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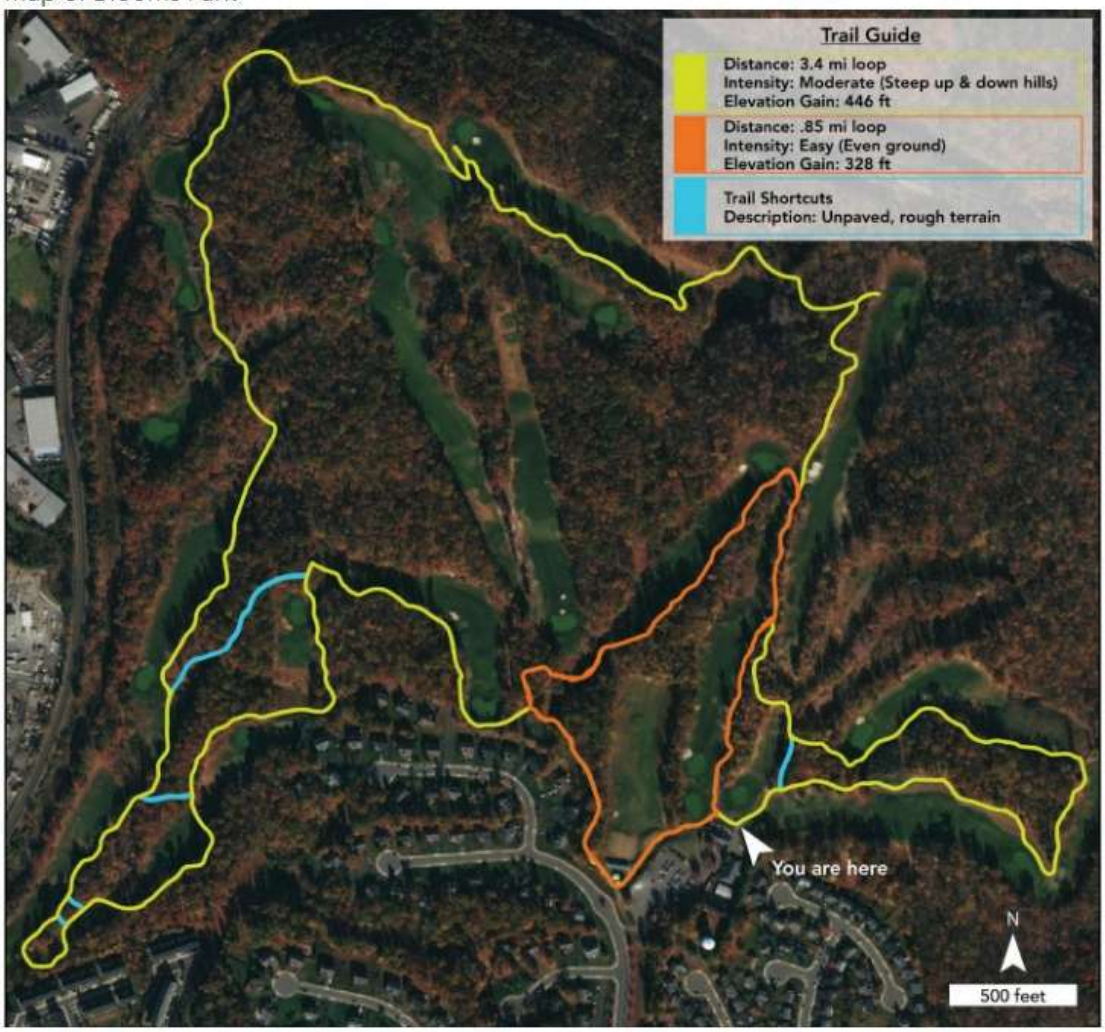
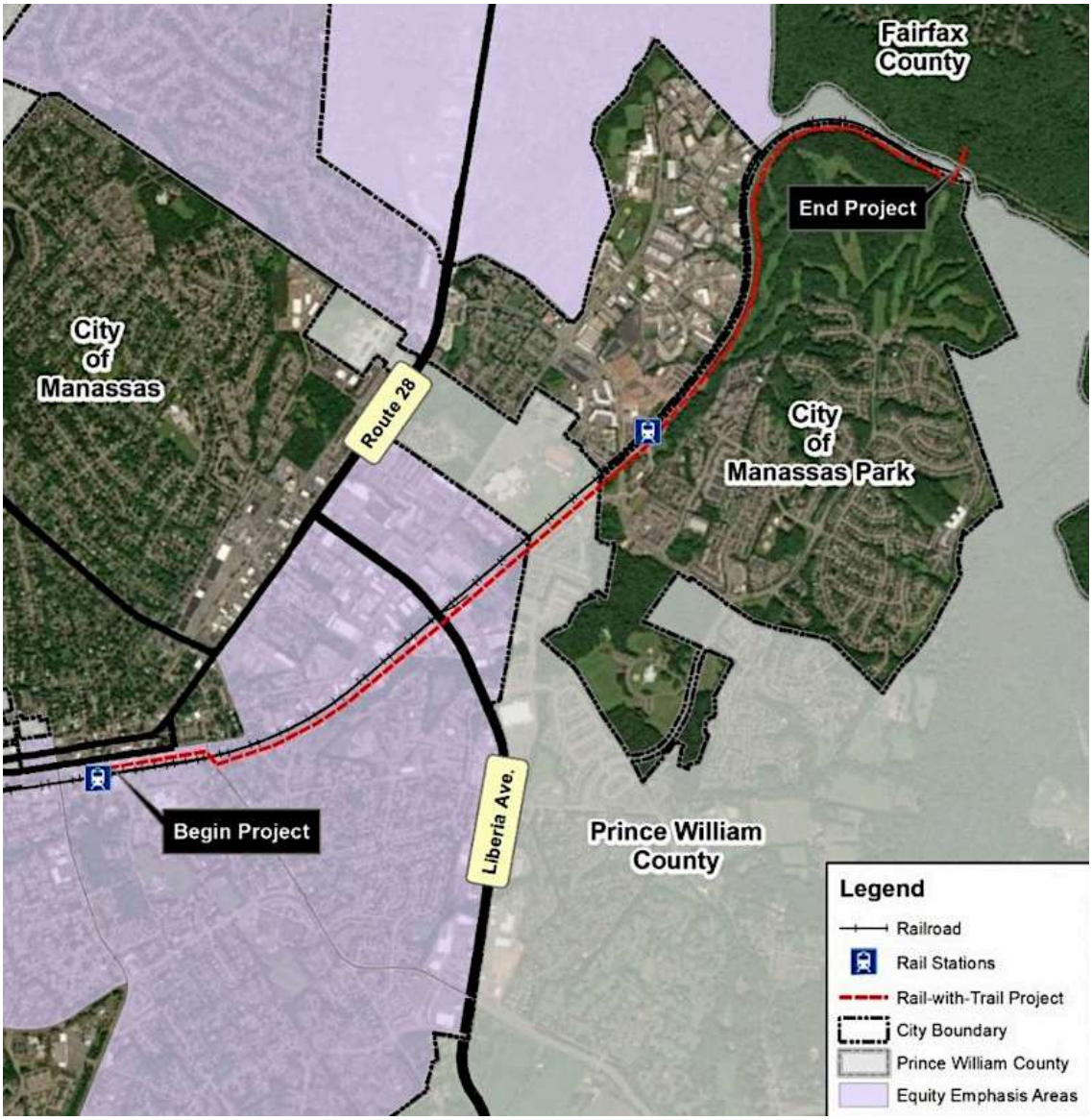
Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Map of Blooms Park



Second Sunday (July 14) Hike: Blooms Park

On July 14 we will hike a scenic 3.5 mile route in Blooms Park, a 270-acre park within the City of Manassas Park. Blooms Park was formerly a golf course. The route is mostly on blacktop paths, formerly used by the golf carts. It's a wooded, hilly area; there will be a number of hill climbs and descents on the route. Please register at **https://tinyurl.com/e27h4m8s** to get details.



What Was Discussed at June 27 Quarterly Meeting

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST)

- Prince William County has chosen a contractor (ATCS) for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant expected to define the preferred route to close three gaps.
- initial submission of the Destination Place rezoning (**REZ2024-00033**) proposes placing the PHNST far from the Occoquan River waterfront
- Belmont Bay rezoning proposes placing PHNST through the former golf course, as proposed in Mobility Chapter of Prince William County 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Town of Occoquan is planning a boardwalk to go along entire river waterfront through town, suitable for East Coast Greenway and PHNST route designation. Boardwalk is 1/3 finished now.

- Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) will be collecting the last data in July for the survey of signs and other amenities. In one stretch, turns out every tree was blazed…

Connecting with Fairfax County

- There are two phases in the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) grant application submitted by Prince William County, Manassas Park and Manassas to build a trail parallel to Norfolk Southern railroad track outside the actual right-of-way.
- Phase One (*see above*) would link Manassas railroad depot with the Bull Run/Occoquan Trail n Fairfax County, passing through Park Central (**Virginia's Newest Downtown**) in Manassas Park. Phase Two would extend trail all the way to Alexandria. Detailed design would require a future grant, perhaps from Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). Trail was identified in 2023 when City of Manassas Park completed its Active Transportation Plan.
- Town of Occoquan is particularly interested in creating a trail network that loops under Route 123. Trail would pass trough NOVAParks property on the Fairfax County side of the river. One option is a new crossing over Occoquan River to PHNST route underneath Route 1 and I-95 on Prince William County side.

Design and Construction Standards Manual (DSCM)

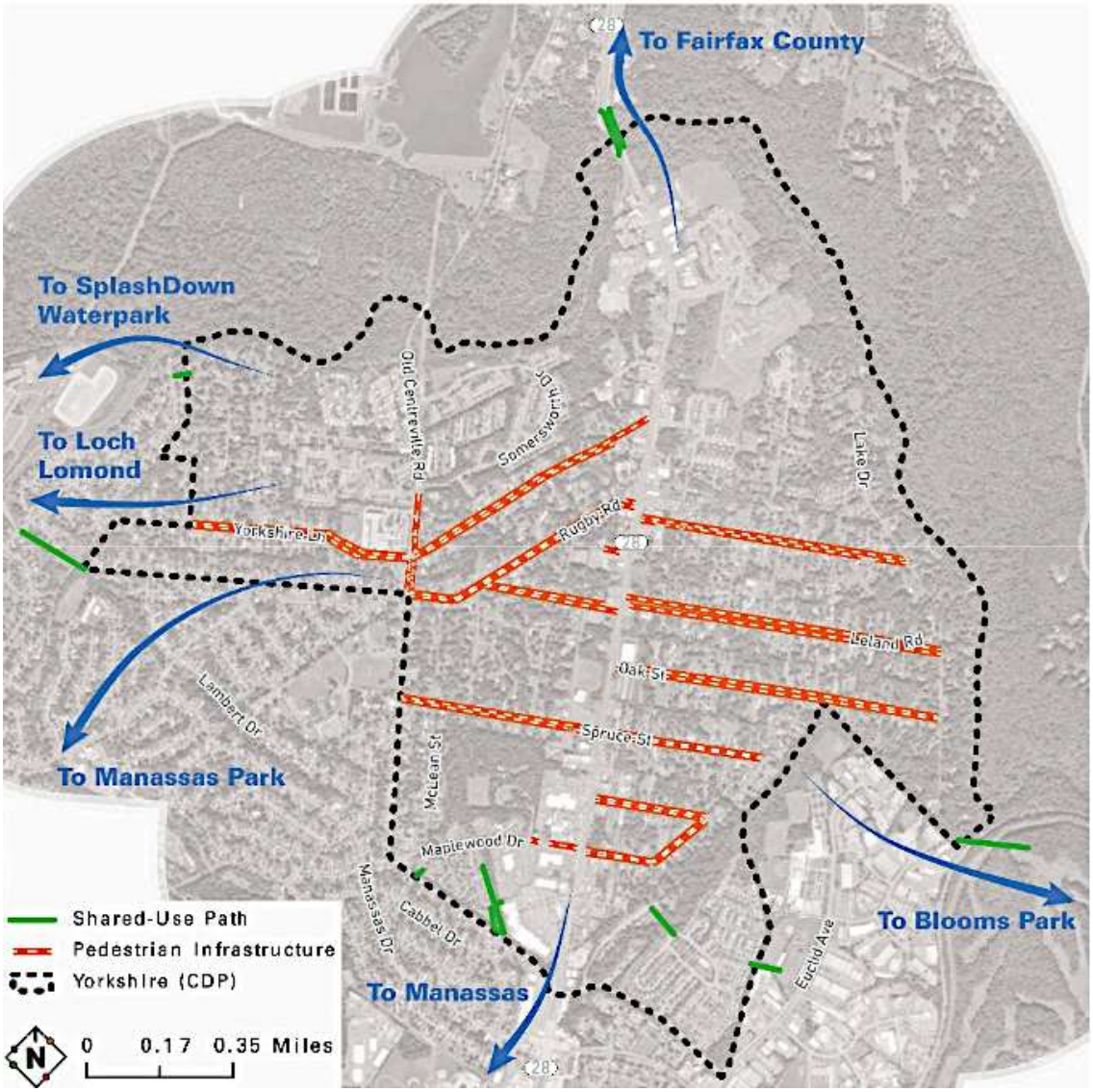
- The Transportation Chapter (**Section 600**) is being revised by the Prince William Transportation Department and Planning Office. **Active Prince William** is reviewing the draft document and preparing suggestions.
- Bike and pedestrian facilities for "by right" development are part of Section 600. The latest draft will be presented to the **DCSM/Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee** (DORAC) on July 25.

Recreational Trails Summit

- Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) has assembled a team to plan for the annual trails summit. It may be split into a virtual day on September 5 and an in-person meeting on September 9.

Upcoming Hikes

- see **calendar** to register for Second Sunday and "South of the Occoquan" hikes



Yorkshire Study Released

The **Route 28 – Yorkshire Multimodal Corridor Study**, funded by a Transportation-Land Use Connections (TLC) grant, concluded that "*Route 28 is a hostile environment especially for people who are walking and bicycling. There is a lack of transportation infrastructure outside of infrastructure for vehicles. Numerous intersections lack basic treatments like crosswalks, signalization, pedestrian signal heads, and ADA compliance. Where sidewalks existed, they were often disconnected and in short, fragmented spans.*"

The list of recommended improvements included extending the sidewalk network, adding high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian refuges at intersections, building a shared-use path on the west side of Route 28 to accommodate cyclists, applying traffic calming tools and downsizing some roads to just 2 lanes, and building more shared-use paths.

A Planning Commission work session on study recommendations is being scheduled for September 11.

New Roundabout Opens on Grant Avenue

The new roundabout on Grant Avenue in Manassas opened on June 27. That stretch will be more bikeable and walkable when the road diet with trail is completed - check out the city's **Facebook video**.

Quantico Creek Boardwalk Proposal

Jacob Giovia in Supervisor Andrea Bailey's office organized an online meeting on June 26, so Kimberly Palacios could present her proposal for a trail/boardwalk along some or all of the north side of Quantico Creek.

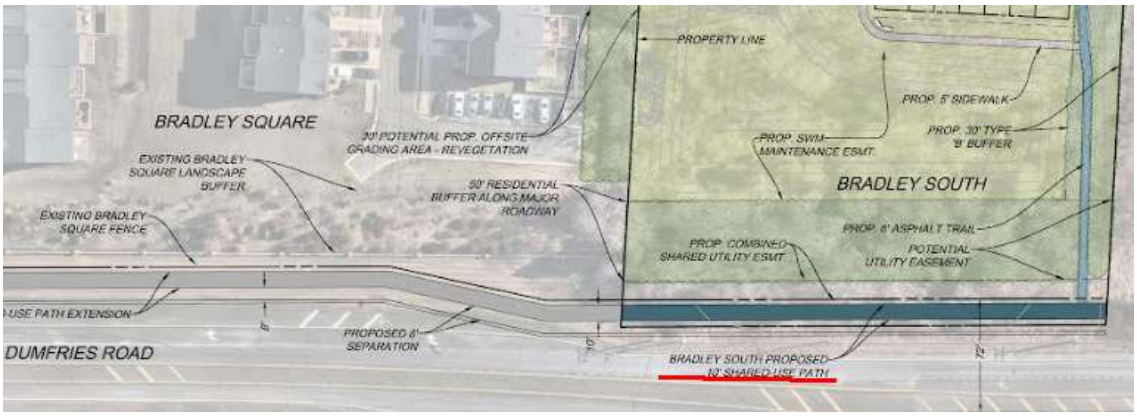
Town of Dumfries and Prince William County officials got briefed. They will consider the Quantico Creek Boardwalk proposal as they continue their planning for a trail connecting Powell's Creek and Dumfries. That segment potentially could be part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

In the meantime, junk vehicles have been removed from the property on Colonial Port Road off of Possum Point Road. Dumfries is planning for a boat ramp there, as it strives to become a "place to go to" rather than a "place to go through."

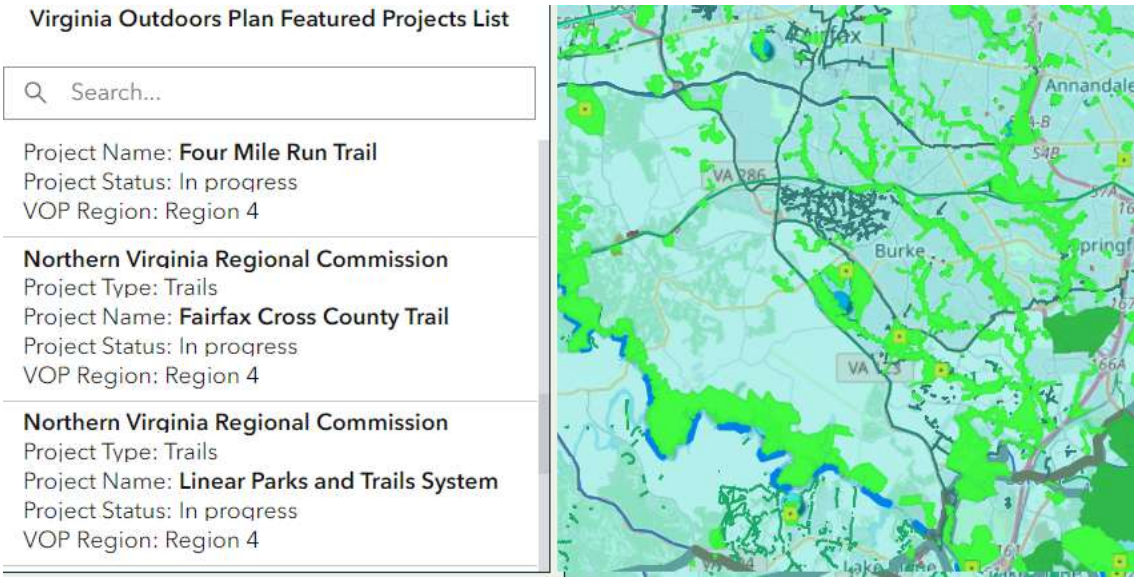
Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Meeting Notes

- A contractor (Dewberry) has been hired to develop the Dove's Landing Master Plan. The Preserve at Long Branch developer is still responsible for building a fair-weather crossing (not a bridge) to connect the trail to the site of Sinclair Mill on the edge of Lake Jackson.

- The Potomac Shores developer has submitted a site plan for building the PHNST from the new town center to Powell's Creek.



*The **Bradley South rezoning** is now proposing a 10'-wide Shared Use Path.*
Earlier proposal had just a 5'-wide sidewalk.



Virginia Outdoors Plan 2024

The statewide comprehensive outdoors recreation plan is being updated to create **Virginia Outdoors Plan 2024**. .

Since the 2018 version, the State Trails Office was created in the Virginia Department of Trasnportation (VDOT). Of particular interest in the 2024 plan are the sections **Building Trail Networks Across Virginia** and **Virginia's State Trails Planning Ecosystem.**

State and Federal funding is prioritized for projects listed in the state plan. Prince William County received a **Land and Water Conservation Fund** (LWCF) grant for the Neabsco boardwalk in 2022 and an **Recreational Trails Program** (RTP) award for the Metz boardwalk and trail in 2020. What is now **Blooms Park** in the City of Manassas Park was purchased with LWCF money as well. That blocked potential for conversion of the 18 holes to residential development when General's Ridge Golf Course was closed.

Local trails and park advocates might suggest the Northern Virginia Region should highlight that Prince William County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes building a trails network that adds 350 more miles. The Comprehensive Plan also proposes to double the size of the county park system from 5,000 to 10,000 acres, to catch up after doubling of the population.

The **public comment** period closes July 31.

The Answer: Use a Bike *(Ugh, What's the Question?)*

Don't like the increasing number of 90° days? Reduce your CO2 emissions - use a bike for short trips.

Yes, zero emission electric vehicles (EV's) are coming… but not in time to meet the 2030 targets established by local jurisdictions for lowering greenhouse gas emissions. According to the **Transportation Emissions Dashboard** of the **State Smart Transportation Initiative**, only 13% of the vehicle fleet in Virginia will be electric in 2025.

litter captured by the "bandalong" on Neabsco Creek, before it reaches Neabsco Boardwalk

In Other News…

- Mark your calendar - next GPWTC Quarterly Meeting will be October 25, 10:00-11:30am. You can **register now**.
- **Putting the Brakes on E-Bikes** (Energy Institute at Haas, June 24) *Since essentially all e-bikes sold in the US are made in China, the 25% tariff on Chinese e-bikes is essentially a tax on all e-bikes. Sure enough, e-bike companies have already announced price increases…*
- Looking fo something other than a spy novel to read at the beach? There are many resources at the **Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center** (PBIC) of the US Department of Transportation that might cause your adrenaline levels to climb, such as **Improving Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity During Rehabilitation of Existing Bridges**.
- **New Virginia law allows localities to drop state highway speed limits to 15 mph. Will they?** (WUSA, June 26) Lower speed limits in residential districts are now an option to increase bike/pedestrian safety. "*A spokesperson for Prince William County said currently officials aren't considering lowering the speed limits below 20 mph on any of the public roads. Some private neighborhoods are set to 20 mph.*"
- George Mason University's Potomac Science Center, where the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition holds its quarterly meetings, is raising funds for a new dock and a boat. Dr.

Chris Jones, the academic director, **says** ""We have to have a long gangway, essentially just a raised walkway to get out to near where the water is deep enough to have boats."

- Prince William Police Department is looking for qualified individuals interested in becoming **School Crossing Guards**. Must be willing to work both mornings and afternoons, Monday through Friday when school is in session. The Crossing Guard Unit provides training.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee** (BPAC) will meet on July 24, 10:00am-noon - see **agenda**. No registration is necessary. Just show up at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, 407 E Water Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902. You can also **join virtually** (Meeting ID: 835 7483 0685, Passcode: 440706)
- The League of American Bicyclists invite everyone to grind some gravel this summer. Check out the **Gravel Cycling 101** webinar.
- "**Traffic engineers build roads that invite crashes because they rely on outdated research and faulty data**," (*The Conversation,* June 21) *"..based on later trends, my estimate is that some 930,000 pedestrians and bicyclists have been killed by automobiles in the U.S."*

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