

City of Falls Church
Planning Commission

Meeting Date: 7-1-19	Title: 30 % Concept Design Plans for the W&OD Dual Trails Project, Preliminary Discussion	Agenda No.: 9D.
Proposed Motion: None. Discussion Only.		
Originating Dept. Head: Gary Fuller , AICP, Acting Planning Director 703-248-5041 GHF 06-25-2019		Report Prepared By: Jeff Hollern, Planner 571-395-0707 JH 06-26-2019

REQUEST:

The Planning Commission is requested to hold a work session to discuss the 30% concept plans for the W&OD Dual Trail project. The applicant submitted the attached preliminary materials on June 17th, 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

Pending - Staff is currently reviewing the submitted concept materials and site plans.

APPLICATION:

The preliminary development proposal seeks to construct parallel trails along the Falls Church portion of the W&OD Trail (approximately 691,297 SQ. FT) which include a shared-use trail and a pedestrian trail. The proposed project includes the following site plan application:

1. **Site Plan** – as required and provided for in Article V, Division 7 of the Zoning Code, to redevelop a city-owned public park and to disturb more than 2,500 square feet of land.

Project Description:

The main deliverable in the project is replacement of the existing 10-foot wide shared-use trail with an 11-foot wide bicycle trail and an 8-foot wide pedestrian trail between Broad Street and Little Falls Street. In addition, curb ramps will be updated as needed and the existing wood-deck bridge over Four Mile Run will be evaluated for replacement or expansion. The project is expected to be under construction by late 2019 with construction completed by late 2020.

At the time of this report, no formal site plan application has been submitted; therefore no modifications to the code have been identified. Any modifications would be considered at site plan. The submitted materials consist of 30% Design Plans which allow Staff and the Planning Commission to get an overview of the project at an earlier stage before it is formally submitted.

BACKGROUND:

The W&OD Trail

The Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) (which includes the W&OD Trail) stretches from Shirlington in Arlington County to the Town of Purcellville in Loudoun County. The park has a typical width of 100 feet, contains more than 533 acres and stretches a

39 distance of 44 miles. The portion of the park within the City measures 16 acres, making it the
40 second largest park space in the City behind the playing fields at George Mason High School and
41 Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School.

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43 The W&OD Railroad Regional Park, and the W&OD Trail serve several purposes, including:

- 44 • Recreation and Exercise – place to bike, jog, walk, play
- 45 • Transportation – connection to regional activity centers, transit facilities (including the
46 East Falls Church Metro Station), and other bike trails
- 47 • Environment – tree canopy, open space, wildlife habitat, gardens, water quality (wetland
48 along Four Mile Run)
- 49 • Economic Development – the W&OD Trail provides access to the City’s commercial
50 districts; additional wayfinding information could direct trail users to City businesses

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52 **W&OD Master Plan:**

53 In 2016, the City Adopted a Master Plan for the W&OD, 24 titled W&OD Park Master Plan: The
54 City’s Greenest Street (<http://www.fallschurchva.gov/WODMasterPlan>). The Master Plan
55 envisions the W&OD as a grand, 16 acre park space within the City. To achieve that vision, the
56 plan calls for five investments:

- 57 1. Separated walking and biking trails
- 58 2. Improved crossings at street intersections
- 59 3. Plazas / resting spaces that tell the history of the W&OD
- 60 4. Restored, native landscaping
- 61 5. Lighting

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63 **Multimodal Safety Improvements**

64 The city is a Regional Activity Center and is working to increase multimodal options to keep up
65 with regional travel demand. This project will increase usage of the W&OD and increase
66 patronage at nearby commercial uses and employment destinations. However, as pedestrians
67 experience the trail currently, there are frequent conflicts with bicyclists which lead to a
68 diminished experience for pedestrians. These conflicts may result in avoidance of the trail by
69 users who do not feel safe, which will worsen as volumes increase. The parallel trails will
70 provide greater capacity and encourage bicyclists and pedestrians who may avoid the facility due
71 to overcrowding.

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73 **Coordinated Implementation**

74 City staff and NVRPA are working jointly to implement the City’s W&OD Master Plan. Current
75 implementation efforts include updating all six trail/street crossings and replacing the existing
76 dual-use trail with separate walking and biking trails. Four of the trail/street crossings are being
77 updated by city staff with funding from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The
78 remaining two trail/street crossings will be updated as part of the Founders Row project at the
79 developer’s expense. The separate walking and biking trails are being implemented by NVRPA,
80 with substantial funding from the NVTA (see below).

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82 **FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

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- 84 **TIMING:**
- 85 • June 17, 2019 30% Design Plans Received
 - 86 • **July 1, 2019 Planning Commission Work Session**
 - 87 • TBD Planning Commission Action
 - 88 • Late 2019 Begin Construction
 - 89 • Late 2020 Finish Construction

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93 **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

- 94 1. Future Land Use and Official Zoning Map
- 95 2. 30% Concept Plans Draft
- 96 3. W&OD Dual Trails Presentation
- 97 4. W&OD Dual Trails Overview Map
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