

Active Transportation Advisory Group Meeting Summary

Prince George's County Planning Department

Monday, September 14, 2026

7:00 to 8:30 PM

Attendees

Sean Adkins, *Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department*

Anne-Claire

Meagan Baco, *Anacostia Trails Heritage Area*

Mark Berger, *Prince George's County Planning Department*

John Ceplarek, *Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation*

Crystal Hancock, *Prince George's County Planning Department*

Diane Harris, *Prince George's County resident*

Ellen Huffman, *Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department*

Michael Jackson, *Prince George's County Planning Department*

Kalli Krumpas, *Washington Area Bicyclist Coalition*

Matt Onajafe, *Jafe Cycling, LLC*

Daniel Paschall, *East Coast Greenway Alliance*

Fionnuala Quinn, *Traffic Garden Designs*

Brandon "Scott" Rowe, *Prince George's County Planning Department*

Desmond Smallwood, *Prince George's County Planning Department*

John "JT" Thomas, *Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department*

1. Welcome and Introductions -Michael Jackson, Active Transportation Planner, started the meeting at 7:09 pm with a round of introductions.

2. Traffic Safety Gardens, What They Are and How to Implement Them – Fionnuala Quinn, founder of Traffic Gardens Designs, discussed the concept of traffic gardens, which are sites where children learn about traffic rules and safety at a site with pretend roadways and traffic control devices. There are two types of traffic gardens, temporary or "pop-up" portables and permanent. Children can ride bicycles, tricycles, or scooters around the traffic garden and learn about pavement markings, traffic signals, and signs in a safe and fun setting. Fionnuala collaborated with Arlington County, Virginia and Prince George's County staff including Tiffany Jennings, to produce the publication, "Planning Seeds for Regional Roadway Safety, One Traffic Garden at a Time", which was funded by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. She said there are two traffic gardens in Prince George's county, in Kettering and Coral Hills. Fionnuala gave a power point presentation and below is a summary of her presentation.

The pretend roadways and traffic control devices for permanent traffic garden installations are created using asphalt sealant, paint and stencils. Decommissioned basketball courts are an ideal, but not the only choice for establishing a traffic garden site. Fionnuala says potential sites are easy to find as there is usually a surplus of unused hard surfaces in our built environment. By using top grade materials, traffic gardens have a 8-to-10-year lifespan, comparable to basketball courts. There are three basic steps to creating the physical permanent traffic garden; 1) designing the

layout; 2) applying asphalt sealant over the site's surface to create a blank canvas, and 3) applying the graphics. Fionnuala's firm, Traffic Garden Designs, can create detailed drawings of traffic gardens and advise on obtaining materials. She says the most skilled contractors to apply the graphics tend to be the ones who install roadway and parking lot striping or lines for basketball and pickleball courts. It is also important to have a complement lesson plan to guide the students. Fionnuala noted that every school has traffic gardens in Japan, North Korea, Spain, and Bulgaria.

Diane Harris asked who is responsible for acquiring the land, permits, and insurance policies associated with traffic gardens. Fionnuala replied that unused vacant land within scores, playgrounds, recreational centers and the like are easy to identify for traffic gardens, and because there is no engineering or construction involved permits are not required. The question of insurance has never arisen. Anne-Claire commented that being from The Netherlands, she is in favor of kids learning how to communicate with other roadway users. Mark Berger asked if primary and secondary schools located on military bases had traffic gardens. He noted that because of frequent transfers the children of service members often move, making it hard for these kids to find friends. Mark thought that military officials might be receptive to installing traffic gardens. Fionnuala said she hadn't considered military base schools but thought it was a great suggestion because traffic gardens are fun places to learn transportation safety skills. Finally, Fionnuala praised Tiffany Jennings, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator with the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, on her efforts to help bring traffic gardens to Prince George's County and for collaboration with Fionnuala in producing "*Planning Seeds for Regional Roadway Safety, One Traffic Garden at a Time*".

3. Charles Flowers High School Bicycle Club and Perspectives on Bicycle Safety Education –

Matt Onojafe, owner of Jafe Cycling LLC, a bicycle shop in Lanham, and Prince George's County Organizer for the Washington Area Bicyclist Association discussed his outreach efforts to expose Prince George's public school students to bicycling. He is a Prince George's county native, and graduate of Gywnn Park middle and high schools. Matt started Jafe Cycling during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and wondered how to provide an outlet for youth and adults to take back control of their health and wellness, as a way of giving back to the community. His first youth outreach was in 2021 when Matt offered an 8-to-12-week bicycling program at Gywnn Park Middle School in Brandywine. The goal was to empower students to become more confident bicycle riders by honing their balancing and other bike handling skills in order to be able to travel by bicycle between home and school. He incorporated aspects relating STEM education, teaching what he referred to as the ABC's of bicycling...Air pressure in bike tires and how to inflate tires and what PSI (pounds per square inch) means, Braking systems, and how the Chain moves the bicycle forward.

Matt's second student outreach program was at Templeton Elementary School in East Riverdale where the focus was on teaching bicycling fundamentals so kids can feel comfortable on their bicycles and enabling them to ride with their families and school friends, thus empowering these students toward independence. Matt's most recent program is with Charles Flowers High School in Springdale where he started a cycling club. They utilize the WB&A and other local trails. Matt exposes the students to higher end, competition level bicycles in contrast to entry level bicycles typically sold at big box and department stores. He teaches traffic skills including skills needed for safe group cycling rides as well as bicycle maintenance and repair, such as fixing flat tires. He mentioned that a couple of his student athletes were able to complete 50-mile bike rides following just learning how to ride a bicycle 3 months before. Some students were provided intern opportunities working at Jafe Cycling and getting real work experience. Matt stated that over 200

colleges, and universities have cycling programs and offer cycling scholarships. Opportunities exist for students to become sponsored bicycle athletes. The National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) has a Maryland chapter where schools outside of Prince George's County participate in. NICA's website says they are "empowering youth to become the best version of themselves: *both on and off of the bike*." NICA programs exist in Montgomery and Howard counties. Matt was not exposed to NICA while attending middle and high school in Brandywine and he is passionate about giving the opportunity to participate to Prince George's County students.

Desmond Smallwood said this was a great presentation and asked if he and Matt could later connect. Desmond runs a small coffee business that focuses on health and wellness and on child development, growth, etc., and would like to connect with Matt, who replied that would be perfect. Michael Jackson asked Matt if he had an opinion on the recent Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) school bus assignment problems that occurred in late August at the beginning of the school year and whether student travel by bicycle could be a travel alternative for some pupils. Matt said students and a few principals have reached out about bike parking questions, and some students are showing up over an hour late due to delayed or absent school bus service. Matt said he would be more than open to discuss ways to alleviate the problems of school bus transportation in Prince George's County.

Kallie Krumpas asked Matt to elaborate on his experiences working with the students from the county's Vision Zero Youth Leadership Institute. He said that students had conducted roadway audits and expressed a preference for more divided (protected?) bike lanes. Matt would like work at more opportunities for students to bike to school.

4. Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department Update – John "JT" Thomas, Trail Planning Supervisor, said his work unit was within the Park Planning and Environmental Stewardship Division, and his team of project planners and project design project managers were on tonight's call. He posted several links into the chat box related to topics he discussed. JT reminded the attendees that the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) created a county Trails Finder application that is available for the public to locate various trails. He said that the first segment of the planned Central Avenue Connector Trail (CACT) between Addison Road and Hill Road is now fully funded for 100 percent design. The next segment of the CACT will extend easterly from Hill Road and eventually cross the Capital Beltway and terminate near the University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center. A walk through the Summerfield neighborhood with interested trail stakeholders is planned for September 24th.

On September 16th a joint presentation from the Montgomery and Prince George's Parks trail teams is scheduled to brief the full National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the two counties trail networks. On September 28 officials with the Maryland Department of Transportation will be holding their annual fall transportation tour meeting with local county officials. This meeting is open to the public.

New wayfinding signs have been installed on the Henson Creek Trail, to be followed by wayfinding signage along the WB&A and Anacostia tributary trails. Staff are continuing to address complaints about e-bikes on trails through education by sign placement. JT announced a ribbon cutting ceremony on a new interpretive natural surface trail on October 6, which is part of Dinosaur Park, located in South Laurel. Sean Adkins announced that DPR released its 2027 Parks and Recreation programming guide, which includes a lot of transportation related events.

Michael asked JT if the new wayfinding signage for the WB&A Trail will include a Welcome to Prince George's County at the west end of the WB&A Trail bridge over the Patuxent River to complement the Welcome to Anne Arundel County sign on the bridge's east end. JT said the lead project manager for the WB&A Trail wayfinding project is on the call and it is something to consider if not already in the design plan.

5. Other Business – Crystal Hancock announced that she and Scott Rowe are working on the updates to the Prince George's County Master Plan of Transportation. Matt said the Washington Area Bicyclist Association will be hosting the 2026 Prince George's County Bicycle Summit and Expo on October 17 at the Bowie City Hall.

Meagan Baco, Executive Director of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA), said that the Maryland Department of Transportation recently completed a feasibility study regarding extending the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail into Brentwood and Mount Rainer. She said the feasibility has not yet been released to the public. Michael asked if the feasibility study would extend the existing Levee Trail that parallels the south side of the Northwest Branch but ends just north of Rhode Island Avenue to the proposed Trolley Trail extension. Kallie said the study proposes extending the trail to the north side of Rhode Island Avenue, but the Trolley Trail would be extended along the south side of Rhode Island Avenue. Meagan announced that ATHA is putting together a 25-mile bicycle ride on October 3rd in honor of the semi-quincentennial year in southern Prince George's County. Michael said he is working with the University of Maryland on a student produced analysis through the Partnership for Active Learning and Sustainability which will examine how to market and promote bicycle tourism in Prince George's County.

6. Adjournment – Michael announced the next virtual ATAG meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 7th from 7 to 8:30 pm.