Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

BOCS FY2027 CIP Request Title	BOCS Magisterial District	Score (maximum score = 41.5)	Construction Cost Estimate
PHNST - Southern Prince William Forest Park to Route 1 ("Gap 3")	Potomac	30.0	$ 5,800,000
PHNST - Town of Dumfries to Prince William Forest Park ("Gap 2")	Potomac	30.0	$ 3,500,000
Charlie Boone Memorial Park Development	Occoquan	27.0	$ 2,500,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Access on Devil's Reach Road	Occoquan	24.0	$ 6,100,000

What Trails Projects Will Be In FY27 Prince William County Budget?

The Finance and Budget Committee of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) reviewed **requests** for Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects on December 2. Four requests involved trails (see above) were proposed by two supervisors.

The Flat Branch Trail from Sudley Road to Splashdown WaterPark was not in the list, perhaps because the Gainesville supervisor's seat was not filled during the process. That trail is partially within the Coles District as well.

The county's budget process is getting more transparent by releasing the BOCS requests prior to the staff presenting a draft budget in January. However, the CIP requests submitted by county staff have not been made public yet.

There is a ranking process underway now to prioritize whatever "recreational" trails may have been proposed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and "active mobility" projects that may have been proposed by the Transportation Department.

Projects that "make the cut" and are included in the draft FY27 budget will be revealed at the next Finance and Budget Committee meeting on January 20, or at a BOCS meeting in February.

Mobility: Objective 5 Action Plan

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Objective #5: Work with the community and stakeholders to identify and implement multi-modal mobility solutions to improve access, safety, and connectivity.

Major Projects & Initiatives	Lead Agencies	Year 1 Activities
NEW: Comprehensive Safety Action Plan Working Group – Develop working group to guide and implement Plan	Transportation, Police Department, Fire and Rescue, Community Safety	• Create permanent working group. • Develop working group mission and goals. • Draft and finalize working group and plan.
NEW: Automated Traffic Enforcement Program – Red Light Cameras Implementation of pilot Red Light Camera Program	Transportation, Police Department, Fire and Rescue, Community Safety	• BOCS approval to extend pilot. • Implement pilot program. • Collect preliminary data. • Report finding to BOCS .
NEW: Bike/Ped Community and stakeholder engagement – Develop working group(s) focusing on bicycle and pedestrian efforts	Transportation, Police Department, Fire and Rescue, Community Safety, Planning, Parks & Rec	• Identify/establish County's technical group. • Create process to identify external members. • Formalize the group(s)/framework.

"Strategic Plan Goal Team" in Prince William County: Why Should Anyone Care About Its Report?

The #1 objective in the Mobility Section of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan (see **p.26**) is to "*Enhance connectivity through transit oriented development and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure*." On December 9, the Board of County Supervisors got an **update** from the mobility action team created by the County Executive on implementation.

One of the team's recommended action items was to increase public engagement by creating a new stakeholder group. How this might affect the role of the current Trails and Blueways Council, and whether there would be public engagement throughout that process, was not addressed in the briefing.

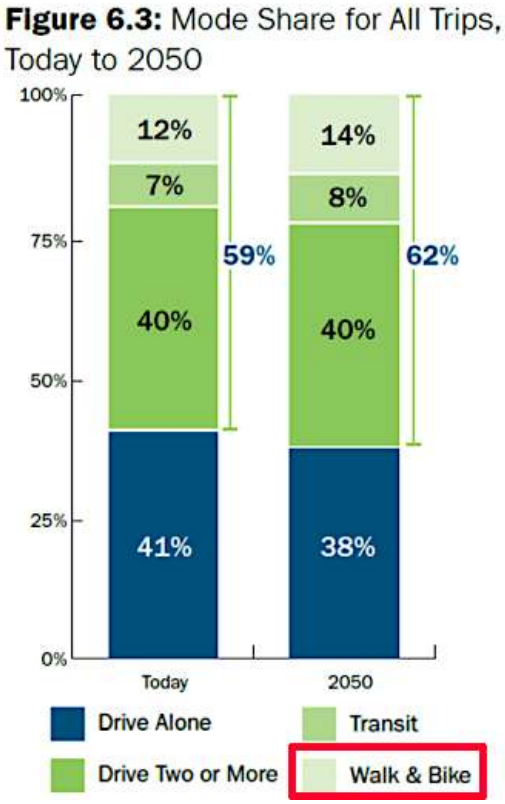
Other proposals were to "*establish a transportation funding working group*" to align priorities involving roads and transit agencies, and to "*Develop a formal process to prioritize mobility projects in the Comp Plan and Small Area Plans*."

So… why care?

Bike/pedestrian infrastructure projects for both recreation and active mobility could be prioritized, together with road and transit projects, in a more-transparent process which involves the general public. The roles and responsibilities of the **Trails and Blueways Council** could be increased - or decreased.

Manassas Park Legislative Agenda

The city's 2026 **legislative agenda** for the General Assembly includes:
• Pedestrian Overpass: The City requests funding for a pedestrian overpass at the intersection of Centreville Road (RT 28) and Manassas Drive. Centreville Road is nine (9) lanes wide at Manassas Drive and due to the heavy volume of traffic, it is extremely hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists that need to cross.
• Mobility Alternatives: The City supports legislation that directs the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to increase funding allocation to bicycles and pedestrian mobility options, and increase funding for the Virginia Rail Express (VRE) and other rail projects in Northern Virginia.



Talking "Walkability" - But Still Planning For Cars

On December 17, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) voted on approving **Visualize 2050.** That plan provides the regional long-term vision for increasing mobility.

That plan assumes the regional population will grow 21% over the next 25 years. Though the Executive Summary says "*a robust world-class multimodal transportation system will be essential to meeting the region's growing mobility and accessibility needs while accommodating the predicted growth,*" little funding is proposed for expanding the bike/pedestrian network to create walkable communities.

An opinion piece, "**A regional transportation plan reinforces the status quo. We can do better**," notes that the plan includes over 500 miles of widened highways and arterials. For **Prince William County**, just 5% of the proposed funding is for bike/pedestrian projects..

Also, Active Prince William has posted on its blog **VDOT's Support of Active Mobility Has Improved. Here's What's Still Lacking.**

Making Hoadly Road Safe for Bikers/Pedestrians

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) **has proposed** in a Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) study to build a shared use path (SUP) along all of Hoadly Road. From Route 234/Dumfries Road to Purcell Road/Dale Boulevard, the SUP would be on the south side of Hoadly Road. For the rest of the distance to Prince William Parkway, the SUP would be on the north side.

Sidewalk improvements are proposed on Hoadly Road, particularly at bus stops, and on Dumfries Road from Hoadly to Walton Drive in order to connect to Colgan High School.

PHNST Braid to Occoquan Regional Park… and Beyond?

Potomac Heritage Trail Association (PHTA) has worked with NOVAParks and Fina Trails to survey a possible connection of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) from Town of Occoquan to Occoquan Regional Park.

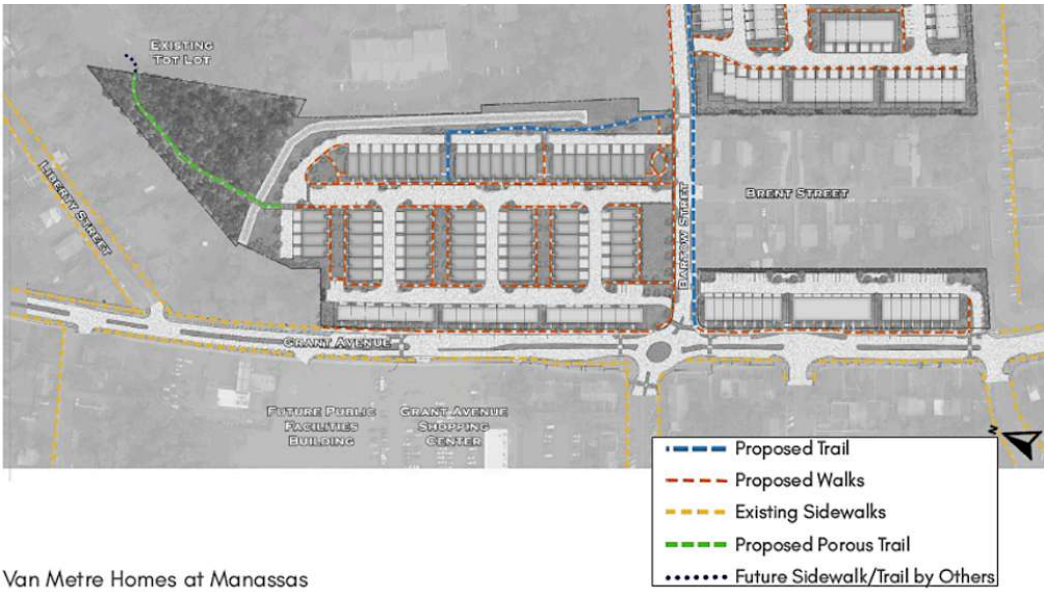
Further extensions in Fairfax County are possible upstream to Sandy Run and downstream to Colchester Road. Fairfax County's draft **Active Transportation and Trail Network Map** includes expanding the Occoquan-Bull Run Trail downstream to Route 1.

Prince William County's **Mobility Chapter**, adopted in 2022, proposes a new shared use path on a widened Route 1 bridge connecting to Fairfax County. There is no schedule for replacing that current bridge, and widening Route 1 might require the Virginia Department of Transportation to compensate the operator of the toll lanes on I-95.

A future bike/pedestrian river crossing could be incorporated into the new Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) bridge. That Occoquan River crossing is planned for **Phase 3 construction** sometime in the 2030's, adding a **third railroad track** (see Sheets 21 and 22).

National Park Service is expected to start developing a long-range management plan for the PHNST in January. Several public meetings to launch that process were cancelled during the recent Federal government shutdown.

The Prince William County **Trails Master Plan** with a proposed route of the PHNST and braids within the county will be completed about the time the National Park Service plan is started.



Trails Connecting Baldwin Park in Manassas

City of Manassas is building a **new trail** to connect Baldwin Park to Prince William Street. It is the latest of many small projects done over the last few years to make the city more walkable.

Upcoming is a **trail** connecting the new Ashberry community on Grant Avenue with Baldwin Park. Look for a ribbon cutting in Spring 2026.

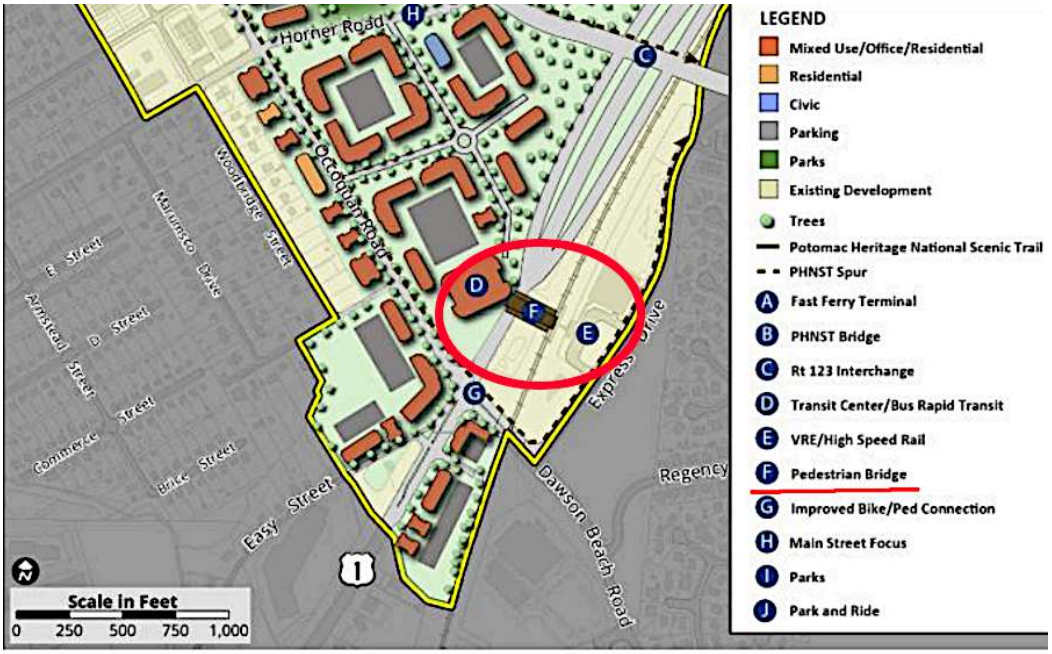
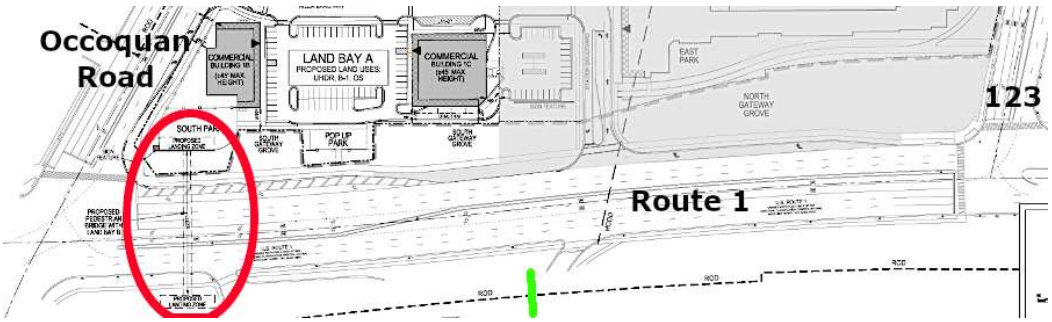


Figure 54: North Woodbridge Town Center – Illustrative Plan



Getting Across Route 1 to the Woodbridge Train Station

The Riverside Station development on Route 1, between Gordon Boulevard and Occoquan Road, is advertised as a future mixed use, live-work-play walkable community with easy access to rail transit at the Woodbridge station. Sidewalks, shared use paths, and natural surface trails are all designed to be part of the mobility network.

However, the current design of Land Bay A at Riverside Station will make it surprisingly difficult to cross both Route 1 and the railroad tracks to access the platform for Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) trains.

The illustrative plan (p.14 in July 20, 2022 **staff report**) showed a straightforward connection from Riverside Station to the train station. A new bike/pedestrian bridge over Route 1 would connect to the existing bridge (*green line, above*) that goes across the tracks.

The Master Zoning Plan reveals that the actual location of the new bridge will be down the block at Occoquan Road. To get from Riverside Station to the train platform would require going on the west side of Route 1 to the intersection with Occoquan Road, walking up the steps to cross Route 1 on the new bridge, going down the steps to the sidewalk on the east side of Route 1, then going up another set of steps to use the existing bridge across the tracks.

The Riverside Station proffer would cover about 1/3 of the costs for a $10 million bridge. Building a bridge to connect directly to the VRE station might cost even more.

In that case, residents of Belmont Bay seeking access to the restaurants on the east side of Route 1 would also have to go up and down two sets of steps to use two separated bridges. Design of the **North Woodbridge Pedestrian Bridge** is due to be completed in mid-2026.

Mark Your Calendar: Quarterly Meeting on January 22

Agenda will include discussions of FY27 trails funding, Prince William County Trails Master Plan, shift of trail construction responsibilities in the county to new Department of Transportation and Capital Projects, and more.

Member organizations also “co-alish” by providing updates on what's happening that would be of interest to others who care about trails south of the Occoquan River.

You can join us at 10:00-11:30am via Zoom or in person, where we have coffee, tea, and oh-so-healthy donuts. **Please register**.

A Rail-WITH-Trail Project in Shenandoah Valley?

The 2023 General Assembly allocated $35 million to convert 49 miles of an unused railroad line in the Shenandoah Valley, from Front Roal to Broadway near Harrisonburg, into a trail. The Virginia Department of Transportation issued its **third assessment** of the proposal in November.

Two competing visions for the project have emerged. Local elected officials initially endorsed replacing the rail line with a trail ("rail **to** trail"). A separate group then proposed to restore the tracks and build a trail parallel to an operating rail line ("rail **with** trail"). The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority has suggested extending Virginia Railway Express (VRE) service to Harrisonburg.

As noted by the Virginia Mercury (**(Va. considers nearly $700 million rail and trail plan in Shenandoah Valley** and **Amid lawmaker concerns, Va. transportation board to consider rail and trail plan in January** on December 15 and 17), a rail-to-trail conversion was estimated to cost $164 million. The rail-with-trail alternative was estimated to cost $687 million.

Closer to home, the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail stretching 45 miles from Purcellville to Arlington County was a rail-to-trail conversion **between 1974-1988**. Now Manassas has taken the lead, in partnership with Manassas Park and Prince William County, to request $110 million from the Northern Virgina Transportation Authority (NVTA) for the **Manassas Rail With Trail** project.

The paved trail would be constructed from the Manassas railroad depot to the Bull Run-Occoquan Trail in Fairfax County, with a new bike/pedestrian bridge across Bull Run at Blooms Park.

NOVAParks has endorsed the proposal. The rail line next to the proposed trail would continue to operate; no restoration is required.

News from Recent Meetings of Trails and Blueways Council and Parks and Recreation Commission

The Prince William County **Trails and Blueways Council** (TBC) met on December 16:
- Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is completing high-level cost estimates based on different surface types for segments of trails in Trails Master Plan, also identifying where rights-of-way will need to be acquired; plan will go to Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) as early as March (pushed back from January)'; draft sections of plan will be presented to TBC starting in January and a public meeting with Planning Commission is possible
- DPR is in the process of re-routing waterfront trail at Doves Landing to avoid private land
- DPR is awaiting approval of conservation easement with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and transfer of new parkland at Sinclair Mill; doing archeological survey and developing 50% design of facilities to get cost estimates; trails proffer for Preserve at Long Branch was for fair weather crossing rather than bridge over Long Branch but DPR is now seeking contribution from developer instead and seeking grant funding for a bridge
- DPR will create rough pre-design cost estimates for Coles and Gainesville districts projects that were prioritized by TBC
- PW Transportation Department will provide update to TBC on how reorganized roles/responsibilities will be implemented in 2026 for coordinating bike/ped projects and other relevant mobility policies/programs
- county and Town of Dumfries are holding quarterly project meetings and a recent field trip to synchronize trails planning
- concrete pad for self-service station for kayaks at Neabsco Boardwalk will be completed this

spring, boaters will need to navigate through hydrilla and time trips to take advantage of tides due to shallow channel

The county's **Parks and Recreation Commission** met on December 17:
- Parks and Recreation Commission is drafting letter to support substantially increasing parks and trails funding through a dedicated revenue stream from Computer and Peripherals tax or other sources
- requested increases for park-related funding in FY27 were kept below the cap in county's budget process due to cost recovery partnerships
- Janet Bartnik, the primary DPR point of contact for trails, has taken a new two-year assignment in county government's **Transformation Management Office**. Frances Bridges, current Assistant Director of Administration, began serving as the Acting Deputy Director for DPR on December 8. Director Seth Hendler-Voss will take stronger leadership role in planning, partnerships, and managing capital projects remaining with DPR.
- Rocky Run bridge in Broad Run Greenway is now on site, installation to be completed in January
- one of two bridges on Featherstone segment of Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) has been completed, bald eagle nesting will not cause delays, segment should be completed between March-July; Heritage Harbor sidewalk connection to PHNST will take longer
- Prince William County has not **advertised** yet for bids to construct bridges in Andrew Leitch Park or extension of Neabsco Greenway south into Metz Wetland
- DPR is starting design conversations with Virginia Department of Highways (VDOT) for constructing a trail under Route15 at Catharpin Creek, linking Dominion Valley with Long Park
- DPR will complete design and standards manual this Spring, new standardized signs for all parks planned in 2026
- Master Plans for Neabsco Greenway and Davis Ford Park will be prepared in 2026
- DPR is currently managing 102 projects (most described on **Parks CIP dashboard**), a few large projects such as **Powells Creek Crossing** and two of the 14 staff will be transferred to new Department of Transportation and Capital Construction on July 1

In Other News…

- **2025 Marks a Record-Setting Year for Expanding Electric Mountain Bike Access** (People for Bikes, October 27) "*...this progress reflects a growing recognition that Class 1 pedal-assist mountain bikes belong on trails and that greater access to recreational infrastructure is a big win for every community.*"
- **The Shocking Crash That Led One County to Reckon With the Dangers of E-Bikes** (*New York Times*, November 30) Low-speed electric bicycles are regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission under the Consumer Product Safety Act - not the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, so no driver's license is required. See more at **Overview of Electric Bike Regulations**
- **America's plan to protect pedestrians failed. A young woman's death reveals why** (*Washington Post*, December 4) "*The real problem isn't that Vision Zero doesn't work; it's that many places have adopted that slogan without making any real changes…*"
- **Foot Traffic Ahead: The Future of Urban Mobility** (Smart Growth America) ranks the top 35 metro areas by their walkable urbanism. It highlights how walkability enhances property values, creating premiums in commercial rents, multifamily rental rates, and for-sale home prices.
- The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond arranged for 400 road bikers to swirl around Alicia Keys and her husband Swizz Beatz to advertise their upcoming "Giants" exhibit. Check out **the video** *(see above).*
- **Then & Now: The Roanoke River Greenway inched closer to completion this year, with the opening of almost 3 more miles of trail** (*Cardinal News*, December 10) "*The initial greenway plan was written in 1995... Since those original plans, more than 40 miles of greenway trails have been built across the region, including the 15-plus miles that make up the Roanoke River Greenway.*"
- **Narrowing Lanes for Road Safety: Small Shift, Big Difference** (America Walks, November 19) "*...just putting the painted lines closer together can have such a positive impact on speed*."
- **Metro rolls out new bike lockers to encourage more cyclists to use rail** (*Washington Post*, December 15) "*It's part of an effort to get over 3.5 percent of Metro riders biking to stations by 2030... The new on-demand lockers will be installed at 73 of Metro's 98 stations. They cost customers five cents an hour, capped at $1 per day, and are controlled by an app, **BikeLink***."
- **Toys R Us Got Its Start in DC's Adams Morgan Neighborhood (WRC-TV, March 16, 2028)** The first Toys R Us store started in a bicycle shop.

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