

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY
TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
FALL 2007 (written by Jenny Pate, Trail Coordinator)

Purpose:

To interpret and implement the Countywide Trail Plan on FCPA land and within stream valley land, and to plan and review all trail improvements to be built for the FCPA through the land development process.

PLAN REVIEW

To review all proposed trail development on parkland, connecting to parkland, or on land with the potential to be dedicated as parkland, in order to implement the Countywide Trail Plan, to ensure appropriate access opportunities and connectivity of trails to parks, and for coordination of trail improvements with other existing and proposed site development.

- Coordinate plan review with Planning and Development Planning Branch (PDPB) Assigned Planner
- Receive plan, review previous staff notes, comments, etc., if any
- Review countywide trail plan requirements for land within proposed development
- Review proposed development in context of existing trails in nearby vicinity, looking for potential connections from or to parkland or other trails
- Visit site if trail is proposed or will be requested and no previous visit has been made
- Check field information against plan for errors or necessary changes
- Evaluate trail location, design, and construction based on the following factors:
 - Minimal disturbance to parkland and other valuable natural resources
 - Low long-term maintenance cost (trail slopes, side slopes, surfacing material, etc.)
 - Ease of maintenance access (direct access, easement, steps, etc.)
 - Implementation of countywide trail plan, including completion of missing connections
 - Appropriate trail surface based on surrounding and existing facilities and predicted uses
 - Access for persons with disabilities if possible
 - Compliance with adopted Master Plan or GMP/CDP (if applicable)
 - Compliance with PFM
 - Reasonable cost to developer

- Discuss plan comments with PDPB Assigned Planner, outlining requirements and writing or editing staff comment memo text if necessary
- Review final text of staff comment memo before it is sent outside of agency
- If trail will be required on development plan, record development in Trail Coordinator's map book in red shading - add plan number and name, date, requirements, etc.
- File copy of memo and any plans and notes in Trail Coordinator's files - project file (if requesting major park trails) or in district file (if there is minimal trail development)

Sample Report Language: The applicant has proposed a four-foot wide asphalt trail on their Development Plan to provide access from the site to adjacent Nottoway Park. As currently proposed, the trail will serve this small development and not the larger community. Currently, there is no trail connection between Sutton Road and Nottoway Park.

To provide community access to the park the Park Authority recommends that the applicant provide a public access trail from the proposed sidewalk along Sutton Road to Nottoway Park. The applicant should construct the six foot asphalt trail (Type I) within a 20 foot wide public-access trail easement. This proposed town home development should connect to the public access trail.

The exact location of the trail connection to the park will be determined by the Park Authority Trail Coordinator. The applicant should dedicate the trail and easement to the Park Authority. Please have the applicant contact the Trail Coordinator to schedule a site visit regarding the trail location prior to the start of construction.

FIELD INSPECTION

To inspect trail facilities prior to start of construction, under construction if needed, and at completion for compliance with approved plans and accepted standards. Include Park Operations staff in final inspection meeting, at other meetings if appropriate.

- Receive request for field inspection from developer, inspector, engineer
- Schedule field meeting, include appropriate staff from Park Operations and Resource Management Divisions if needed
- Review any previous notes and plan
- Initial field meeting is held to agree on field alignment for trail, as well as to:
 - Approve limits of clearing and grading (should be flagged prior to meeting)
 - Resolve discrepancies or disputes
 - Establish contact persons
 - Agree on revisions to trail layout or construction
 - Flag stream crossing locations and identify stream crossing type

- Meeting(s) during construction shall be held at either Trail Coordinator's request or at the request of the Developer or Site Inspector to settle questions/problems
- Following notification from site inspector or developer, schedule substantial completion meeting to approve and accept the completed trail or to assist in preparing a punch list for acceptance of the trail facility. Park Operations staff must be present at field meeting.
- If needed, follow-up inspection shall be performed by Park Operations staff to insure that trail facility has been completed to all standards
- After trail is completed to the satisfaction of Park Authority, trail coordinator shall write and send memo to site inspector or developer (depending on who set up final meeting), detailing FCPA acceptance
- Acceptance memo shall include width, surface type and total approximate linear feet of the new trail, a map of the location of the trail, and shall be copied to:
 - Park Authority Board Member from district
 - Park Authority Director and Deputy Director
 - Park Operations Division Director and Management Branch Supervisor
 - Park Operations Area Manager
 - Planning and Development Division Director
 - Branch Manager of trails section
 - Trail Program Manager
- File copy of acceptance memo and any plans and notes in Trail Coordinator's files - project file (if requesting major park trails) or in district file (if there is minimal trail development). Record completed trail in "Accepted Trail Sections" log and in Trail Coordinator's map book.
- Notify manager of Park Authority GIS trail database so that new trail can be mapped and added to the GIS layer.

TRAIL WAIVER REQUESTS

To review trail waiver requests as they apply to the stream valley trail system and other trails in potential parkland in the county. The goal of the Countywide Trail Plan is connectivity of trails; trails should only be recommended for waiver under very limited conditions. A waiver may be recommended for approval if:

- Trail would dead-end into private residential property (this is applicable for very short sections of trail only) – escrow and easement should be provided for future construction
- No construction, maintenance, or trail-use access is currently possible (very steep slopes, other prohibiting conditions) – escrow and easement should be provided for future construction

- The only possible location for trail construction is within delineated wetlands or extremely wet flood plain – trail may be recommended to be modified or waived
- Trail would dead end at major highway with little likelihood for crossing (and with no existing or likely future connection at opposite end of proposed trail) – trail may be recommend to be waived
- Another preferable alternative exists for trail connection (for example: a reroute will provide a connection that the planned trail will not; a necessary stream crossing can be provided instead of the proposed trail, making a better connection; a different route can circumvent a dead-end). This trail may be recommended for a waiver under the condition that the alternative be built instead. This interpretation of the countywide trail plan should be done in consultation with district trail committee rep, other trail staff (county trail planner, pedestrian coordinator, bike planner, etc.).