



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Michael Farrell, Senior Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Item 11: Expanding the National Capital Regional Trails Network
DATE: January 25, 2019

OVERVIEW

At its December 2018 meeting, the TPB adopted Resolution R10-2019 which directed TPB staff to take action on several ideas that would help implement the TPB's Aspirational Initiatives in Visualize 2045, including the National Capital Trail.

The TPB directed staff to expand the TPB-endorsed National Capital Trail to provide connectivity to other major trails in the region, thereby creating a regional trail network that extends into all TPB member jurisdictions. Staff is to build on previous work done by TPB and others, and to report on progress by end of June 2019, including as practicable, a report on potential sources of funding.

Projects that are part of this regional trail network could receive priority consideration for Transportation-Land Use Connections (TLC) funding, as well as Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) funding.

The TPB Technical Committee was briefed at its January meeting on the TPB's directive to expand the National Capital Trail, as well as staff's initial ideas on how to follow through on that directive. This memorandum provides an update.

BACKGROUND

As originally defined, the National Capital Trail was aimed at providing a high-quality, low-stress circumferential route around the urban core of the Washington region, serving many residents, commuters, and visitors. Half a million residents, over 800,000 jobs, and 26 Metro stations are within half a mile of the trail.

However, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee believes that the scope of the of the National Capital Trail as currently defined is too narrow. It omits many of our jurisdictions and trails of regional significance. Also, its use in guiding the TLC and TAP programs is too limited. The Subcommittee recommended expanding the National Capital Trail into a regional trails plan that could help shape funding decisions. The subcommittee's recommendations were presented to the TPB in November 2018, leading to the adoption of TPB Resolution R10-2019 in December.

PROCESS

TPB Staff will work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee and the TPB member jurisdictions to expand the National Capital Trail into a regional trails plan. Building on the draft network, [goals](#), and [Criteria for Network Inclusion](#) that the Capital Trails Coalition has developed, a trails plan will be created that will include the all the TPB member jurisdictions.

Tasks:

1. TPB staff briefed the Bike/Ped Subcommittee on the draft work plan at the Subcommittee's January 24 meeting. The Subcommittee reviewed and the Capital Trails Coalition goals and Criteria for Network Inclusion. The Subcommittee approved the use of the goals and Criteria for Network Inclusion, with the understanding that there would be some flexibility in the application of the criteria to rural areas.
2. TPB staff will identify needed resources needed to complete the plan, including planner and GIS staff – January.
3. TPB staff will meet with the Capital Trails Coalition to be briefed on the methods used in the National Capital Trail effort – January/early February.
4. TPB staff will carry out site visits to the outer jurisdictions (Charles, Loudoun, Prince William, and Frederick) to gather GIS data on existing and planned trails and other bike facilities, February – March.
5. In consultation with the relevant jurisdictions, staff will select trails for inclusion in the regional trails network, using the approved goals and criteria for network inclusion.
6. In consultation with the relevant jurisdictions, staff will review the trails network identified by the Capital Trails Coalition to date and determine whether any changes are needed.
7. Staff will build and maintain an in-house trails network database.
8. The Bike/Ped Subcommittee will approve the regional trails network at its May meeting and recommend a schedule for revising or updating the network.
9. The Bike/Ped Subcommittee chair will make a progress report to the TPB in June.

NEXT STEPS

Identification and commitment of staff resources and completion of the draft work plan are the most immediate tasks.