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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

June 2026 Newsletter

see more at our [calendar](#), [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.
Numerous hikes are scheduled in June...



Quarterly Meeting on June 25

Come and meet with fellow trail planners, managers, and advocates at the Quarterly Meeting on June 25, 10:00-11:30am. We gather in-person at GMU's [Potomac Science Center](#), and via Zoom as well. [Register](#) to get Zoom link.

Among other topics, we'll discuss the current action plan for the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition. We schmooze, but we schmooze with a purpose. One current focus is identifying the "low hanging fruit" trail segments which can be constructed with minimal funding and delay, particularly with volunteer help.

We'll also discuss funding and implementing Pathways 2035, the **Countywide Trails Master Plan**. That 10-year plan is now scheduled to go to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors for approval at the end of July.

In contrast to the **Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan** just released by the Virginia Department of Transportation, the county plan takes a comprehensive, integrated approach and prioritizes both recreational and active mobility trail segments.



At the May 26 Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Meeting

Room was full with all 16 TBC members participating (2 were virtual). There were four people from Prince William County and park police, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and two staff, plus three members of the general public.

- Ribbon cutting for new segment of Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) next to

Fetherbed National Wildlife Refuge is expected this Fall.

- All three alternatives in the Davis Ford Park **draft Master Plan** include a mile of new trails. Park plan will be completed in July.
- Pathways 2035 is scheduled to go to Board of County Supervisors for adoption on July 21.
- Five companies participated in the pre-bid conference for the contract to extend Neabsco Boardwalk from the South Landing to the southern shoreline and into Julie Metz Wetland.. A separate contract will extend the boardwalk eastward towards Leesylvania State Park.
- Primary component of Powells Creek Crossing is near 35% design stage. Design of auxiliary “arms” will stop at 10% stage. Those additions will be completed later when funding is available.
- Major projects and two DPR staffers will transfer to new Department of Transportation and Capital Construction (DTCC) on July 1. DPR will remain responsible for all trail planning and design, then hand off construction of major projects to DTCC.
- Adult Learn to Ride” class offered by Prince William Transportation Department in May was sold out; 19 adults participated.
- National Museum of the Marine Corps is exploring development options for land around the museum in order to generate revenue. That possibility is blocking museum board approval for PHNST to cross the property and connect to Locust Shade Park.
- DPR signage package will be developed along with separate Trail Design Standards Manual, which Section 600 of county’s **Design and Construction Standards Manual** (DCSM) will reference. Specific DPR standards are needed for recreational trails that will be built separately from developer proffers.
- TBC and Seth Hendler-Voss, Director of DPR, discussed draft FY2027-2032 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. TBC provided specific suggestions for including trails-related strategies and key performance indicators. That strategic plan is intended to identify realistic accomplishments within existing resources, not aspirational items.
- “Low Hanging Fruit” trail projects could include low-water stream crossings of ephemeral and intermittent streams, but crossing perennial streams will require more resources from county staff.



paved trail leading to Signal Bay Waterpark in Manassas Park

What Is a Multiuse Trail?

The State Trails Office in the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) released the **Statewide Multiuse Trail Plan** on May 1. That plan focuses on plans to build hard-surface trails, almost all paved with stonedust, asphalt or concrete. Natural surface trails such as the Appalachian Trail or the Occoquan Greenway are not included.

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) did not get listed as one of the 23 “signature” state trails (see p.3-22) . Some segments with a 10-foot wide paved surface to accommodate two-way wheeled traffic are identified in the state plan.

VDOT identified four characteristics of a multiuse trail:

- 1) Should serve non-motorized users - primarily people on foot, bicycle, horseback, e-mobility devices, and wheelchair as defined in existing **Virginia Code § 46.2-904.1** and local regulation - in a shared environment.
- 2) Should preferably be separated from motor vehicle traffic, including those that are in their own right-of-way (e.g., along a utility corridor or former rail line)
- 3) Should strive to meet current design standards for accessibility and safety as found in the ADA [**Americans with Disabilities Act**], the most **current edition** of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, the **Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines**, and currently applicable VDOT design standards where possible and appropriately balance cost.
- 4) Should strive to support regional connectivity across jurisdictions and/or regionally significant destinations (e.g., parks, hospitals, major population, schools, and employment centers, etc.) within the same jurisdiction.

Most, but not all trails identified in the Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan are within the VDOT right of way. The criteria for inclusion are consistent with those for the National Capital Trail Network and the East Coast Greenway.

Stonedust paved trails, as well as asphalt and concrete pavement, are included. The **Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail**, a component of the PHNST which is in the state plan, has a dirt and gravel surface.



Pathways 2035 vs. the Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan

The 292 miles of planned new “active mobility” segments in Prince William’s Pathways 2035 plan (the **Countywide Trails Master Plan** for Prince William County) are divided into four categories:

Shared Use Path - 147 miles

Paved Shoulder - 104 miles

Bicycle Lanes - 30 miles

Sharrows - 11 miles

Active mobility trails in Pathways 2035 typically are paved with asphalt, concrete, or stonedust; most are 8-10’ wide. In Prince William County, active mobility segments are associated with paved roads and were identified by the Transportation Department.

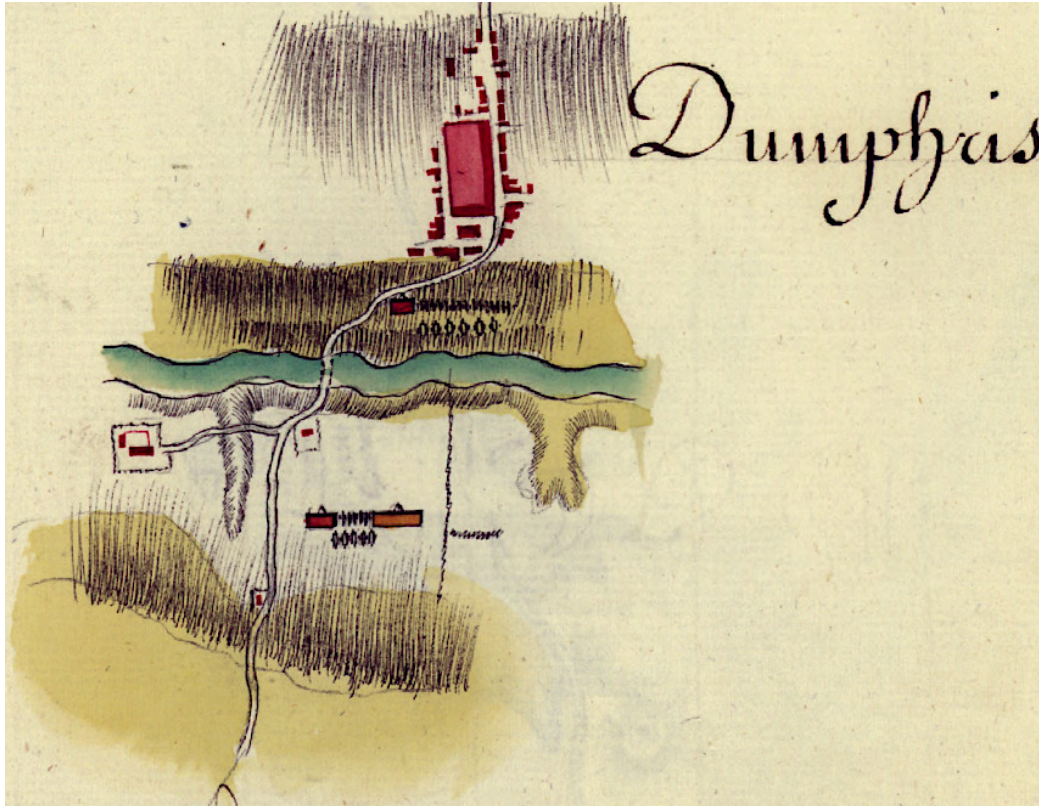
The county’s plan also includes 118 miles of “recreational” trails identified by the Department of Parks and Recreation. They are typically narrow trails located within county parks and greenways. Most recreational segments have a natural/gravel surface or a boardwalk, but some are paved.

The **Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan**, released on May 1, identified 2.900 miles of planned active mobility trails. VDOT inventoried local plans for segments suitable for use by road bikes and other wheeled vehicles that meet Americans With Disabilities Act design criteria regarding slope and grade.

The state plan was not designed to include natural surface recreational trails for hiking within parks. Pathways 2035 provides an integrated plan for multiple types of trails, both recreational and active mobility.

New Blog Posts on GPWTC Website

- [What Comes After Pathways 2035?](#)
- [Answers to Questions about Upcoming Pathways 2035 Trails Master Plan](#)
- [Revising the Route of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail \(PHNST\)](#)
- [Update – Comprehensive Plan Development for Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail \(PHNST\)](#)
- [Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail \(PHNST\) Subcommittee – May 20 Meeting](#)
- [Rocky Branch Bridge Has Been Installed at Broad Run Linear Park](#)
- [Six-Year Program Update – Northern Virginia Transportation Authority \(NVTa\)](#)

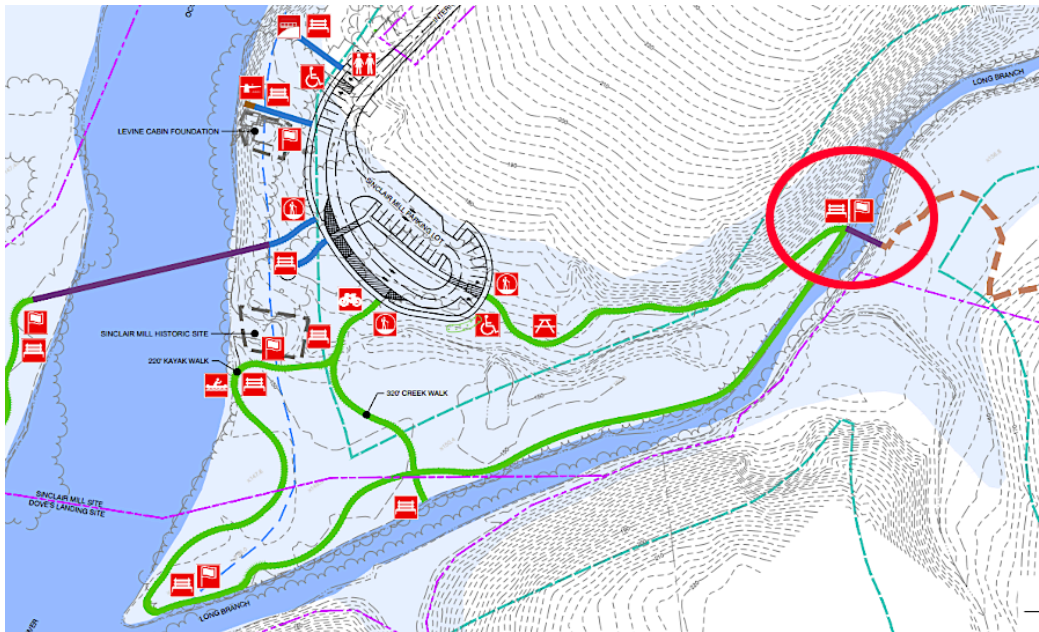


Second Sunday Hike on June 14, 1:00-3:00pm at Prince William Forest Park

We will take advantage of the fee-free day at the national park and begin at The Crossing Trailhead. We'll loop within the Park to see remnants of the [Washington-Rochambeau Route](#) used on the march to Yorktown in 1781.

The route will take us up to the South Fork of Quantico Creek; we'll enjoy the beautiful scenery you always expect when visiting PW Forest Park. The hike distance will be about 3 miles on well-maintained natural surface trails with some hills, roots and rocks.

Register online, in case weather forces us to cancel. Park and meet in the Telegraph Parking Lot within the Park.



June 2 Board of County Supervisors Meeting

The **agenda** for the June 2 meeting of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) includes Item 5J. ratifying a submission to obtain \$1,850,000 from a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to construct the Sinclair Mill section of **Doves Landing Park**, including a boat ramp providing canoe/kayak/paddleboard access to Lake Jackson for the general public.

The LWCF grant and proffer funding will allow construction of the bridge over Long Branch, completing the trail from Classic Springs Drive to the waterfront (*circled, above*).

With Item 7G., the BOCS will also vote on acquiring the land needed to build a bike/pedestrian bridge across Route 1 connecting the future North Woodbridge Town Center to the Woodbridge train station for the Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

It is common for the county to use its condemnation authority to acquire property rights for roads. Condemnation is also used for "active mobility" trail segments, such as shared use paths which accompany road projects.



*Kisha Wilson-Sogunro from Manassas, plus Rob Orrison and Seth Hendler-Voss from Prince William County, spoke on May 28 to the **Committee of 100** about parks, trails, history, and effective cooperation.*

Capital Trails Coalition Summit

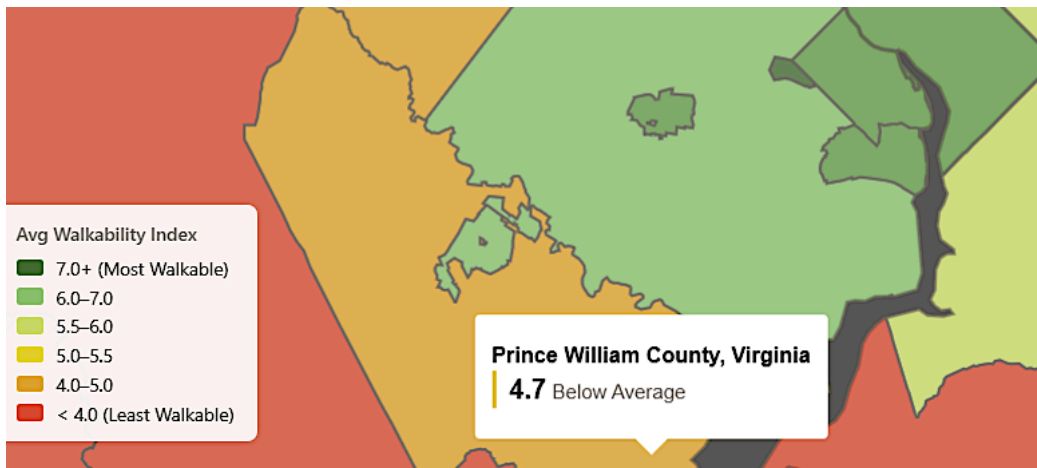
The Capital Trails Coalition formed in 2016. The summit, a free event organized by the **Washington Area Bicyclist Association** (WABA), will celebrate ten years of trail engagement and advocacy in the Washington, D.C region. **Register** to reserve a spot on June 18, 1:00-5:00pm.

The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition is one of the **members** of the Capital Trails Coalition. Primary overlap in interest is the development of the **National Capital Trail Network**. Breakout sessions on June 18 will provide the opportunity to discuss trail accessibility, maintenance, and creation, as well as collaborate and connect..



Do You Know: Where Is This Blueway?

Guess first - then **see the answer**.



Who Gets to Live in Walkable Places — and Who Doesn't?

America Walks has **upgraded** its Interactive Walkable Land Use Tool. Its calculations are derived by combining the Environmental Protection Agency's **National Walkability Index** with population data from the US Census.

Rural areas where farming and forestry are dominant industries are the least walkable communities. Jurisdictions where development evolved from a downtown center are more walkable. Manassas has a 6.7 walkability score. Manassas Park, which is only now creating a downtown with Park Central, already has a 6.5 score.

After World War II, once-rural Northern Virginia jurisdictions rezoned land to accommodate population growth. Prince William County first approved Marumsco Woods and Dale City, but then scattered new development away from jobs, retail centers, and public facilities.

Spawl offers low walkability; Prince William County has a 4.7 score. Fairfax County has retrofitted its original car-centered suburban development, adding trails and incentivizing live-work-play mixed use development. It now has a 6.2 walkability score.

The Prince William County 2040 Comprehensive Plan identified a **Level of Service standard** to increase walkability/bikeability. The county has now identified where it could close bicycle and pedestrian facility **gaps** "to support the pursuit of strategic goals outlined in the FY2025-2028 Strategic Plan, aiming to enhance walkability and bikeability..."

PARK TYPE	WALK/BIKE SERVICE AREA	DRIVE TIME SERVICE AREA
Neighborhood	5 to 10-minute walk/bike time; bus stop within ¼-mile, preferred	Less than 10 minutes
Community	10 to 15-minute walk/bike time	10 to 20-minute drive time
Regional	Greater than 15-minute walk/bike time	20 to 30-minute drive time
School/Community-Use	5 to 10-minute walk/bike time	Less than 10 minutes

E-Bike Info

On May 26 John Hamilton, president of Virginia Bicycling Federation, gave a presentation about e-bikes to the Trails and Blueways Council (TBC). They are currently permitted on trails in Prince William County parks, but faster “e-motos” that can exceed the 28mph limit of Class 3 e-bikes are a safety concern.

At that TBC meeting, Prince William County police and parks staff described how they have difficulty identifying the class of e-bike (or an “e-moto” vehicle) without close inspection. They are not prepared to enforce a Class 3 e-bike/e-moto prohibition on park trails; bikes with pedals look too similar. Education and outreach may be a more effective tool to shape trail use than hard-to-implement enforcement.

E-Bikes in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests In Pennsylvania, e-bikes are allowed on trails where regular bikes are allowed if they meet these rules:

- Weigh no more than 100 pounds
- Do not go faster than 20 mph using the motor
- Have a motor no bigger than 750 watts
- Have working pedals

Safe Trails for All: Responsible E-Bike Use Matters (Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, May 24) *“E-bikes are here to stay, and they can be a tremendous force for good. The goal is not conflict between riders—it is building a culture where everyone can travel safely together.”*

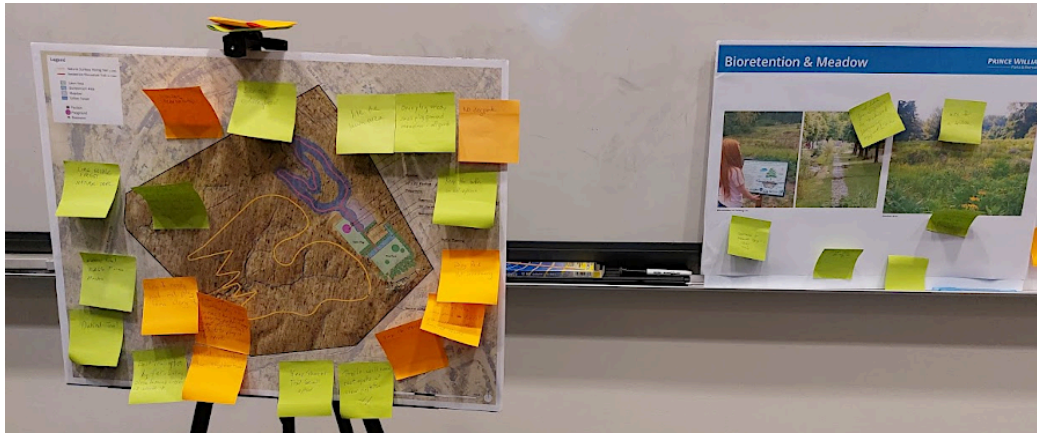
International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) has information on **electric mountain bikes** (eMTBs). *“IMBA continues to support Class 1 pedal-assist eMTBs - those that require pedaling and are capped at 20 mph - as the most compatible with traditional mountain biking experiences and the intent of natural surface, non-motorized trails. These bikes preserve the spirit of human-powered recreation while enabling a broader range of riders to access trails.”*

Two *Bicycler Retailer* articles of Interest:

- **Amazon stops selling e-bikes that exceed 28 mph in California** (May 11)

- **California AG, district attorneys issue alert over e-moto concern** (April 16)

The alert also reminded retailers that they can only advertise or sell e-mobility devices as e-bikes if they fall within one of the three classes.



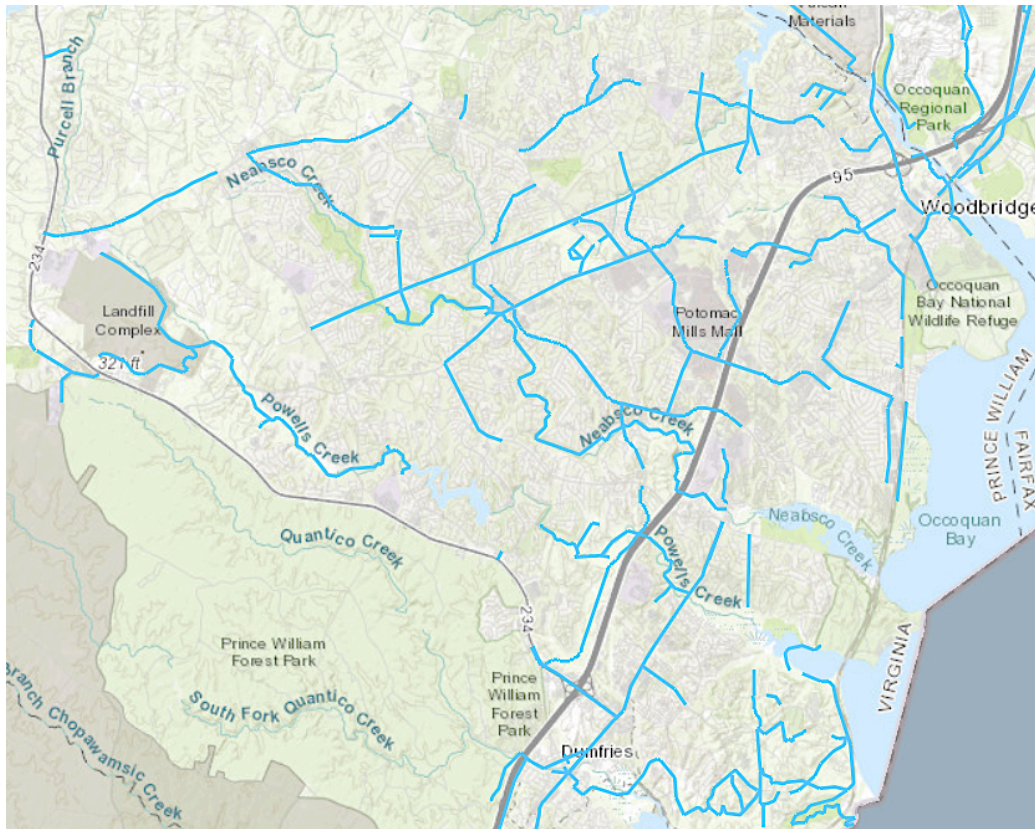
Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation has gathered public comment for the Davis Ford Park Master Plan, including location of proposed trails.

In Other News...

- **Our May 2026 Statement to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)** (Active Prince William, May 23)
- Starting June 6, **day-use reservations** are required for hikers/bikers to enter Leesylvania State Park on weekends and state holidays. A reservation is required even to walk into the park: *While reservations are per vehicle, capacity for the site has been planned on a per person basis. This is also to prevent parking issues on adjacent property and roadways near the park.*
- **Davis Ford Park Master Plan** was discussed at the May 21 meeting of the Mid County Civic Association (MIDCO). **Video recording** is available, with park discussion starting about 1/3 of the way into the meeting.
- Supervisor Kenny Boddye **reports** regarding plans for the **Charlie Boone Trails Bike & Skate Park**: *“The FY27 CIP includes \$3 million for the design and construction of a family-friendly bicycle and skateboard park, dog park, restroom facility, parking lot, security lighting, and bench seating at the County-owned property...”*
- **A Lesson from Amsterdam** (Bacon’s Rebellion blog, May 21) *“A transportation infrastructure built around the primacy of bicycles works OK for the Dutch, but Virginians would never accept it.”*
- **Greenway Bike Bus drives connection to nature, community** (East Coast Greenway, May 28) *“...the Greenway Bike Bus launched at the start of this school year... Within the first week, bike commuting doubled, then it doubled again to 45 children and parents enjoying riding to school together at 7am, prompting the principal to add more bike parking capacity in front of the school.”*
- Virginia State Parks has a **Trail Quest** program. *“By accepting the Trail Quest challenge, you’ll do much more than earn pins and become a Master Hiker - you’ll explore Virginia’s diverse state parks that are full of history, offer thousands of educational and nature programs, and provide access to more than 700 miles of **hiking, biking and equestrian** trails.”*

Indicator	Metric	Statewide Total	Existing Multiuse Trails	Percent within Buffer	Planned Multiuse Trails	Increase	Existing and Planned Multiuse Trails	Percent Within Buffer
Population	People within a half-mile buffer	8,582,479	3,098,094	36.10%	3,325,544	1,217,477	4,315,571	50.28%
Underserved Communities	People in Justice40 census tracts within a half-mile buffer	1,920,205	381,005	19.84%	556,580	325,769	706,774	36.81%
Employment	Jobs within a half-mile buffer	3,635,927	1,746,212	48.03%	1,825,358	519,115	2,265,327	62.30%
Safety	Miles of statewide priority corridors within a half-mile buffer	4,281	2,393	55.91%	2,368	651	3,044	71.12%

- 1,600+ miles of existing multiuse trails
- 2,900+ miles of planned multiuse trails



50% of the state population would live within 1/2 mile of a trail if all the 2,900 miles of **planned trails** in the Virginia Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan are completed



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