



# National Capital Area Regional Trail Count Program

Update | May 18, 2021

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Transportation Planning Board Bicycle and Pedestrian  
Subcommittee Meeting



# Agenda

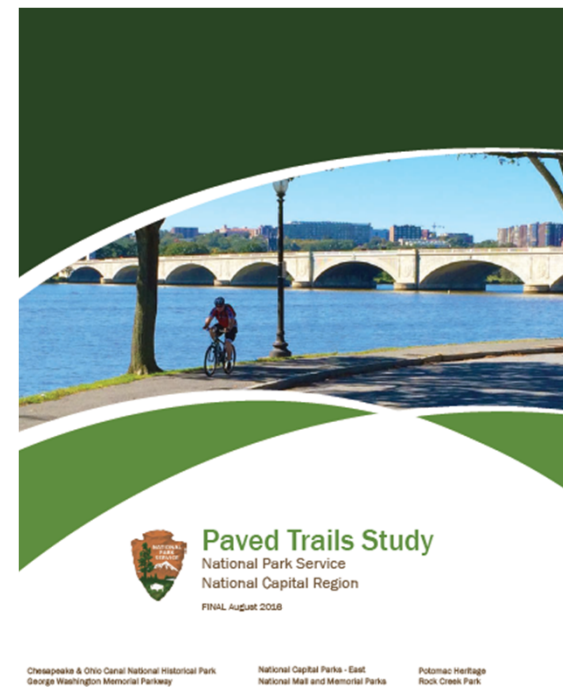
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- Project Background
- Project Overview
- Summary of Interviews, Research, and Stakeholder Meeting Results
- Next Steps



## Project Background

- Shared interest in regional trail counts and improving via coordination:
  - Consistency
  - Effectiveness
  - Sustainability
  - Resiliency
- NPS 2016 Paved Trails Plan



Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park  
George Washington Memorial Parkway

National Capital Parks - East  
National Mall and Memorial Parks

Potomac Heritage  
Rock Creek Park

AECOM



## Project Overview

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- **Purpose:** Explore formation of regional non-motorized traffic count program focused on multi-use trails.
- Project activities include:
  - Identify notable practices
  - Conduct stakeholder interviews
  - Present findings
  - Support 1<sup>st</sup> year of coordinated count program



# Summary of Interviews, Research, and Stakeholder Meeting Results



## Past and Present Experience

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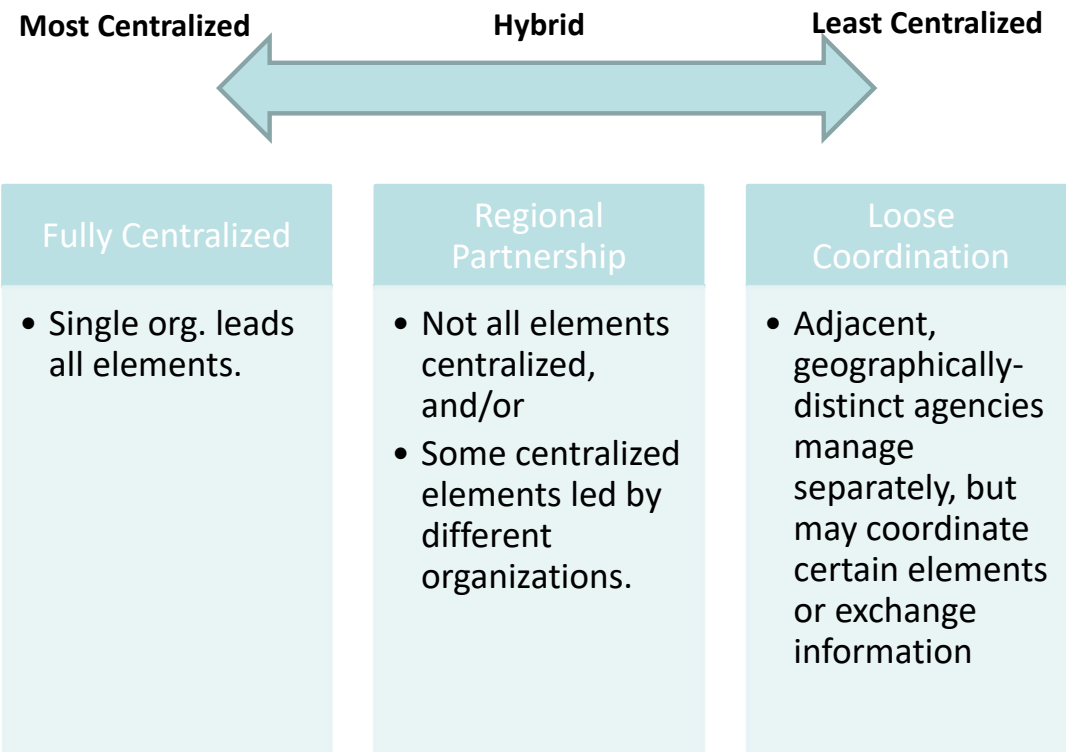
- Almost all jurisdictions have counter technology in place.
- Permanent counters are difficult for jurisdictions to maintain in working order.
- Most stakeholders use counter data to:
  - Demonstrate need for infrastructure improvements;
  - Support decision-making;
  - Fulfill reporting requirements; and
  - Prioritize future activities.
- Many stakeholders indicated that they would like to make better use of the data, but have limited capacity to do so.



## Coordinated Program Model

Most stakeholders preferred a hybrid model with a la carte options for program elements, which include:

- Data
  - Presentation
  - Quality Control and Validation
  - Analysis
- Procurement
  - Mobile counter loan program
- Maintenance and operations
  - Routine
  - Non-routine
- Installation





## Potential Program Scope

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- Geographic scope
- Counters by desired program element

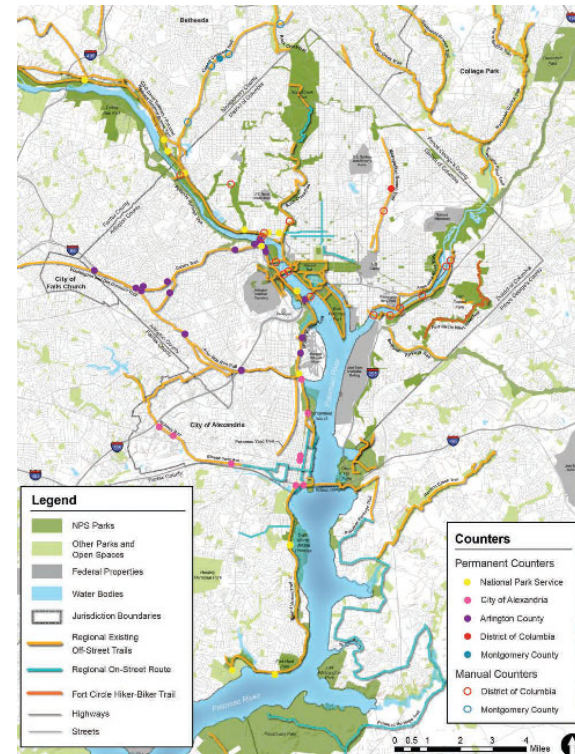
Program Element	Counters
Data analysis and synthesis	93
Data presentation (including a website)	105
Data quality control and validation	105
Installation	19
Mobile counter loan program	31
Non-routine operations and maintenance	65
Procurement	21
Routine operations and maintenance	31





# Automated Counter Inventory

Jurisdiction	Counter Equipment
DDOT	Eco Counter (16)
Arlington	Eco Counter (40)
Prince George's County	Eco Counter (2)
Montgomery County	Eco Counter (11) and TRAFx (21)
Fairfax County	Eco Counter (1)
City of Alexandria	Eco Counter (11), Miovision (1)
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Historical Park	TRAFx counters (2)





## Emerging Approaches

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- Stakeholders are interested in exploring new data sources as part of coordinated program.
- Big data can supplement but will not replace the role of automated counters.
- Data fusion models hold great promise for modeling volumes network-wide, even where there are no counters. State of the practice is still immature.
- Pooled-fund study supported by VDOT, DDOT, and others will be complete June 2021.



# Next Steps





## Most Likely Scenario: Regional Partnership with University Support

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- NPS cooperative agreement allows selection of university partner(s)
- University leads data tasks
- University monitors data quality for counters needing repairs
- University oversees local sub-contractor for “on-ground” elements like maintenance and operations
- Option for stakeholders to participate “a la carte” in either data or “on the ground” elements



## Funding Mechanism: Cooperative Agreement

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- NPS can fund university partners for research and technical assistance projects
- More flexible than typical procurement processes
  - Can split award among multiple universities
  - Time periods can be up to 5 years
- TPB/MWCOG may have mechanism to pool county funds



## Unresolved Program Elements

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- Program host
- Data will need to be accessible to partner groups and the public
  - Data hosting
  - Website hosting
- Jurisdiction financial contribution



## Funding Contributions

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- NPS might be able to identify some seed funding to initiate a coordinated program. In the longer-term costs would likely need to be shared across partners.
- Survey question asked how to determine relative contributions from each participant.
  - Most prefer a hybrid approach where some program costs are divided evenly, while others vary by participant, e.g., proportional to the share of counters that each participant owns.



Questions?