
Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Mid-March 2026 Newsletter

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

Project	District	Est.	Description
Property Acquisition	Brentsville	\$2.0M	Park land property acquisition
Hellwig Artificial Turf – Phase 2	Coles	\$2.0M	Completes 2019 bond referendum project
Long Park Infrastructure	Gainesville	\$1.0M	Concession/restroom facilities, upgrade baseball fields
Tyler Elementary Community Use	Gainesville	\$1.0M	Addresses amenities and ADA issues
<u>Charlie Boone Park Development</u>	<u>Occoquan</u>	<u>\$3.0M</u>	<u>Bicycle and skateboard park</u>
Dale City Rec. Center Park Improv.	Neabsco	\$1.0M	Improvements to diamond fields, play space, batting cages
Cunard & Cloverdale Park Courts	Neabsco	\$1.0M	Basketball & tennis court renovations
Forest Greens Golf Outdoor Grill	Potomac	\$2.0M	Outdoor seating, guest amenities
<u>PHNST Metz Boardwalk Extension</u>	<u>Woodbridge</u>	<u>\$4.0M</u>	<u>Extends the Neabsco Creek Boardwalk</u>
	Total	\$17.0M	

FY27 Budget in Prince William County

The current draft of the **FY27 Prince William County budget** has a 10% increase to \$63 million for the Department of Parks and Recreation (see [p.176](#) and following). Budget notes that “*the top five community priorities are: (1) walking, hiking, and biking trails; (2) park restrooms; (3) botanical gardens; (4) natural wildlife habitats; and (5) museums.*”

Funding for trail construction remains at \$1 million/year, except for FY27 there is a one-time addition of \$4 million to fund **extension of the Neabsco Boardwalk** to Leesylvania State Park and \$3 million for a new bike/skate park in the Occoquan District. There is now \$5 million/year for upgrading recreational facilities within county parks.

FY27 Budget would add \$1.2 million for maintenance across the entire county park system.

Three additional FTE (Full Time Equivalent) positions are proposed for Occoquan Greenway and Trail Maintenance, Current trails maintenance staff is 5 FTE. In addition, 2 FTE are added for project inspectors to help oversee construction projects.

Another needed position for a planner to prepare projects was not included in the proposed budget. There are currently 51 active projects listed on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) **dashboard** for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Everyone can respond to the budget survey posted by most **supervisors**. The county also has an official website to **ask questions** (and see staff's prompt answers) regarding FY27 budget.

Already asked: How will the Trails Master Plan, scheduled to come to the BOCS in May, be funded? Currently the county has about 60 miles of trails. Plan will propose around 300 miles - but funding for trails construction is just \$5 million in FY27 and \$1 million/year afterwards - and sidewalks are costing \$15 million/mile.

Answer: Specific projects in the upcoming Trails Master Plan that are advanced by the Board of County Supervisors could be funded by a variety of funding sources, including, but not limited to, debt financing, general funds, and developer contributions (proffers). The appropriate funding source for future projects resulting from the Trails Master Plan will be determined on a project-by-project basis.

Based on the **2020 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan**, the FY27 budget indicates "*There are currently \$542M in unmet capital needs throughout the park system.*" That number may change significantly when the Trails Master Plan is released. The trails plan will identify the cost of building trail segments proposed for completion over the next 10 years, plus all the remaining segments in the proposed bike/pedestrian network.

The March 10 agenda for the BOCS included **key financial data** regarding debt capacity that could affect a **Parks, Open Space, and Library bond referendum** in November. The draft **FY27 budget** prioritized using debt capacity to start a \$1+ billion expansion of office space for county employees. For details on the office expansion plan, see **recording** of January MIDCO meeting.

On May 7, the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) will hold a bond referendum work session with a Mobility and Parks presentation by the Directors of Transportation and Parks, Recreation & Tourism. BOCS must make the final decision on what bond projects and funding totals to put on the Fall 2026 ballot in early June.



Davis Ford Park: Community Hike for New Master Plan

Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation is developing its first Master Plan for Davis Ford Park. That plan will determine what development is appropriate, including the routing of a trails network, and provide the justification for future budget requests.

This March 21 event (11:00am-2:00pm) will offer participants the opportunity to explore the natural landscape of the undeveloped park property, including an historic homestead site and scenic overlook. during an optional one-mile guided hike. County staff will also host interactive stations and solicit community feedback.

Registration is required for this event no later than Wednesday, March 18.

Davis Ford Park is an undeveloped site and is not ADA accessible now. Because parking is limited at the site, attendees should park at PWC Stadium Parking Lot, 7 County Complex Ct., Woodbridge VA. A county bus will shuttle people to Davis Ford Park.

In the case of inclement weather, county staff will host attendees in Room 107 A&B – Development Services Building at the Development Services Building, located at 5 County Complex Court, Woodbridge VA. Inclement weather notes will be **posted** by Friday, March 20 at 3:00pm and sent to all registered attendees.



Trails = Mental/Physical Health Infrastructure

On March 2, the Community Healthcare Coalition of Greater Prince William started the public engagement process for developing the next **Community Health Improvement Plan** (CHIP).

The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition is one of the partners (*see above*) identifying how to improve behavioral health patterns.

As noted by Fire Department Chief Thomas LaBelle at the State of the County event on March 2, every time a fire truck or ambulance is dispatched... it is a sign of failure. The objective is to get “upstream” of incidents and prevent them from happening, rather than just respond when they occur.

Walking/biking outdoors, especially in green spaces, is an easy way to improve one’s mood and lower blood pressure. For the “get outdoors” solution to be available, however, Prince William County will need to fund the implementation of the Trails Master Plan and create “walkable” communities with easy access to green spaces.

One symptom: More than **20% of Prince William County residents** report feeling depressed.

One solution: Build the planned network of trails connecting communities to parks.

Greater Prince William Trails Coalition will be one of the organizations participating in the **Senior Resource Fair** at the Ben Lomond Community Center on March 25 from 10:00am-2:00pm.

Prince William Health District, Prince William Area Agency on Aging, and Manassas Senior Center are looking at issues identified during the **Community Health Assessment** (CHA). Lack of exercise was one item - more benches are needed on trails.

*(And look for the Walk and Talk Wellness Program organized by the **Prevention Coalition of Greater Prince William** to return to local trails in May...)*



Manassas Parks, Culture & Recreation Master Plan

The city is updating the **2016** plan; **new plan** will guide the city's parks, recreation and culture programming and infrastructure development from 2026-2036. Adoption by the Manassas City Council is expected in March 2027.

The community engagement phase is now being launched. Public meetings will be held on April 7, 14, 28 and May 6 and 13. Events will be on April 4 and 22, May 16, and June 20. Topics to be discussed are:

- Parks and Open Space
- Recreation Programming
- History and Education
- Athletics and Sports
- Culture and Community Events



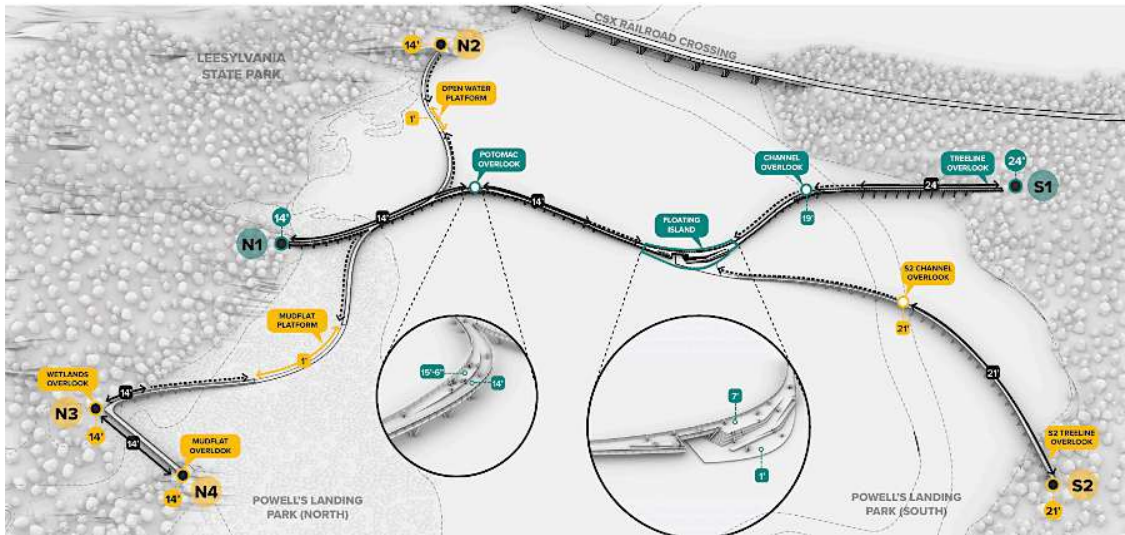
Volunteer As a Trail Monitor

It's getting warmer. The "snowcrete" has melted and bulbs are starting to flower. So... it's time to get outdoors.

The Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation - Maintenance and Operations Division is seeking trail monitor volunteers. Trail monitors will 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.

Register at Volunteer Prince William.

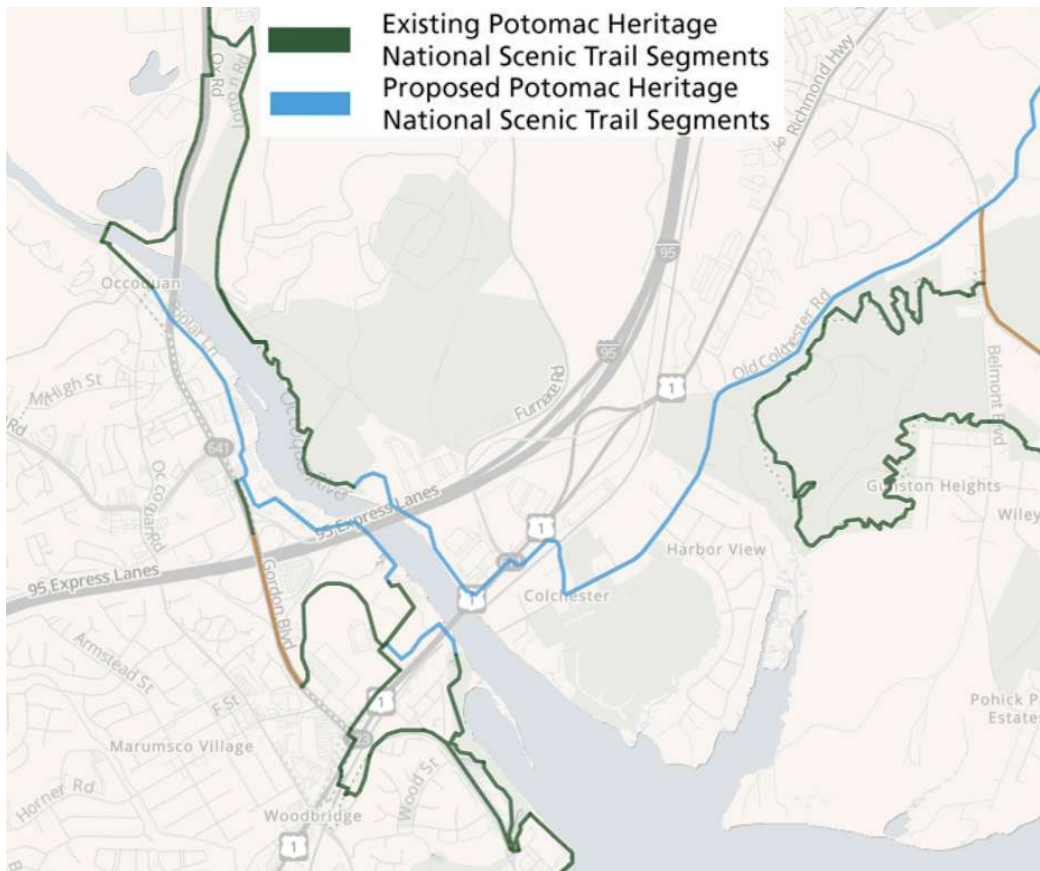




Powells Creek Crossing

There was a **10% design review** of the Powells Creek Crossing by stakeholders on March 4. Due to post-COVID inflation of construction costs, the \$9 million provided by the 2019 bond issue will be sufficient to complete only Phase 1 of the entire project.

Phase 1 will provide a complete connection across Powells Creek to link Leesylvania State Park and Potomac Shores. As noted in the FY27 budget (**p.179**), “Additional funds will be necessary” to complete the extra sections of the boardwalk that provide access to more spots on the north and south banks of the creek.



New Occoquan River Trail Bridge?

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) is **seeking Federal funding** to design a new railroad bridge across the Occoquan River. The addition of a third (and potentially fourth) track across the river is included in Phase 3 of the **Transforming Rail in Virginia** initiative. Construction would begin in the mid-2030's.

One possibility: include a bike/pedestrian trail on the new bridge, using the same pilings but separate from the tracks. This could be a braid of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST), and would be consistent with current **Active Fairfax** planning.

As defined recently by Prince William County, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), and the National Park Service, the **primary route** of the PHNST (*see above*) crosses the river at the town of Occoquan.

The PHNST has multiple braids, including one dead-end route into southern Maryland on the other side of the Potomac River, so there is clearly an option of defining an additional segment to connect Colchester Road in Fairfax County to Belmont Bay in Prince William County. The final map of the primary PHNST route and braids will be defined by the Board of County Supervisors in Prince William County's **Trails Master Plan**.



Giulia Manno, ***Environmental and Energy Sustainability Officer***, at the March 4 meeting

Sustainability and Resilience Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Prince William County is seeking public input on the **Sustainability and Resilience Comprehensive Plan Amendment** (CPA), in part to incorporate the **Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan** (CESMP) in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The CESMP was adopted officially on October 24, 2023.

Of the 25 high-priority action items in the CESMP, the #1 transportation item is “Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure and Enhance Connectivity.” The existing 2040

Comprehensive Plan will need to be modified to meet the top goal in the CESMP to “Reduce GHG [greenhouse gas emissions] emissions county-wide to 50% below 2005 levels by 2030.” The current **Roadway Plan** includes \$7 billion of proposed highway projects that will increase Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and tailpipe emissions.

The **online survey** for public comment on the CPA is open until March 18. After that date comments are still welcome; submit them to SRcpa@pwcgov.org

Those interested in building the bike/pedestrian network to create an alternative to using cars for at least short trips in “walkable” communities will have to select “Other” in Question #3 (*Which of the following environmental challenges concern you most?*) to indicate that priority. Comments can also be provided in the last question.



Land Acquisition Completed for Neabsco Greenway Segment

The Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation just purchased two parcels from Dale Land LLC. That company owns the properties not transferred to Home Owner Associations (HOA's) when Dale City subdivisions were constructed.

Funding for the land acquisition was provided by the 2019 bond issue. There is approximately \$900K remaining from that source.

The planned trail in the Neabsco Greenway can now be constructed downstream from Lindendale Road to Delaney Road. A contractor has already been identified to complete the project. All or most of the trail will be located on the north side of Neabsco Creek with “puncheons” (boardwalk on ground) crossing wettest spots.

The nearby Mapledale rezoning proposal for 208 new dwelling units includes a proffer (see [p.17](#)) of \$27.62 per market rate unit for the Neabsco Greenway trail. That totals less than \$6,000 - clearly the trail can not be completed with just proffer funding.



Project Name	Cost/Mile
Greenway Corridor (Long Range Planning Estimate)	\$ 1,785,714.29
Greenway Corridor (Long Range Planning Estimate)	\$ 3,150,000.00
Greenway Corridor (Long Range Planning Estimate)	\$ 3,937,500.00
Greenway Corridor (Long Range Planning Estimate)	\$ 8,666,666.67
Greenway Corridor (Long Range Planning Estimate)	\$ 1,524,390.24
Open Water Boardwalk Crossing	\$26,400,000.00
Regional Transit Connector (Full Corridor)	\$15,450,201.34
Natural Surface	\$ 422,400.00
Low Boardwalk	\$ 6,336,000.00
Stonedust	\$ 2,418,240.00
Low Boardwalk	\$ 3,500,000.00
Stonedust*	\$ 540,000.00
Low Boardwalk	\$ 6,113,684.21
Stonedust Trail	
Simple Stonedust*	\$ 578,688.00

Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Update

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) subcommittee met on February 18. A final decision was made on the **primary route** for the trail through the county.

At the February 19 meeting of the **Mid County Civic Association of Prince William** (MIDCO), Joe Marshall and Jason Williams gave a presentation about the TBC and trails planning/funding. A recording of their session can be viewed online; **start** at the 36 minute mark.

The February TBC meeting was held on March 3. It had been postponed to accommodate the State of the Parks event. There was a packed agenda to address trails planning, funding (and lack of funding), status of projects, and other topics.

As an indicator of citizen commitment, 14 of the 16 TBC members participated in person for the entire 2.5 hours of discussion. TBC members receive no compensation for their service, unlike

many other advisory committees.

Department of Parks and Recreation staff reported that they estimate constructing new trails will cost between \$425,000-\$6,000,000 per mile, depending upon the location and type of trail to be constructed.

For more details of the TBC meeting, see the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition [blog post](#).



Townes at Occoquan/Destination Place Rezoning Update

Proffers have been revised for the proposed Townes at Occoquan/Destination Place rezoning (**REZ2024-00033**). The request is for authorization of 167 dwelling units on the 18-acre parcel within the North Woodbridge Town Center and North Woodbridge Waterfront District.

Proposal finally includes a route for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail to go along the Occoquan River waterfront - though in standing water and marshy areas, so it would require substantial funding to construct something like the Neabsco Boardwalk. Most of the poison pills

included in previous proffers, which would have blocked construction of a public trail, have been removed.

County staff are completing their fourth review now. The project is not scheduled for a hearing at the Planning Commission yet.



In Other News...

- Prince William Water needs to assess the condition of an existing underground “force main” that could be used to pump sewage from Lake Ridge to the Mooney water reclamation plant. A segment of the Occoquan Greenway (see above) may be closed for a short time in 2026 to excavate to the sewer pipe and run a camera through it.
- In the General Assembly, **HB661** authorizing Safety Yield, Proceed on Walk Signal, and Riding Two Abreast died in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee on March 6. **Latest update** on legislation is available from the Virginia Bicycling Federation.
- **Bikes make life freer. These laws could change that** (*Washington Post*, March 4) “E-bikes make the world bigger for more people. But policymakers are hard at work designing regulations that curtail this freedom.”
- At Neabsco Boardwalk, Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation is offering a **Twilight Trek** on March 28 and a **Full Moon Hike** on April 2. Register 48 hours in advance.
- City of Manassas is proposing a new 1.2 mile bike connection along Sudley Road between Godwin Drive and Grant Avenue. All **three concepts** include bike lanes on Digges Road.
- Check out the results of the **Neabsco Creek & Boardwalk trash cleanup** on March 7 by Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition.
- **Marumsco Creek & Wetlands cleanup** at Veteran's Park will be March 28 (9:00am-noon).

- The Mount Vernon Trail has been named “Trail of the Year” by the Public Lands Alliance. As noted in the **March newsletter** of the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail, 3,700 volunteers invested 8,523 hours. *“Improvements in 2024-2025 included removing over 1,000 trail bumps, patching 161 potholes, replacing 5 outdated bike racks, installing bike racks at 3 new locations, cleaning and leveling pavers at 3 rest areas and installing 6 new freeze resistant water fountains with bottle fillers.”*
- **2025 Parks & Recreation Annual Report Highlights Tremendous Growth Over the Past Year** (Prince William County, February 24) *“We proudly steward one of the most dynamic park systems in the nation, one where visitors can choose from 55 parks and facilities, 15 historic sites, 60 miles of trail, and 5,400 acres of parkland stretching from the Bull Run Mountains to the Potomac River.”*
- **As regional transportation body allocates millions, multimodal advocates clamor for more bike, pedestrian infrastructure** (*Henrico Citizen*, March 2) The Central Virginia Transportation Authority (the Richmond-area equivalent to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority) awarded another \$6 million for construction of the Fall Line Trail. Most of the project applications featured bike and pedestrian components. CVTA Director said *“If there is a person who wants an additional bike ped[estrian] project, they need to be working at the locality level so that CVTA gets an application for that project.”*
- **Accelerating connection: Our plan to double the Greenway’s impact by 2030** (East Coast Greenway, March 4) *“We already estimate that the East Coast Greenway is the most visited park in America, hosting around 50 million bike rides, runs and walks per year. We aim to hit 100 million, doubling our positive impact for the health, sustainability and economy of our 15 states and 450 communities.”* For more, see new **2026-2030 Strategic Plan**.
- Want to lead hikes for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC)? Check out **Leading the Way: How to Become a PATC Hike Leader**.
- **Alexandria neighbors push back on plan to turn some street parking into bike lanes** (Fox5, March 6) 50 residents on West Braddock Road, just west of Old Town Alexandria, have signed a petition opposing the removal of 100 parking spaces to create dedicated and protected bike lanes.
- The 2026 Bluebell Festival sponsored by the **Prince William Conservation Alliance** will be Sunday, March 29 from 10:00am-3:00pm. There are 10 guided 1-mile hikes throughout the day. **Register** for a free timed entry ticket.



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Greater Prince William Trails Coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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