



Georgetown Pike Footpath Feasibility Study *Initial Planning Workshop*

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 3, 2018
TIME: 10:00 to 12:00 PM
LOCATION: McLean Governmental Center Community Room
1437 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, VA

SUBJECT: Initial Planning Workshop

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Kimley-Horn
DATE PREPARED: April 11, 2018

ATTENDEES:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization / Role</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Alazar Feleke	FHWA EFLHD – Project Manager	703-404-6319	alazar.feleke@dot.gov
James Ruppert	FHWA EFLHD	703-948-3550	james.ruppert@dot.gov
Thang Nguyen	FHWA EFLHD	703-404-6298	thang.nguyen@dot.gov
Makaya Royal	NPS NCR – FLTP Coordinator	202-619-7092	makayah_royal@nps.gov
Don Briggs	NPS Superintendent, PHNST	304-535-4016	don_briggs@nps.gov
Heather Groen	NPS Training	304-535-6215	Heather_groen1@gmail.com
Brent O'Neill	NPS/GWMP	202-438-6614	beoneill@nps.gov
Jane Edmondson	Supervisor Foust's Office	703-356-0551	Jane.edmondson@fairfaxcounty.gov
Jenny Kaplan	Supervisor Foust's Office	703-356-0551	Jennifer.kaplan@fairfaxcounty.gov
Steve Bates	VDOT NOVA District L&D Engr	703-259-2949	Stephen.bates@vdot.virginia.gov
Gary Runco	VDOT NOVA District Bridge Engr	703-259-3341	Gary.Runco@vdot.virginia.gov
Liz Cronauer	FCPA Trail Program Manager	703-324-8738	Elizabeth.cronauer@fairfaxcounty.gov
Paul Shirey	FCPA Branch Manager	703-324-8738	Paul.shirey@fairfaxcounty.gov
Chris Wells	FCDOT Bike/Ped Manager	703-877-5772	Chris.wells@fairfaxcounty.gov
Alex Heiberger	Madeira School CFO	703-556-8241	aheiberger@madeira.org
Ed Pickens	Fairfax Trail and Stream	703-448-0415	pickens_slim@hotmail.com
Karen Jones	PHTA/Fairfax Trails and Streams	703-638-3218	sadiqi0417@gmail.com
Bill Niedringhaus	PHTA/Fairfax Trails and Streams	703-244-2476	wniedrin@gmail.com
John Martin	Kimley-Horn Project Manager	703-674-1305	john.martin@kimley-horn.com
Keith Aimone	Kimley-Horn Landscape Architect	703-674-1314	keith.aimone@kimley-horn.com
Zach Teague	Kimley-Horn Trail Designer	703-674-1352	zach.teague@kimley-horn.com
Daniele McCray	Kimley-Horn Planner/Engineer	703-674-1381	Danielle.mccray@kimley-horn.com

Introduction

- This Initial Planning Workshop for the Georgetown Pike Footpath Feasibility study was held with the study's stakeholders to provide an overview of the scope of the study and to seek input from the participants as the study gets underway.

- The study is being completed by EFLHD, in coordination with NPS, with assistance from Kimley-Horn through a task order under Kimley-Horn's IDIQ contract with EFLHD.
- Following introductions of the participants, the discussion generally followed the agenda and the slides in the attached presentation (Attachment 1).

Project Background and Purpose

- Don Briggs highlighted the local investments made in the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) over the past 10 to 20 years and indicated this project is an opportunity to explore a connection between Towlston Road (VA 676) and the Difficult Run Trail within Great Falls Park, as part of a large effort to improve connections between Scott's Run Nature Preserve and Great Falls Park.
- Makayah Royal noted the long-standing partnership between NPS and FHWA EFLHD for transportation projects and that this stakeholder meeting represents an opportunity to engage the community on the proposed Georgetown Pike Footpath.
- Alazar Feleke provided a review of the scope of work and noted that the focus of this effort is to assess the feasibility of options for a trail connection in the Georgetown Pike corridor and for pedestrians or hikers to cross over Difficult Run either next to Georgetown Pike or at a location within the park.
- Using the slide from the attached presentation, John Martin provided an overview of the study area and the project limits. The scope of the feasibility study includes:
 - Feasibility study for a footpath along Georgetown Pike connecting existing and planned facilities
 - Feasibility of options for a pedestrian bridge over Difficult Run to connect to the existing Difficult Run Trail

Previous Studies

- With support from Bill Niedringhaus, the group discussed previous studies related to the study area.
- Georgetown Pike Trail Feasibility Summary Findings
 - Completed by Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) several years ago
 - Identified issues influencing feasibility of bicycle/pedestrian trail along Georgetown Pike, between the Capital Beltway and Great Falls Park
 - Cindy Engelhart recommended checking with Debbie Spiliotopoulos at Northern Virginia Regional Commission (dspilio@novaregion.org) regarding specific follow-up details on the feasibility study
- Field Trip Report
 - In March 2017, Alazar led group on a field trip to project site area to explore potential opportunities for an alignment to close the gap in the Potomac Heritage Trail. Representatives of both FHWA EFL and NPS participated in the field trip
 - Report documenting the field trip was prepared and is serving as a reference for current study
- Potomac Heritage Trail Association efforts
 - Bill provided documentation of walking between Kimberwicke Road and Great Falls Park
 - Bill mentioned a fascinating book where the author documents traces of old historic roads along the scenic trail area
 - The group discussed the potential of exploring an historic trail or road alignment for use by this study
 - Recognize that we are currently in planning process to explore feasibility, any feasible option will be considered

- Concern was expressed related to use of historic spaces; NPS noted that there are different historic contexts for different federal lands (forests, battlefields, parks, etc.); though important to note, there are no known restrictions at this time
- Fairfax County efforts
 - The County is administering the implementation of trail connections west of the project study area
 - Georgetown Pike trail connections (between Route 7 and Great Falls) are being delivered in four phases; two phases are complete
 - Federal money currently applied to three of the four projects
 - Pedestrian improvements are also being constructed in the vicinity of the intersection of Georgetown Pike and Route 123 (well to the east of the current study area)
- Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan includes a Countywide Bicycle Master Plan to help guide this project. Plan was updated 2014. General type and location of bicycle facilities are shown on the plan, but specific types and locations need to be planned and designed to become reality.

Connecting People to Parks

- This current study is consistent with the NPS goal of connecting people to parks.
- Potomac National Heritage Scenic Trail network spans the corridor between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands in western PA; the current project area is heavily traveled.
- Great Falls Park is one of the most visited parks in the region; similarly, Scott's Run Nature Preserve is also a busy park.

Discussion of Current Study and Possible Alignments

- Discussion turned to the current study—its study area, scope, and existing conditions.
- Steve Bates noted that fee simple ROW is available for the footpath along Georgetown Pike near the current bridge over Difficult Run.
- The existing vehicle bridge on Georgetown Pike (owned by VDOT) has an attached cantilever structure that used to serve as a pedestrian facility.
- Gary Runco indicated that the cantilever structure was closed to pedestrians in the 1980s due to structural concerns.
 - Wooden deck does not protect underlying steel members from rain, snow, and salt, which accelerated the deterioration of the steel.
 - VDOT will not be replacing the bridge in the near term; it currently has a 5 or 6 bridge rating
- Prior to closure of pedestrian path across the bridge, there was a good deal of pedestrian activity, partially due to a parking lot that used to be on the south side of Georgetown Pike, just east of Difficult Run.
- The group agreed that potential footpath or trail could be located next to the Georgetown Pike roadway facility or somewhere away from the roadway on NPS property.
- The possible alignment of the trail appears to favor the north side of Georgetown Pike.
 - More NPS property on the north side, including just to the north of the Georgetown Pike/Towlston Road intersection.
 - An easement for a future trail on the north side of Georgetown Pike has been reserved on the Madeira School property.
 - Other segments of trails along Georgetown Pike are on the north side of the roadway (west of Great Falls and east of I-495).

- If the pedestrian facility on the south side of the bridge were to be replaced, it may need to be rebuilt on the north side.
- It was noted that with more development occurring to the west in Loudoun County, traffic volumes have increased significantly as traffic avoids Route 7.
 - Average daily traffic volumes are in excess of 15,000 vehicles per day.
 - Heavier traffic on the two-lane road has led to safety concerns regarding pedestrian crossings on Georgetown Pike, making a trail on the south side less attractive.
- Current study is only between Difficult Run and Towlston Rd.
 - The representatives from the agencies present (NPS, VDOT, and Fairfax County) said that a trail is not current planned or programmed to the east of Towlston Road.
 - However, with the easement across the front of Madeira School, the group noted that there could be an opportunity to make a connection between Towlston Road and the west end of the trail on the school property (a distance of about 0.3 miles).
 - The geographic scope of the study should be flexible to include a planned pedestrian trail or other facility on Madeira property at the intersection with Bellview Road

Discussion on Conceptual Design

- This project is planning for a footpath or trail.
 - Trail design and materials to accommodate ADA accessibility will not be evaluated as part of this study.
 - The trail type and material will depend on character NPS wants to maintain, as well as funding, right-of-way, and location.
- More of the focus for this effort is the conceptual alignment, not necessarily details of materials and construction.
- Representatives from PHTA noted that the effort should seek a continuous non-motorized route for the trail, considering potential alignments and potential constraints that could contribute to a pedestrian route between the I-495 sound wall and Great Falls Park.
- In the existing conditions, there are small shoulder areas along Georgetown Pike that will be evaluated during this feasibility study as the potential location of the footpath.
- Following the group discussion, the stakeholders and project team broke off into several discussion groups, which included sketching of potential conceptual alignments on two of the base maps provided for the meeting. These sketches are attached (Attachments 2 and 3).

Schedule and Next Steps

- This study is anticipated to be completed by November 2018.
- Two more workshops are planned within this time frame:
 - One to discuss and refine initial concepts
 - Another to discuss a preferred concept
- Conceptual designs will be documented in a final report
- Planning costs will be developed for concepts; however, funding sources will not be identified as part of the study.
- Following the study, final design and implementation could be implemented by one or more of the agencies present, including through potential partnerships such as NPS/EFLHD and Fairfax County/VDOT.
- As the study moves forward, in addition to meeting attendees, there are additional stakeholders who could be notified that a feasibility study is occurring and who could be invited to the next

workshop, including property owners in the area and Debbie Spiliotopoulos of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. A working list of contacts used by the Madeira School for communications purposes could be used for subsequent outreach.

Closing

FHWA, NPS, and Kimley-Horn very much appreciate the participation of the attendees at this Initial Planning Workshop.

Kimley-Horn requests that the attendees review the content of these draft minutes and advise the author(s) of any necessary revisions within two weeks of the preparation date, after which time these meeting notes will be considered final.

Attachments:

1. Workshop Presentation Slides
2. Working Sketch 1
3. Working Sketch 2



Federal Highway Administration
Task Order – DTFH7113D000003L/693C7318F000019

Georgetown Pike Footpath Feasibility Study
Initial Planning Workshop and Site Visit

April 3, 2018



AGENDA

1. Welcome / Introductions

2. Project Overview

- Project Location
- Project Area
- Scope of Study

3. Previous Studies

4. Current Study

- Objectives
- Schedule

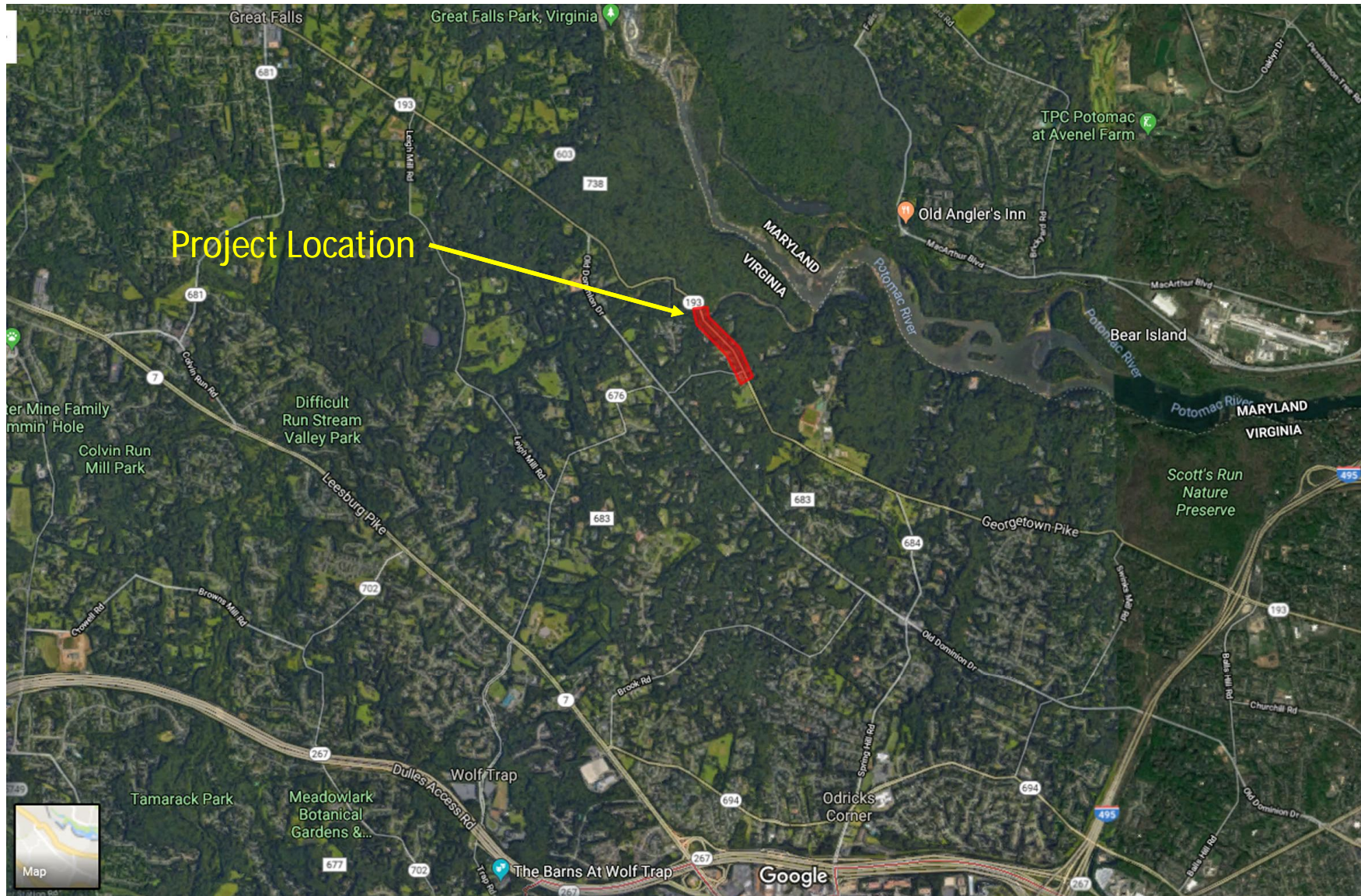
5. Discussion

- Issues present
- Base map exercise

6. Next Steps

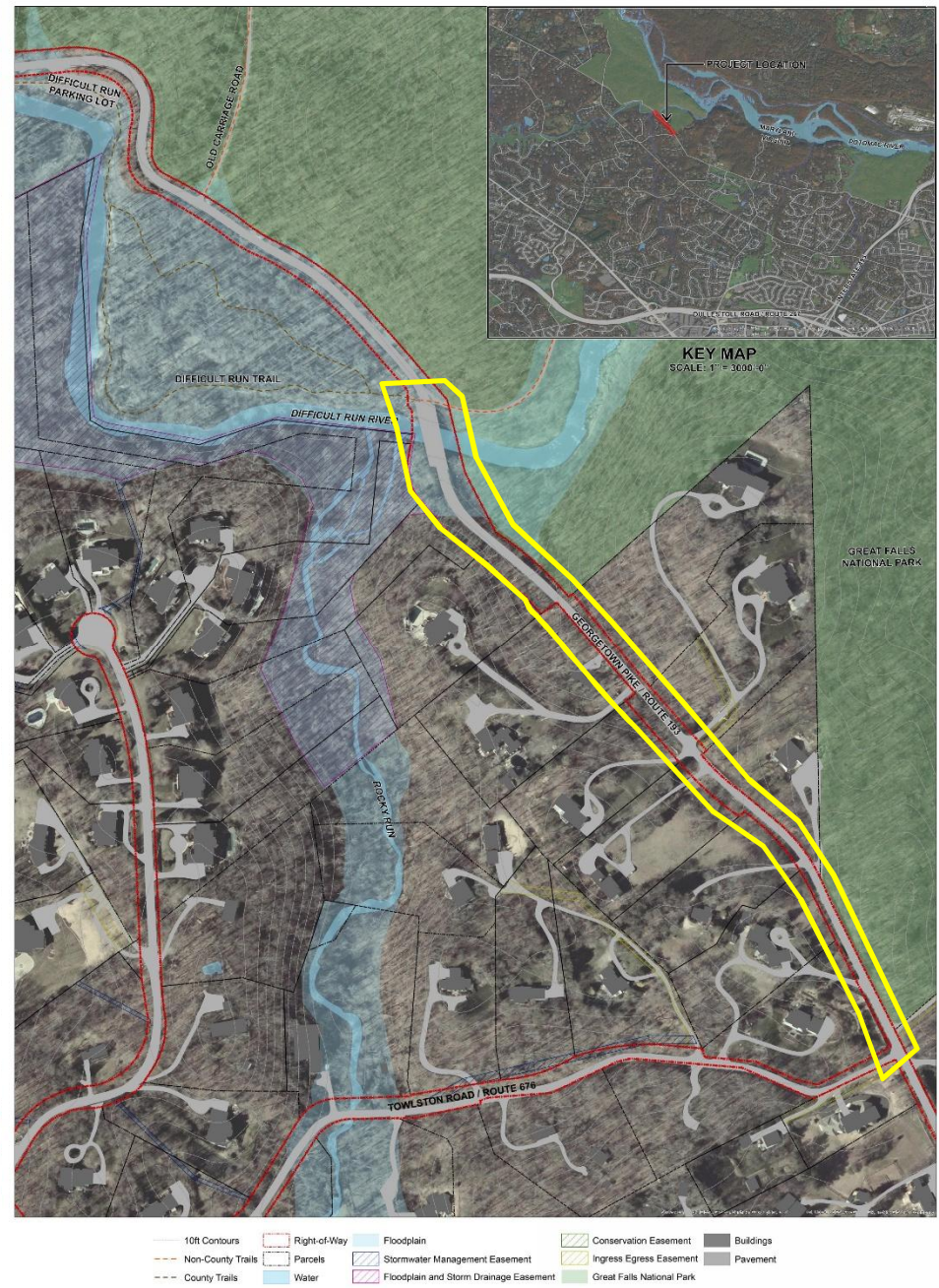
7. Team Site Visit

PROJECT LOCATION



PROJECT OVERVIEW

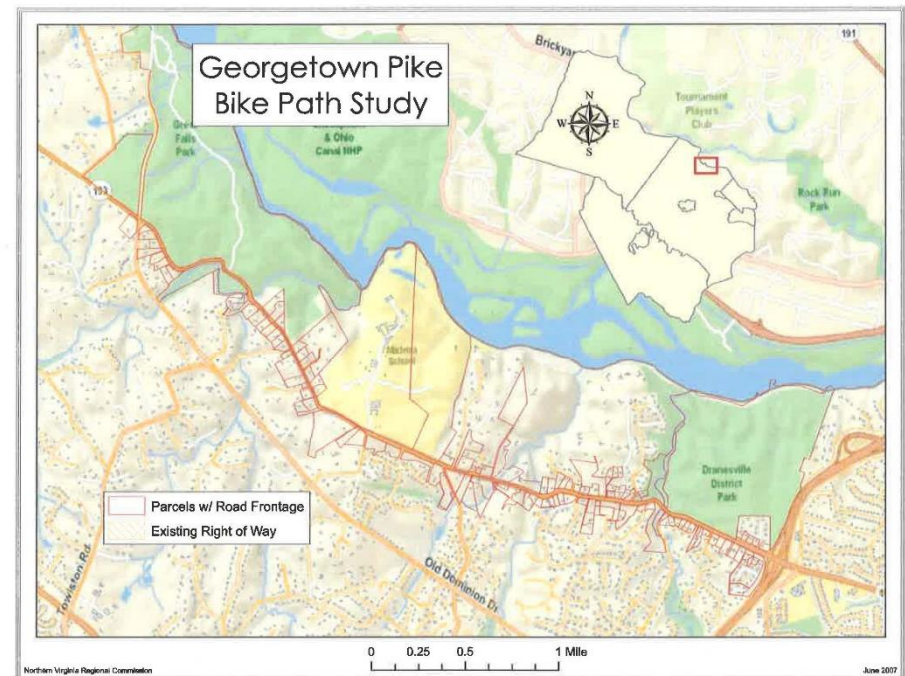
- Project Area:
Georgetown Pike (VA 193)
 - from Towlston Road (VA 676)
 - to Difficult Run Trail within Great Falls National Park
- Scope of Study
 - Feasibility study for a footpath along Georgetown Pike connecting existing facilities
 - Feasibility of options for a pedestrian bridge over Difficult Run to connect to trail



PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Georgetown Pike Trail Feasibility Summary Findings (no date)
 - Completed by Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)
 - Identified issues influencing feasibility of bicycle/pedestrian trail along Georgetown Pike, between the Capital Beltway and Great Falls National Park
 - Study was Phase 2 of overall Georgetown Pike Trail Project (Phase 1: 5,500' section between Applewood Lane and Ad Hoc Rd.)
 - Reviewed relevant literature and implementation plans for similar trails along historic roads within narrow rights of way

Map of Study Area



Graphic Source: Georgetown Pike Trail Feasibility Summary Findings, no date

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Field Trip Report

Pre-Scoping visit held on March 23, 2017 to investigate the potential trail alignment locations to connect the gap in Potomac Heritage Trail

FIELD TRIP REPORT			
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Sterling VA. Date: Mar 23, 2017			
TO: Katerina Roman Project Manager		FROM: James Ruppert Civil Engineer (Highway)	
THROUGH: Alazar Felske Highway Design Manager		OTHER DIVISIONAL PERSONNEL ATTENDING Jack VanDey Senior Program Manager (Planning and Environment)	
INCLUSIVE DATES From: Mar 23, 2017 To: Mar 23, 2017			
ITINERARY AND PURPOSE FOR TRIP A pre-scoping site visit to Great Falls National Park was held on March 23, 2017. The project proposes to assess the feasibility of establishing a multi-modal trail between a pedestrian right of way near Townsview Rd along Georgetown Pike and the Difficult Run Trail within the Great Falls Park. The purpose of the trip was to investigate the potential trail alignment locations to connect a gap in the Potomac Heritage trail and to assess the condition of one of those alignments by walking the trail.			
PRINCIPAL CONTACTS			
Name	Title	Agency	Telephone
Makayah Royal	FLTP Coordinator	NPS	202-619-7092
Don Briggs	Superintendent	NPS	304-535-4016
Bill Niedringhaus	President	Potomac Heritage Trail Association	703-244-2476
Jennifer Kaplan	Staff Aide	Fairfax County	703-356-0551
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS			
1	The group met at the visitor center at Great Falls Park to discuss the agenda of the site visit and to discuss the next steps of the project. Makayah stated that the project was currently in the pre-scoping phase. The next step for the project is to develop a scope of work for the feasibility study.		
2	Mr. Niedringhaus provided maps of the locations of the gaps in the Potomac Heritage Trail. He discussed the history of the trail and some existing projects under construction to further connect the remainder of the trail.		
3	The group walked the trail along the proposed alignment. The current trail has not been maintained for approximately 20 years. The trail ranges from 5-8 feet in width and is an undisturbed earthen surface. The northern part of the proposed alignment connects with the historic path of the Georgetown pike.		
4	At the conclusion of the walk, Mr. Niedringhaus stated that he would transmit some historic information from a document written about the trail by Winlow Hatch.		
DISTRIBUTION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signature Box JAMES W RUPPERT <small>Digitally signed by JAMES W RUPPERT DN: cn=JAMES W RUPPERT, ou=DOT FEDERAL HIGHWAY DIVISION, c=US Date: 2017.03.23 11:41:36 -0400</small>			
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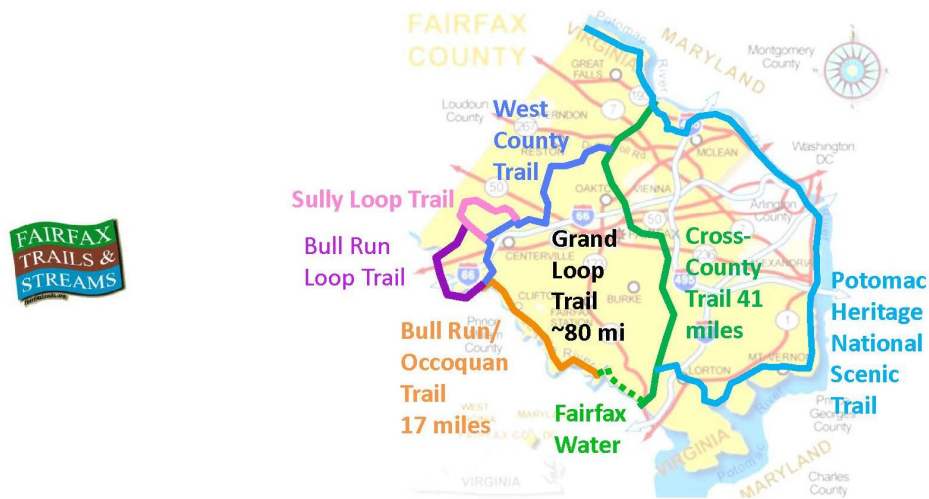
Graphic Source: POHE Field Trip Report

FIELD TRIP REPORT	
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Sterling VA. Date: Mar 23, 2017	
	
Trailhead at Parking Lot on Georgetown Pike, West of Bridge Crossing	Trail underneath North side of bridge @ Difficult Run
	
Trailhead at South side of bridge	Existing pedestrian crossing on bridge - closed to public
	
Beginning of proposed trail alignment on South side of Bridge	Condition of trail along proposed alignment

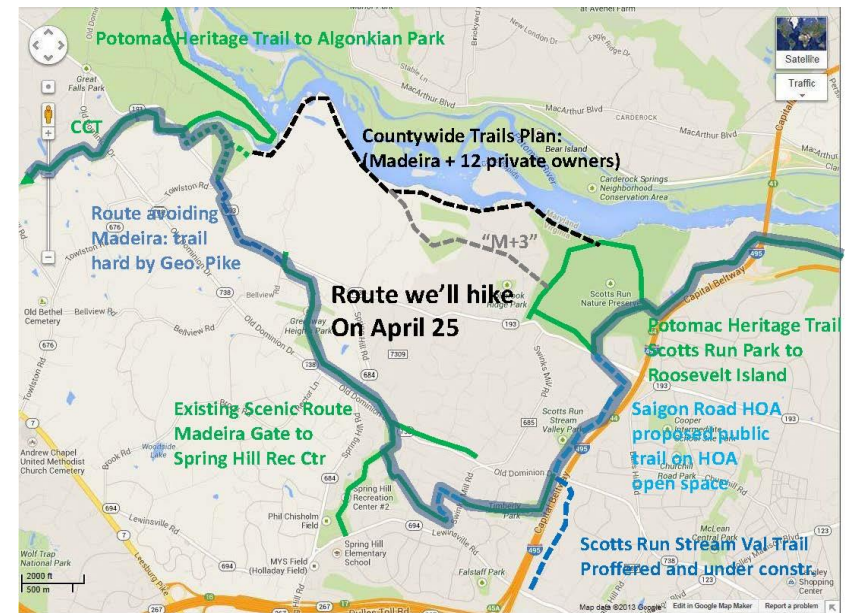
Graphic Source: POHE Field Trip Report

PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Potomac Heritage Trail Association
Filling the Gap in McLean: Great Falls National Park to
Scotts Run Nature Preserve



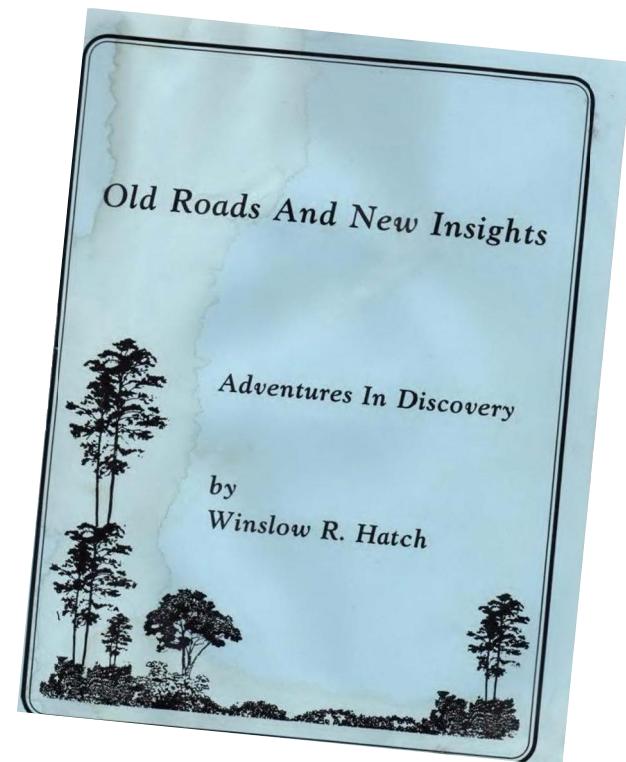
Graphic Source: Filling the Gap in McLean: Great Falls National Park to Scotts Run National Park



Graphic Source: Filling the Gap in McLean: Great Falls National Park to Scotts Run National Park

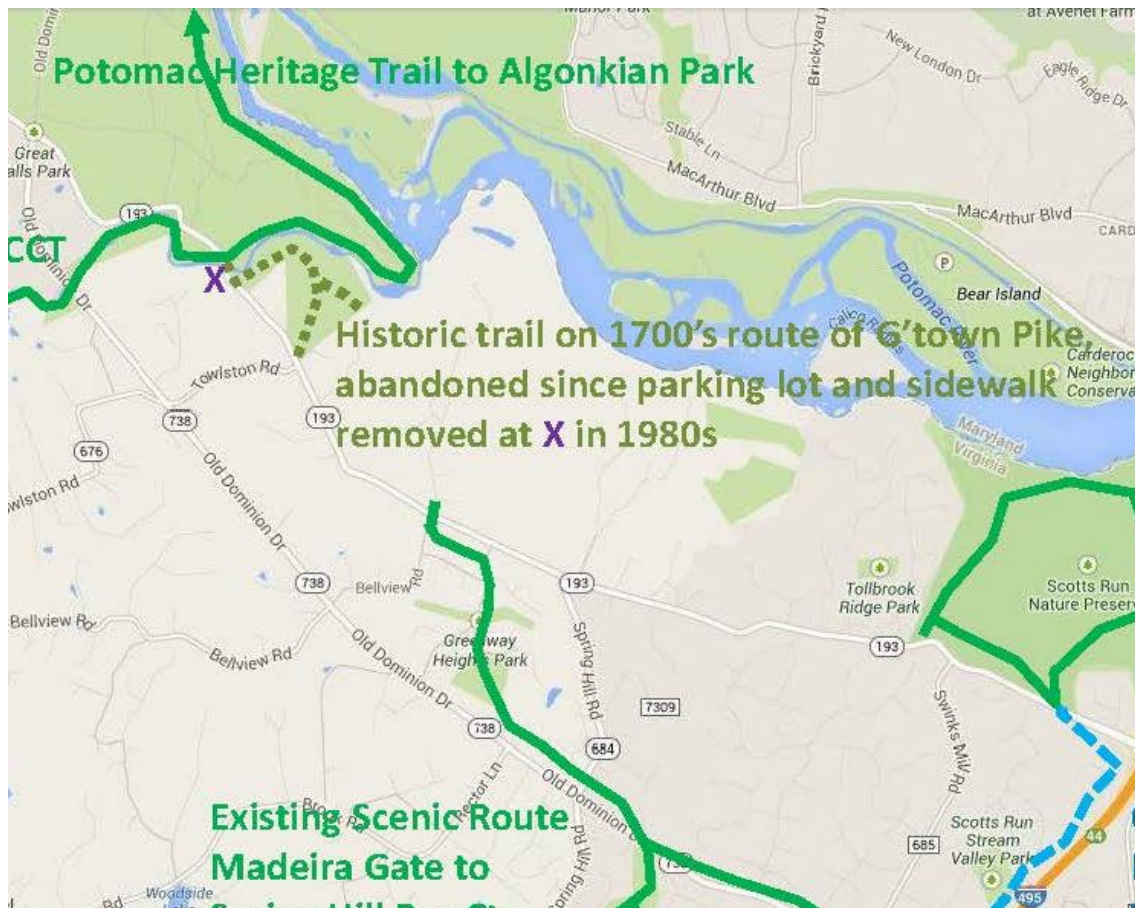
PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Mr. Bill Niedringhaus, Potomac Heritage Trail Association (PHTA)
 - Documentation of hike from Georgetown Pike in Great Falls National Park to Kimberwicke Road (toward McLean)
 - Winslow Hatch on original route of Georgetown Pike at Great Falls Park



PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Conclusion from PHTA study: Historic location of Georgetown Pike inside the Great Falls Park has not been maintained as a trail in more than 20 years



Graphic Source: PHTA Presentation, Georgetown Pike Great Falls National Park to Kimberwicke Road

CURRENT STUDY | Objectives

- Investigate concepts
 - Connect pedestrian right-of-way along Georgetown Pike to Difficult Run Trail
 - New pedestrian facility on the existing Georgetown Pike bridge over Difficult Run
 - New pedestrian-only bridge over Difficult Run within Great Falls Park



CURRENT STUDY | Objectives

- Feasibility analysis of concepts:
 - Conduct outreach with potential stakeholders
 - Consider pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access for Difficult Run Trail
 - Examine potential environmental compliance measures
 - Evaluate cost and constructability
 - Outline steps for implementation
 - Provide summary of findings and conclusions

CURRENT STUDY | Objectives

- Study will also address the National Park Service Centennial goal of “Connecting People to Parks”
 - Footpath would link to larger network of trails known as the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
 - PHNST:
 - Connects the Potomac River at the Chesapeake Bay to the Alleghany Highlands in Western Pennsylvania
 - Incorporates both existing and planned trails managed by federal, state, local, and nonprofit entities
 - Georgetown Pike Footpath would help to close the gap between Great Falls Park and Scotts Run Nature Preserve

CURRENT STUDY | Schedule

2018

April	Planning Workshop #1 / Field Investigation
May	Initial layout of concepts
Early June	Planning Workshop #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review field investigation findings- Discuss initial concepts
June/July	Design of concepts
August/September	Workshop #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review refined concepts- Discuss draft recommendations
November	Finalize conceptual design/feasibility report

DISCUSSION | Issues Present

- High traffic volumes on Georgetown Pike

Route No.	Route Name	From	To	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)	Average Annual Weekday Daily Traffic (AAWDT)
193	Georgetown Pike	Rt 683 Leigh Mill Rd	Rt 676 Towlston Rd	16,000	17,000
193	Georgetown Pike	Rt 676 Towlston Rd	Urban Boundary	15,000	17,000
676	Towlston Road	Rt 738 Old Dominion Dr	Rt 193 Georgetown Pike	650	700

Source: 2016 VDOT Daily Traffic Volume Estimates

http://www.virginiadot.org/info/2016_traffic_data_by_jurisdiction.asp

DISCUSSION | Issues Present

- Pedestrian access to the planned trail location confined to narrow shoulder of Georgetown Pike bridge over Difficult Run



View: South of Georgetown Pike Bridge, Looking north on shoulder



View: South of Georgetown Pike Bridge, Looking north on centerline

DISCUSSION | Issues Present

- *Let's discuss...*
 - Why the missing gap?
 - What facilities are we connecting?
 - Why is Towlston Road the connection point?
 - How does this project fit into network connectivity?
 - What is the regional context? ...local context?
 - What conclusions were drawn from previous structural studies?
 - What groups will use this connection?
 - Who else should we reach out to?
 - Challenges in moving ahead with implementation?

DISCUSSION | Base Map Exercise

- *Let's draw!*
 - What past hikes were completed?
 - What constraints were found during those hikes?
 - What opportunities do we have for connections?
 - In an ideal world where would the trail connection occur?
 - How would the trail function?
 - What would the trail look like?
 - What would the pedestrian bridge look like?

NEXT STEPS

- *Site visit today for those who can join us*
- Field investigation and report—will make use information gathered today
- Desktop environmental investigation
- Initial concept development
- Additional outreach with stakeholder assistance
- Planning Workshop #2 in early June



THANK YOU !



Federal Highway Administration
Task Order – DTFH7113D000003L/693C7318F000019

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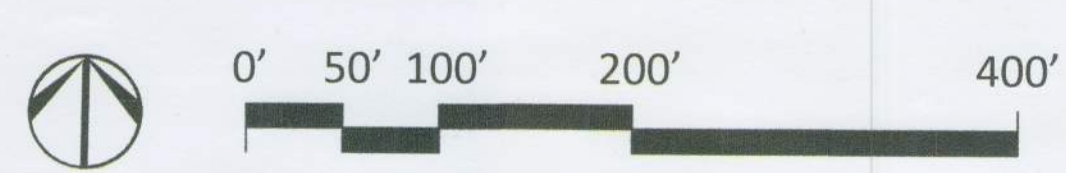




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|-------------------|--------------|--|---------------------------|-----------|
| 10ft Contours | Right-of-Way | Floodplain | Conservation Easement | Buildings |
| Non-County Trails | Parcels | Stormwater Management Easement | Ingress Egress Easement | Pavement |
| County Trails | Water | Floodplain and Storm Drainage Easement | Great Falls National Park | |

GEORGETOWN PIKE FOOTPATH

Fairfax County, VA



BASEMAP
April 2018
SCALE: 1" = 100' - 0"

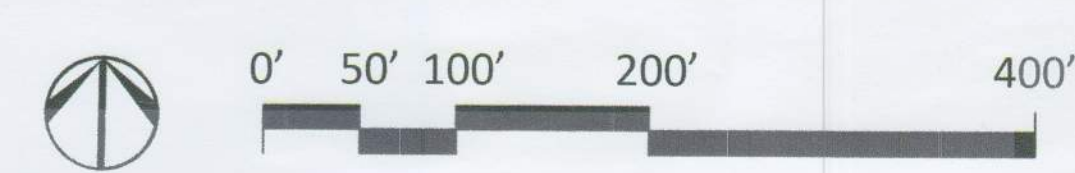




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GEORGETOWN PIKE FOOTPATH

Fairfax County, VA



BASEMAP
April 2018
SCALE: 1" = 100' - 0"

