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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Mark Your Calendar: Quarterly Meeting on Thursday, January 23

Members of organizations that have joined the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition, and others interested in trails south of the Occoquan River, will gather again at the GMU Potomac Science Center on Thursday, January 23 at 10:00am.

Agenda will include discussion of the update to the Manassas transportation plan, and the recommendations of the Trails and Blueways Council for funding specific projects. **Please register** to let us know if you'll come in person or join via Zoom.

Doves Landing Master Plan Meeting on January 8

Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation has announced the **kick-off meeting** for the next steps in designing the facilities proposed in the **2022 Master Plan for Doves Landing Park** (including Sinclair Mill). The discussion will include an overview of the master planned facilities, project timeline for design, and initial design considerations. This is an opportunity to meet the design team and provide feedback.

Meeting will be 7:00-9:00pm in-person at Pat White Center at Ben Lomond, 10501 Copeland Dr., Manassas. It will also be online - attend virtually at **https://pwcparks.info/dovesmeeting**

Second Sunday Hike - January 12, 1:00-3:00pm

Following the January 8 meeting (*see above*), we will explore Dove's Landing Park. We will hike a loop of about 3.5 miles on natural surface trails winding through the woods of the Park and along the streams bordering it.

Please register, in case weather forces a rescheduling. (First Day Hike on January 1 was moved to January 12 due to predicted high winds. Bummer, but safer.)

Want Trails? Now Is the Time to Contact Elected Officials

Prince William County staff will present a draft FY26 budget to the Board of County Supervisors in January. If you want construction of trails, and their maintenance in a state of good repair to be funded, you can contact the eight top elected officials in the county now by sending an e-mail to **bocs@pwcva.gov**

For the last few months, trail advocates have been requesting that the draft include significant funding to construct the **Countywide Trails Plan** approved in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan back in 2022. You can see video of the **December 10 requests** by the chairs of the Trails and Blueways Council and the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition, starting at 54 minutes into the December 10 meeting of the supervisors.

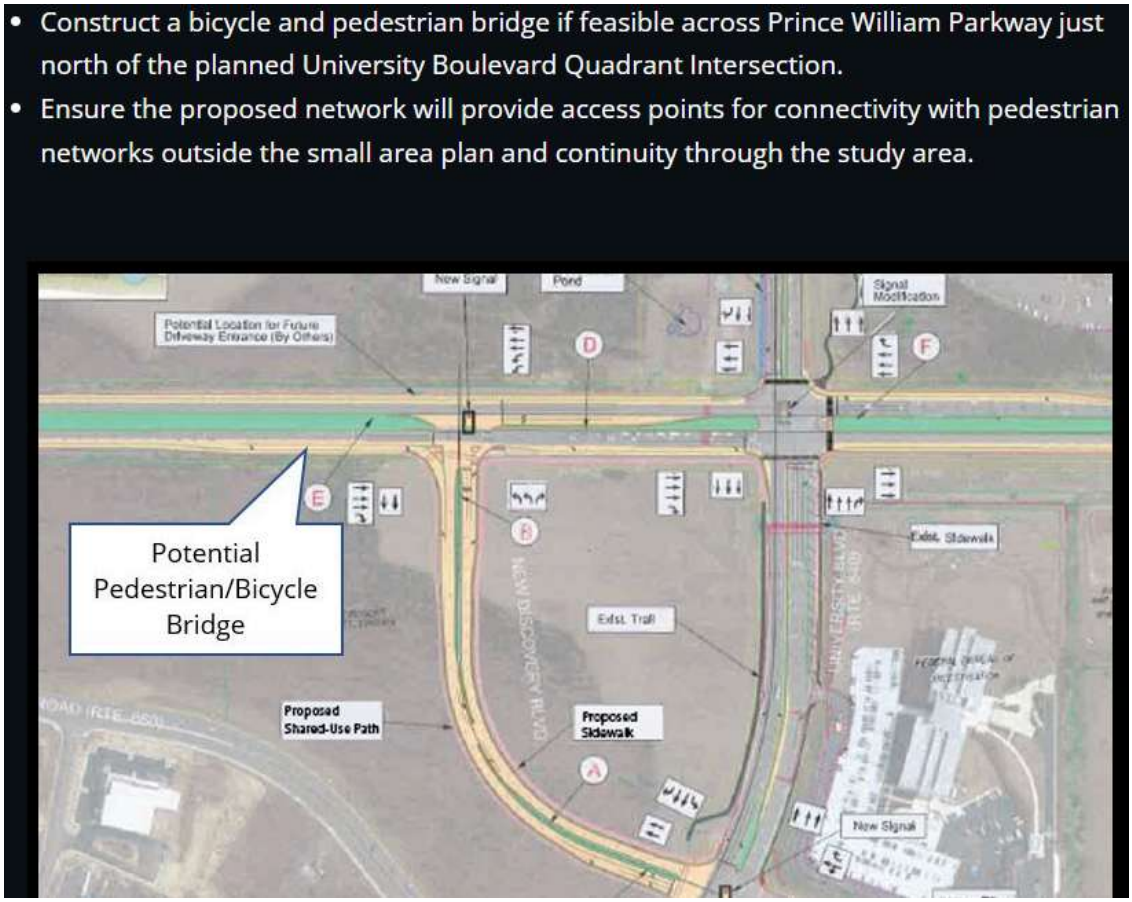
Kenny Boddye, Occoquan District Supervisor, reported in his **most recent newsletter** that "*all the new trails maintenance staff position the Board of County Supervisors funded in the FY25 budget have been filled*, *growing the crew from two people to five. The Board also funded the purchase of equipment needed to tackle trails projects.*"

Nationwide, **People for Bikes reports** that voters are approving funding initiatives for bike/pedestrian projects: "*Out of a possible $33 billion available on November ballots, voters approved an impressive $26 billion in funding to support paved and off-road bicycle infrastructure projects.*"

January 4 Hike on North Section of Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve

Join Virginia Outdoors Foundation staff for an exclusive hike on the Preserve's North Section. Explore the cultural history in the walls, springs, cemeteries, and house foundations of families who previously lived in the Bull Run Mountains and learned how they used the land.

Hike starts at 10:00am. Trails are primitive, and expect a moderate challenge (800-foot elevation change) on this 6-mile hike. **Register online**.

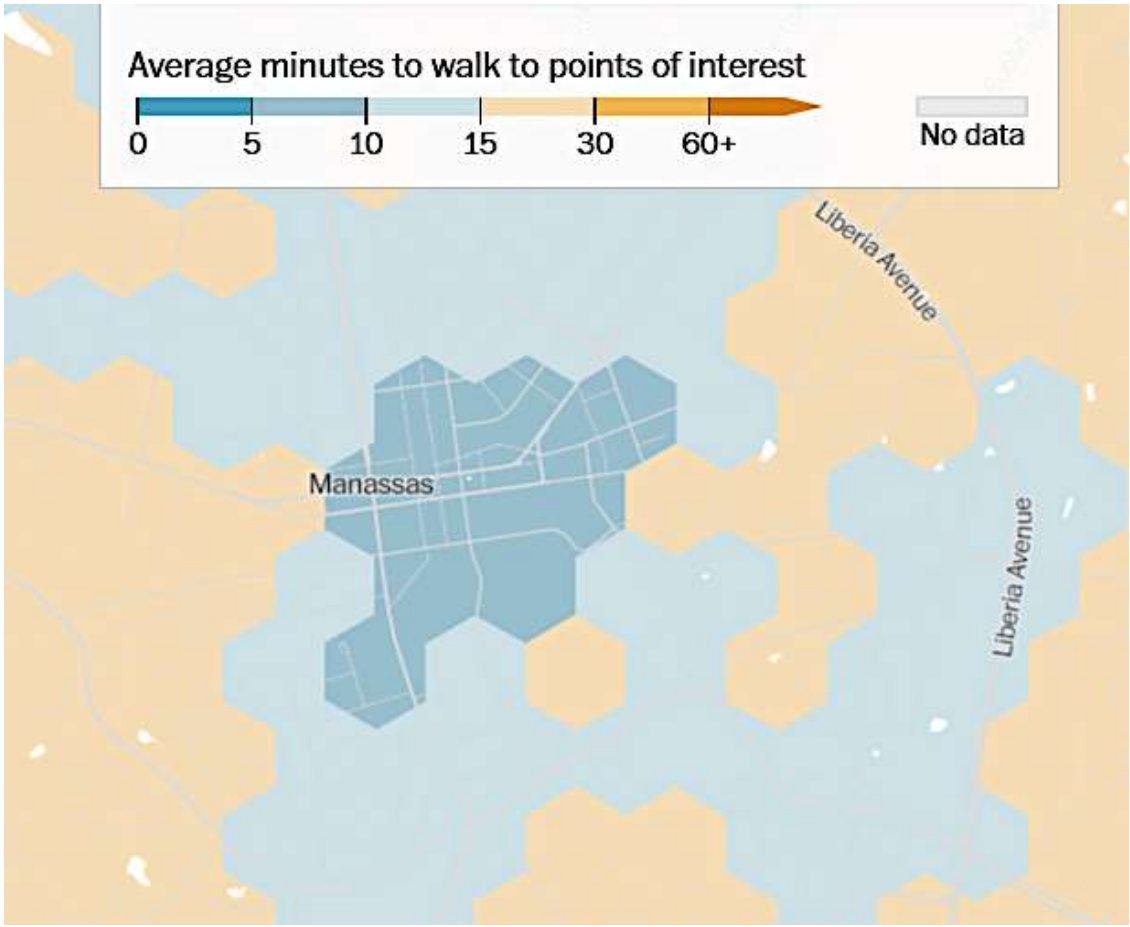


Route 234/Sudley Manor Interchange Project

The Prince William Department of Transportation has received an **unsolicited proposal** to build an interchange at Sudley Manor Drive and Prince William Parkway. It was submitted by Wagman Heavy Civil, Inc. under Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act. Wagner just completed the Route 234/Brentsville Road Interchange.

Prince William County has requested $115 million from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) for the interchange. The county will accept competing proposals from prospective offerors until February 4.

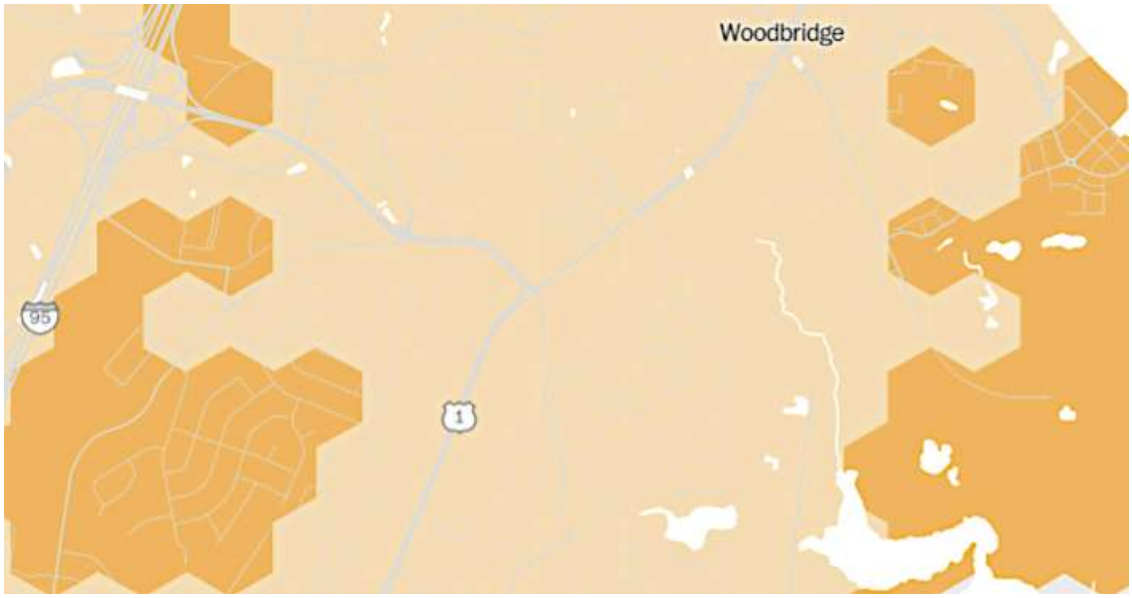
Both **Active Prince William** and the **Trails and Blueways Council** are already identifying design options for enhancing bike/pedestrian traffic at Sudley Manor Drive, and how to increase safety at the new at-grade Discovery Boulevard intersection next to University Drive. One option is to build the bike/pedestrian bridge identified in the **Innovation Park Small Area Plan** (*see above*).



Is Manassas a “15 Minute” City?

Local long-range land use plans emphasize creating walkable neighborhoods. In the last five years Manassas has funded almost all the trail projects in its Capital Improvements Program (CIP). City officials put their money where their mouth - and Comprehensive Plan - said to invest, and Manassas is now a **15-minute city**. Schools, retail and restaurants are within short walking distance of many neighborhoods.

You can use a **tool shared by the *Washington Post*** to assess many places - for example, check out the walkability of not-so-compact Woodbridge and the Route 1 corridor (below).



Pedestrian Count Study

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Data Collection Summary:

School	Bell Times	AM Volume	PM Volume	Total School Pedestrians	Total Daily Pedestrians	Percentage of School Pedestrians
Battlefield HS	7:25-2:05	12	62	74	194	38.2%
Colgan HS	7:30-2:10	11	16	27	65	41.5%
Gar-Field HS	7:30-2:10	11	44	55	148	37.2%
Unity Reed HS	7:30-2:10	37	96	133	207	64.3%
Woodbridge HS	7:30-2:10	112	141	253	393	64.4%
Woodbridge HS-ES Entrance	7:30-2:10	26	65	91	206	44.2%

Bike/Pedestrian Bridges Over Prince William County Highways

At-grade crossings are more dangerous for cars than grade-separated interchanges. The same applies for bikers and pedestrians, but bridges are expensive. Prince William County staff has assessed bike/pedestrian traffic near six high schools. The **report to the Board of County Supervisors** on December 17 concluded that the effectiveness of a grade-separated crossing depends on whether it is easy to use compared to scooting across highways, and recommended alternative safety improvements rather than bridges to high schools.

At Battlefield High School, staff recommended against building a $20 million pedestrian bridge over Route 15. It proposed two other action items instead:
- Construct a parking lot at the end of Graduation Drive to reduce pedestrians crossing Route 15.
- Extend the trail north on the west side of Route 15 from the intersection of Dominion Valley Drive to Catharpin Creek, where it will cross under Route 15 and connect with the existing trail network.

The staff report endorsed the planned $15 million North Woodbridge Pedestrian Bridge over Route 1 at the VRE station. It would consolidate pedestrian paths and provide the safest crossing alternative for the expected volumes.

Girl Scouts Build a Bridge on Chopawamsic Trail

Back in September on Public Lands Day, the High Adventure troop of the Girl Scouts of the Nation's Capital built a 24-foot long bridge in Prince William Forest Park. The project replaced the "bouncy bridge," which had been formed from an old airplane door, that had weakened enough to become a safety hazard.

You can read the whole story in the December issue of the **Potomac Appalachian**, from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). *(What will you be doing on Public Lands Day on September 27, 2025?)*

Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve **reports** "*On a cheery chilly December day, twelve volunteers joined preserve staff to rebuild an aging 20-foot footbridge on the Fern Hollow Trail. They hiked the lumber and tools a mile in and hiked out the old rotting tread boards.*"

In Other News…

- The Virginia Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) 2025 Winter Meeting is January 14, 10:00am-noon. See **the agenda**. You can **join by Zoom** (passcode is 961006).
- Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is February 12. **Nominations are due** by January 11.
- The latest newsletter from the **Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center** includes "The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) released the **Climate Strategies that Work Playbook** featuring 28 strategies to help communities reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. Guess what - better trails for safe walking and biking reduces car traffic, and reducing vehicle miles traveled helps save the planet.

- **Cycling can make seniors healthier and more independent – here's how to design bikes and networks that meet their needs** (*The Conversation*, November 27) "*In response to survey questions about the most important features of a senior-friendly bike network, participants said they wanted to be able to bike for 30 minutes at a stretch, ride twice a week and have a bathroom available*."
- Got video of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail? Federal agencies are developing a National Scenic & Historic Trails Leadership Cornerstone Training video series, and the contractor is looking for content. For more details, contact Andrew Braker directly at Andrew Braker at **abraker@logansimpson.com**
- Looking for trails training, including learning credits for professional certification? Check out the **Advancing Trails Webinar Series** offered by **American Trails**.
- Kimberly Palacios was **appointed on December 10** by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to the Prince William County Trails and Blueways Council. She is one of the two representatives for the Potomac District.
- The 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway will cross 15 states, including Prince William County. The ambitious trail project started in 1991 and is now 40% completed. Elliot Caldwell tells the history on a **Mechanics of Transportation podcast**.
- When it's cold, air pressure drops in bike tires. The **Washington Area Bicyclist Association** (WABA) recommends an **ABC Check** before a ride. (ABC = Air/Brakes/Chain). WABA has also posted its **Virginia Advocacy 2024 Wrap Up**. "*Statewide, things didn't go quite as we hoped at the General Assembly...*"
- "**CaBi is a huge success, Will the program structure allow it to keep growing regionally?**" (*Greater Greater Washington*, December 2, 2024) To enhance Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) use, "*Mayor Muriel Bowser has pledged to put a bikeshare station within a quarter-mile of 90% of DC residents' homes*."
- **Pedestrian and cyclist fatalities have doubled in Fairfax County this year, study finds** (*FFX NOW,* December 11) "*A total of 19 pedestrians have died this year through November - a substantial increase from the 10 tallied in 2023…*"
- The first episode of the Virginia Department of Health podcast series, **Health in the Commonwealth: Advancing Health Equity Across the Lifespan**, explores how Roanoke created a vibrant art mural that has slowed traffic and increased pedestrian access to essential services.
- Wanna get smarter in 2025? View one of over 600 **Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center webinars** archived since 2022.
- The City of Chesapeake approved the **Chesapeake Trails and Connectivity Plan** (TConn) in November. Elliott Caldwell from the East Coast Greenway served on the TConn steering committee. **As described** by the East Coast Greenway, the TConn "*prioritizes local connections to schools and key destinations within the population center, focusing on areas that will benefit the largest number of trail users right from the start*."
- **Traffic Engineers Propose Two-Way Streets and Bike Lanes to Slow Down Fredericksburg Drivers** (*Potomac News*, December 20) The city is considering converting select one-way streets to two-way streets in a downtown area, designating bike lanes, and implementing traffic calming measures intended to slow drivers.
- The American Bicycle Federation has released its **2024 Bicycle Friendly State Report Card** with a state-specific **report for Virginia**, which ranked 12th in the nation.

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The Greater Price William Trails Coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization (EIN: 92-3087298).
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