
Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

March 2026 Newsletter

Check out the [calendar](#) of events and our latest [blog posts](#).

<i>Funding Sources (Revenue)</i>	Project Estimate	Prior Yrs Actual	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY27 - FY32	Future
ARPA	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Revenue	1,730	1,730	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
General Funds	4,223	223	-	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	4,000	-
Other Revenue	825	825	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proffers	2,274	2,274	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	9,552	5,552	-	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	4,000	-
<i>Cost Categories (Expenditures)</i>											
Design/Planning	725	634	49	41	-	-	-	-	-	41	-
Construction	8,827	743	1,832	6,252	-	-	-	-	-	6,252	-
Total Expenditure	9,552	1,378	1,881	6,293	-	-	-	-	-	6,293	-

Funding Trails: the Latest Regarding FY27 County Budget

The proposed **FY27 budget** (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027) for Prince William County includes \$1 million for trails construction from the General Fund, plus a one-time addition of \$4 million from the General Fund to extend the Neabsco Boardwalk to Leesylvania State Park.

The Board of County Supervisors is expected to approve a Trails Master Plan in several months. No funding to implement that plan is identified in the **FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program** (CIP), which is proposed to increase 50% to \$1.6 billion in FY27.

As shown above by blanks in outyears for Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (see p.425), there is no new funding for new trail projects in FY28, FY29, FY30, FY31, or FY32.

Trail advocates are asking for a steady \$5 million/year in funding every year to build the low-cost “low hanging fruit” trails, plus a one-time major funding infusion (if a bond issue is approved by voters in November 2026) to build the more-expensive projects.

Post-COVID, all construction projects are significantly more expensive. Sidewalks in Prince William County are now costing \$15 million/mile. The Capital Trail Coalition **estimated** in 2019 that over \$1 billion was required to complete the Capital Trails Network north of the Occoquan River, assuming \$2.7 million per mile for over 400 miles of paved bike paths.

There are still opportunities to build miles of low-cost natural surface trails that do not require expensive bridges or land acquisition. The National Park Service has estimated costs for such trails, when built with volunteer help, at \$30,000/mile. Specific “low hanging fruit” possibilities are identified in a [blog post](#) by the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition.

Question: Why should people who care about trails get involved in a budget process?

Answer: Trail projects proposed in the 2040 Mobility Chapter and the upcoming Trails Master Plan are good only for virtual use. Bikers, walkers, strollers, etc. who want to use a trail in real life need to get elected officials and voters to direct funding to actually build the bike/pedestrian network over the next two decades.

As noted on the first slide at the start of the county staff February 21 presentation on the draft budget:

“A county budget is more than a financial plan - it is a statement of our values and a roadmap for how we invest in the people, places, and services that make our community thrive.”

The public can speak [in person](#) and [online](#), and send e-mails with comments on budget priorities directly to the elected county supervisors at bocs@pwcgov.org There is also a [webpage](#) to submit specific questions to staff and view answers.



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail ford across Pimmit Run was [upgraded](#) by National Park Service and multiple partners in January

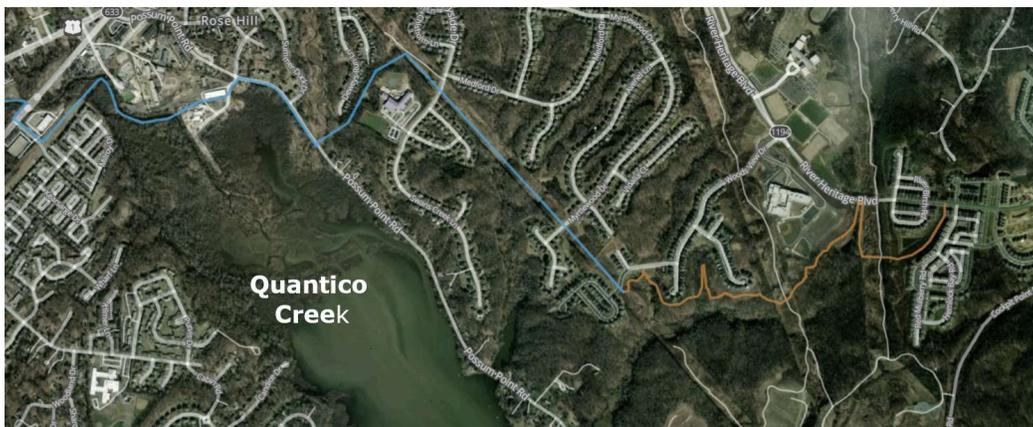
General Assembly Update

Our Virginia Outdoors has identified **budget amendments** for trails funding. One introduced by Del. Michelle Maldonado would affect our area:

Item 103 #15h - \$4 million for City of Manassas Park to make improvements including completing sidewalks, addressing sidewalk gaps, lighting and signage issues, and initiating a feasibility study for trails. However, that funding was not included in the **subcommittee reports**.

HB661 was reported 13-1 by the Senate Transportation Committee on February 26 and re-referred to the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. It will be heard by that committee next week, after which it could be advanced for a vote on the Senate Floor.

The fiscal impact statement claimed it would cost an estimated \$1,000 per intersection to evaluate hundreds of Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) pedestrian crossing signals to ensure they are safe for use by bike riders.



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Update

National Park Service has organized a virtual meeting on March 19 from 9:30am-3:00pm to discuss building partnerships for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST). Other national trails offer a model to consider. For details, **contact** Jennifer Wampler.

The National Park Service will hold a public comment period before starting development of a PHNST Comprehensive Plan. After a draft plan is developed, a follow-up comment period is anticipated in March 2027. Currently the National Park Service requires a renewal every five years of the **partnership agreements** with jurisdictions through which the trail passes. That approach may be revisited in the upcoming PHNST Comprehensive Plan.

There is now a planned route for the PHNST through Prince William County, as shown on the National Park Service **map**. (*The planned connection from Potomac Shores to Dumfries is shown above.*)

Leesylvania State Park currently closes the PHNST segment passing through the park when the parking lot is full. Discussions are planned with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to keep PHNST open, since hikers walking into the park do not fill parking spaces.

Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation has scheduled a virtual meeting for a

design review of Powells Creek Crossing on March 4, 6:30pm. If interested, contact Robert Boyd at RBoyd1@pwcgov.org for a link.



Transportation Planning Board Funding for Alternative Transportation Projects

The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has **approved** \$2,500,000 in FY27 and FY28 Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program funds** to fill in existing sidewalk gaps and build a pedestrian crossing across Centreville Road.

Adding 0.2 miles of sidewalk along Centreville Road between Weir Place and Prim Lane, as well as on Carriage Lane and Reb Yank Drive, will connect a residential community of about 300 residents to the Weems Elementary School and other commercial businesses along the corridor.

Also approved:

- \$2,388,529 in Manassas Park for a 0.21 mile Shared Use Path on the west side of Manassas Drive, for a continuous shared-use path between Broad Street and Railroad Drive. It will improve bike/pedestrian connections to the new Park Central downtown and Virginia Railway Express station.

- \$2,470,256 for the Old Carolina/Jefferson Street Sidewalk across the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks, from Somerset Crossing to Fayette Street, to connect Prince William County with Haymarket. Project includes adding a crosswalk immediately south of the railroad tracks and a pedestrian automatic gate at the railroad crossing (*example above*).

Prince William County officials objected strongly to plans by the Virginia Department of Transportation to build a giant culvert underneath I-95 and block the planned route of the Neabsco Greenway (*shown above*) passing through the same area. For more details, see the start of the story in the **February 2025** newsletter.

At the moment, no funding has been allocated by Prince William County to acquire right-of-way and construct the segment of the Neabsco Greenway that would pass through the area.



Community Health Improvement Plan

The **Community Health Improvement Plan** meeting (March 2, 10:00am-1:00pm) is an opportunity to discuss community health priorities and help shape future health initiatives.

Trails are getting recognized as an essential part of health infrastructure, for mental health as well as physical exercise. There are two ways to encourage individuals to get healthier:

- convince people to change their behavior (*eat better, exercise more...*)
- provide convenient facilities for healthier behavior

Building a network of trails near where people live is a low-cost, low-maintenance option for “make it easy to exercise” infrastructure, compared to the cost of building a large number of gyms/recreation centers near where people live.

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission **has estimated** that just the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail generates over \$400 million in health benefits. Back in 2020, the Capital Trails Coalition **calculated** that the National Capital Trail Network would generate \$500 million in annual health cost savings.

In Other News...

- Rails to Trails Conservancy is offering a three-part webinar on **“Opposition to Trails: Tools for Understanding and Transforming Conflict When There Is Resistance to Trail Projects”** on March 11, 18, and 25.
- **E-Bike Boosters Ask: Is It All Downhill From Here?** (*Bloomberg, January 14*) *“E-bike excitement reached a crescendo when Covid-19 struck in 2020, as many people stuck at home sought fresh air and exercise... Tariffs pose a major danger since few models are built*

domestically. Cities' hesitations to expand cycle lane networks are undermining demand for biking writ large."

- **High-stress paint-only bike lanes in U.S. cities: Prevalence in 2024 and patterns of geographical variation over 442 municipalities** (*Journal of Cycling and Micromobility Research*, March 2026) "...61% of the length of paint-only bike lanes nationwide was classified as high stress.... nearly all low-stress paint-only lanes were located on roads with speed limits of 25 mph and a single motor-vehicle lane in each direction, while most paint-only lanes overall were installed on faster, multi-lane roadways."
- **Fairfax County seeks corporate sponsors, more varied locations for Capital Bikeshare network** (*FFX Now*, February 25) "Currently operated by Lyft, Capital Bikeshare started operations in 2010 in Arlington and D.C. It debuted in Fairfax County in 2016 and now has 96 docking stations in the county that are expected to grow to 126 by the end of this year. Planned additions include the Town of Vienna's first five stations, which are on track to launch this summer."



Need bling? *East Coast Greenway (from Maine to Florida) now sells a Moose to Manatee t-shirt.*

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