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**Greater
Prince
William** **TRAILS**
COALITION

April 25 - GPWTC Quarterly Meeting

Quarterly Meetings are designed so trail managers and advocates will carve out time in busy schedules and discover opportunities to work in synch with partners and fellow travelers. Greater Prince William Trails Coalition “adds value” by building a network of trail-ers where plans, events, policies, signage, and anything else trails-related can be coordinated informally.

Next gathering of the flock will be Thursday, April 25, 10:00-11:30am. You can join in person at the **GMU Potomac Science Center** or via Zoom.

*NOTE: Please **sign up**, so we'll know how much coffee and donuts to bring.*

Keynote speaker will be **Dr. Robert Zarr** on “Prescribing Nature as Medicine.” He is founder and medical director of **Park Rx America**. Agenda also includes updates on Bike to Work Day, the “Explore South of the Occoquan” hiking initiative with the Sierra Club, and funding for trails in the FY2025 county budget.



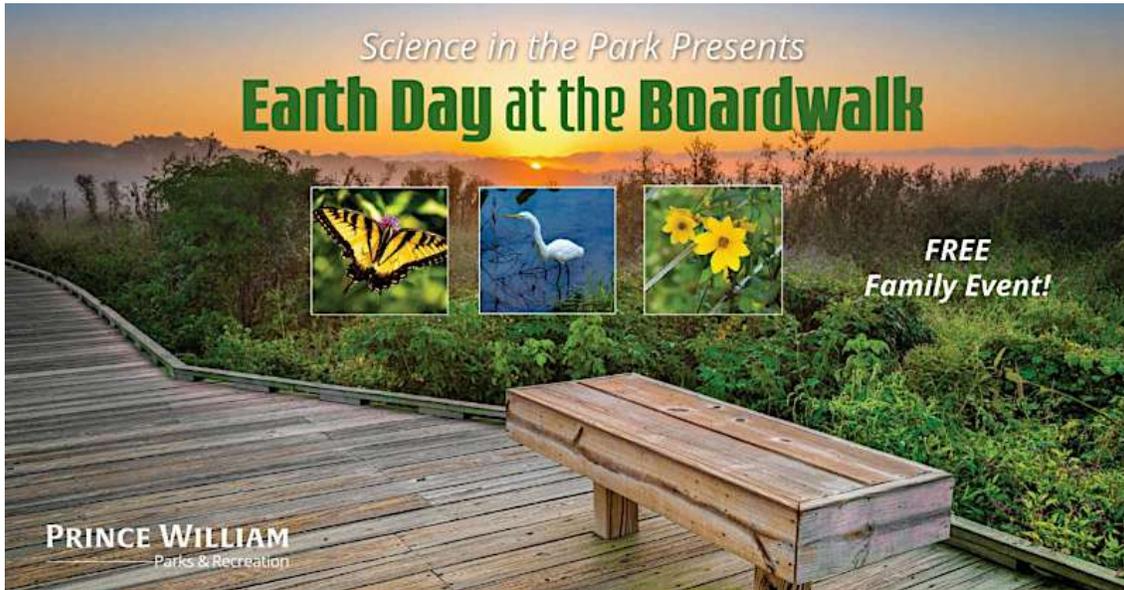
New Trails Funding in FY25 Budget!

\$1 million for trail construction funding was approved by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors in the **FY25 budget markup session** on April 16. Motion was made by Occoquan District Supervisor **Kenny Boddye** to add new dedicated mobility funding, with an emphasis on trails and pedestrian/bike connectivity.

The \$1 million was added to the Transportation Department budget, rather than Department of Parks and Recreation budget, so it would count towards the county’s minimum of local funding required to qualify for Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) regional funding. Rick

Canizales, director of the Transportation Department, noted “*We work with parks in doing projects.*”

Prior to markup, \$325,000 and 3 FTE for trails maintenance had already been added before the markup session. The Board of County Supervisors also added \$1.2 million for park facility maintenance, almost doubling the current \$1.4 million for maintenance. When leading support for the additional parks maintenance funding, Brentsville District Supervisor **Tom Gordy** noted “*We’ve already invested money in these parks. We own these parks... I would rather not be taking on new land for more parks when we can’t take care of the ones we have now...*”



April 22: Earth Day At Neabsco Boardwalk

Enjoy a stroll down the Neabsco Creek Boardwalk between 9:00am-1:00pm with hands-on "Discovery Stations" set up along the way. Learn about the wetlands' most beautiful animals and the habitat they call home in this Science in the Parks program.

Park Naturalists will discuss the mammals, birds, pollinators and plants that make the Boardwalk such an unforgettable experience and **a perfect way to celebrate Earth Day!**



April 27: “Explore South of the Occoquan” Initiative

Sierra Club - Great Falls Group is partnering with the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition and other groups to offer a series of guided hikes in 2024 in Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

Local guides will provide natural and cultural history at special places between the Blue Ridge and Potomac River, and between the Occoquan River/Bull Run and Chopawamsic Creek/Cedar Run.

In addition to just having fun, walking around places with guides will provide context and background for those interested in getting more engaged with local conservation opportunities/challenges.

Hikes are scheduled for roughly two hours each, typically 3-4 miles on easy/moderate natural surface trails. These are family friendly expeditions - even dogs (on a leash) are welcome on most hikes.

First “Explore South of the Occoquan” hike is April 27, 10:00am-noon. We will explore some of the 150+ acres along Broad Run acquired by American Battlefield Trust and not normally open to the public. We will view Broad Run from a 75' high bluff and see two beaver lodges. This is part of the historic **Bristoe Station battlefield**. County park historians will provide on-site interpretation. Register at **Sierra Club Potomac Regional Outings** site.



Occoquan River Waterfront Rezoning Proposed - Without a Waterfront Route for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

The “Destination Place” rezoning (**REZ2024-00033**) would authorize 485 dwelling units on 18 acres in the North Woodbridge Town Center. The proposed route for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is a 10-foot wide multi-use path along Annapolis Way (yellow line) rather than the path in the 2040 Mobility Chapter (brown line).

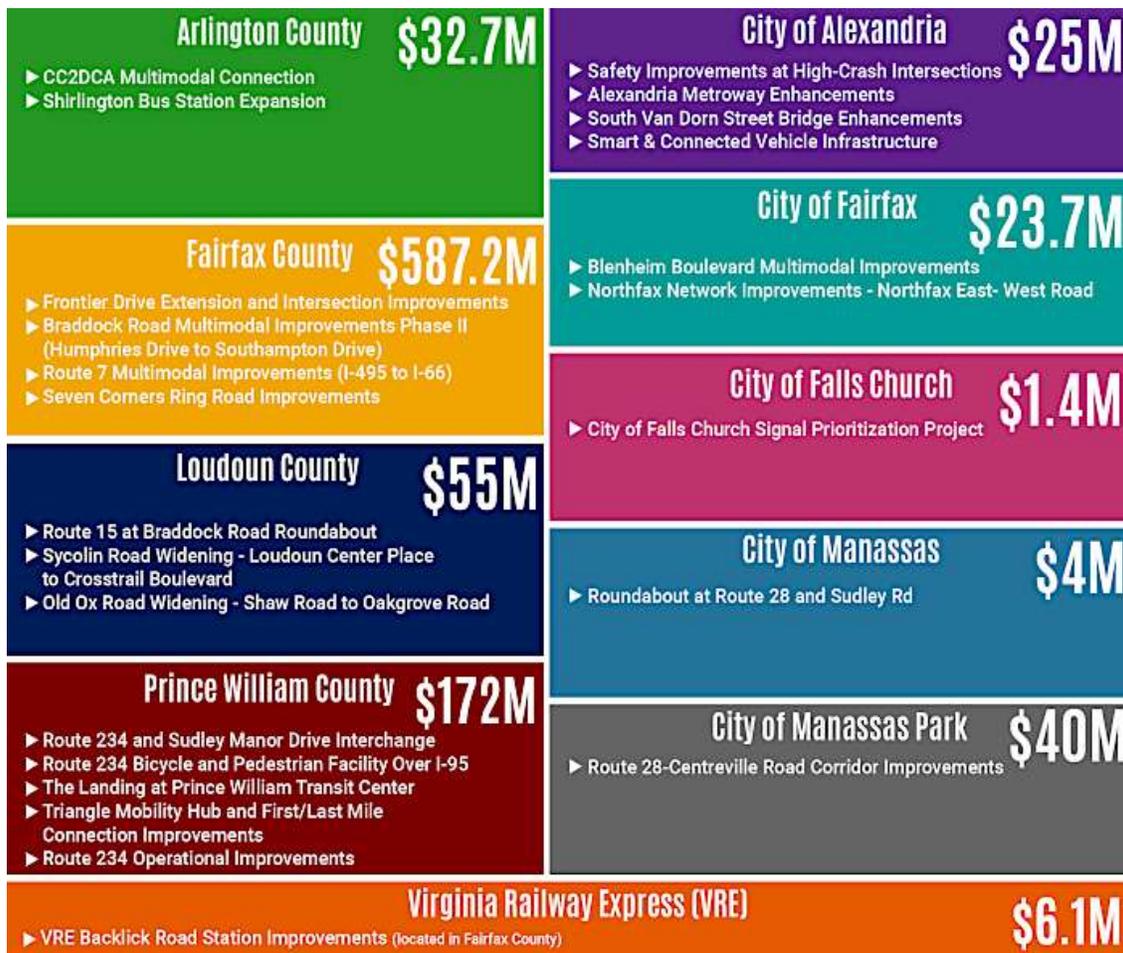
The North Woodbridge Small Area Plan (NWSAP) adopted in 2019 says (**p.98**):

Preferred PHNST Route: *Within the North Woodbridge Town Center area, the preferred trail connection of the PHNST is to be located within the area shown as a Waterfront within the Urban Neighborhood land use designation. If the trail is not located directly along the waterfront of the Occoquan River, then a spur or multiple spurs of the trail should be established to provide public waterfront accessibility. The existing trail segment along the Rivergate property should be incorporated into the trail as a trail spur.*

The initial submission of the proposed rezoning offers \$0 (**no** funding) as a proffer to mitigate impact on parks and recreation for perhaps 1,500 new residents. Some highlights:

p.22: **Recreational Areas.** *“A component of the Annapolis Way Development Agreement facilitated the inclusion of a 10-foot wide multi-use path along the Destination Place side of Annapolis Way. This trail segment implements the recommendations of the NWSAP with respect to the PHNST through this portion of the Town Center, providing a critical link between U.S. Route 1 and Interstate 95.”*

pp.53-54: **Linear/Greenway Park:** *“Because there are no expenditures planned beyond FY25, there is no basis for calculating a proffer... a proffer for the linear parks is not appropriate as residents will be paying for these projects in a prorate [sic] share of their taxes.”*



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA): Time to Comment

Northern Virginia jurisdictions have requested nearly \$1 billion in regional funding from NVTA for 24 projects in the FY2024-2029 Six Year Plan.

The \$12 million requested for the **PWC-041 project** would fund a shared use path along Route 234 (Dumfries Road). The “facility” would extend eastward from terminus of the existing path, at the southbound I-95 ramp, past the new Rosie’s all the way to Route 1.

The public is invited to comment during the public comment period until May 19. You can use the **feedback form** or speak at the **May 9 public hearing**.

*(If you are confused about all the agencies and transportation plans, see **A People's Guide to Transportation Decision-Making in the National Capital Region**.)*



sMORE's Bike Rides

Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) sponsors **sMORE's group rides** for parents & kids in various locations in the DMV.

Each sMORE's program is structured a little differently, but they all have one common goal in mind: to provide a fun and safe opportunity for kids and families to enjoy and learn more about the sport of Mountain Biking.

At Andrew Letch Park, rides will be on the first and third Tuesday of the month.. All rides will begin at 5:30pm and roughly end around 6:30pm depending on the group's ability. Post-ride activities will include playing at playground, riding on the flat soccer field, ice cream/popsicles, and camaraderie with all.

Please register. You're also invited to join the Andrew Leitch Park **Trails Project**.



Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Update

The TPB funds Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) studies, which are intended to integrate land-use and transportation planning. The recent **Vibrant Communities and Safer Roads webinar** provides more background.

The April 17 TPB meeting will approve a **new round of grants** - but no proposals from south of the Occoquan River are recommended.

Those proposals were:

- Nokesville Road Bike Facilities Conceptual Plan Development
- Manassas Park Mathis Avenue Multimodal Extension Study
- Manassas Park Manassas Park Route 28 Safe Crossings Feasibility
- Prince William Co Prince William County Truck Parking Planning Study
- Prince William Co Southbridge/Dumfries Road Transportation Planning Study
- Prince William Co Judicial Center Multimodal Connectivity
- Prince William (Occoquan) Riverwalk Preliminary Engineering and Design Project



On April 6, 40 volunteers with **Prince William Trail and Streams Coalition** removed 90 bags of trash, 8 tires, 1 shopping cart, **and more** from Marumsco Creek and Veterans Park wetlands.

In Other News...

- **2022 was the “worst year ever for bicyclist deaths,” new data shows** (Route 50, April 4) *“The number of cyclists who died in traffic crashes reached the highest number in 2022 since the federal government started tracking those deaths half a century ago, with 1,105 people dying in that year while riding a bike.”*
- April 20-28 is **National Park Week** (yes, 9 days for the “week.”) There are **37 miles of hiking trails** in Prince William Forest Park and **40 miles of trails** at Manassas National Battlefield Park. Entrance fees are waived in national parks on April 20.
- Have you checked out the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) **Trails Newsletter**, with details on the **Wayfinding & Amenities Study**? (Data collection is expected to wrap up in June.)
- May 8 is **Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day**.
- May 17 is **Bike to Work Day** with more than 100 pit stops in DC, MD, and VA.
- The times they are a-changing: read more about **Electric bikes for middle and high school students**.
- For VDOT, paving season generally lasts from April to December. The **2024 Statewide Paving Status Map** is now online.
- **The Pedestrian Pound: The Business Case for Better Streets and Places** (Living Streets). Bottom Line: pedestrians spend more than individuals arriving by car, so creating walkable live-work-play communities is good for businesses.
- **People walking are often blamed for crashes when roads are designed for driving** (State Smart Transportation Initiative, February 27, 2024)
- **Fairfax County proposes crosswalks, bike lanes with annual road restriping program** (FFXNow, April 2) *‘Hundreds of miles of roadway will be repaved and re-striped by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) as part of the program throughout the state...’*

- Virginia Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Spring Meeting will be April 23, 10:00am-noon. **Agenda** includes an update on the State Trails Office. Join by **Zoom** (Passcode: 879806).
- In Virginia, 20-25% of the East Coast Greenway is currently in planning, design or construction. Check out Elliott Caldwell's latest video, **Growing the Greenway in DC and Virginia.**
- **Playing the Blame Game Won't Make Our Roads Safer** (*Strong Towns*, March 22). "If you're walking or biking in an auto-dominated environment, you are always rolling the dice... What we need to be doing is making those odds work in our favor. Right now, they're not." (NOTE: The online **Crash Studio Academy** is free.)



Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) has replaced the **Ash Grove boardwalk** at Locust Shade park.



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