

Effective Public/Private Partnerships and Citizen Involvement in Trail Planning



A case study of the Prince George's County Bicycle and Trails Advisory Group (BTAG)



Prince George's County has planned for multi-use trails, side paths, in-road bicycle facilities, and equestrian trails for many years in an effort to develop a countywide network of trails and bikeways.





Prince George's County has many scenic greenways and parkland which can be used by hikers, bicyclists, equestrians and other trail users.



History of Trails Planning in Prince George's County

- 1975 Adopted and Approved Countywide Trails Plan
- 1985 Equestrian Addendum to the Countywide Trails Plan
- Area master plans
- Transit district development plans
- Joint Signature Letter identifies top County trail priorities
- The Bicycle and Trails Advisory Group founded in 1998
- The Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Equestrian Element of the Master Plan of Transportation initiated in 2003

- Citizen involvement is crucial throughout the entire planning process
- M-NCPPC is constantly trying to improve its public participation process
- Public input and feedback is sought at the planning, design and implementation phases of development
- Need for a trail advisory group was identified in 1997 in Prince George's County.



Effective Public/Private Partnerships and Citizen Involvement in Trail Planning

What will be covered in this session:

- Why form a trails advisory group?
- How BTAG operates
- Patuxent River Scenic Trail
- Potomac River Trail
- Countywide Trail Priorities
- Fairland Park Trail Master Plan
- Countywide Trails Plan

Why form a trail advisory group?

- Allow regular interaction between implementing agencies and trail users
- Develop consensus on decisions affecting trail planning and implementation
- Resolve user conflicts
- Develop mutually beneficial trail plans
- Determine trail priorities
- Provide unified input into capital improvement projects
- Provide support for grant applications

Stakeholders

- Bicycle Clubs
- Equestrian Groups
- Park agencies (local, state, and national)
- Road agencies (local and state)
- Municipalities
- Civic associations
- Developers
- Individual citizens
- Land conservancies

Trail and Bicycle groups in Prince George's County:

- College Park Area Bicycle Coalition
- Trail Riders of Today Equestrian Group
- Southern Prince George's Trails Coalition
- Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
- Maryland Horse Council
- East Coast Greenway Alliance
- American Discovery Trail
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)

Bicycle and Trails Advisory Group (BTAG)



- Established in 1998 by the County Executive with the cooperation of local trail, equestrian, and bicycle groups
- Involves trail groups, private citizens, municipalities, civic associations, and implementing agencies
- Holds quarterly meetings, as well as more frequent meetings on specific topics or issues
- Allows a dialogue between trail users and advocates and the agencies maintaining or implementing public lands, trails, and other facilities

How BTAG assists in trails planning

- Develop Countywide trail priorities
- Determine trail alignments for various projects
- Work with land managers to develop new trails
- Provide GPS data for trails
- Identify maintenance issues along trails
- Develop planned network of future trails, bicycle connections, and pedestrian facilities
- Develop trail plans for specific parks
- Provide input on capital improvement projects
- Provide public support for planned trails



BTAG members work on an appropriate trail alignment in the field. Equestrians and other trail users can provide valuable information during the planning and design of trails.

How BTAG Functions:

- Comprehensive Quarterly Meetings
- Subcommittee Meetings
- Community Workshops
- Review develop proposals & master plans
- Provide input into capital improvement projects
- Vote on specific issues, develop BTAG position

Quarterly Meetings

- Facilitate discussion between all trail groups and agencies
- Review recent trail projects
- Discuss development review issues
- Discuss current master plan projects
- Determine BTAG position on issues
- Identify areas need more detailed study

Subcommittee Meetings

- Allow more detailed analysis of specific issues
- Potomac Heritage Trail
- Trail Maintenance
- Determine Countywide Trail Priorities
- Develop Park Trail Master Plan
- Walk potential trail alignments
- Trail signage (East Coast Greenway)
- Complete grant applications
- Mapping



BTAG positions/letters have included:

- Bicycle/pedestrians improvements along Powder Mill Road
- Bike lanes along US 1
- Designation of PHT Bike Route
- Trail maintenance issues
- Trail Priorities
- Safety issues along area roads

BTAG Events

- National Trails Day events
- Bike-to-Work Day events
- Trail dedications/ribbon cuttings
- Trail clean-ups
- Trail maintenance projects
- Patuxent Rural Legacy Ride
- Regularly scheduled bike rides/hikes



It is important to get elected officials involved and aware of issues facing trail users.



Patuxent River Scenic Trail – a community driven project



M-NCPPC completed the
Central Patuxent Area Study
in 2002.

Trails and access to public
land identified as a
community priority.



The Queen Anne (Central Patuxent area) Hiker-Equestrian Trails were initiated by the community after a special planning study was completed by M-NCPPC and the community



Key elements of Central Patuxent Study

- M-NCPPC facilitated stakeholder meetings
- Citizens/equestrian groups identify community goals and priorities
- Trails and access to public lands identified as community priorities

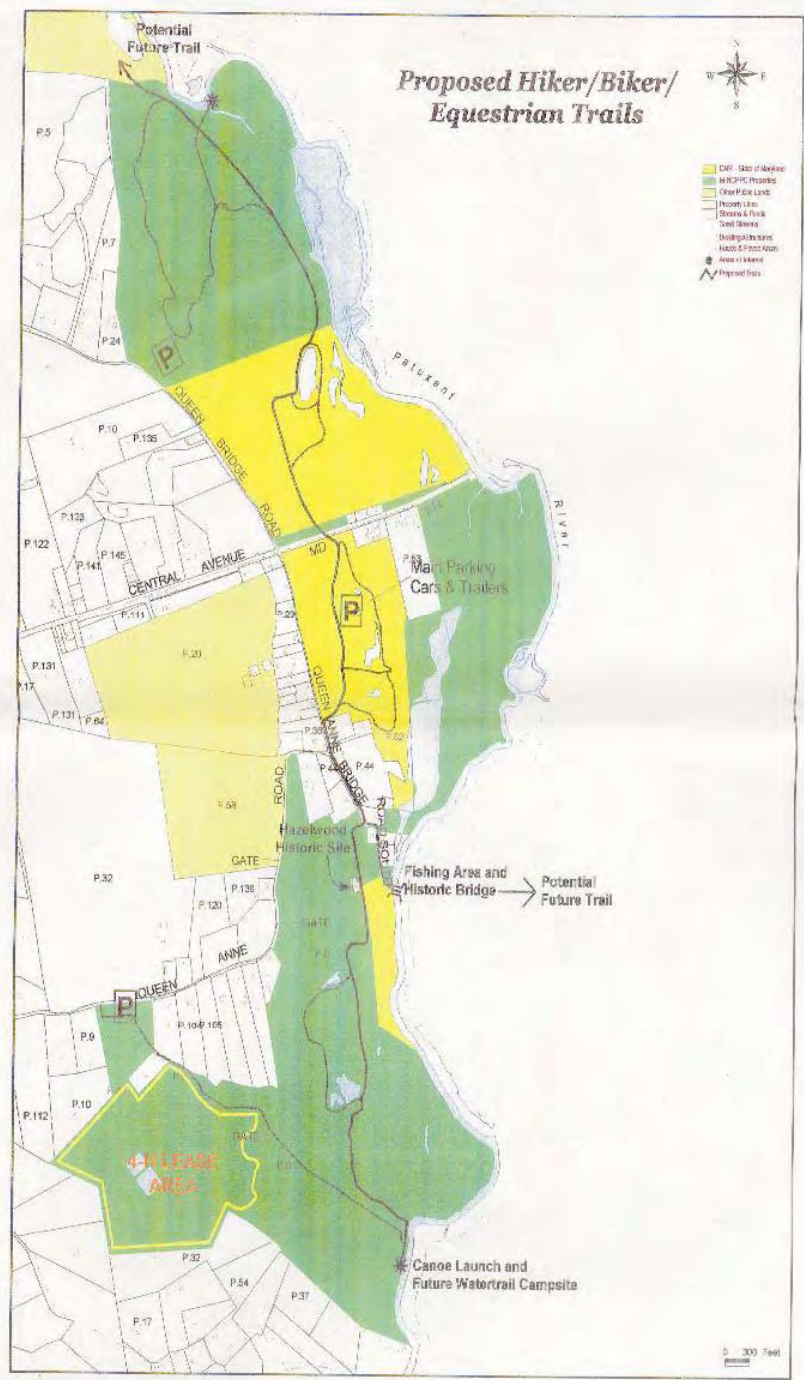
Community-led activities after study:

- Community continues to meet to develop implementation plan
- Community led field visits identify trail location
- Phase project into manageable segments
- Trail maintenance
- Community outreach
- Ribbon-cutting Phase I with National Trails Day event

Proposed Hiker/Biker/ Equestrian Trails



- DMR - State of Maryland
- MD POTP Properties
- Other POTP Lands
- Property Lines
- Streams & Ponds
- Small Streams
- Highway Right-of-Way
- Utility & Power Lines
- Area of Interest
- Proposed trails



0 300 Feet



This trail will include over 6 miles of natural surface trails, parking for a small number of cars and trailers, and access to beautiful natural areas along the Patuxent on land owned by M-NCPPC and DNR.



Trail route highlights several local wetland creation projects



Trail uses several old farm and logging roads

Phase I of the Patuxent River Scenic Trail included:

- Use agreement with DNR
- Construction of 2 miles of hiker/equestrian trail
- Completion of trail signage, kiosk, and trail user map
- National Trails Day event in June 2004

Patuxent National Trails Day event included:

- Official opening of trail
- Unveiling of new trail kiosk and map
- Recognition of trail volunteers and community groups
- Free prizes
- Trail walks

Potomac River Trail – a successful partnership among multiple stakeholders



The Potomac River was designated as a National Scenic Trail corridor by Congress in 1983. A river trail has been designated on various County trails plans and master plans since 1975.

In 1999, the County's Bicycle and Trails Advisory Group began work to establish an On-Road Bicycle Route and explore options for an off-road trail on or near the river.



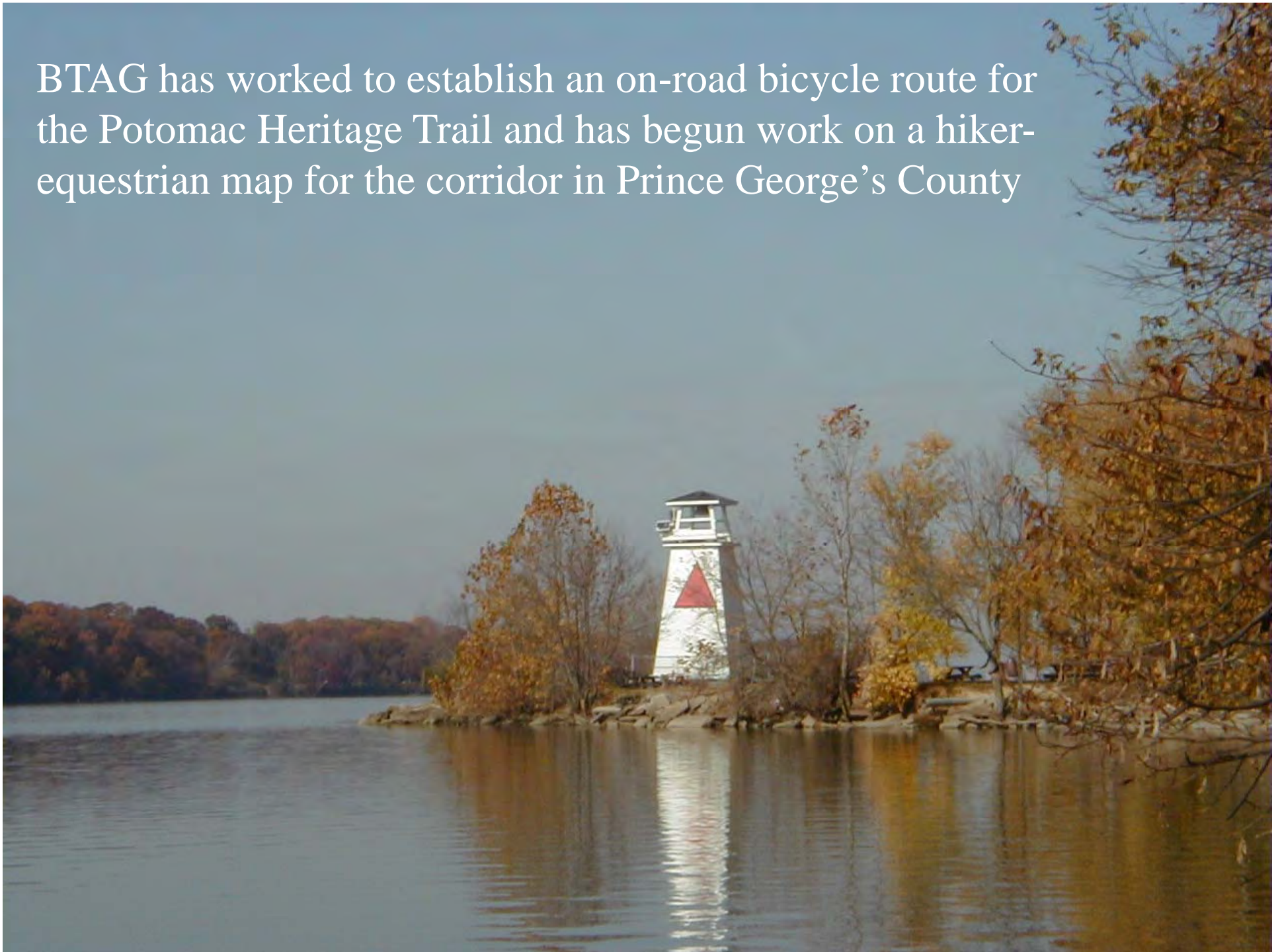
Sites along the Potomac River corridor:

- Oxon Hill Farm
- Oxon Hill Manor
- Harmony Hall Regional Center
- Fort Foote National Park
- Broad Creek Historic District
- Broad Creek marsh
- Fort Washington National Park
- Fort Washington Marina
- Piscataway Park
- National Colonial Farm





BTAG has worked to establish an on-road bicycle route for the Potomac Heritage Trail and has begun work on a hiker-equestrian map for the corridor in Prince George's County



PHT On-Road Bicycle Route

- Connects to sites along Potomac
- Promotes the idea of trail corridor
- Promotes bicycle and pedestrian improvements along route
- First step to off-road trail



Development of the bike route:

- Bike route developed by the NPS, M-NCPPC, Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club, Potomac Heritage Partnership, and the Southern Prince George's Trails Coalition.
- Involved several meetings and rides to determine best route.
- Relied on bike club knowledge of local cycling conditions and needed improvements.

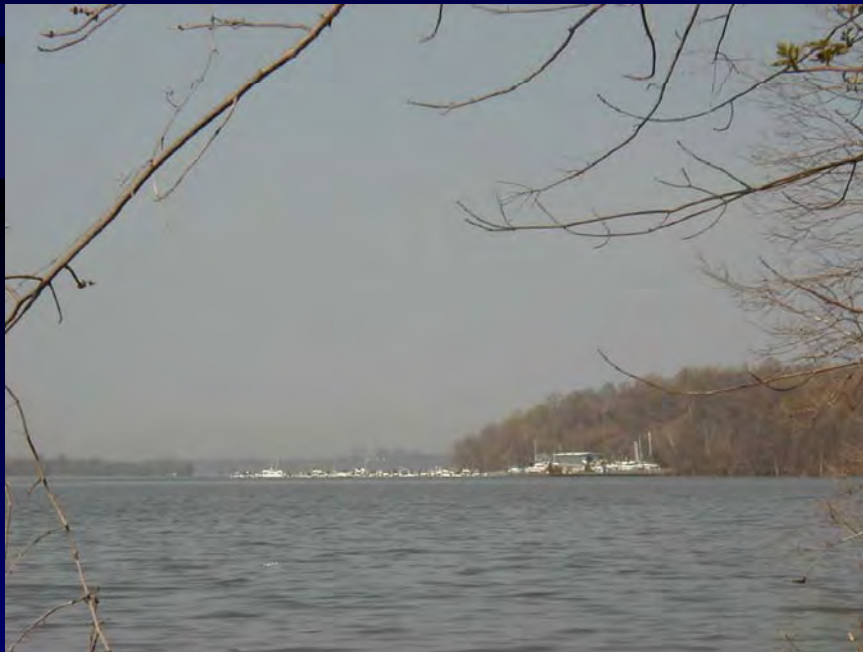


Historic Piscataway Village

The PHT Bike Route has been incorporated into area master plans and capital improvement projects for trail related improvements as development occurs.



Potomac Heritage Trail Demonstration Project



Potomac Heritage Trail Demonstration Project

- Built on National Park Service Land
- Volunteer labor coordinated by NPS
- Project supported and coordinated by the Southern Prince George's Trails Coalition
- M-NCPPC transferred funds for boardwalk along trail
- BTAG organized trail cleanup

Trail utilizes an established utility corridor



Trailhead Facility



Turnpike installed in area of poor drainage





Other drainage improvements along trail









Area requiring boardwalk construction

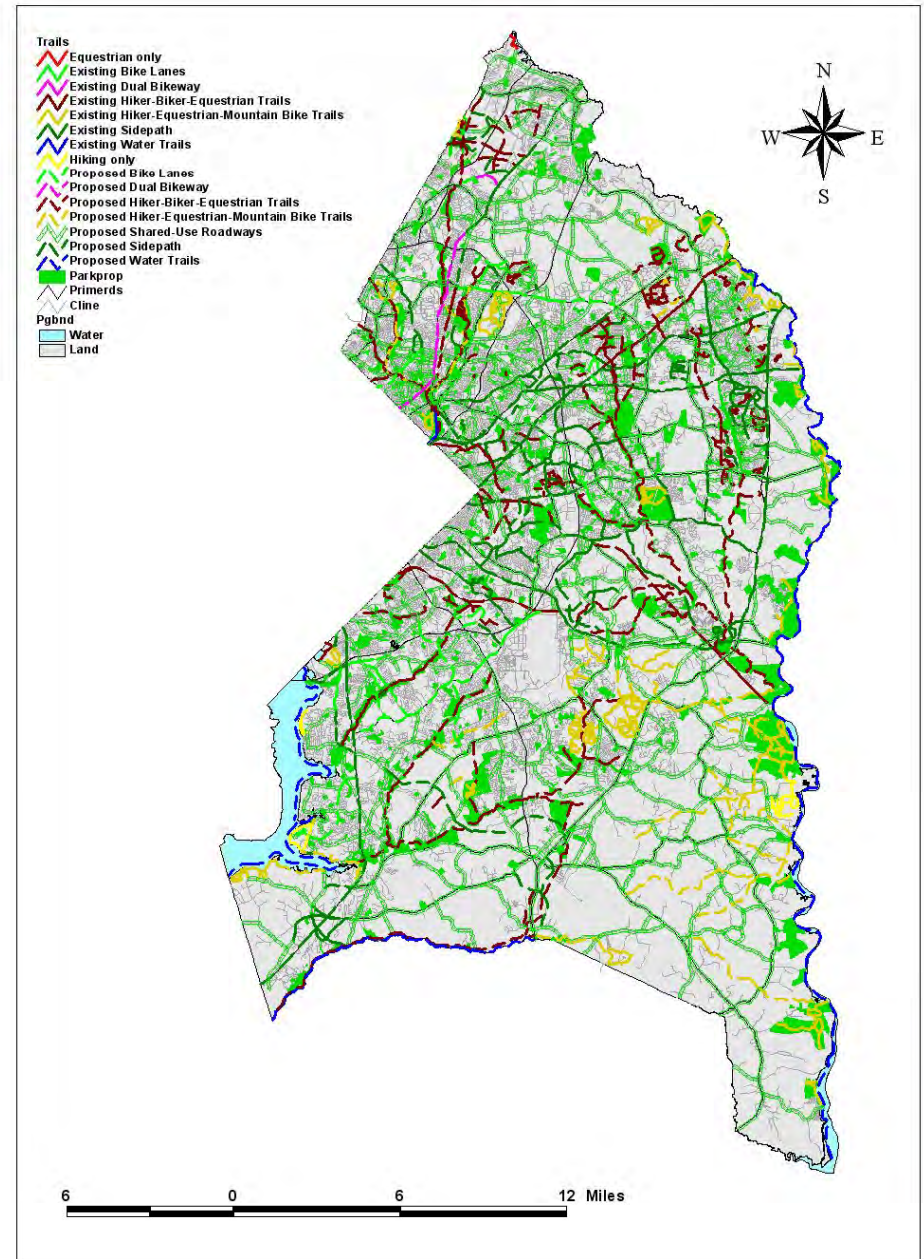


Development of Countywide Trail Priorities

Prince George's County Joint Signature Letter

- Signed by County Executive, Chairman of the County Council, and Chairman of the Transportation Oversight Committee
- Identifies County Transportation Priorities
- Prince George's County was the first County in Maryland to include bicycle and trail priorities with transportation priorities.

Why develop trail priorities?



Draft Countywide Trails Plan

Additional reasons for trail priorities

- Get community feedback
- Focus local efforts on what is most important to the community
- Evaluate master plan trails in a systematic, measurable and consistent method
- Determine where limited funds should be directed
- Get community, agency, and elected official buy-in and support for priority projects
- Increase funding opportunities

Criteria used for On-Road Trails/Bikeways

- Connectivity
- Revitalization/Economic Development
- Recreation Value
- Feasibility
- Transportation Value
- Safety
- Geographic Distribution

Criteria for Park Trails

- Connectivity
- Revitalization/Economic Development
- Feasibility
- Transportation Value
- Recreation Value
- Geographic Distribution



The Prince George's Connector Trail will provide access to two train stations, as well as link two major trail networks

Priorities allow funding to be allocated to the projects most important to the community

Folly Branch Trail



Henson Creek Trail



WB&A Spur Trail







Development of the Fairland Regional Park Trails Plan

Stakeholders:

- Golf course developer
- Montgomery County Parks Department
- Prince George's County Parks Department
- Planning Department representatives from both counties
- Trail Riders of Today Equestrian Group
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts
- Civic groups and private citizens

Plan Development Process

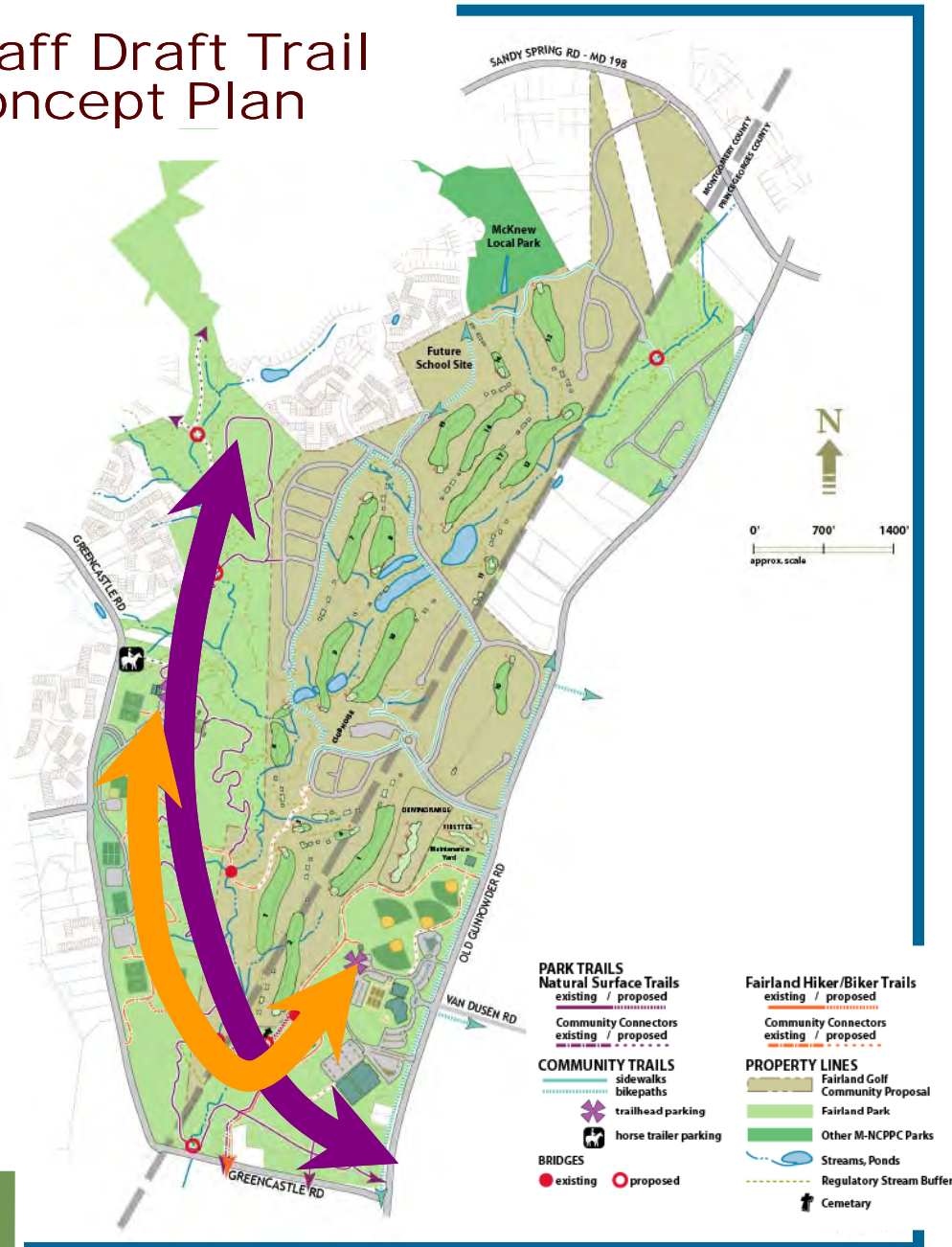
- Numerous stakeholder meetings
- Field visits to GPS existing trails
- Field visits to determine new trail alignments
- Meeting with TROT
- Meeting with MORE
- Evening workshop and presentation

Staff Draft Trail Concept Plan

Trail Planning

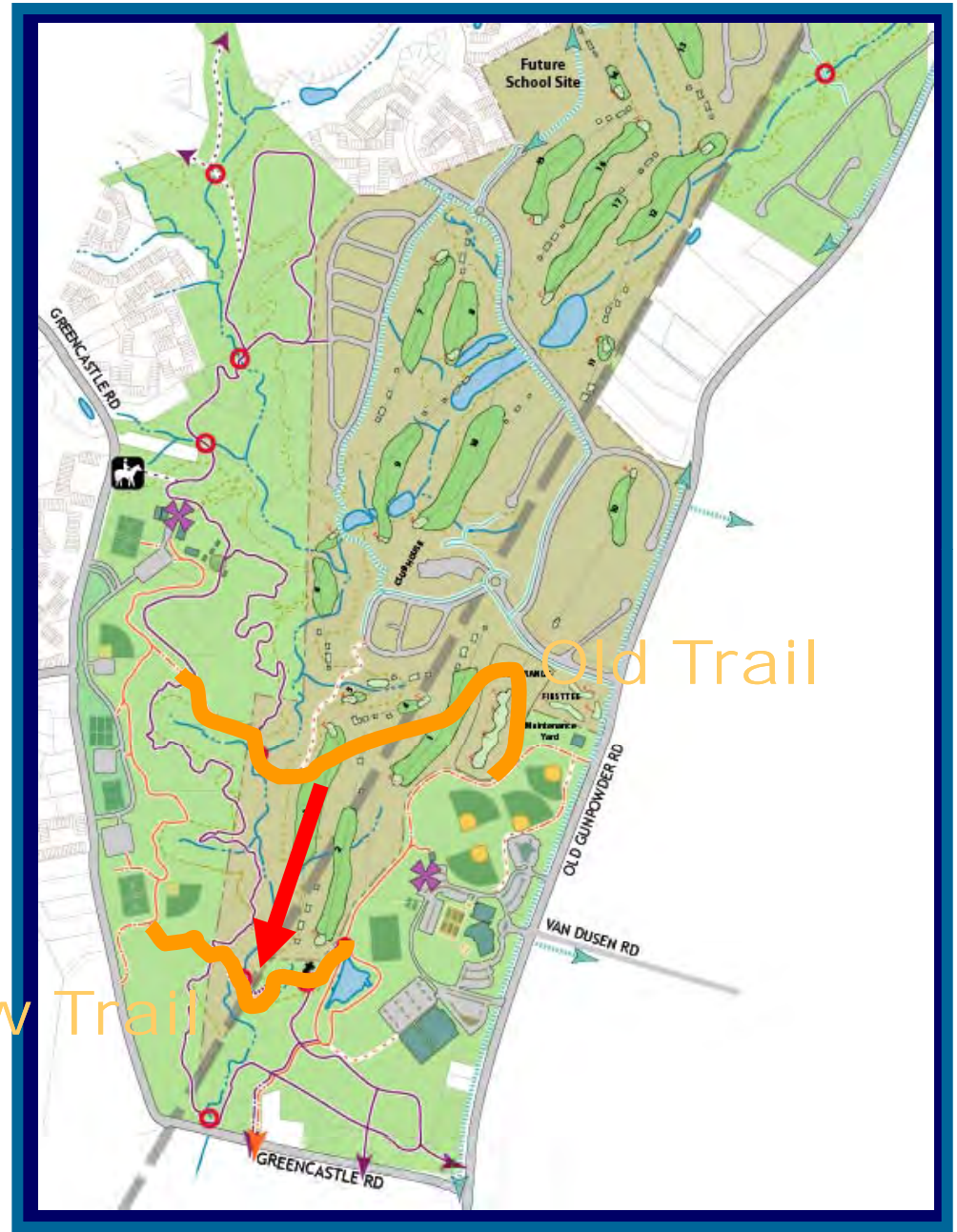
4.3 miles Natural Surface Trails

2.6 miles Hard Surface Trails



Concept Plan Details

Relocated Existing
Paved Trail

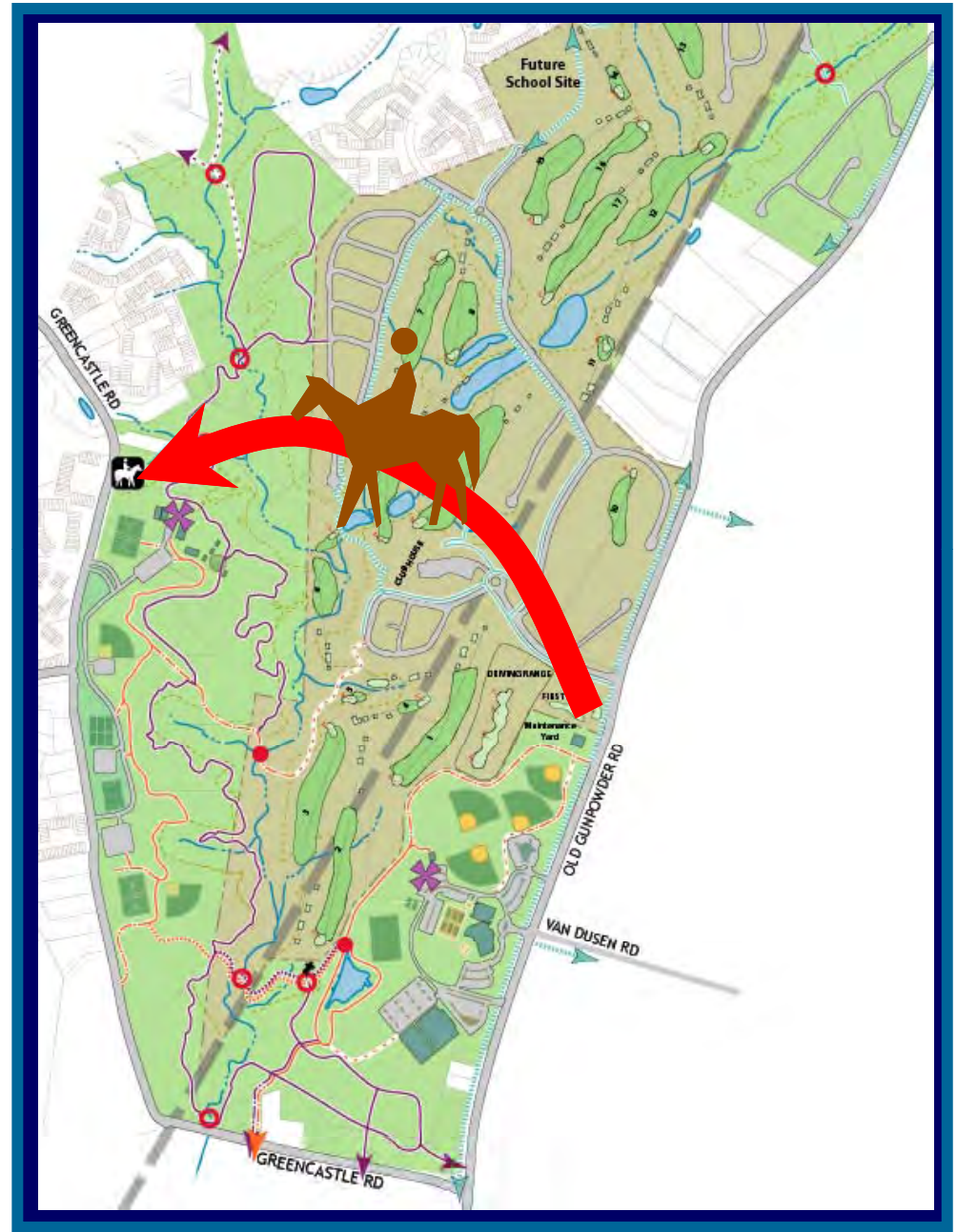


Old Trail

New Trail

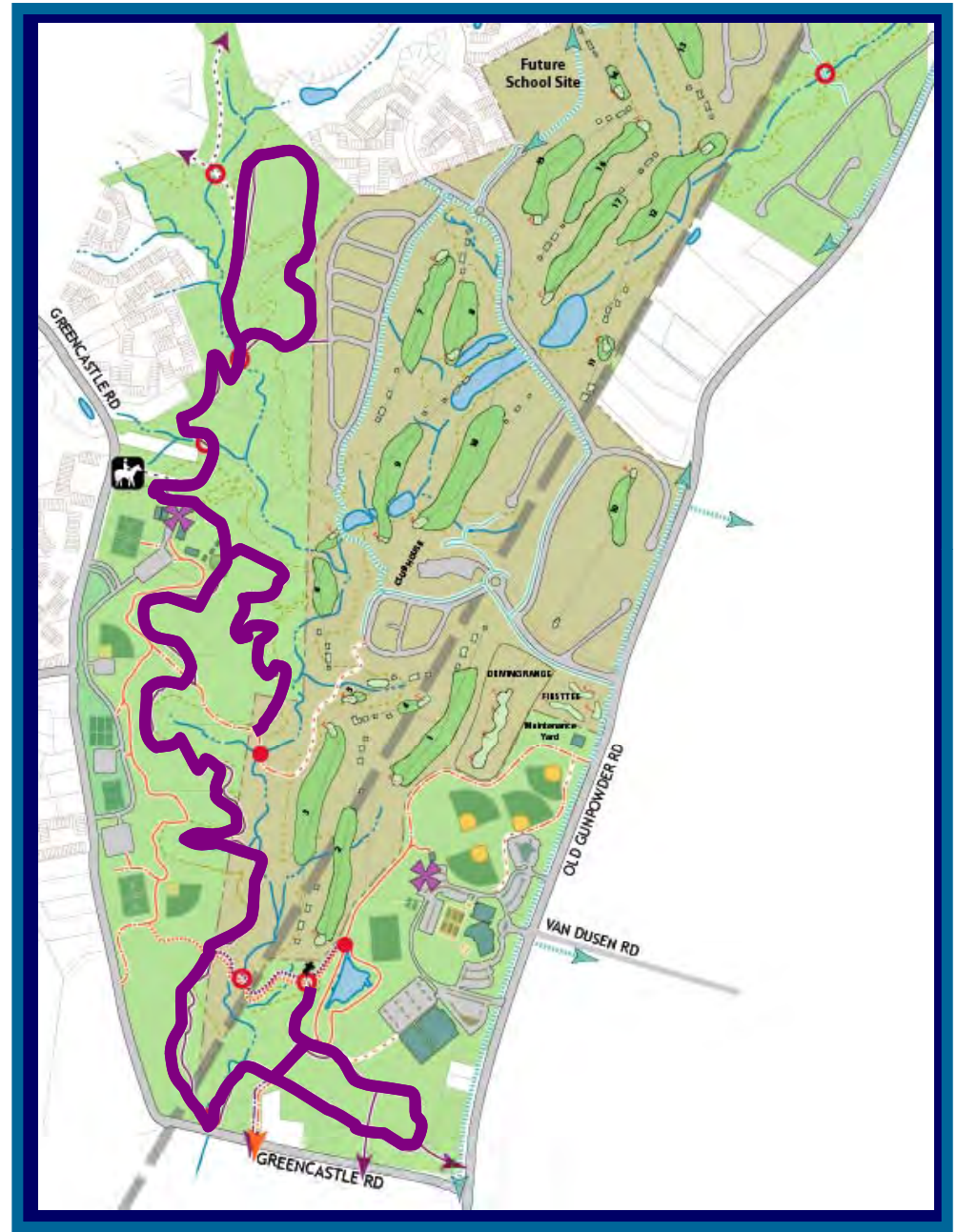
Concept Plan Details

Relocated Equestrian
Parking



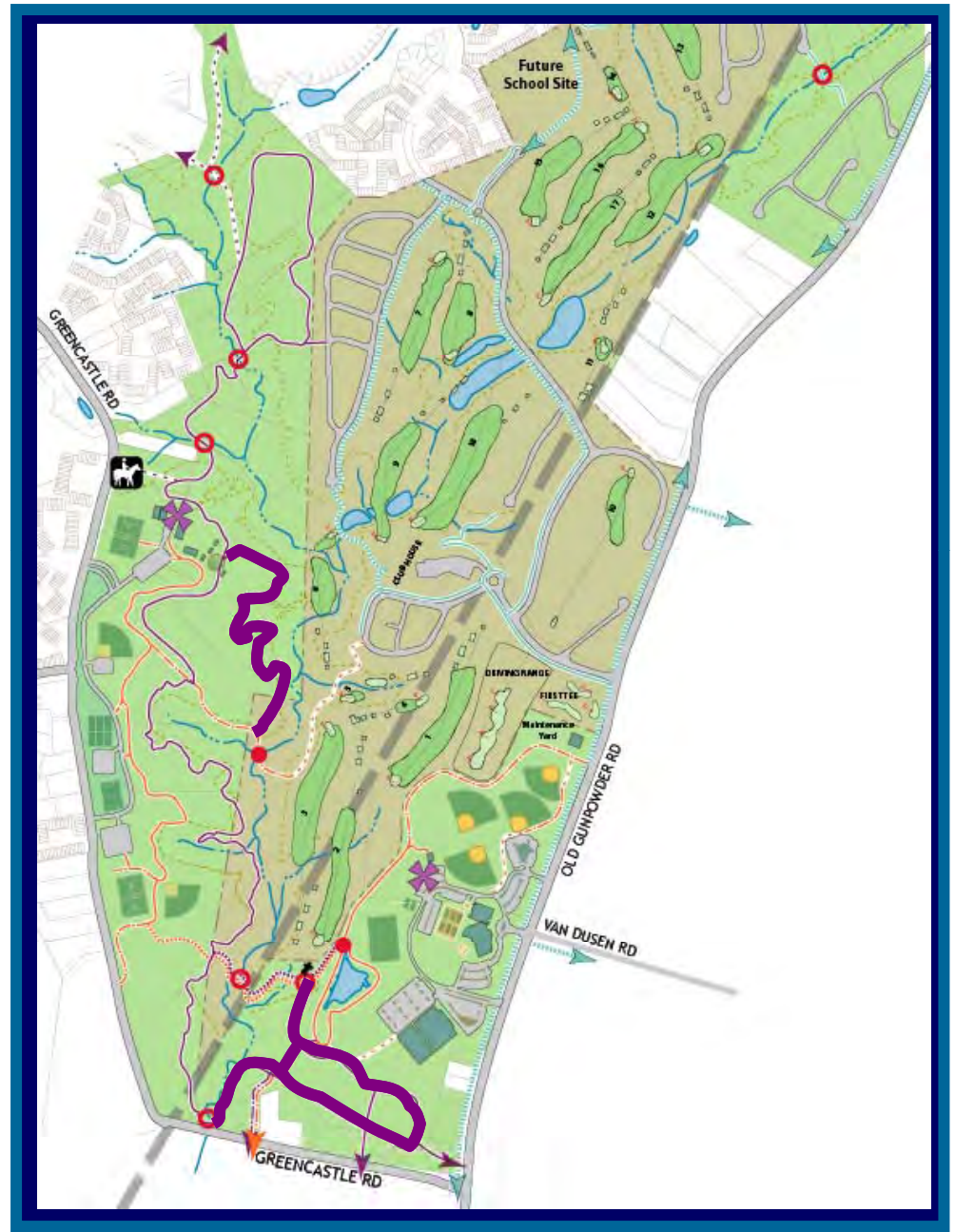
Concept Plan Details

Relocates Natural Surface
Trails for Environmental
Concerns



Concept Plan Details

Preserves Volunteer
Efforts by MORE



Concept Plan Details

Extensive Trail
Connections From the
Residential Development



Results of meetings & BTAG Input

- Identified issues important to trail users
- Relocated some unsustainable trails
- Developed trail network acceptable to trail users if the Golf Course development occurs
- GPS data acquired for all existing trails
- Trail map under development
- Proposals distributed to the larger trails community by BTAG representatives

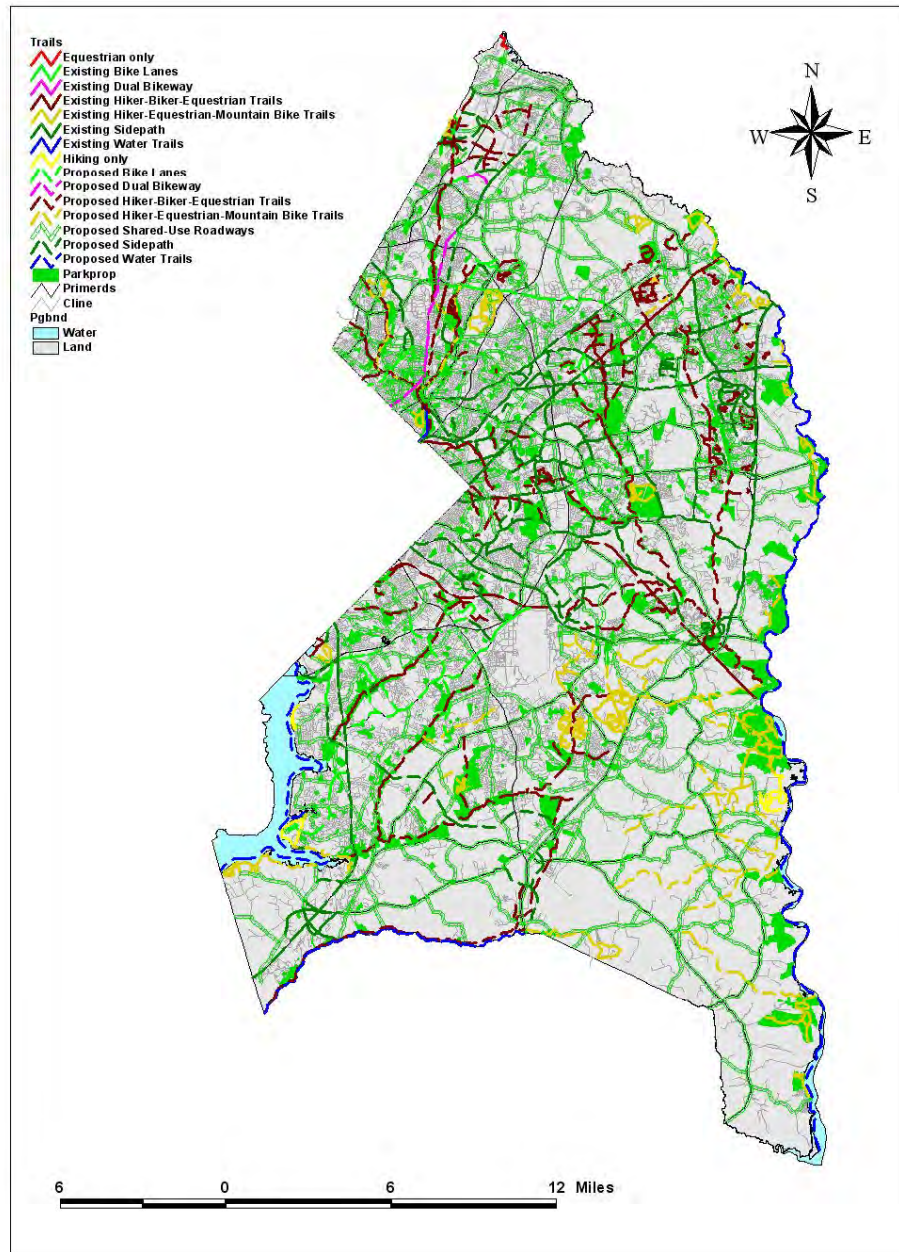
Countywide Trails Plan



- One element of the Master Plan of Transportation
- Will include a network of trails and bikeways for recreation and transportation
- BTAG has served as the focus group for this element of the Master Plan of Transportation
- Work with BTAG and specific user groups and communities is on-going to ensure that the trail plan meets the needs of all trail users in Prince George's County

Trails types included in plan:

- Paved multi-use trails
- Natural surface hiker-equestrian-mountain bike trails
- Side paths (trails parallel to road, but behind curb)
- Bike Routes
- Designated Bike Lanes
- Water Trails



Draft Countywide Trails Plan

In addition to park trails, the trails plan will also include recommendations for in-road bicycle facilities, water trails, multi-use side paths, and other neighborhood trail connections



Trails and walkable neighborhoods are an important component of livable communities and smart growth



It is important for the community to identify trail corridors that need to be preserved





Trail corridors can be preserved through the planning process through the work of trail users

Black Swamp Creek Trail easement



The Black Swamp Creek Conservancy was instrumental in acquiring and field locating a hiker-equestrian easement through the development review process.



Even small, neighborhood parks can be used for valuable trail connections. Proposed alignment for trail connection to Metro (mass transit) shown.

Citizen involvement is crucial to trail planning, preservation, and implementation.



Questions or Comments?

