Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Active Fairfax - Draft Plan Released

The Active Fairfax plan was initiated in 2020. **A draft** that would amend the county's Comprehensive Plan is now out for public comment.

The draft identifies locations where Fairfax County expects its trails network would connect to Prince William across Bull Run/Occoquan River. Public engagement opportunities are expected in late summer and early fall 2025, with adoption by the Fairfax Board of Supervisors anticipated in early 2026.

Prince William County Trails Master Plan: Got Suggestions?

Prince William County is inviting public comments on the development of a **Trails Master Plan**.

Once the Board of County Supervisors approves the Trails Master Plan next January, the planning phase will be completed in Manassas, Manassas Park, and the county. Regional planning (such as **TransAction** by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority) will continue. Getting projects specified in state/regional plans (such as the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in the **Virginia Outdoors Plan**) is essential for getting bike/pedestrian projects funded.

Also, the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) Subcommittee** of the Trails and Blueways Council is meeting on July 17 at 2:00pm in the Hellwig Administration Building (George Hellwig Memorial Park, 14420 Bristow Road, Manassas, VA 20112)., That subcommittee will discuss alternatives to close existing gaps in the PHNST planned route.

NOTE: The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition was initiated by the county, relying upon a National Park Service grant, back in 2019 when county staff was drafting the **Parks, Recreation and Tourism chapter** in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Getting high-quality trail plans adopted by the local jurisdictions has been a major focal point since 2019.

We're almost there. Looking forward, GPWTC will focus on funding, building, and maintaining a comprehensive and well-connected trails network.

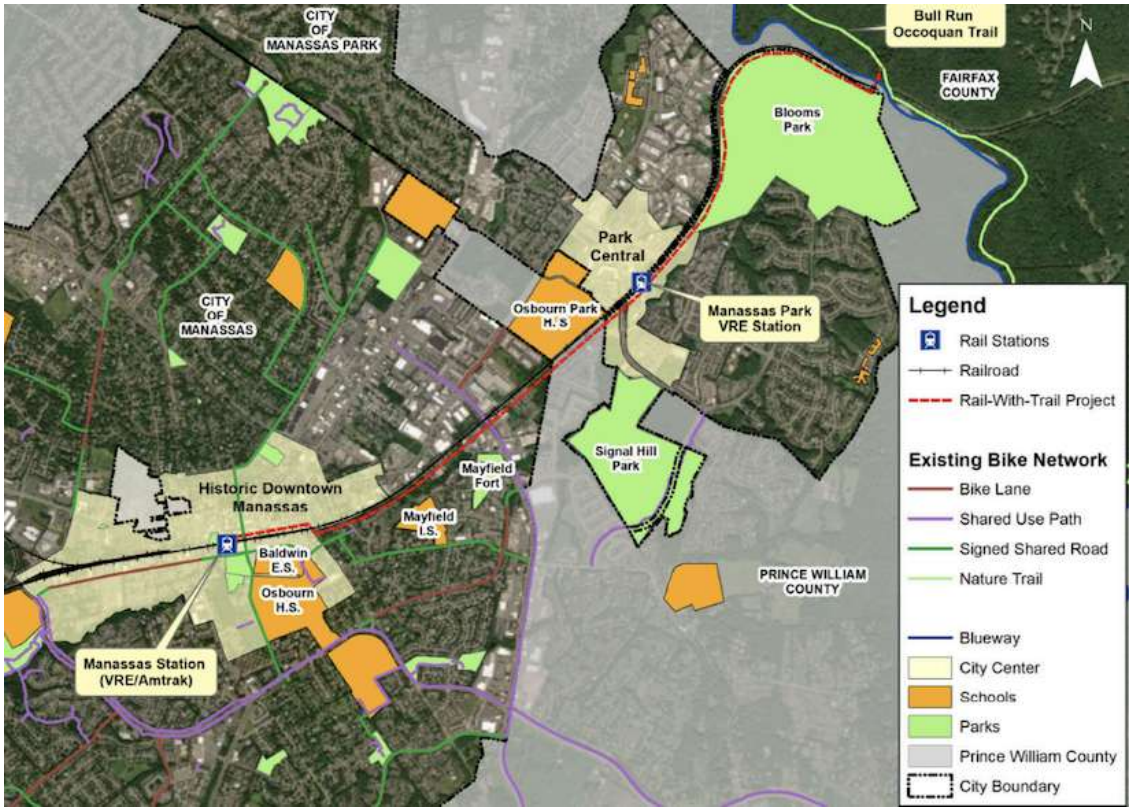
Community Health Assessment: Where Do Trails Fit In?

The Community Healthcare Coalition of Greater Prince William released the **Community Health Assessment (CHA)** on July 9. The top two answers to "Which behaviors need to be addressed in the community where you live?" were:
1) Eating unhealthy foods
2) Lack of exercise

The free donuts at Quarterly Meetings of the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition exacerbate #1, but expanding the trails network can address #2.

Mental and physical health is improved by getting outside and walking/biking. Exercise would be more accessible if every neighborhood had a trail, with connections to a regional network of greenways, shared use paths, bike routes, etc. Trails plans in each jurisdiction identify the trail connections, while budgets approved by local officials each fiscal year determine if trails will exist just on paper or also in real life.

According to the **data portal**, over 4,500 households have no motor vehicle. Those residents rely upon transit, walking/biking, or bumming a ride.



Rail With Trail Public Meeting

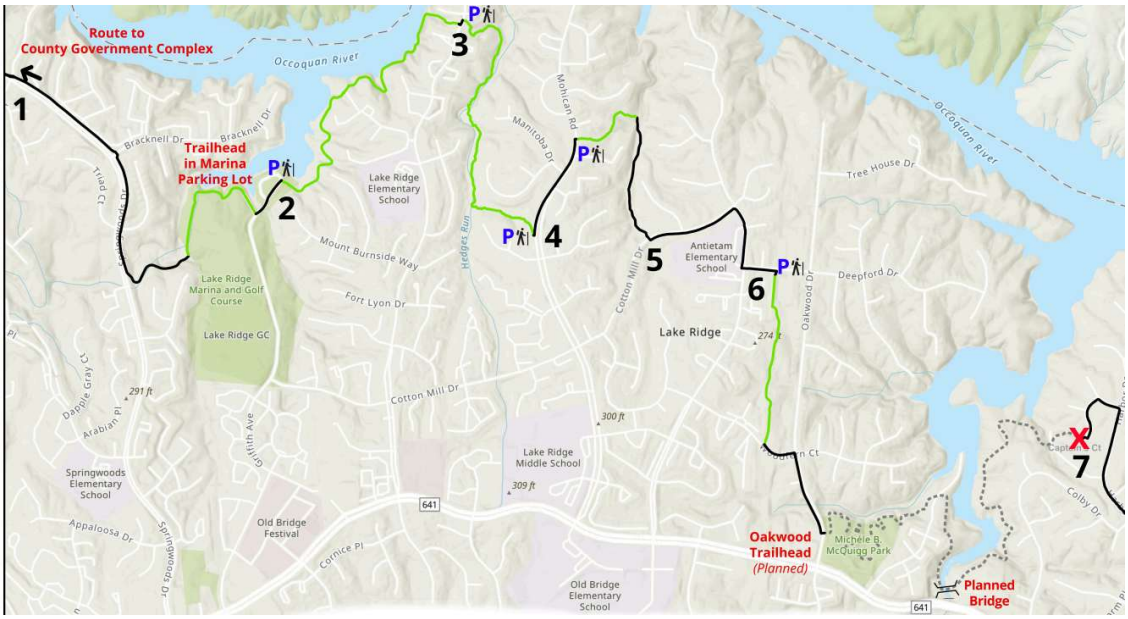
To obtain public input on the proposed three-mile multi-use trail along the railroad between downtown Manassas and the Bull Run Trail in Fairfax County, Manassas Park is hosting an **open house** at City Hall on July 30, 6:00-8:00pm. Spanish interpretation will be available.

In Search Of…. Trail Monitors

Prince William County's Department of Parks and Recreation is seeking **trail monitor volunteers** to walk a trail, or section of trail, on a weekly basis. During their walk they will pick up litter and

look for maintenance issues, such as damaged trees and hanging branches, standing water, trail washouts, etc.

Trail monitors will take pictures of identified issues and report their findings to the Maintenance and Operations Division.



Occoquan Greenway Construction Update

The bridge on Segment 2 of the **Occoquan Greenway** has been installed. The railing on the abutment is the last component before final inspection is completed.

The county is preparing to issue a request for bids on Segment 6 construction and bridge installation. Virginia Department of Transportation is reviewing the final (100%) design of Section 8, which forms the eastern portion of the trail connecting to the Town of Occoquan.

Prince William Water has started construction on the pump station at the end of Spinnaker Court on Segment 7 (*red X, above*). The trail will be rerouted there, but *be prepared for construction to interrupt trail access*.

Also, a contractor has been hired to complete the survey and plat for realigning a small section of Segment 7 west of Colby Drive, to avoid crossing private property.

As always, the **CIP Dashboard** has information on the 79 Department of Parks and Recreation projects.

NVRC: Promoting and Advertising NOVA Trails

Interested in promoting local trails, leading guided tours, or simply encouraging outdoor recreation? The Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) has **posted a survey** and is looking for feedback, in preparing promotional outreach.

NVRC is also conducting a new scenic viewshed inventory for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST).

Activities for volunteers will include a virtual training on September 11th and in-person inventorying on September 16th and 17th. NVRC and other volunteers will aim to assess 15-20 sites, including re-evaluation of some locations previously inventoried in 2015. Fill out the **volunteer sign up form** by August 31st to take part in these activities.

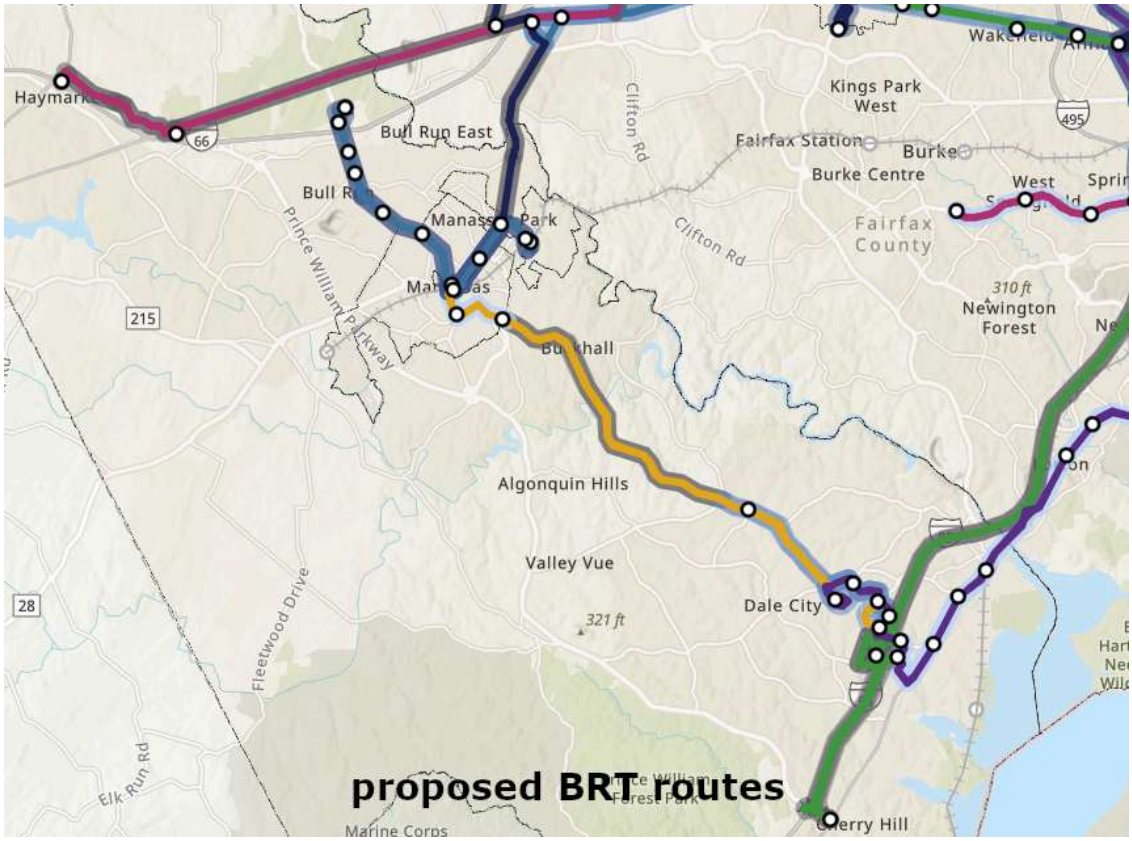
Subscribe to the NRVC Trails newsletter to stay in the loop.

In Other News…

- Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation is offering a **Twilight Trek** on July 19 (7:30-9:30pm) and **Adaptive Flatwater Kayaking** on July 26 (10:15-11:45am).
- The next **Junk Slam Dunk** litter clean-up at Leesylvania State Park will be July 26, 1:00-2:00pm.
- The **Virginia Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee** (BPAC) 2025 Summer Meeting will be July 22, 10:00am-noon. **Register online** to attend via Zoom.
- Statewide, the **bicycle facility inventory map** includes 1,614 miles of shared use path facilities, 986 lane miles of bicycle lanes (including 150 lane miles of buffered bicycle lanes and 26 lane miles of separated 2-way and 1-way facilities and contraflow bicycle lanes),

484 lane miles of shared lane markings and locally designated routes, and 7.5 miles of sidewalk connectors.

- **Walk with a Doc** at Chinn Aquatics and Fitness Center on July 24, noon-1:00pm.
- Mark your calendar - the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust **Fall Festival at Leopold's Preserve** (co-sponsored with the White House Farm Foundation) will be September 20, 10:00-2:00pm. There will be guided nature hikes along with other activities.
- Keep marking that calendar - the **16th Annual Upper Occoquan River Cleanup** organized by Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition will be September 27, 9:00am-noon.
- **Mountain biking group creates new paths at Haymarket's Long Park** (InsideNOVA, July 2) *"Between 2017-2024, MORE built four additional miles of trails at Long Park, ranging from 0.8-1.5 miles."* The effort led by Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) has involved 60 volunteers, and **Broad Run Off Road** provided $100,000 in funding.
- **Recent research** is showing that Right Turn on Red (RTOR) movements are actually unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers while only marginally useful in lowering emissions.
- **Annual "Best Places to Bike" report ranks Va. cities low, rankles officials and advocates** (*Virginia Mercury*, July 8) Cape Charles was rated #1.
- Prince William County is hiring a consultant to **plan improvements** at the Lake Ridge Marina boathouse used by crew teams. During the summer the Department of Parks and Recreation **rents boats** there. All that equipment is stored outside the boathouse. (Unlike the Neabsco Boardwalk boat ramp, water level at the marina is always high enough for access.)
- **Endurance mountain bike championships expected to bring more than 1,000 elite riders to Roanoke** (*Cardinal News*, July 9) The USA Cycling Endurance Mountain Bike Championships between July 14-20 includes a short track event in downtown. "*The amateur course clocks in at just over 40 miles, with approximately 4,300 feet of climbing. The Elite course is 53 miles long with 6,300 feet of climbing.*"
- **Snaking Through Washington DC To West Virginia Is A Scenic Hiking Trail Highlighting American History** (*Islands*, July 7*) "The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is more a patchwork than monolith, pulling together existing trails managed by federal, state, local, and nonprofit authorities. It's also growing and becoming more cohesive, with new segments opening regularly."*
- The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) **is proposing** a comprehensive Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The location of BRT stations was not identified in the concept plan, so it would be difficult to propose in the Prince William County Trails Master Plan how to provide bike/pedestrian access.



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