Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Greater Prince William Trails Coalition
Quarterly Meeting is January 23, 10:00-11:00am

Please register to join us, in person or on Zoom. GMU kindly provides space for us to meet at **Potomac Science Center**. It's a chance to network with others interested in trails south of the Occoquan River. We can plan, coordinate, scheme, plot, conspire… whatever suits your fancy.

Agenda:
1. Manassas City presentation for feedback on the City's proposed Mobility Plan
2. Comprehensive Plan Trail Updates/Aspirational Trails Map Updates - Prince William County
3. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) Updates (FLAP Grant Status and Powell's Creek)
4. East Coast Greenway Through Prince William County
5. 501c3 status and GPWTC budget
6. Member Updates and 2025 Plans

GOAL 4
MOBILITY

GOAL STATEMENT

Foster an inter-connected and accessible transportation network that advances the County's mobility infrastructure, broadens transportation choices, and enhances safety measures.

Key Objectives

1

Enhance connectivity through transit-oriented development and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Strategies:
1. Integrate innovative technology and transit networks in designing and planning communities to ensure seamless connections between various transit modes.
2. Design streets around transit hubs that equally accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit vehicles, with features like wide sidewalks, bike lanes, and accessible crosswalks.
3. Provide a secure biking infrastructure and implement traffic calming measures to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists and to reduce the reliance on cars.

January 24: Deadline for Comment on Prince William County 2025-2028 Strategic Plan

Prince William County's **draft 2025-2028 Strategic Plan** will guide budget priorities. Do you think the 8 members of the Board of County Supervisors elected in 2023 should prioritize developing the bike/pedestrian network that was approved in 2022?

Don't keep your ideas about priorities a secret. Tell the people who will make the decisions, the elected local officials, by responding to the **4-question survey**. Note in particular Question #3: "*Please identify one important issue to you that is included in the draft Strategic Plan.*"

FY2026 Budget Calendar
Tentative – Pending BOCS Approval

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

• Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	February 11
• Proposed FY2026 Budget	February 18
• Budget Work Sessions	March 11/18 April 1
• Public Hearing – Proposed Budget	March 18
• PWCS Budget Presentation	April 1
• Budget Recap	April 8
• Public Hearing – Proposed Budget & Tax Rates	April 8
• Budget Markup	April 15
• Budget Adoption	April 22

FY2026 County Budget Time - Time to Speak Up for Trails

The FY2026 budget process is now well underway. Prince William County staff will reveal a recommended draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at the February 11 meeting of the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS). The county is creating a new process to prioritize projects for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), such as proposals to build new trail segments, starting with the FY2027 budget cycle.

Trails are identified as a recognized need for FY26, but also as an unfunded element in the budget. To provide context, county voters have approved over $911 million in road bonds starting in 1988.

There is money available in FY26. The **January 14 briefing** to the BOCS noted that revenues exceeded expenses by $11 million in FY2024. That surplus has been added to the Capital Reserve, which now totals almost $85 million. Typically the county retains around $60 million in the Capital Reserve.

A year ago, trails advocates convinced the county supervisors to add $1 million to the FY25 budget for trails. County staff described that funding in the January 14 **Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Outlook** as a "pedestrian and mobility safety investment."

If you want the BOCS to increase trails funding to $5 million/year (or some other number you prefer), share your perspective to **bocs@pwcva.gov**

Table 1: Planning Level Cost Estimate Ranges, Per Mile[2]

Project Facility Type	2022 Cost Estimate (Low)	2022 Cost Estimate (High)	2034[3] Cost Estimate (Low)	2034 Cost Estimate (High)
Shared Use Path Project	$4,385,000	$9,110,000	$7,020,000	$14,580,000
Cycle Track Project	$1,840,000	$3,815,000	$2,945,000	$6,105,000
Sidewalk Project	$2,340,000	$4,860,000	$3,745,000	$7,780,000
Bike Lane Project	$ 310,000	$ 645,000	$ 500,000	$ 1,035,000
Shared Lane Project	$30,000	$55,000	$50,000	$90,000
Natural Surface Trail Project	$205,000	$420,000	$330,000	$675,000

Table 2: Planning Level Cost Estimate Ranges that Support Focus Elements

Elements	Planned Access Miles	2022 Cost Estimate (Low)	2022 Cost Estimate (High)	2034 Cost Estimate (Low)	2034 Cost Estimate (High)
Activity Centers	1,598	$3.1 billion	$6.5 billion	$5.0 billion	$10.4 billion
High-Capacity Transit Stops/Stations	600	$1.1 billion	$2.3 billion	$1.8 billion	$3.7 billion
Higher Need Populations	1,114	$2.1 billion	$4.5 billion	$3.5 billion	$7.2 billion
Regional Trails	1,923	$4.1 billion	$8.5 billion	$6.6 billion	$13.6 billion

Costs to Build Planned Trails Identified in 2024 Northern Virginia Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Study

VDOT has completed **a study** of officially planned pedestrian, bicycling, and traffic calming infrastructure in Northern Virginia to develop a regional picture of the projects, benefits, and funding implications.

The study compiled data that localities provided about planned facilities and standardized it using the Statewide Bicycle Facility Inventory. Trails were categorized by six facility types: shared use path, bike lane, natural surface trail, paved shoulder, shared lane, and sidewalk (see above, though the photo on the lower left appears to be a parking lane on an urban-section roadway more than a "paved shoulder.")

The 2024 Northern Virginia Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Study identified nearly 5,000 miles of planned bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Of the 714 miles proposed in Prince William County, only one (1) mile was identified as a natural surface trail… so it is not clear how the planned network of greenways and trails within parks was addressed.
NOTE: The January 23 GPWTC Quarterly Meeting offers a chance to network with smart people and ask questions…

VDOT estimated total regional costs, including paved shoulders, ranged from $10.4-$34.9 billion. For context, the most recent **Transaction 2045 Update** by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) identified 424 projects and programs, primarily highway and transitway improvements, that would cost an estimated $75 billion.
The study's map of the regional planned bicycle and pedestrian network is **now online**.

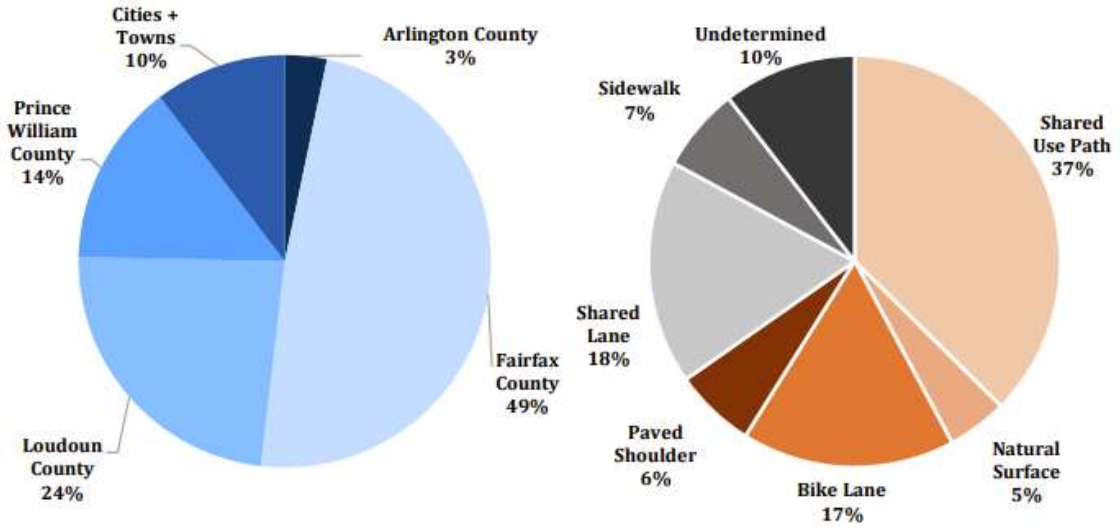
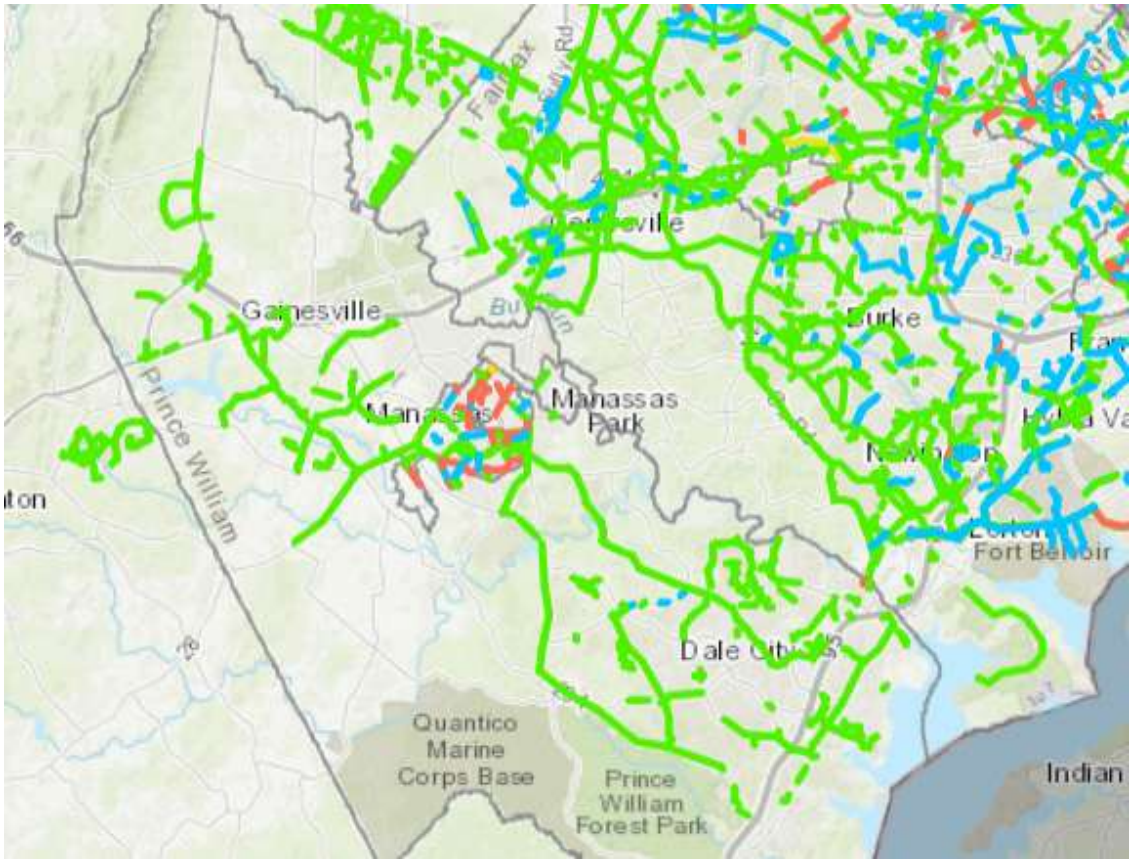


Figure 9: Percentage of Planned Segment Mileage by Locality and by Facility Type as Provided in Local Plans

Table 5: Total Planned Segment Lane Mileage by County

Jurisdiction	Shared Use Path	Natural Surface	Bike Lane	Paved Shoulder	Shared Lane	Sidewalk	Undetermined	Total Mileage
Arlington	23		95		47			165
Fairfax	1,060	168	496	55	331	25	283	2,418
Loudoun	365	60[7]	110		335	208[8]	90	1,168
Prince William	348	1	76	263	26			714
Cities/ Towns	68	7	57		139	97	148	516
Total Miles	1,864	236	834	318	878	330	521	4,981

Note: Blank cells indicate that no planned mileage was reported.



More Re: Maps and Data For Active Transportation

VDOT continues to seek feedback on the **Statewide Bicycle Facility Inventory Map**. Statewide, there are now 1,589 miles of shared use path facilities, 973 lane miles of bicycle lanes (including 139 lane miles of buffered bicycle lanes and 16.4 miles of separated and contraflow bicycle lanes), 458 lane miles of shared lane markings, and 5.4 miles of sidewalk connectors complete with standardized attribute data. Feedback should go to **david.cook@vdot.virginia.gov**

Many of the Active Transportation (bike/pedestrian) mapping applications, data visualizations and datasets produced by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) are **available online**. Check out the **NoVA District Bike and Pedestrian Counts** and the **2022 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region**. That regional plan is on a four-year update cycle, so the next update is scheduled for release in May 2026.

Also online is the 2023 Update of the **National Capital Trail Network** - and “Periodic (biennial) progress reports are anticipated.”

Jurisdictions with bike/pedestrian counters share data through the **Virginia Statewide Active Transportation Count Network**. (NOTE: Some temporary counts done in Northern Virginia will not be listed there.)

Are Northern Virginia Jurisdictions Serious About Active Transportation? Follow the Money…

Northern Virginia jurisdictions raise extra sales, hotel occupancy, and real estate transfer taxes for transportation projects. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) allocates 70% of that revenue for "regional" projects and returns 30% to the localities for eligible local projects.

In Prince William County's FY25 budget, $70 million of that local tax revenue is budgeted for the **Minnieville Road /Prince William Parkway Interchange**.

Allen Muchnick, co-chair of **Active Prince William**, took the opportunity to speak at the NVTA annual public hearing on January 9. He highlighted that NVTA has allocated only a tiny share of its regional money to standalone active mobility.

*VDOT's NoVA District office **has recently estimated** that it would cost roughly $14 Billion (in current, year 2022 dollars) to build the active mobility facilities already described in adopted NoVA-locality plans and not part of a larger transportation project now under development.*

*Yet, according to NVTA's **NoVA Gateway project tracking website**, during 16 fiscal years, NVTA has awarded only about 3.5% ($131.4 million) of its $3.8 Billion in total allocations of NVTA regional funds to 11 standalone active mobility projects (and of that amount $39.1 million has been set aside for a single project, the **CC2DCA connector**).*

Thus, at NVTA's historic rate of allocating its regional funds for standalone active mobility projects, it would take roughly 1700 years to fully fund NoVA's already planned active mobility facilities.

Active Prince William has also added new blog posts:

- **Our Comments at the NoVA Joint Transportation Meeting, December 2, 2024**
- **Prince William Supervisors: Allow Public Input on New Transportation Projects!**
- **If At First You Don't Succeed, Send Another Email**

- **Virginia Bicycling Federation's 2025 Legislative Asks Presented to Prince William Legislators**
- **Active Mobility & The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority**
- **Our Comments on PWC's Proposed Route 1 Widening**

Prince William County Could Open Flat Branch Trail - Even If Route 28 Bypass Is Cancelled on February 4

The Prince William County Transportation Department's latest **Capital Improvement Project Update** notes that a resolution will be presented to the Board of County Supervisors on February 4 in response to a recent BOCS directive to cancel the **Route 28 Bypass**. A member of the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition, Active Prince William, has **been outspoken** regarding that road project.

The road proposal included a shared use path. If the road is cancelled, there is an existing gravel road along Flat Branch that could easily and quickly be converted into a trail. There is room beneath the Lomond Drive bridge so hikers/bikers on Flat Branch Trail could get under the Lomond Drive traffic.

You can share your point of view with the Board of County Supervisors via e-mail to **bocs@pwcva.gov**

Hmmm… Can We Build A Trail Below the I-95 Neabsco Creek Bridge?

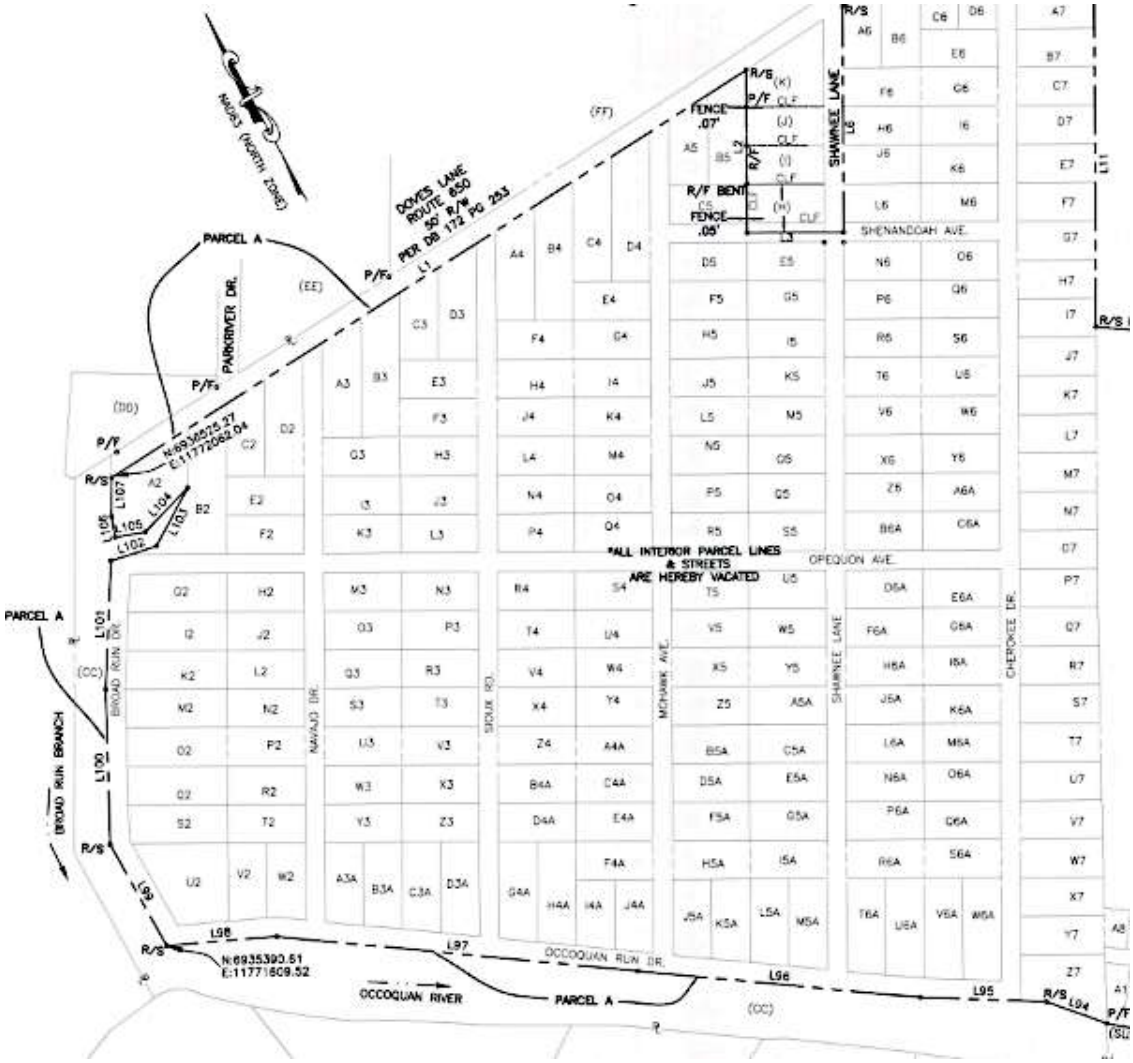
The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will replace the southbound I-95 general purpose lanes bridge over Neabsco Creek. Construction starts in 2027, but **design is already underway**.

The Neabsco Greenway is planned to pass underneath I-95. Prince William Transportation Department and Department of Parks and Recreation will connect with VDOT to arrange for a land use permit to authorize the trail. In an ideal world, VDOT will be able create a bench along the creek for future trail construction, after acquisition of the necessary right-of-way for the greenway.

First Annual Report from Prince William County Department of Transportation

"*Our mission is to construct and enhance a multi-modal transportation network that supports local and regional mobility.*" **The report** has details about funding ($7.3 million annually to support a $1 billion construction program, along with costs for street lights), building interchanges, widening roads, paving new lanemiles, conducting several planning studies, and completing nine traffic safety projects.

Content related to bike/pedestrian infrastructure is marginal. The mobility focus clearly remains car-centered.



Dove's Landing Update

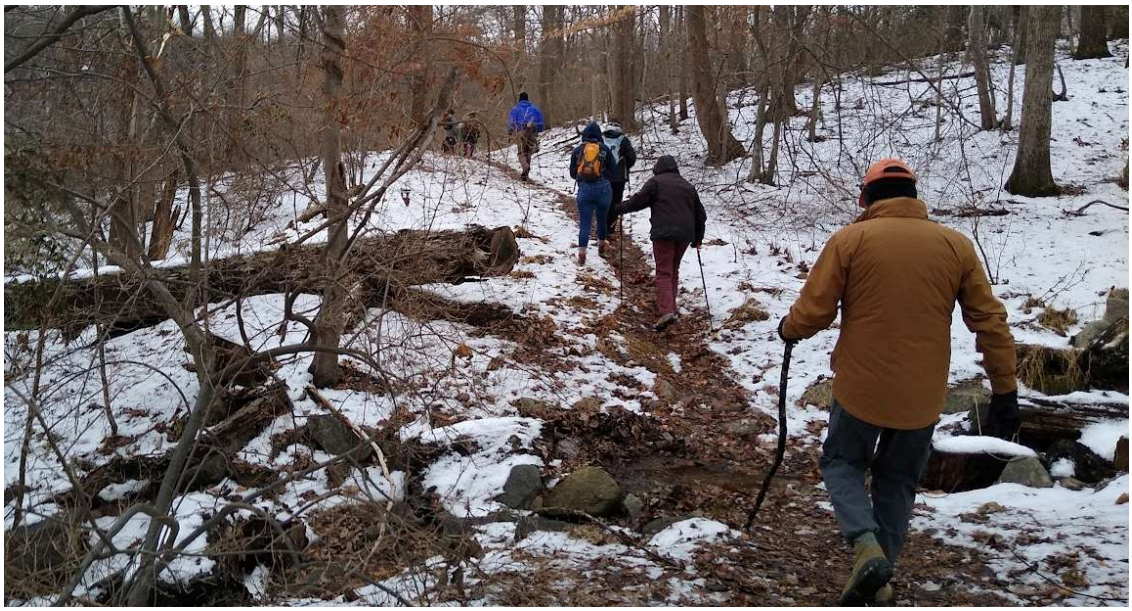
The contractor for developing Dove's Landing Park has reached the 10% design stage for implementing the Master Plan. Public input has been obtained at a community meeting for the neighbors in November and a public meeting on January 8.

Some takeaways from the recent public meeting:

- the Board of County Supervisors has allocated **$2.4 million in proffer funds** for implementing the Master Plan. It prioritized developing the Sinclair Mill portion of the park first, which includes a kayak launch and fishing pier providing public access to Lake Jackson.
- cost estimates for projects are generated at 35% design stage, which should be completed by mid-summer 2025 in time for FY27 budget.
- neighbors have concerns about additional traffic, especially on Dove's Lane which is a dead-end dirt road, and adding more boats to Lake Jackson. (The lake is public, not private.)
- on the 308-acre western part of Dove's Landing Park, the county has finalized a **conservation easement** with the **Northern Virginia Conservation Trust**. The easement on the Sinclair Mill section is still in process. Getting the land protected has been a priority

of the **Prince William Conservation Alliance** for over 15 years, and closes the potential to build **almost 250 houses** there (*see above*).

- the shoreline on the western edge of the 308-acre parcel is privately owned, including much of the existing trail along the waterfront. The kayak launch in the 10% design sketches shown on January 8 is located where the county owns land all the way to the water.



Expanding Public Lands
Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE)

President Biden has signed **HR 6492**. Among other provisions, it includes a requirement for Federal officials to identify at least 10 long-distance bike trails that make use of trails and roads, but primarily make use of dirt or natural surface trails. To qualify, trails must br at least 80 miles long.

There is also a focus on accessible trails that meet the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968. The new law requires publishing an inventory of high-priority trails on Federal lands within seven years that identifies for each trail:
(A) average and minimum tread width;
(B) average and maximum running slope;
(C) average and maximum cross slope;
(D) tread type; and
(E) length

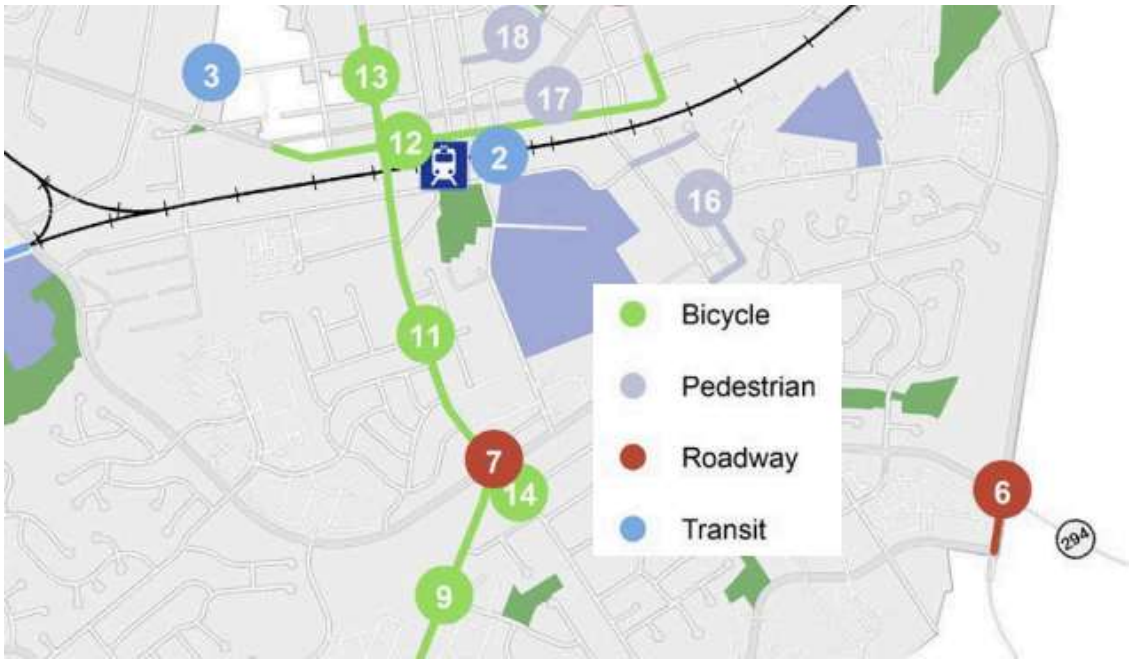
Staff Recommended Scenario – Northern Virginia

Project	Organization	Total Request	SMART SCALE Request
Duke St and Route 1 Intersection Improvements	Alexandria City	$6,577,065	$6,577,065
US 50 at VA 27 Interchange Access Improvements	Arlington County	$32,348,376	$32,348,376
US 29 (Lee Highway) Corridor Improvements	Prince William County	$40,463,612	$40,463,612
Cascades Pkwy Bike &Ped (Church Rd. to Victoria Station Dr)	Loudoun County	$13,932,841	$9,296,841
Total Staff Recommended - 4	Total	$93,321,894	$88,685,894

FY 2026 Smart Scale (Round 6) Preliminary Results

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has evaluated 277 proposals for Smart Scale funding. Total requested funding was $8.2 billion. **Staff recommended** $1.1 billion be allocated among 53 projects with 87% of funding for highway projects, 9.6% to bike/pedestrian projects, and 3.5% for bus transit.

One Prince William County project was recommended for funding. The **US 29 (Lee Highway) Corridor Improvements** from Linton Hall Road to US Route 15 would reconfigure lanes, improve 10 intersections, and construct "*sections of shared use path and sidewalk and pedestrian bridge*." For "Land Use," it was the top-scoring project in the entire state.



Comment on the City of Manassas Comprehensive Plan

The City of Manassas is **collecting public input** for development of its 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Draft of the **Environmental Sustainability & Health** chapter includes expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout Manassas as a way to reduce vehicle emissions.

Draft of **Mobility Chapter** is not complete, and a separate public survey will gather input for it. Current draft includes a change to recommend implementing sidewalk infill projects on both sides of the streets in the Downtown, Mathis, and Traditional Neighborhood Character Areas since focus priorities in those areas include walkability and connectivity for pedestrians.

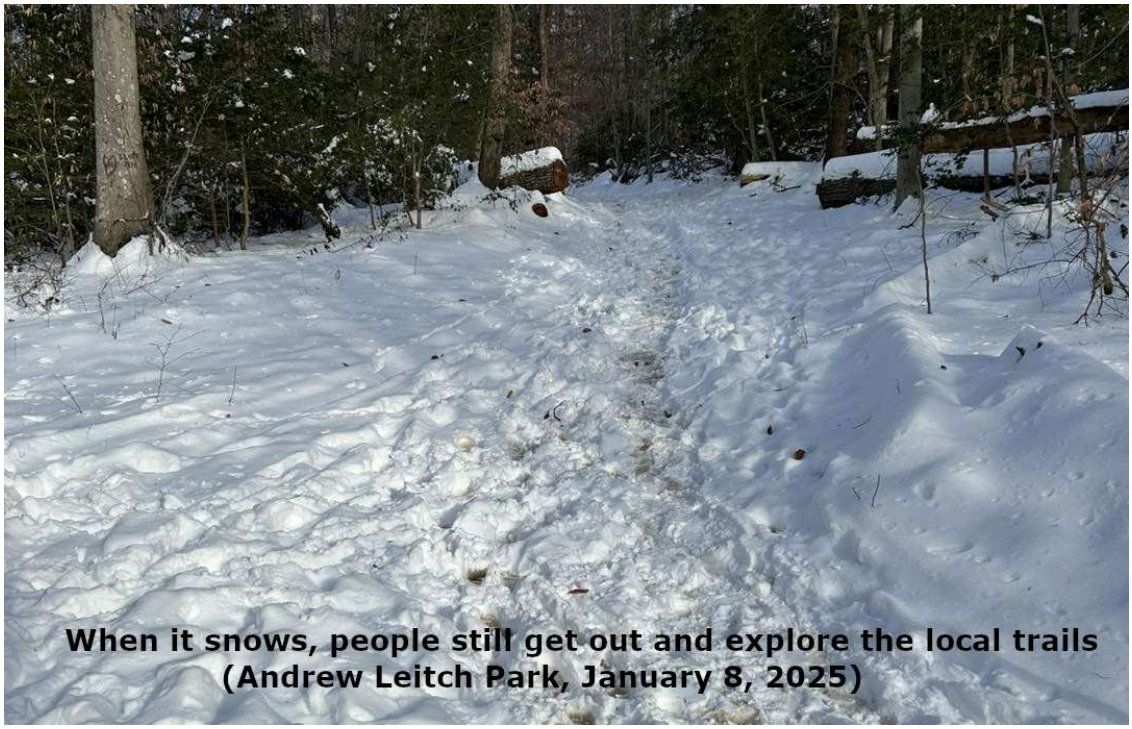
At the 2025 General Assembly…

The Virginia Great Outdoors Act has been reintroduced in the 2025 General Assembly. Bill number is **HB2059**. Of at least $200 million per year of funding, 12.5% would be directed to the to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to create a statewide trails system. Another 12.5% would be directed to VDOT to construct regional multi-use trails pursuant to the State Trails Plan.

SB1007 would establish the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safety Improvements Infrastructure Fund and Program, funded by an annual $0.50 tax on each parking space in off street parking facilities (excluding single family residences). Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) would allocate funding for projects.

SJ260 would direct the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to conduct a comprehensive study of VDOT's highway maintenance spending and allocations, to ensure that Virginia's active mobility assets - including sidepath and sidewalk pavements - are suitably and more proactively maintained.

On January 20, the Virginia Bicycling Federation (VBF) released its **Action Alert for 8 Bills Being Heard This Week**. For more on proposed state legislation, see the VBF **Bill Watcher**.



In Other News…

- Check out the latest **Trails Newsletter** from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC).
- **This doctor was tired of patients not exercising. So he joined them for walks**. (*Washington Post*, January 2). "*…there are now 576* ***Walk with a Doc chapters****. About 60 percent meet monthly, 20 percent meet weekly and the rest have a combination schedule*." (One Walk With a Doc chapter is in **Woodbridge.**)
- "Big Night" Salamander Hike at Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve has been scheduled for February 15…. but is weather dependent. **Register online**.
- **A Virginia law to protect pedestrians has almost never been used** (*Washington Post*, January 15). Maximum punishment for failure to yield to a pedestrian is $250. Law was intended to be a deterrent, but as State Sen. Adam Ebbin noted "T*here are people who are being struck in crosswalks, crossing the street, without much of a penalty at all*." Under the rarely-applied vulnerable road user law, maximum penalty increases to up to a year in jail and a $2,500 fine.
- The Transportation Planning Board has joined DriveSmart Virginia, Transurban, Virginia Department of Transportation, and about 200 other organizations in **Allies in Action** committed to increasing road safety.
- Several nature-related walks are scheduled at Leopolds's Preserve. The Prince William Wildflower Society will provide a Winter Botanical Walk on January 31, 10:00am-noon starting from the parking lot at 16290 Thoroughfare Rd, Broad Run, VA. Bull Run Mountains Conservancy has a regular Friday Conservation Corps volunteer opportunity, plus a Geology Walk on January 25 from 10:00am-noon. Check the **Leopold's Preserve calendar**.
- The Prince William Transportation Department provided an update at the most recent **Mid County Civic Association** (MIDCO) meeting on the Hoadley Road Strategically Targeted

Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) Study. Study will recommend operational and safety improvements (not road expansion) on all of Hoadly Road, particularly at intersections. US **Bike Route 1** runs along a portion of Hoadly Road where there is no shared use path or continuous bike lane. First public meeting will be in Spring 2025. Final report is scheduled for completion in Summer 2026.

View email in browser

update your preferences or unsubscribe

INTUIT mailchimp