



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee
FROM: Michael Farrell, TPB Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: TPB Initiative to Expand the National Capital Trail – Status Report
DATE: August 30, 2019

BACKGROUND

In Fall 2018 the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee recommended expanding the National Capital Trail into a regional trails plan. The Subcommittee's recommendations were presented to the TPB in November 2018, and included in the adoption of TPB Resolution R10-2019 in December 2019.

Resolution R10-2019 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 was directed 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 on this project at their January and June 2019 meetings, and this memorandum summarizes progress since January 2019.

PROCESS

TPB Staff is working with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, and the outer jurisdictions to expand the National Capital Trail into a regional trails plan. Using the trails network, [goals](#) and [Criteria for Network Inclusion](#) that the Capital Trails Coalition has developed as a starting point, the network will be extended to include all the TPB member jurisdictions.

Continued on next page...

PROGRESS

Task	Status
Identify needed resources, including planner and GIS staff time	Completed.
Meet with the Capital Trails Coalition to be briefed on the data gathering process	Completed. A successful information exchange meeting with the Coalition was held on March 8.
TPB will agree to house the trails data	Agreed. COG/TPB will gather and house trails data.
Bike/Ped Subcommittee will review and approve the work plan, goals statement, and Criteria for Network Inclusion	Completed. B/P Subcommittee reviewed and approved the work plan in January, adopted the goals statement and Capital Trails Coalition network at the March meeting, and approved the Criteria for Network Inclusion at the May meeting.
Carry out site visits to the outer jurisdictions	Site visits held in Frederick County, Prince William County, and Loudoun County. Met with Charles County staff at COG; site visit anticipated in the near future.
Gather GIS data on existing and planned trails and other bike facilities	GIS data layers received from all major jurisdictions.
The Subcommittee chair will make a progress report to the TPB	September 2019, or as per TPB's schedule.
In consultation with the relevant jurisdictions, staff will identify trails for inclusion in the regional trails network, using the approved goals and selection criteria	September 2019
Subcommittee endorsement of the expanded regional trails network	Fall 2019
TPB Approval	Fall 2019

NEXT STEPS

Staff will apply the Criteria for Network Inclusion to create a draft network, which will be vetted by the outer jurisdictions' staff prior to review and endorsement by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee. Subcommittee endorsement and TPB approval of the expanded network are anticipated for Fall 2019.

EXPAND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TRAIL INITIATIVE

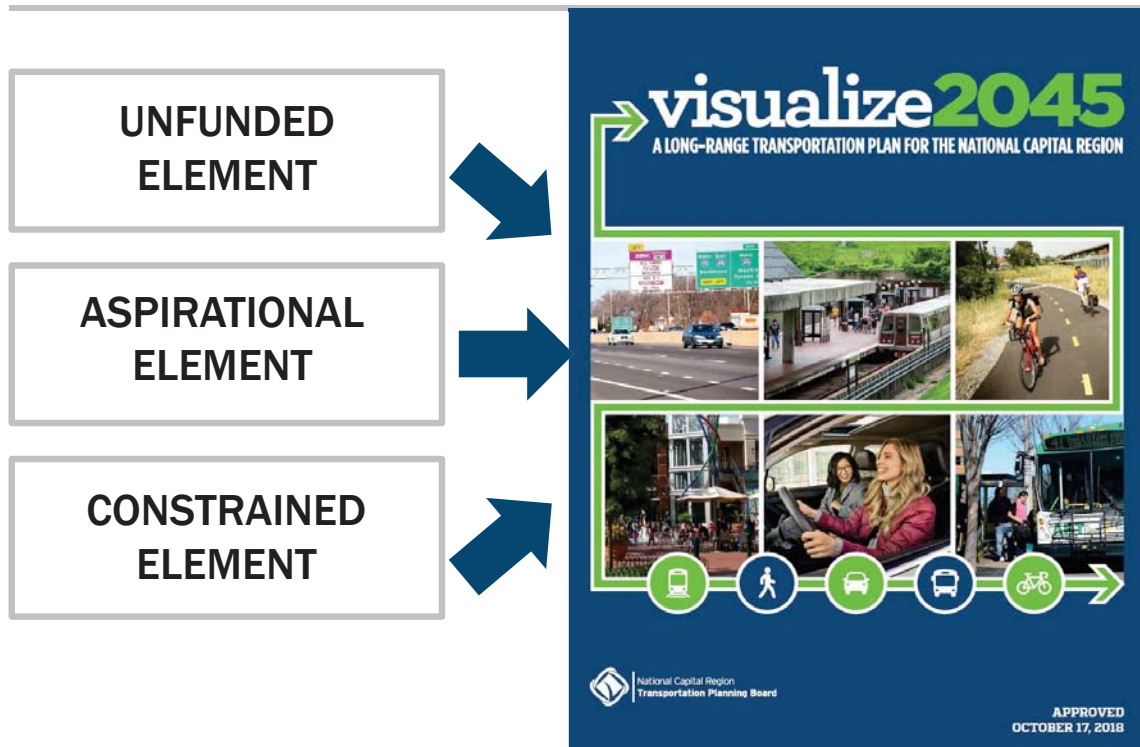
Of the TPB's 2018 Long-Range Transportation Plan *Visualize 2045*

Michael Farrell
Transportation Planner

TPB Technical Committee
Item 7
September 6, 2019



2018 Long-Range Plan



Aspirational Initiative: Complete the National Capital Trail

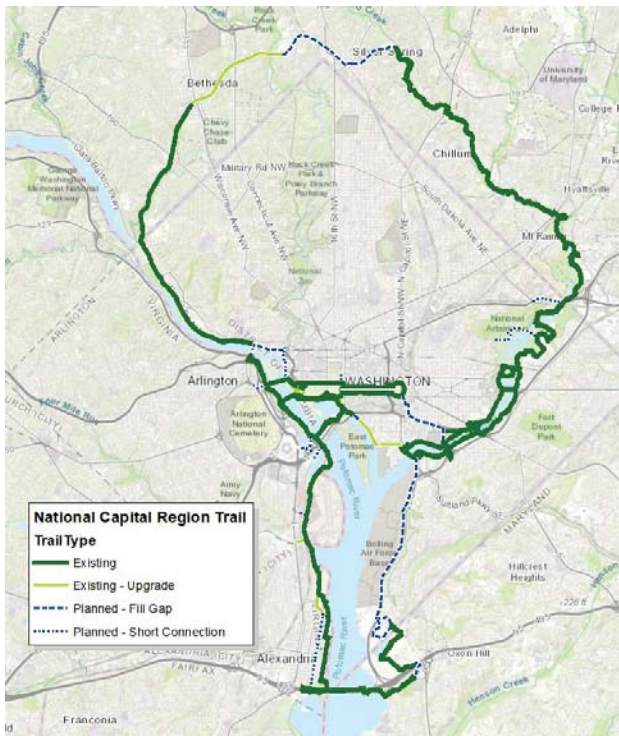


Mount Vernon Trail (BeyondDC, flickr.com)

“The NCT is compelling because it is simple, understandable, and refrains from trying to be overly ambitious or inclusive of all trails in the National Capital Region or broader region.”

-NPS Paved Trails Plan, 2016

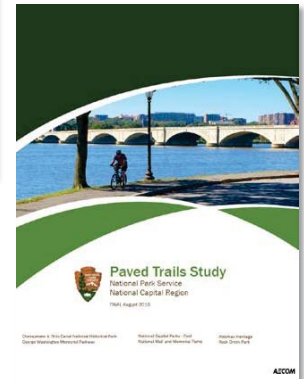
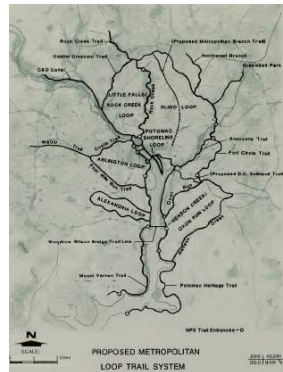
National Capital Trail



- 60 total miles total
- 21 miles unconstructed
- 3 miles need upgrading

Evolution of an Idea

- 1990: National Park Service *Paved Recreation Trails of the National Capital Region*
- 2014: TPB Bicycle Beltway
- 2016: National Park Service's *Paved Trails Plan*
- 2018: Capital Trails Network

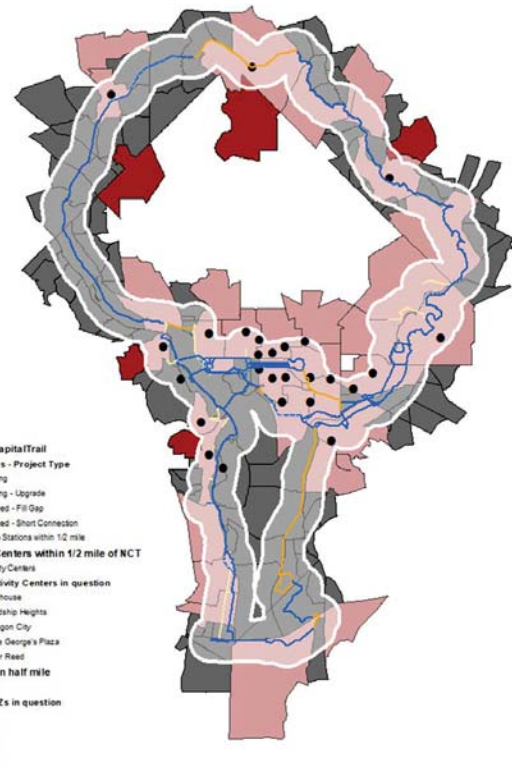


People and Jobs Served

Within 1/2 mile of the National Capital Trail:

- 36 Activity Centers
- 26 Metro Station
- 817,983 jobs
- 498,161 people

	Activity Centers	Metro Stations	Employment	Population
1/2-mile Buffer	36	26	817983	498161
2-mile Buffer	57	58	1254344	1365260



TPB calls for Expansion

- In Fall 2018, TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee recommended that the National Capital Trail be expanded to cover the entire TPB footprint
- Capital Trails Coalition urged the TPB to incorporate its newly adopted Capital Trails Network into Visualize 2045
- In December 2018, TPB adopted Resolution TPB R20-2019, which directed TPB 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, by building on **previous work done by TPB and others**, and to report on progress by end of June 2019...”

Building on Previous Work

- TPB staff participated in four years of planning and consensus-building with the Capital Trails Coalition
- REI-funded 1.5 full time equivalent staff, housed at Washington Area Bicyclist Association and at Rails to Trails
- Vision: A continuous network of “all-ages, all-abilities” long distance multi-use trails, covering the entire region, connecting people to jobs, transit, and nature.



Selection Criteria

- Long-distance, regional trail network
 - Many local trails will not be included
- Accessible for “All Ages and Abilities”
- Off-Street Multi-Use Paths:
 - 10'+ wide for new construction.
 - 8' minimum for existing facilities
 - Narrower in short segments if design constrains
 - Paved, or firm surface such as crushed limestone
- On-street:
 - Protected from moving traffic (i.e. parked cars, curb, flexposts)
 - Short unprotected connections where necessary
- Designed for non-motorized use
- Connectivity
 - Directly connected to the regional network
 - Suitable for both transportation and recreation
- Existing or Planned Facilities are acceptable
 - Planned facilities must be in an approved plan



Virginia Avenue SE

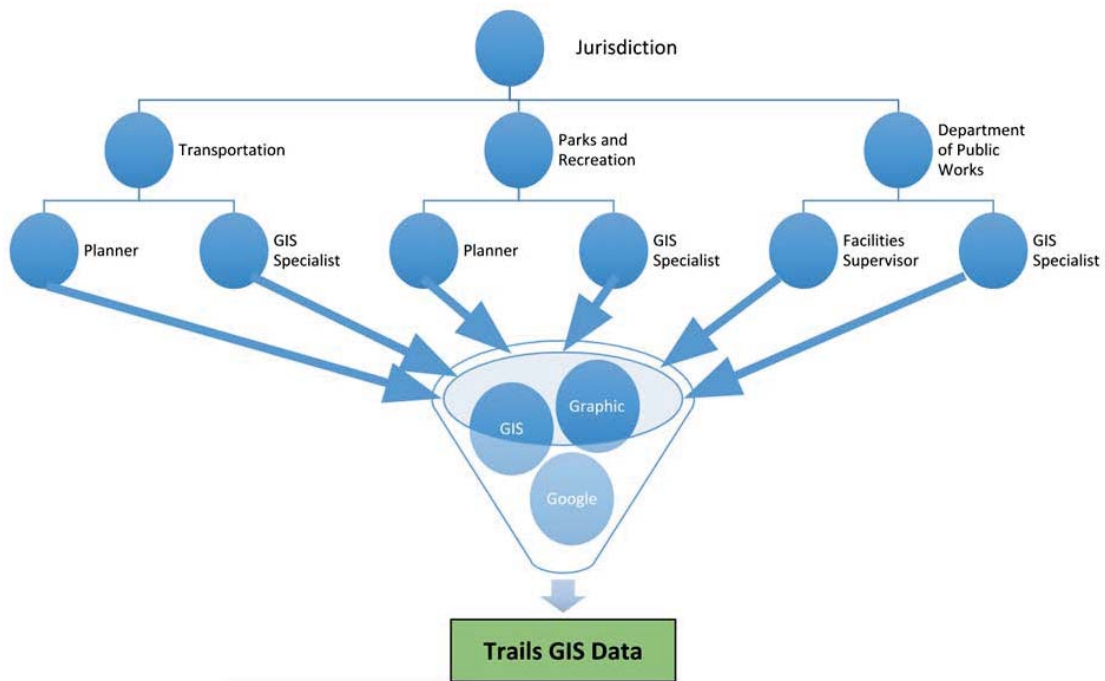


Progress to Date

- Coordination/Planning
 - B/P Subcommittee
 - Endorsed Capital Trails Coalition Network – March 19
 - Endorsed Criteria for Network Inclusion – May 21
 - Site Visits
 - Capital Trails Coalition – March 8
 - Frederick County/City – April 30
 - Prince William/Manassas/Manassas Park – May 2
 - Loudoun – May 13
 - Charles – Met at COG, June 7
- Data Gathering/Mapping
 - GIS data gathered from all the major jurisdictions
 - Draft map created



Data Gathering



Source: Capital Trails Coalition



Schedule/Next Steps

- Apply the Selection Criteria to produce a draft Network – August-September
- Report Progress to TPB - September
- Vet Draft Network – September-October
- TPB Adopts Final Network – Late 2019
- Follow-on Effort: Update of the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan



Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region

- Last updated in 2015
- Update delayed in favor of expanding the National Capital Trail
- Purpose:
 - Big picture pedestrian and bicycle trends, policies and projects in the region
 - 25 year time frame
 - Measure progress by tracking completion of bike/ped projects since the last update
- Static, Paper and PDF-oriented

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region



January 2015

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Agenda Item 7: Expand the National Capital Trail Initiative
September 6, 2019

13

Bike/Ped Plan Update

- Goal: A visual, on-line, map-based plan.
- Database of major Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects is the core of the plan
 - Last updated in 2014
 - Originally designed (2006) as a list of projects with no associated GIS layers
 - Each jurisdiction or agency has a contact person
 - Cumbersome data entry



- National Capital Trail effort can help us get GIS shapefiles associated with each project
 - Frederick County will put a checkbox on the GIS data they provide so that projects that should be in the regional bike ped plan (i.e. larger projects) can be their own layer in the map



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Agenda Item 7: Expand the National Capital Trail Initiative
September 6, 2019

14

Bike/Ped Plan Database

Guidelines: Bike/Ped Projects should be in the plan if they are:

1. Greater than \$400,000 in cost and/or
2. One mile or more in length
3. No individual sidewalk projects. Area streetscaping or Countywide sidewalk plans are OK
4. Agencies have discretion

Mandatory fields:

Project name, Location (jurisdiction) and **State**.

From

To

Description (if the project name does not make the project type evident)

Lead Agency (agency responsible for implementation)

Status (should be accurate. We especially want to know if a project is complete. If complete, don't delete, just change the status to Complete)

Length of (standard bike lane/protected bike lane/buffered bike lane/shared use path) All of that apply to a given project.

Type of spot improvement (if applicable)

Year of Completion (if Completed)



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Agenda Item 7: Expand the National Capital Trail Initiative
September 6, 2019

15

Michael Farrell

Transportation Planner

(202) 962-3760

mfarrell@mwkog.org

mwkog.org/tpb

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20002



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board