



MEDIA ADVISORY

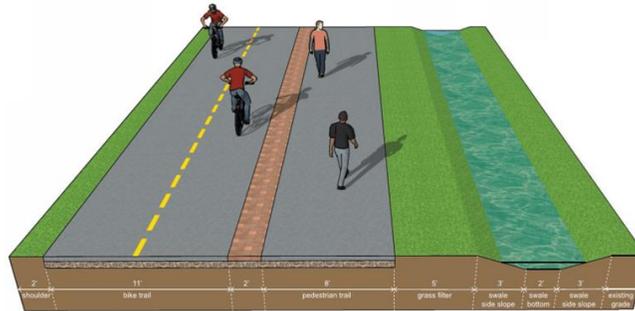


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Regional Leaders to Unveil Enhanced Dual Trails on Washington & Old Dominion Trail in City of Falls Church

City of Falls Church (October 4, 2021) – On Thursday, October 7th, leaders from NOVA Parks, the City of Falls Church, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) will convene to celebrate a new section of Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail improvements that will alleviate crowding and increase safety for cyclists and walkers, while offering an enhanced commuting option.

The popular 45-mile-long W&OD Trail, managed by regional parks agency NOVA Parks, is one of the first rail-to-trail projects in the nation and spans from Shirlington (Arlington County) to Purcellville (Loudoun County), Virginia, connecting several counties, towns, and cities in the region. The new enhancements ready to be unveiled span nearly 1.5 miles of trail from Little Falls Street to North West Street in the City of Falls Church, and now feature an 11-foot-wide path for cycling, an 8-foot-wide path for walkers, and a 2-foot-wide colored and textured median between the two paths to separate trail users traveling at different speeds.

“We are delighted to collaborate with the City of Falls Church and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to improve mobility for both cyclists and walkers and to simultaneously increase capacity on the W&OD” said Paul Gilbert, Executive Director of NOVA Parks. “Also, the stormwater management system we installed will protect the environment along the trail and will create habitats for birds and pollinators.”

The W&OD Trail Enhancements Project reduces congestion and increases capacity for cyclists and pedestrians using the busy regional pathway.

“Active transportation is rapidly growing and much needed as we continue to navigate through the pandemic,” said David F. Snyder, Council Member, City of Falls Church, and Vice Chair, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. “Even prior to COVID-19, the W&OD Trail was already bustling with cyclists and pedestrians alike, whether commuting to work or utilizing for recreational activities. Utilization of the regional trail also offers a great alternative to driving to work in a single occupancy vehicle, helping reduce



greenhouse gas emissions. We welcome travelers through the region to check out the new trail enhancements and enjoy a safer journey while helping relieve congestion on the roadways.”

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority awarded NOVA Parks more than \$3.24 million in regional revenues to fund the W&OD Trail Enhancements in the City of Falls Church. In 2020, NOVA Parks also received \$650,000 in NVRTA regional revenues for Trail Enhancements in Arlington County, through the NVRTA FY2020-2025 Six Year Program.

The dual trails project not only reduces congestion on the roadways, it also provides cyclists, runners and pedestrians with access to two Metrorail stations. Furthermore, the dual trail design contributes to environmental sustainability. The project employed numerous low impact techniques, like swales (shallow, broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey runoff while removing pollutants), French drains, pervious pavement areas, and modular wetlands to filter rainwater. Pollinators like bees and butterflies, in addition to birds, will benefit from the enhanced biodiversity of adding meadow grasses to the drainage areas.

The ribbon-cutting celebration on October 7th at 10:30 a.m. will include remarks by representatives from NOVA Parks, the City of Falls Church, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. The ceremony will be held at 400 N. Oak St., City of Falls Church, VA 22046.

About NOVA Parks

Founded in 1959, [NOVA Parks](#) (once known as Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) represents three counties and three cities -- Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church, and the City of Fairfax. The regional agency manages over 12,000 acres of parks and recreational facilities, including water parks, golf courses, swimming pools, and a climbing center. For more information on the W&OD Trail project in the City of Falls Church, visit the [project page](#).

About the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

The [NVRTA](#) was created by the General Assembly on July 1, 2002, to offer a common voice for Northern Virginia on transportation issues confronting the region. The Authority is made up of nine jurisdictions including: the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. The Authority is responsible for updating Northern Virginia’s long-range transportation plan, TransAction, and since 2014 manages approximately \$365 million annually in public funds for transportation projects designed to provide congestion relief throughout Northern Virginia.

About the City of Falls Church

The [City of Falls Church](#) is an independent city in Northern Virginia with over 14,000 residents. The City was named the first “America’s Healthiest Community” by U.S. News & World Report in 2018 and has placed in the top five every year since. “The Little City” has the atmosphere of a small town with the conveniences and culture of a city. It is known for its high-ranking schools, weekly year-round farmers market, and environmentally-friendly initiatives like bike share and walkability.