

ITEM 8 – Action
February 21, 2024

National Capital Trail Network Update

Action: Adopt Resolution R7-2024 to approve the National Capital Trail Network.

Background: The board will be asked to approve the updated National Capital Trail Network, one of the TPB initiatives of Visualize 2045. Staff provided a briefing on the draft updated network at the January 17 meeting.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Washington,
D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED NATIONAL CAPITAL TRAIL NETWORK

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorized on November 15, 2021 when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law, for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the FAST Act and IIJA include an emphasis on bicycle, pedestrian, and Complete Streets considerations in metropolitan transportation planning; and

WHEREAS, the TPB Vision, adopted in 1998, calls for convenient bicycle and pedestrian access, increased walk and bike mode share, and implementation of a regional bicycle/trail/pedestrian plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, adopted by the TPB in 2014, set the goal of providing a comprehensive range of transportation options, identified the challenge of unsafe and incomplete walking and biking infrastructure, and supported a strategy of expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and,

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2018, the TPB approved a new long-range transportation plan, called "Visualize 2045," that meets federal planning requirements, addresses the federal planning factors and goals in the TPB Vision and the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, and included a new "Aspirational Element" as specified by TPB Resolution R8-2018; and

WHEREAS, in Resolutions R12-2018 and R10-2019, the TPB directed that the National Capital Trail be a part of Visualize 2045's aspirational element, and that TPB staff expand the National Capital Trail to provide connectivity to other major trails in the region, thereby creating the National Capital Trail Network that extends into all TPB member jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, in July 2021 the TPB adopted Resolution R5-2021, approving the National Capital Trail Network Map, and

WHEREAS, Resolution R5-2021 directed TPB staff to report progress towards implementation of the network, and to work with the TPB member jurisdictions to update the network, to reflect anticipated new agency bicycle and pedestrian plans, on a periodic basis; and

WHEREAS, TPB staff has worked with the TPB member jurisdictions to identify the segments of the National Capital Trail Network that have been built since July 2020, re-routed some segments, and added new segments at the request of the jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the updated National Capital Trail Network will provide a continuous pedestrian and bicycle network of 1,549 miles of trails and other low-stress facilities, of which 752 miles already exist and 797 miles are planned, serving the entire region in an equitable manner; and

WHEREAS, 63% of the region's population and 72% of region's jobs are within a half-mile of the network; 136 of the region's 140 Activity Centers are within a half-mile of the network, as are 334 of the 364 Equity Emphasis Areas; and

WHEREAS, TPB Resolution R18-2022, adopting regional transportation greenhouse gas reduction goals and strategies, identified completing the National Capital Trail Network by the year 2030 as a priority strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, since July 2020 approximately 83 miles of the National Capital Trail Network have been constructed, a rate of approximately 27 miles per year, and

WHEREAS, since July 2020 approximately 127 miles have been identified by member jurisdictions to be added to the network, while the share of completed miles has increased from 45% to 49%, and

WHEREAS, the updated National Capital Trail Network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and clean, inexpensive, reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD:

1. Adopts the updated National Capital Trail Network as described on the TPB National Capital Trail Network web page.
2. Directs TPB staff to undertake or continue the following activities:
 - Give additional consideration to projects that will implement portions of the network for Transportation Alternatives, Transportation-Land Use Connections, Transit within Reach, and Regional Roadway Safety program funding.
 - Report on progress towards implementation of the network as feasible but at least every two years.
 - Work with the TPB member jurisdictions to update the network, to reflect anticipated new agency bicycle and pedestrian plans, as feasible but at least every two years.
3. Calls upon its members to prioritize projects, programs, and policies that will implement portions of the National Capital Trail Network, as well as to increase the rate of progress in completing planned portions of the National Capital Trail Network, in conjunction with goals set forth in R5-2021 and R18-2022. All projects, programs, and policies must be implemented in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner, consistent with the TPB Vision.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Andrew Meese, TPB Systems Performance Planning Program Director
Michael Farrell, TPB Senior Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Updated National Capital Regional Trail Network
DATE: February 15, 2024

This memorandum provides the status of the National Capital Trail Network update subsequent to the January TPB meeting.

Staff presented the proposed updated National Capital Trail Network to the TPB at its January 17, 2024 meeting, providing the background to the network as a Visualize 2045 Aspirational Initiative; a geographic analysis of the network's proximity to COG and TPB policy areas such as Equity Emphasis Areas; success stories of project completions since the TPB adopted the original version of the network in 2020; and an introduction to the interactive web page created for the network on the TPB website.

No changes have been made to the proposed updated National Capital Trail Network since the January 17 meeting. The map and web page may be viewed at the [National Capital Trail Network web page](#).

On January 17, board members raised questions concerning specific trails in Loudoun County and in the City of Fairfax. In response, staff worked with Loudoun County and City of Fairfax staffs to confirm that the network information included for those jurisdictions in the update is accurate and reflects the wishes of those jurisdictions at this time.

The board was asked to provide staff any further comments by February 9, and none were received.

Staff recommends that the TPB adopt Resolution R7-2024 to approve the updated National Capital Trail Network, at the February 21 meeting.

As noted at the January TPB meeting, staff worked with the jurisdictions and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee to produce a revised National Capital Trail Network. Input received through December 5, 2023 and which met the agreed regional National Capital Trail Network inclusion criteria, is reflected in the updated map. Jurisdictional changes not available in time for this cycle will have an opportunity to be reflected in the next update in about a year's time.