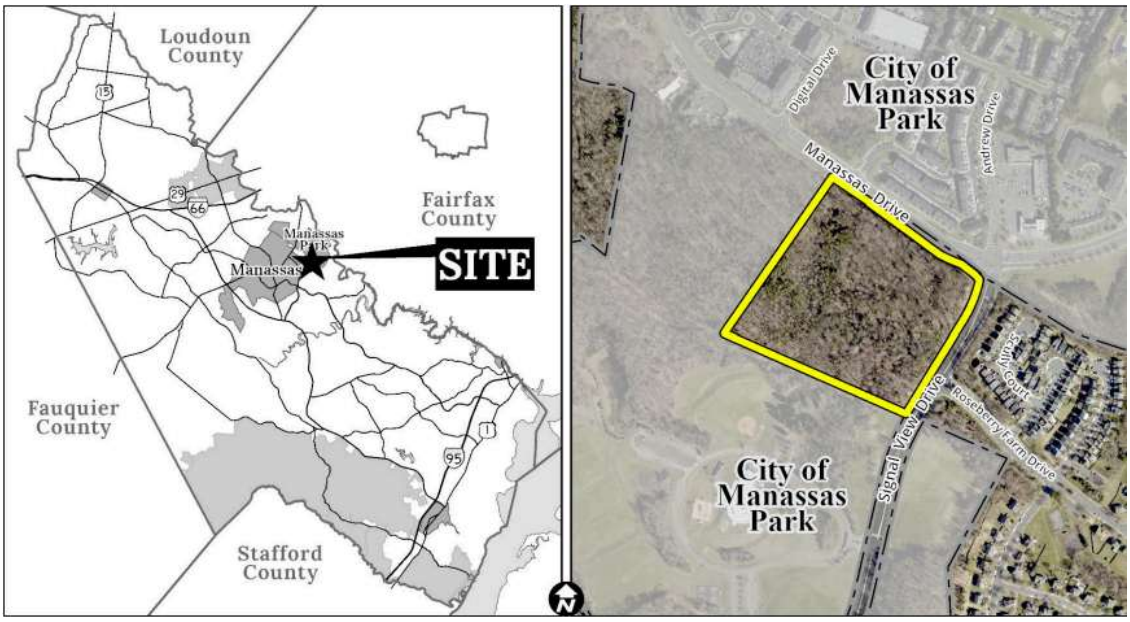
Second Sunday Hike on April 13 - Blooms Park

On the Second Sunday of every month, the organizations that created the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition offer a hike to explore places in Prince William, Manassas, and Manassas Park. Prince William Trails and Streams is the sponsor of these monthly hikes.
In April, we will explore **Blooms Park** in Manassas Park. We'll follow the old golf course cart path, check out the historic railroad bridge over Bull Run, and discover that there really are a few steep hills in Manassas Park. (*Yes, there was gold in them thar hills... at least down in Fauquier County.*)
Please **register** for details, such as where to park. Questions? Contact **secretary@pwtsc.org**

April 24 GPWTC Quarterly Meeting

Anyone associated with the member organizations in the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition, or interested in trails south of the Occoquan River, is invited to gather again at the Potomac Science Center in Belmont Bay on April 24, 10:00-11:30am. We network, share information, and build partnerships.

Meeting is hybrid, so you can join by Zoom (and watch everyone in-person enjoying the coffee and donuts). Please register at **https://tinyurl.com/ms33jkzy**



Mayfield Crossing

The proposed development (Case Number **REZ2024-00007**) is proffering to add 700 feet of an 8-foot wide shared use path along Signal View Drive, beyond the boundaries of the project, to connect to Signal Hill Park. There is also a proposed trail connection from inside the new development to the Signal Bay waterpark area.

The City of Manassas Park has requested a 10' wide sidewalk or shared use path to be constructed on Manassas Drive. The developer is proposing only 5' wide sidewalks along the parcel's Manassas Drive and Signal View Drive frontage. These sidewalks would provide connectivity to the city's new downtown (**Park Central**) and VRE station.

Creekside Trail at Long Park Is Now Open

There were at least 16 volunteers at the trail work day on March 23 at **Long Park** near Dominion Valley on Route 15. They finished building Creekside Trail, which already had absorbed hundreds of volunteer hours. Even the trail signs are in place on the 7-mile trail.
The bike repair/tune up station at the trailhead (see above) was donated by **NOVA Cycleworks**.

Will VDOT Block the Neabsco Greenway?

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has reconsidered initial plans to build a massive culvert at I-95 as the southbound bridge is replaced. Initial VDOT design ignored the county's Mobility Chapter, with the Neabsco Greenway passing underneath I-95.

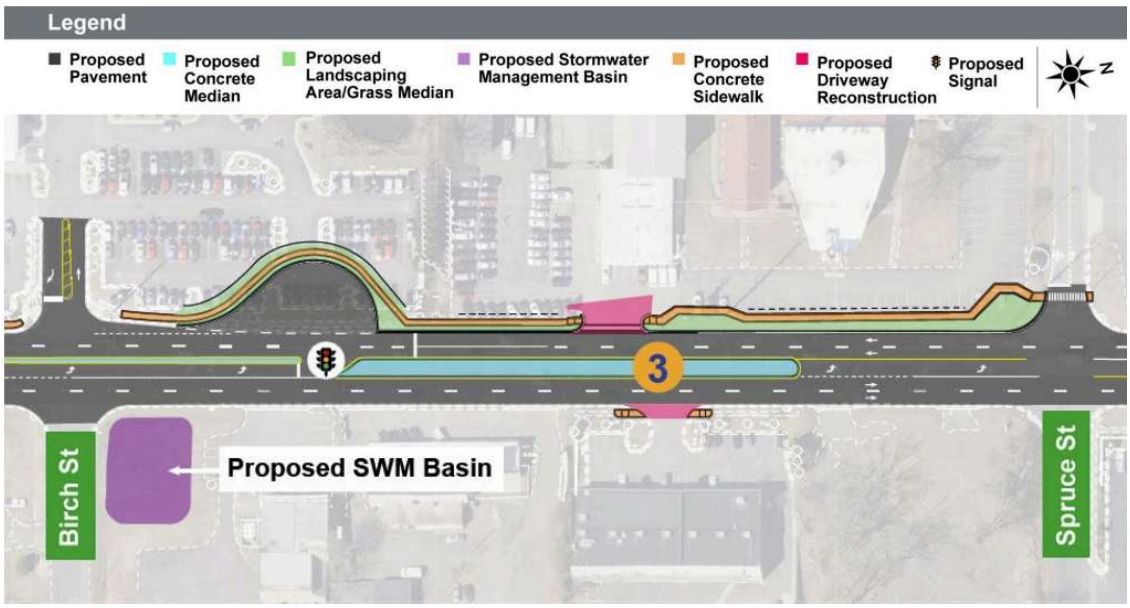
Proposed culvert could be expanded to add a 5' wide concrete path inside a 100-150 foot tunnel to create a "bench trail" on one side on Neabsco Creek. PW Transportation Department was encouraged by initial response but still has concerns regarding design.

VDOT may ask Prince William County to pay for safety railing and lights. Actual design will be shared at April 22 TBC meeting when VDOT requests comments. TBC is preparing to provide examples of pedestrian-friendly equivalents from Missouri, Colorado, and even underpasses at Wakefield Park on Accotink Creek.

Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) - March 25 Meeting

Items covered included:
- The **Neabsco Creek kayak launch** is completed. Ribbon cutting is scheduled for April 16 at 1:00pm. Bring a boat; tides will provide the water.
- Using the $1 million in funding added by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to the FY25 budget for trail construction, the Department of Parks and Recreation is planning to build a stone dust trail parallel to the CSX tracks from Marumsco Acres to Jefferson Park
- Prince William Transportation Department will spend another 6-12 months in the procurement process before bike/ped options can be examined again at Sudley Manor/PW Parkway interchange. The unsolicited proposal for the interchange does not appear yet on the **map of planned mobility projects**.
- Also, Prince William Transportation Department will be scheduling open houses on April 30, May 7, and May 15 so the general public can ask about planned projects, funding status, schedules for construction, streetlights, safety issues, etc. and meet the staff.
- Belmont Bay land dedication proffer is changing from 105 to 100 acres. County staff are ensuring that transfer of 5 acres to HOA will still retain connections between three open space parcels, including land where Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail will be constructed. That trail will not use the golf cart route closest to houses near Route 1
- Department of Parks and Recreation staff are negotiating easements now to create Cannon Branch Greenway trail north of Manassas Airport, going downstream past the confluence with Broad Run to the end of city-owned property. A trail connection further to Doves Landing is in the **Countywide Trails Plan**.
- Prince William Transportation Department is deploying two trail automated counters to identify patterns of bike/pedestrian use. TBC members are suggesting where to place them, in addition to the bike/pedestrian bridge at Brentsville interchange and the Neabsco Boardwalk.
- MORE will launch the next season of **s'MORE rides** in April at Andrew Leitch Park (*see photo above*) on first and third Tuesdays, 5:30-7:15pm.
- The Discovery Trail at the county landfill is still interrupted, after construction of a sewer line.

- Department of Parks and Recreation has received the first engineering design for Powells Creek Crossing from the contractor, INFORM Studios. The crossing will be much further downstream than the Powells Creek Footbridge on Route 1, which **opened in 2018**.



Route 28 - What's Next?

Now that Prince William County has cancelled the Route 28 Bypass, the challenge of improving transportation and rationalizing land use in the corridor will be addressed in two planning efforts. The Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) directed staff to consider **adding another lane in each direction** on Route 28 in Yorkshire, an option previously considered before the bypass alternative was adopted.

Any study on widening the existing highway to 6 lanes will identify major impacts to local businesses. The county also could launch a **small area plan** for Yorkshire and examine bike/pedestrian, transit, and roadway options in that process. The county's FY25 budget included additional funding for the Community Planning and Revitalization Program, but more action by the BOCS is required before the Planning Office will launch a Yorkshire Small Area Plan.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will repair the Route 28 bridge over Bull Run in April. The existing sidewalks on the bridge will remain, but no project to date is planning to provide a safe connection in Prince William County for the last 100 yards to reach those sidewalks. Just to get to the bridge over Bull Run, pedestrians must walk in a lane of busy traffic.

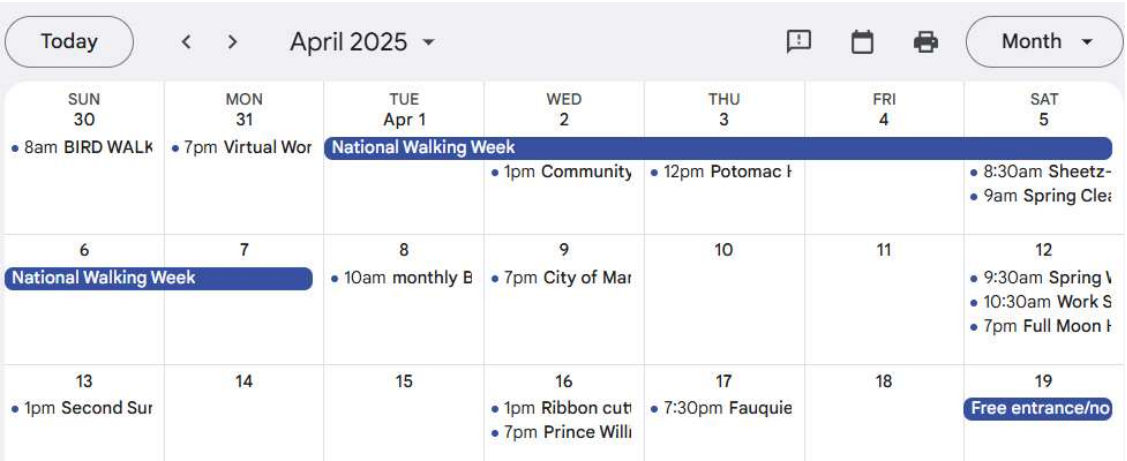
VDOT will begin construction of Phase 1 of new **innovative intersections** on Route 28 north of Manassas Drive in 2028. On sidewalks between Manassas Drive and Spruce Street, gaps will be closed and the walkways will be upgraded. For drivers, existing left turn options will be replaced with R-cut intersections with restricted crossings and median U-turns. The project will cost $28 million.

Also, Loudoun County Transit is considering launching a **commuter bus route** running from Dale City to Leesburg. It would include a stop in Manassas Park and use Route 28 during rush hour, which OmniRide avoids due to traffic congestion.

In Other News…

- The **agenda** for the April 1 meeting of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors includes an open session for questions regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Budget. It's one last chance to express support for increasing trails funding. If speaking in-person is not convenient, e-mails can be sent to **bocs@pwcgov.org**
- The first webinar in the **Trail Care Academy**, Trail Management 101, is April 1 at 1:00-2:30pm. The free training will focus on managing natural surface trails. **Register online**.
- About 60 volunteers participated in the **Marumsco Creek/Veteran's Park cleanup** on March 22 (*see photo above*). Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition organized the project. 80 bags of trash and three tires were removed.
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is **accepting applications** until May 6 for Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, a Federal 80-20 matching reimbursement program for building and rehabilitating trails and trail-related facilities. Nonprofit organizations partnered with a government body are eligible. Only maintenance, repair and amenity projects on existing trails are eligible for funding in odd-numbered years.
- **Pedestrian dies after being struck twice in Woodbridge; police looking for one of the drivers** (*InsideNOVA*, March 21)
- Town Council in Occoquan is planning to spend $1.5 million to expand the **Riverwalk**, with 80% coming from a **state grant**. Officials are also planning to budget for long-term maintenance of the wooden structure, which gets wear-and-tear from logs washing downstream and boats docking too hard.

- **Visualize 2050**, the National Capital Region Transportation Plan prepared by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), will be completed a year earlier than normal in 2025. The TPB is using a "zero-based budgeting" approach to reconsider all previously-approved projects not under construction, and accelerating the schedule to consider how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by vehicles.
- **States push to shift road funds to transit and bike projects as Trump threatens cuts** (Associated Press, March 22). A topic of discussion at the recent **National Bike Summit** was creation by 7 states of the **Clean Rides Network**, which highlights that "*transportation is second only to housing costs as the biggest share of monthly expenses for the typical American family.*"
- Trails are the cheapest investment to make in infrastructure to support mental health. Check out **Walk and Talk Therapy**.
- Board of County Supervisors is now scheduled on April 1 to accept the **donation of 39 acres** from Stack Infrastructure. The Broad Run Linear Park and Greenway Trail is planned to cross the 5 parcels being donated.
- **Alexandria's Complete Streets Program sparks debate at Agenda: Alexandria forum** (ALX NOW, March 24) "*We can't wave a magic wand and make that [bike] network happen overnight. It happens incrementally from project to project. We're not just looking five years into the future, we're looking 10 to 20 years into the future.*"
- Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve is offering a **Spring Wildflower Hike** on April 12, 9:30am-12:30pm.
- **Old trail controversy stumps new Fairfax City Council** (FFX NOW, March 25) The widening of the George Snyder Trail received $17 million in funding from I-66 Express Mobility Partners, but requires cutting down many trees. One city council member said "*I'm not against trails; I'm against roads in the woods, which is what I personally feel like this is.*"



*Note: To see trails-related events in Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park, check the **Greater Prince William Trails Coalition calendar**. To get an event added, contact us at **info@gpwtrails.org***

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