



# Beaches-to-Bluegrass

TRAIL MASTER PLAN

Prepared for



Prepared by



January 2015

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# Definitions

**Shared Use Path:** Multi-use path designed primarily for use by bicyclists and pedestrians, including pedestrians with disabilities, for transportation and recreation purposes. Shared use paths are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier, and are either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. (U.S. Access Board)

**Trail:** The treadway and shoulders of a cleared or improved path (2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan). Trail design will vary with the primary user group--if a trail is designed to serve pedestrians, federal guidelines for outdoor developed areas apply.

**Accessible Route:** For paths that connect accessible facilities, more stringent guidelines apply. A review of the definitions and technical requirements for each type of route is available at: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/a-summary-of-accessibility-standards-for-federal-outdoor-developed-areas/appendixes>

**Trailhead:** According to the U.S. Access Board, a trail head is an outdoor space that is designated by an entity responsible for administering or maintaining a trail to serve as an access point to the trail. To meet federal guidelines for outdoor developed areas, trailhead information signs should include

- Length of the trail or trail segment
- Type of trail surface
- Typical and minimum trail tread width
- Typical and maximum trail grade
- Typical and maximum trail cross slope

# Acknowledgements

## Lead Agencies

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT)  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (VDCR)

## Project Stakeholders

### LOCAL

CITY OF BRISTOL  
CITY OF CHESAPEAKE  
CITY OF DANVILLE  
CITY OF EMPORIA  
CITY OF FRANKLIN  
CITY OF GALAX  
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE  
CITY OF NORFOLK  
CITY OF NORTON  
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH  
CITY OF RADFORD  
CITY OF SUFFOLK  
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH  
TOWN OF ABINGDON  
TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP  
TOWN OF BOYDTON  
TOWN OF BOYKINS  
TOWN OF BRODNAX  
TOWN OF CLARKSVILLE  
TOWN OF CUMBERLAND GAP, TN  
TOWN OF DAMASCUS  
TOWN OF DUBLIN  
TOWN OF DUFFIELD  
TOWN OF DUNGANNON  
TOWN OF JARRATT  
TOWN OF LA CROSSE  
TOWN OF LAWRENCEVILLE  
TOWN OF PENNINGTON GAP  
TOWN OF PULASKI  
TOWN OF SCOTTSBURG  
TOWN OF SOUTH BOSTON

TOWN OF SOUTH HILL  
TOWN OF STUART  
TOWN OF TROUTDALE

### COUNTY

BRUNSWICK COUNTY  
CARROLL COUNTY  
FLOYD COUNTY  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
GRAYSON COUNTY  
GREENSVILLE COUNTY  
HALIFAX COUNTY  
HENRY COUNTY  
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY  
LEE COUNTY  
MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PATRICK COUNTY  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY  
PULASKI COUNTY  
RUSSELL COUNTY  
SCOTT COUNTY  
SMYTH COUNTY  
SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY  
SUSSEX COUNTY  
WASHINGTON COUNTY  
WISE COUNTY  
WYTHE COUNTY

### PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSIONS

CRATER  
CUMBERLAND PLATEAU  
HAMPTON ROADS  
LENOWISCO  
MOUNT ROGERS  
NEW RIVER VALLEY  
SOUTHSIDE  
WEST PIEDMONT

## STATE

VIRGINIA STATE PARKS DISTRICT 1, 5 AND 6  
FIRST LANDING STATE PARK  
FAIRY STONE STATE PARK  
OCCONEECHEE STATE PARK  
NEW RIVER TRAIL STATE PARK  
NATURAL TUNNEL STATE PARK  
STAUNTON RIVER STATE PARK  
WILDERNESS ROAD STATE PARK  
VA DEPT. OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES  
VA DEPT. OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEV.  
VIRGINIA TOURISM  
SPEARHEAD TRAILS (SOUTHWEST REGION RECREATION AUTHORITY)

## NATIONAL/REGIONAL

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, CLINCH AND MT. ROGERS DISTRICTS  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK  
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY  
USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

ACTIVATE MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY  
BIKE NORFOLK  
BLUE RIDGE BICYCLE CLUB  
BLUE RIDGE LAND CONSERVANCY  
BOY SCOUTS (BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS COUNCIL)  
BOY SCOUTS (COLONIAL VIRGINIA COUNCIL)  
BOY SCOUTS (HEART OF VIRGINIA COUNCIL)  
BOY SCOUTS (SEQUOYHA AND JOHNSON CITY COUNCILS)  
BOY SCOUTS (TIDEWATER COUNCIL)  
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF EMPORIA/GREENSVILLE  
CLINCH COALITION AND CLINCH RIVER INITIATIVE  
CROOKED ROAD HERITAGE MUSIC TRAIL  
CYCLISTS OF DANVILLE  
DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION  
EASTERN VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION  
ELIZABETH RIVER TRAIL COMMITTEE  
EMPORIA-GREENSVILLE RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
FAMILY YMCA OF EMPORIA/GREENSVILLE

FRIENDS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA  
HEALTHY APPALACHIA INSTITUTE  
HENRY COUNTY BIKE CLUB  
NEW RIVER VALLEY SIERRA CLUB  
IRON MOUNTAIN BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF VIRGINIA/  
IRON MOUNTAIN TRAIL RIDERS  
JARRATT RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
LONESOME PINE DISTRICT  
MASTER NATURALISTS-HISTORIC SOUTHSIDE CHAPTER  
MASTER NATURALISTS-HOLSTON RIVER CHAPTER  
MASTER NATURALISTS-SOUTHWESTERN PIEDMONT CHAPTER  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE NEW RIVER  
NEW RIVER LAND TRUST  
NEW RIVER VALLEY BICYCLE ASSOCIATION  
OLD DOMINION RESOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
PARTNERSHIP FOR FLOYD  
PENINSULA BICYCLING ASSOCIATION  
PINE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE  
RADFORD UNIVERSITY  
ROANOKE RIVER RAILS TO TRAILS  
ROUND THE MOUNTAIN ARTISAN NETWORK  
SELU CONSERVANCY  
SORBA TRI-CITIES  
SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF TRAIL RIDERS  
SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN GREENWAYS ALLIANCE  
SOUTHERN VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION  
SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA HORSE COUNCIL  
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL RECREATION AUTHORITY  
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CULTURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CYCLISTS  
THE HARVEST FOUNDATION  
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
TIDEWATER BICYCLE ASSOCIATION  
TIDEWATER HORSE COUNCIL  
VIRGINIA BICYCLING FEDERATION  
VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL CLUB

## Consultant Team

HNTB  
ALTA PLANNING + DESIGN

# Beaches-to-Bluegrass

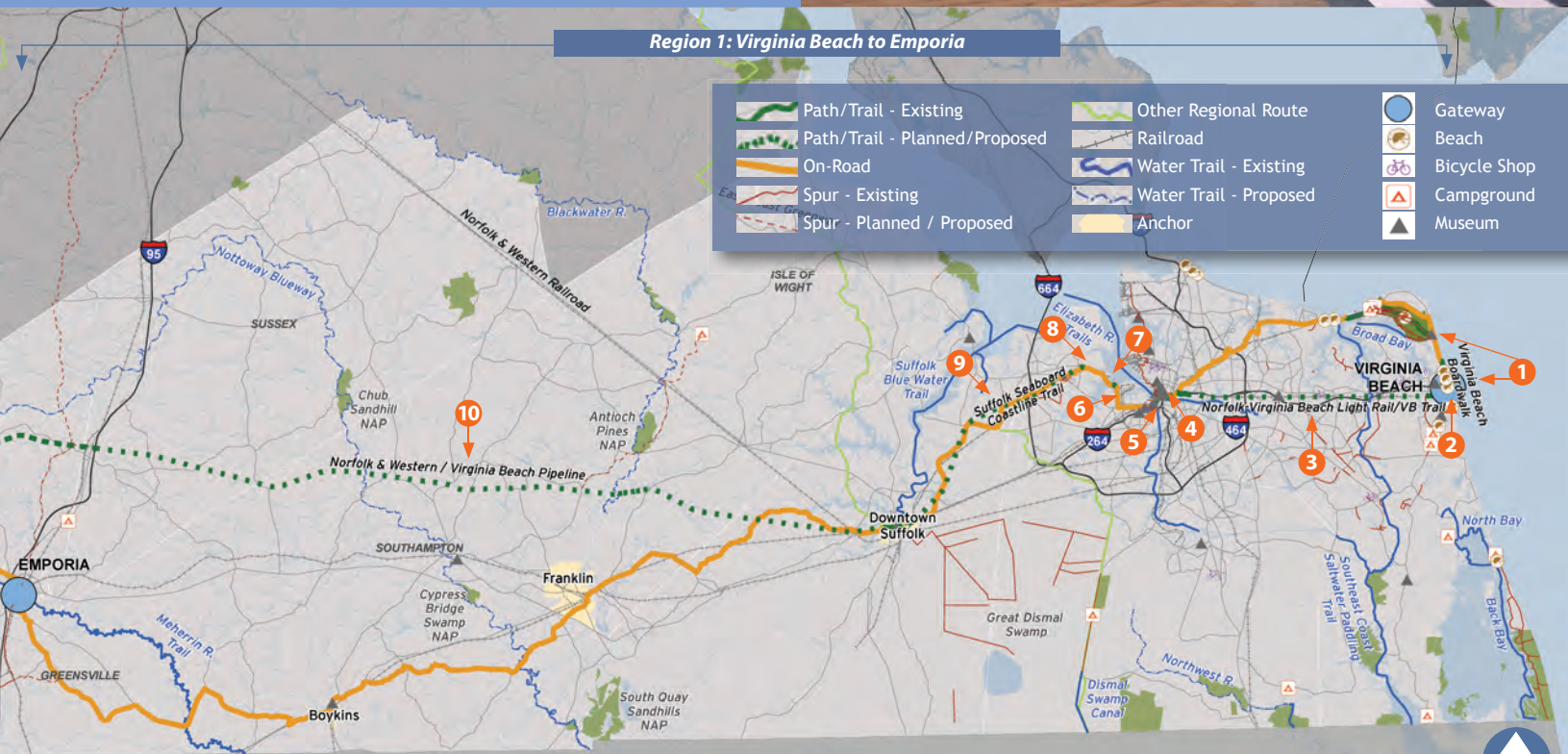
## TRAIL MASTER PLAN

# Executive Summary

**Vision ....This statewide shared-use path and multi-use trail connects communities between the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and Cumberland Gap, providing residents and visitors in southern Virginia with increased opportunities for walking, bicycling, and horseback riding.**



### Region 1: Virginia Beach to Emporia



20 MILES



## Project Background

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept first appeared in the 1979 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* as the 'Trans-Virginia Trail' and the 'Southside Virginia Trail'. Initial planning was spurred by needs surfacing across the corridor: demand for more non-motorized connections to destinations, a lack of recreational amenities in rural areas, and a loss of industry leaving many out of work. The concurrent abandonment of significant stretches of railroad corridor provided the opportunity to encourage trail development and ecotourism to begin to address these needs. Various entities worked independently to plan and complete sections of trail, such as the popular Virginia Creeper Trail and New River Trail State Park. This plan recommends a route that connects completed trails, documents the level of support for those routes, and sets a framework for the completion of trail projects throughout the corridor at the regional and local level.

## Plan Goals

- 1 Establish a coalition of regional stakeholders and advocates** to develop, promote and manage a connected, sustainable trail system across the southern length of Virginia. Use these partnerships to leverage and pursue funding to construct sections of trail and plan for closing the gaps.
- 2 Map a route that links existing trails** to form a long-distance network across the length of southern Virginia. For gap areas, provide a connected off-road corridor for hikers, equestrians and bicyclists; braided trail segments and road routes may be utilized for interim and alternate connections.
- 3 Provide consistency along the route** through design standards and encourage future branding and universal development and management guidelines.
- 4 Support the development of infrastructure to provide essential services** at reasonable intervals through cooperative efforts and promote trail towns, places and organizations that serve trail users.
- 5 Provide baseline conditions that can be used to measure performance and return on investment** and encourage land managers to track trail usage, volunteer hours and miles of trail development each year.

## Plan Development

Key tasks that guided development of the plan included:

- » Collecting data on existing trails related to their location, length, principal and restricted uses, terrain, vegetation, unique features, estimated visitation, and management framework.
- » Collecting input from stakeholders through webinars, email, and targeted outreach.
- » Conducting on-the-ground reviews of existing and proposed corridors, with a focus on potential alignments.
- » Analyzing heat maps that depict routes currently used by cyclists.
- » Inventorying tourism-related amenities along the route, including beaches, water trails, campgrounds, museums, artisan venues, bluegrass venues, and stops along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail.

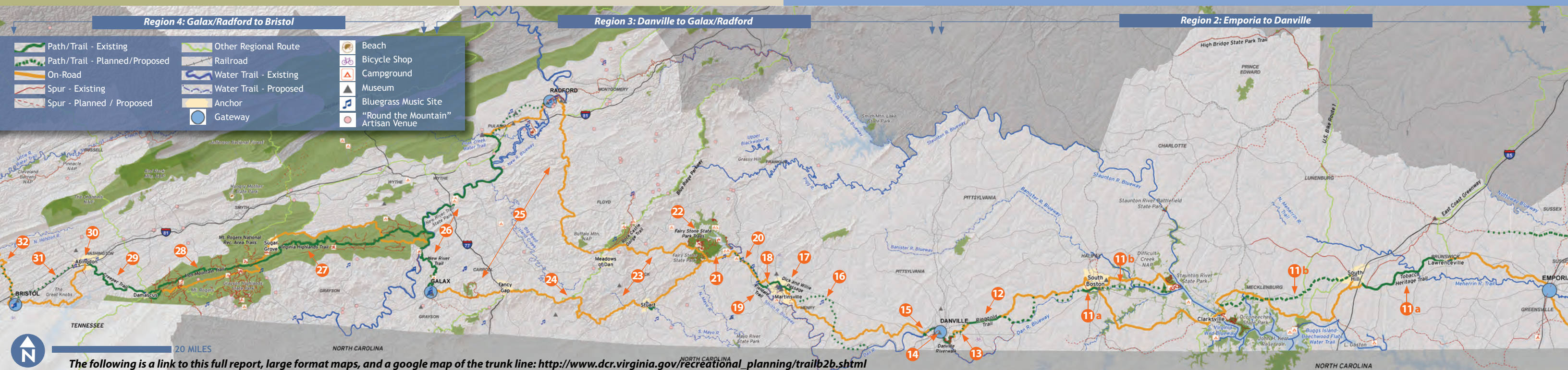
## The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail System

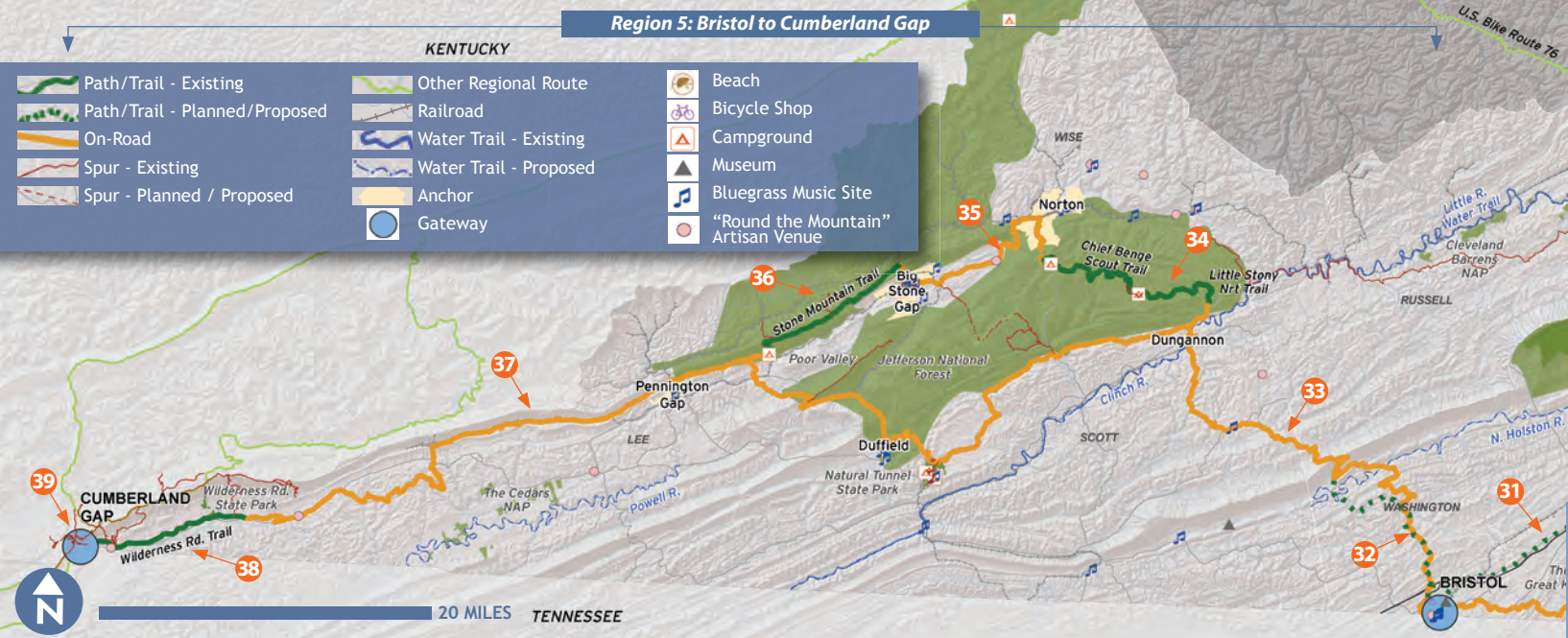
This Plan recommends an ideal off-road alignment (long-term goal) as well as an interim on-road route. The interim trail is a braided system intended for both transportation and recreation by non-motorized users, principally walkers, joggers, hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. The ideal route (long-term goal) is to provide a shared-use path and multi-use trail along the entire corridor, from the Virginia Beach Oceanfront to Cumberland Gap. Until the ideal, long-term shared-use path and multi use trail is completed, the route will split to accommodate different uses. Subsequent planning will address gaps in the trail and potential trail extensions. Below is a list of the existing, planned, and gap (corridor study needed) sections of the long-term route, from east to west, with numbers corresponding to the maps on each page of this executive summary.

Existing trails are listed in **bold** and asterisks (\*) denote trails that currently accommodate horseback riding. (+) Denotes seasonal motorized use

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Virginia Beach Boardwalk (2.7 mi.) &amp; Cape Henry Trail (6.1 mi.)</b> | 20. Smith River Trail (8 mi.)*   |
| <b>2. Norfolk Avenue Trail (1.4 mi.)</b>                                      | 21. Philpott Lake Recreation Area to Fairy Stone State Park (6 mi. gap)            |
| 3. Norfolk-Virginia Beach Transit Corridor (11 mi.; 4.1 mi. gap)              | <b>22. Fairy Stone State Park Trails (2 mi.)*</b>                                  |
| <b>4. Elizabeth River Trail (1.5 mi.)</b>                                     | 23. Fairy Stone State Park to the Blue Ridge Mountains (17 mi. gap)                |
| <b>5. Elizabeth River Ferry (0.5 mi.)</b>                                     | 24. Blue Ridge Parkway (alternative route)   |
| <b>6. Mount Vernon Avenue Bicycle Lanes (1 mi.)</b>                           | 25. Blue Ridge Parkway to Galax/Radford (9 mi. gap)                                |
| <b>7. West Norfolk Bridge (0.5 mi.)</b>                                       | <b>26. New River Trail (51.5 mi.)*</b>   |
| 8. Commonwealth Railway Trail (5 mi.)   | <b>27. Virginia Highlands Horse Trail (50 mi.)*+</b>                               |
| 9. Seaboard Coastline Trail (10.5 mi.; <b>1.25 existing</b> )*                | <b>28. Iron Mountain Trail (16 mi.)*+</b>  |
| 10. Virginia Beach Pipeline/Norfolk and Western Railroad (51 mi.)*            | <b>29. Virginia Creeper Trail (19.5 mi.)*</b>                                      |
| <b>11a. Tobacco Heritage Trail (19 mi.)*</b>                                  | 30. Abingdon Urban Path (1.5 mi.)  |
| 11b. Tobacco Heritage Trail (88 mi.; 16 mi. gap)*                             | 31. Abingdon to Bristol (16 mi.; 3 mi. gap)  |
| <b>12. Ringgold Trail (6 mi.)*</b>  | 32. Mendota Trail (14 mi.)*  |
| 13. Ringgold to the Danville Riverwalk (5 mi.)                                | 33. Mendota to George Washington and Jefferson (GWJ) National Forest (22 mi. gap)  |
| <b>14. Danville Riverwalk (7 mi.)</b>   | <b>34. GWJ National Forest Trails toward Big Stone Gap or Dryden (18.7 mi.)*</b>   |
| 15. Danville Riverwalk (3 mi.)  | 35. Big Stone Gap to the Stone Mountain Trail (12 mi. gap)                         |
| 16. Danville to Martinsville (40 mi. gap)                                     | <b>36. Stone Mountain Trail - GWJ National Forest (14.32 mi.)*</b>                 |
| <b>17. Dick and Willie Passage (4.5 mi.)</b>                                  | 37. Stone Mountain Trail to the Wilderness Road Trail (42 mi. gap)                 |
| 18. Dick and Willie Passage Extension (1 mi.)                                 | <b>38. Wilderness Road Trail to Cumberland Gap National Historic Park (8 mi.)*</b> |
| <b>19. Fieldale Trail (2.6mi.)*</b>   | <b>39. Cumberland Gap National Historic Park Trails (3 mi.)*</b>                   |

Trail lengths reflect Beaches to Bluegrass portion





### Trail Characteristics

- » Multiple uses, multiple surfaces
- » Suitable for out-of-state tourists
- » Easy to navigate
- » Safe, year-round attraction
- » Each region stands on its own and begins and ends in a state park or gateway city

### Trail Regions

1. Virginia Beach to Emporia
2. Emporia to Danville
3. Danville to Galax/Radford
4. Galax/Radford to Bristol
5. Bristol to Cumberland Gap

### Gateways & Anchors

Since one goal is to promote trail towns and places that serve trail users, "gateways" have been identified along the corridor to provide long-term parking and orientation kiosks at trailheads. "Anchors" are places between the gateways that will provide food, lodging and other amenities for trail users at reasonable intervals. Seven state parks and other public lands along the corridor also provide services for trail users.

#### Gateways

- » Virginia Beach
- » Emporia
- » Danville
- » Radford
- » Galax
- » Bristol
- » Cumberland Gap (TN)

#### Anchors

- » Abingdon
- » Big Stone Gap
- » Boykins
- » Clarksville
- » Damascus
- » Downtown Suffolk
- » Duffield
- » Dungannon
- » Fancy Gap
- » Franklin

- » Lawrenceville
- » Martinsville
- » Meadows of Dan
- » Norfolk-Portsmouth waterfronts
- » Norton
- » Pennington Gap
- » South Boston
- » South Hill
- » Stuart
- » Sugar Grove



The Beaches to Bluegrass Master Trail Plan was developed in 2013 and 2014 through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Statewide Trails Program and the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Transportation and Mobility Planning Division's Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. HNTB and Alta Planning + Design were contracted by VDOT to develop the trail master plan in cooperation with DCR. Cover photo and top photo above are from the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau; middle photo from Virginia.org; bottom photo from Alta Planning + Design.





# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Purpose

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail was first envisioned in the late 1970s. The corridor is one of five proposed trunk line trails included in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*. When complete, the trail will stretch over 600 miles across the southern part of the Commonwealth connecting Virginia Beach to Cumberland Gap. The trail is envisioned as a separated facility serving pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists and equestrians that can also provide infrastructure for special events and emergencies. Efforts in this plan build on more than 30 years of investment, collaboration and advocacy for the trail. Opportunities to emphasize economic, social and physical benefits of paths/trails are included as well as design guidelines for shared-use paths and multi-use trails. Shared-use paths are generally paved or crushed stone 10 ft. wide facilities that meet specific accessibility guidelines. The term multi-use trail is used to describe doubletrack and singletrack trails that may not be suitable for road bicycles. This plan also identifies key stakeholders who may be willing to take part in the implementation, management and operation of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as it evolves.

## History

One of the earliest references to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is in the 1979 Virginia Outdoors Plan, where it is referred to as the Southside Virginia Trail. The Southside Virginia Trail was referred to as the Trans Virginia Southern Trail in subsequent updates of the Virginia Outdoors Plan. The Beaches to Bluegrass name was conceived in 2008 when tourism officials involved with the trail heard of a book, *Beach to Bluegrass: Places to Brake on Virginia's Longest Road*, a collection of stories along the U.S. 58 corridor by author Joe Tennis. They thought the name – coined by Richard Tennis, the author's father – better captured the concept of a statewide trail. With the author's permission, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is the official title in the 2013 update of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*.

Since the trail was first envisioned, localities and advocates along the corridor have worked to make the trail a reality. Many trails have been constructed and planned within the corridor and one of the purposes of this plan is to identify which segments can become part of the final alignment.

## Vision and Goals

### Vision

This statewide, shared-use path and multi-use trail connects communities between the Chesapeake Bay and Cumberland Gap-- providing residents and visitors in southern Virginia with increased opportunities for walking, biking and horseback riding.

### Plan Goals

1. Encourage a formation of a coalition of regional stakeholders and advocates to develop, promote and manage a connected, sustainable trail system across the southern length of Virginia. These partnerships can leverage and pursue funding to construct sections of trail and plan for closing the gaps.
2. Map a route that links existing trails to form a long-distance network across the length of southern Virginia. For gap areas, provide a connected off-road corridor for hikers, joggers, equestrians and bicyclists; braided trail segments and road routes may be utilized for interim connections.
3. Provide consistency along the route through design standards and encourage future branding and universal development and management guidelines.
4. Support the development of infrastructure to provide essential services at reasonable intervals through cooperative efforts and promote trail towns, places and organizations that serve trail users.
5. Provide baseline conditions that can be used to measure performance and encourage land managers to track trail usage, volunteer hours and miles of trail development each year.

### Trail Characteristics

1. Multiple use, multiple surfaces
2. Suitable for out-of-state tourists
3. Easy to navigate
4. Safe, year-round attraction
5. Each region stands on its own and begins and ends in a state park or gateway city

## Context

The alignment utilizes former railroad corridors through southern Virginia because so many abandoned lines follow an east/west course and provide reasonable grades and remaining base course materials for trail development. The proposed corridor passes through large expanses of undeveloped, rural land, so there is more opportunity to complete a connected, off-road, shared-use path and multi-use trail system along this corridor than along any other statewide trail. For this amazing opportunity to be realized, regional stakeholders and advocates must join together in a coalition to pursue the next steps. This plan provides information that can serve as a starting point for future implementation discussions.

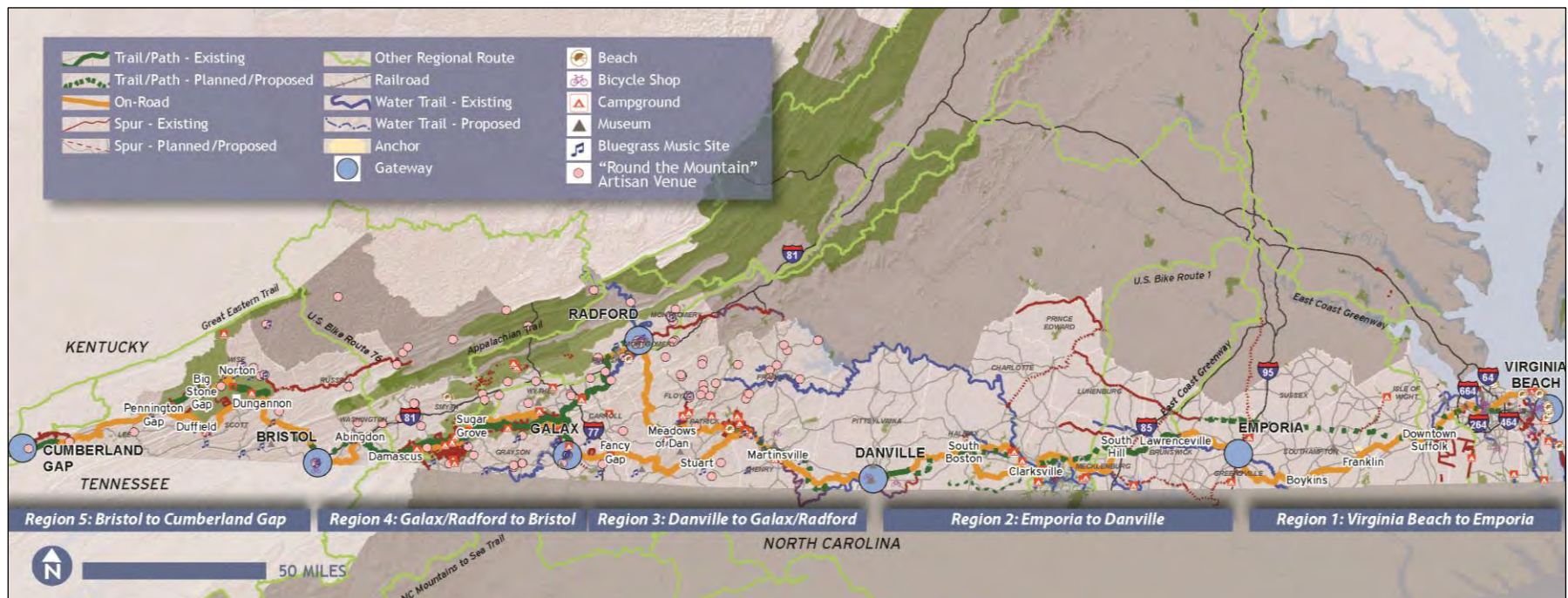
## Five Regions

The trail is divided into five segments:

- **Region One** connects Virginia Beach/First Landing State Park to Emporia and the I-95 corridor, linking urban areas along the ocean and the Bay to farms and forests in Tidewater.

- **Region Two** stretches from Emporia (I-95) to Danville, linking farming communities with historic towns, lakes and rivers in the southern Piedmont.
- **Region Three** travels from Danville to Radford (northern route) and Galax (southern route), linking old industrial towns to spectacular scenery in the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- **Region Four** extends from Galax and Radford to Bristol, linking the New River Valley to the Birthplace of Country Music through the Mount Rogers Recreation Area.
- **Region Five** extends from Bristol to Cumberland Gap, linking the Holston and Clinch River valleys to Wilderness Road through the Clinch Ranger District of the National Forest.

Within the five major segments, shorter segments are supported by local governments, trail clubs and other advocates. Seven gateway cities (mapped below) will provide orientation, long-term parking and services to trail users. Partnerships will evolve to accomplish the work of promoting, funding, designing, developing, operating and maintaining the trail.



# Chapter 2: Benefits

## Overview

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will help improve the health and fitness of residents, enhance local transportation options in cities and towns, increase bicycle and pedestrian safety, stimulate the local economy and contribute to a greater sense of community.

Southern Virginia is home to some of the highest unemployment and obesity rates in the state. The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail can be a strong influence in improving the region's health and economy.

This chapter describes the many benefits of projects that support active transportation and recreation.

## Health and Physical Activity

The design of our communities affects our ability to reach the recommended 30 minutes per day of moderately intense physical activity (60 minutes for youth). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "physical inactivity causes numerous physical and mental health problems, is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths per year and contributes to the obesity epidemic."<sup>1</sup> The increased rate of disease associated with inactivity reduces quality of life for individuals and increases medical costs for families, companies and local governments. According to the CDC Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System, more than half of Virginia adult residents (61.2 percent)<sup>2</sup> are overweight or obese and 47.5 percent of the adult population is physically inactive.<sup>3</sup>

The CDC has determined that creating and improving places to be active could result in a 25 percent increase in the number of people who exercise at least three times a week.<sup>4</sup> This is significant considering that for people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity can bring measurable health benefits. Establishing a safe and reliable trail across the state of Virginia will positively impact the health of local residents and

visitors. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy puts it simply: "Individuals must choose to exercise, but communities can make that choice easier."<sup>5</sup>

The construction of a trail will connect communities across Virginia and expand convenient recreation and exercise options. These connections also make it possible to take short trips without needing to get in the car, thereby incorporating physical activity into daily life, especially in urban and small town centers along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

Regular physical activity such as bicycling and walking:

- Reduces the risk and impact of cardiovascular disease and diabetes
- Reduces the risk of some types of cancer
- Controls weight
- Improves mood
- Reduces the risk of premature death

The CDC reports that 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise is equivalent to:

- 1.5 miles of walking; or
- 5 miles of bicycling; or
- 1 less slice of pizza.

In a 2008 study, adolescents who bicycle were found to be 48% less likely to be overweight in young adulthood.<sup>6</sup> Walking and bicycling have been shown to have longevity benefits as well. An adult cyclist typically has a level of fitness equivalent to someone 10 years younger, and a life expectancy two years longer than average.<sup>7,8</sup> Being physically active for even 10 minutes at a time can produce health benefits.<sup>9</sup> A study on the Charlotte LYNX rail line found that nearby residents who switched from driving to light rail were on average six pounds lighter than nearby residents who continued to drive, due to walking to and from transit stops.<sup>10</sup> These health benefits and other benefits of walking and bicycling were found to outweigh the risks by as much as 77 to 1.<sup>11</sup>

## Lower Health Care Costs

The health and well-being benefits of increased physical activity also have a positive impact on individual and societal health costs. Virginia’s neighbor to the south, North Carolina, spent \$24 billion on health care related to lack of physical activity, diabetes, excess weight and poor nutrition.<sup>12</sup> Walking and bicycling act as preventative measures against these and other conditions, potentially saving individuals and families thousands of dollars on health care. A Portland, Oregon study on the benefits of bicycle projects found that by 2040, Portland’s investment of \$138-605 million in bicycling will have saved \$388-594 million in health care costs and \$7-12 billion in statistical lives.<sup>13</sup> By improving conditions for walking and bicycling across southern Virginia, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will provide safe and accessible physical activity opportunities and help mitigate the health care costs associated with lack of exercise.

## Equestrian Considerations: Health and Wellness

Horse activities provide many physical, psychological and other therapeutic benefits. In an era when obesity and the costs of obesity-related health problems continue to mount, equine activities contribute to improved fitness. Moreover, horse-related activities such as 4-H, pony clubs and therapeutic riding can help build self-confidence and physical agility and teach responsibility and better citizenship.<sup>14</sup>

## Safety

### Design Treatments, Traffic Calming, & Reduced Collision Risk

Safety benefits are some of the most important benefits of walking and bicycling improvements. Studies show that installing pedestrian and bicycle facilities directly improves safety by reducing the risk of pedestrian-automobile and bicycle-automobile crashes. Increased enforcement has also been shown to reduce crash risk for pedestrians and bicyclists. The table on the following page shows common pedestrian and bicycle design treatments and interventions and their resulting collision rate reductions.

Considering the cities, towns and numerous roads that the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail crosses, these considerations remain significant.

Infrastructure for walking and bicycling can also help to reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities by contributing to traffic calming measures. These changes to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists are often effective at slowing traffic to a people-friendly speed and can help to ensure speed limit compliance by matching the physical design of the road to the posted speed limit. Slowing traffic by even 10 miles per hour can greatly reduce the risk of a pedestrian fatality in the event of a collision.<sup>15</sup> Including designated

Table 2.1: Vehicle-Pedestrian Collision	Pedestrian Fatality
Speed	Rate
40 mph	85%
30 mph	45%
20 mph	5%

facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists provides safety benefits to all users. Streets with bike lanes have been shown to be safer not just for bicyclists, but for pedestrians and drivers as well.<sup>16</sup> Streets without bicycle facilities pose a greater collision risk: The highest number of bike crashes happen on major streets without bicycle facilities, followed by minor streets without facilities, shared-use paths and then bike lanes.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, installing bike lanes increases cyclist predictability, reduces wrong-way riding and sidewalk riding and increases traffic control compliance.<sup>18,19</sup> These will be important considerations while the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is being developed, particularly for the interim route on-road sections and in urban areas.

Table 2.2: Design Treatment	Crash Reduction Rate
Provide minimum 4' paved shoulder to avoid bicycling/walking along roadway	71% (pedestrian crashes)
Increase enforcement to reduce speed	70% (pedestrian crashes)
Install sidewalk to avoid walking along roadway	65-89% (pedestrian crashes)
Install pedestrian refuge islands	56% (pedestrian crashes)
Install raised median + crosswalk	46% (pedestrian crashes)
Improve lighting at intersections	42% (pedestrian injury crashes)
Provide bike lanes	36% (bicycle crashes)
Provide a bicycle box (advance stop bar to leave dedicated space for cyclists)	36% (pedestrian crashes)
Add exclusive pedestrian phasing to signalized intersection	34% (pedestrian crashes)
Restrict parking near intersections	30% (pedestrian crashes)
Convert unsignalized intersection to roundabout	27% (pedestrian crashes)
Improve/install pedestrian crossing	25% (pedestrian crashes)
Install pedestrian countdown signal heads	25% (pedestrian fatal/injury crashes)
Increase enforcement related to motorist yielding in marked crosswalks + education campaign	23% (pedestrian crashes)
Install pedestrian overpass/underpass at unsignalized intersection	13% (pedestrian crashes)
Source: *Federal Highway Administration. (2008). "Desktop reference for crash reduction factors."	

## Safety in Numbers

As walking and bicycling rates increase, streets become safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. This is known as the “safety in numbers” principle: When walking and bicycling rates double, per-kilometer pedestrian-motorist collision risk decreases by 34%.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, cities with high bicycling rates tend to have lower crash rates for all road users.<sup>21</sup> In Minneapolis, bicycle commuting increased by 100% between 2003 and 2007, and bicycle crashes have declined an average of 20% every year since 2000.<sup>22</sup> Bicycling rates in New York City increased 289% between 2001 and 2011, and over the same period safety increased for all road users. Traffic fatality rates decreased to their lowest recorded levels in a century while bicycle injury and fatality rates remained unchanged despite a near-quadrupling in the number of riders.<sup>23</sup>

Improved environments for bicycling therefore contribute to the safety of the transportation system in two important ways: by directly reducing collision risk and by making walking and bicycling a more visible and more common mode of travel. Safe places to bike and walk are especially important for non-driving populations who require safe, reliable and convenient alternatives and opportunities. Non-drivers include children and teens, the elderly, low-income populations and people with disabilities, among others. These non-driving groups, which together make up about one-third of the U.S. population, are the most at risk when walking and bicycling accommodations are lacking. Integrating pedestrian and bicycle treatments as a basic element in the transportation network helps to make streets safer for everyone.

## Economy

Walking and bicycling trails are in high demand. According to the National Association of Homebuilders, trails are consistently ranked one of the most important community amenities by prospective home buyers, above golf courses, parks, security and others.<sup>24</sup> 70% of Americans say that having bike lanes or trails in their community is important to them, and two-thirds of home buyers consider the walkability of an area in their purchase

decision.<sup>25,26</sup> This preference for communities that accommodate walking and bicycling is reflected in property values across the country.<sup>27</sup>

## Tourism and Economic Development

Investing in walking and bicycling facilities also stimulates the local economy by generating tourism revenue, supporting local business and creating jobs.<sup>28,29,30</sup> Many tourists seek out places they can experience outside of their cars, where they feel comfortable walking and bicycling to explore a new area. In the Outer Banks of North Carolina, a one-time public investment of \$6.7 million in trails and wide paved shoulders has generated \$60 million in annual tourism revenue from bicyclists. An estimated 1,400 jobs are created or supported each year with expenditures from bicycle tourists. Moreover, quality bicycling conditions played a major part in many tourists' choice of destination and duration of stay: 43% of visitors surveyed considered bicycling in their decision to vacation in the Outer Banks, while 53% reported bicycling as a major factor in deciding to return to the area in the future. 12% decided to stay in the area longer because of the quality of local bicycle facilities, with an average extension of 4 days.

Similar tourism benefits are seen elsewhere in the region. An economic impact analysis of the proposed Hendersonville-to-Brevard Ecusta Rail Trail in North Carolina estimates that the trail will:<sup>31</sup>

- Support 180 jobs
- Generate \$1.2 million per year in tourism revenue
- Attract 1,600 new exercisers and 20,000 new visitors to the area each year
- Generate \$22 million in property value increases
- Yield \$5 million per year in health care cost reductions

The 141-mile Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) trail that stretches from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Cumberland, Maryland, generated \$40 million in revenue from trail users in 2008, and an additional \$7.5 million in wages were attributed to the GAP.<sup>33</sup> These projects show the potential for relatively low-cost walking and bicycling improvements to generate a high return on investment, attracting home buyers, workers and visitors who increase local revenue and support jobs and businesses year after year.

In 2004, Chmura Economics was contracted to conduct an economic impact study of the potential High Bridge Trail State Park. They estimated that the park would attract about 68,000 visitors per year and that they would bring approximately \$1.0 million of new money into the local economy. In 2013, the park reported 194,251 visitors and over \$3.1 million in economic impact.

The 57-mile New River Trail State Park in southwestern Virginia attracts 1 million visitors per year who have been spending approximately \$15 million annually.<sup>37</sup> Although local governments initially resisted development of this rail trail along the New River, it is now seen as a valuable economic driver in the region.

From mountain biking destinations such as the Virginia Creeper Trail to horseback riding tours in Virginia Beach, trails are having significant impacts on local economies. Even in its remote mountainous setting, the Virginia Creeper Trail has shown significant impacts. It has been estimated that nearly 150,000 visitors spend over \$2.5 million annually along the trail.<sup>35</sup> Because of the intersection of four major trails through the Town of Damascus; the Appalachian Trail, US Bike Route 76, the Iron Mountain Trail and the Virginia Creeper Trail, it has become known as "Trail Town USA". Its annual *Trail Days* festival at the end of May attracts upwards of 20,000 visitors. No economic impact studies have been focused on *Trail Days* but the results are surely significant for Damascus.

Table 2.3: Project	Jobs Created/Supported
\$1M on road construction	7 jobs
\$1M on bicycle facilities	11-14 jobs
Ecusta Rail Trail	180 jobs
Outer Banks paths and shoulders	1,400 jobs
Great Allegheny Passage Trail	\$7.5M in wages

Similar to *Trail Days*, cycling events can have major positive economic impacts on a local economy. A smaller scale event in the Town of Boone, North Carolina, *Blood, Sweat and Gears* sees over 1,100 participants each year. In 2011 it was estimated by an independent study from a student in the Department of Economics at Appalachian State University as bringing \$892,000 into Boone's local economy.<sup>36</sup>

As clearly shown by the above examples, trails have already helped to diversify and grow local economies in the Appalachian region, including southwest Virginia. The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will build upon these numbers and contribute to economies across the state.

## Equestrian Economic Impacts

The equestrian industry in Virginia also has a very large impact on the economy. In 2010, the total sales impact was over \$1.2 billion and it accounted for more than 16,000 jobs. State and local taxes derived from equestrian industry spending combined to produce \$65 million in tax revenue. The majority of trail riding venues in Virginia are found on private lands; the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail presents expanded opportunities for the general public and the equestrian community.

### EQUESTRIANS AND THE RURAL ECONOMY

A series of statistics helps to demonstrate the magnitude of open space contributions. While Virginia farms decreased in number from 49,366 to 46,030 from 1997 to 2012 according to Census of Agriculture statistics, the number of farms with horses actually increased during the same period from 10,972 to 12,058, thereby helping to offset more severe decline (U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service 2004, 2014). The amount of open space acreage preserved by horse farms is also significant. At least two acres per horse are generally recommended for raising horses (Pleasant and Currin 2009) though local zoning requirements may vary. If one conservatively estimated that the minimum area was used by all horse owners and operations for the 215,000 Virginia horse inventory, it would account for at least 430,000 open space acres or 671 square miles. Horse owners also spend money on locally made agricultural products. For example, they spent an estimated \$99.6 million on feed and bedding for

horses in 2006 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service 2008). During the same year, Virginia farms harvested 1.24 million acres of hay for a total production value of \$275 million or a value of \$222 per planted acre. If one assumes that only half (or \$49.8 million) of the feed and bedding amount was spent on local hay and the other half on other non-local feeding supplies (e.g., mixed feed, salt and minerals), it would account for an additional 224,432 acres of Virginia agricultural land (\$49.8 million/\$222). The sum of the two acreages is 654,432 acres (1,023 square miles) statewide or 2.6 percent of Virginia's total land area of 39,594 square miles. This total does not count additional public and private land preserved as open space for riding and competitions.<sup>14</sup>

## Real Estate Values

A study of over 90,000 U.S. home sales found that better walking conditions were correlated with higher housing prices in 13 of the 15 housing markets studied, controlling for other factors that influence housing value. The results showed that houses in walkable neighborhoods have property values \$4,000 to \$34,000 higher than houses in areas with average walkability.<sup>38</sup> In Apex, NC the Shepard's Vineyard housing development added \$5,000 to the price of 40 homes adjacent to the regional greenway trail – and those homes were still the first to sell.<sup>39</sup> A similar study in Ohio found that the Little Miami Scenic Trail increases single-family home property values by \$7.05 for every foot closer a property is located to the trail.<sup>40</sup> These cases show the tangible economic benefits that trail projects have for homeowners and the premium that people are willing to pay to live in places that accommodate walking, bicycling and active living opportunities.

## Affordable Transportation Options and Cost-Efficient projects

Walking and bicycling are also among the most affordable forms of transportation. As is already happening with Danville's Riverwalk and Martinsville's Dick and Willie Passage, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail can serve alternative transportation purposes as well in connecting through cities and towns.

According to an annual study conducted by the American Automobile Association (AAA), the average cost of owning and operating one car for one year is \$8,946, while walking is virtually free and owning and operating a bicycle for one year costs approximately \$120.<sup>41,42</sup> In addition to the personal savings costs of walking and bicycling, these transportation options also produce a number of benefits for other drivers and society as a whole. A study from the Victoria Transport Policy Institute found that replacing a single car trip with a bike trip saves individuals and society \$2.73 per mile in gas costs, congestion reduction, vehicle cost savings, roadway cost savings, parking cost savings, energy conservation, air pollution reduction and traffic safety improvements.<sup>43</sup> These benefits and the relatively low construction and maintenance costs make walking and bicycling projects some of the most cost-effective transportation investments possible.<sup>44,45</sup> For the cost of 1 mile of four-lane urban highway (\$50 million), a shared-use path connecting Danville to Martinsville and through Patrick County to the Blue Ridge Parkway could be constructed, providing feasible travel options through the urban areas and connecting outdoor recreation opportunities that increase the overall efficiency and dynamics of the transportation system.<sup>46</sup>

## Environment

As demonstrated by the Southern Resource Center of the Federal Highway Administration, when people get out of their cars and onto trails and bicycles, they reduce measurable volumes of pollutants. The environmental benefits of walking and bicycling are diverse, including a reduction in vehicle emissions and fuel consumption, energy conservation and independence and improved water quality and wildlife habitat.

## Reduction in Vehicle Emissions and Fuel Consumption

Providing safe accommodations for walking and bicycling can help to reduce automobile dependency, which in turn leads to a reduction in vehicle emissions – a benefit for Virginians and the surrounding environment. As of 2003, 27 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to the

transportation sector, and personal vehicles account for almost two-thirds (62 percent) of all transportation emissions.<sup>47</sup> Primary emissions that pose potential health and environmental risks are carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, (VOCs), nitrous oxides (NOx) and benzene. Children and senior citizens are particularly sensitive to the harmful effects of air pollution, as are individuals with heart or other respiratory illnesses. Increased health risks such as asthma and heart problems are associated with vehicle emissions.<sup>48</sup>

Decreasing the dependency on daily motor vehicle trips and increasing the availability of alternative travel methods such as walking and bicycling can reduce emissions and assist in improving air quality. Replacing two miles of driving each day will, in one year, prevent 730 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.<sup>49</sup>

- As of 2008, roughly 9.5% of all U.S. trips are made by walking or bicycling. A modest increase in walking and bicycling to 13% of all trips would save 3.8 billion gallons of gasoline each year and reduce CO2 emissions by 33 million tons. A substantial increase in walk and bike rates to 25% of all trips would save 10.3 billion gallons of gasoline and prevent 91 million tons of CO2 emissions.<sup>50</sup>
- A 5 percent increase in the walkability of a neighborhood is associated with a per capita 32.1% increase in active travel, 6.5% fewer miles driven, 5.6% fewer grams of nitrous oxides (NOx) emitted and 5.5% fewer grams of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted.<sup>52</sup>

By providing balanced transportation and recreation choices, citizens of Virginia will also have a sense of contributing to the solution of reducing air and noise emissions.

## Energy Conservation and Independence

According to the National Association of Realtors and Transportation for America, 89% of Americans believe that transportation investments should support the goal of reducing energy use.<sup>53</sup> The transportation sector currently accounts for 71 percent of all U.S. petroleum use, with 40 percent of daily trips made within two miles or less and 28 percent less than a



mile.<sup>54</sup> Providing alternative modes of travel has the potential to reduce dependency on foreign oil and promote more energy-efficient transportation choices in communities. Most of the short trips made in the U.S. and in Virginia are single-occupancy vehicle trips that could be made on foot or by bike with improved facilities.

## Improved Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

Pedestrian and bicycle trails are often included as part of greenway corridors, offering transportation options while also contributing to environmental quality. Greenways help link fragmented tracts of land to provide larger habitats for wildlife while also protecting sensitive natural features, natural processes and ecological integrity. These tracts of open space also contribute to cleaner air by preserving stands of plants that create oxygen and filter air pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and airborne particles of heavy metal. Vegetation within the greenways also creates a buffer to protect streams, rivers and lakes, preventing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by agricultural and roadway runoff.<sup>55</sup> Trails that are built within greenway corridors give pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized trail users access to these natural areas and provide safe off-road facilities for walking and bicycling. Greenways also provide opportunities for restoring wildlife habitat in areas that have been previously disturbed. Invasive, exotic species are often a threat and greenway maintenance is essential to remove these species.

## Quality of Life

Many factors go into determining quality of life for the citizens of Virginia: the local education system, prevalence of quality employment opportunities and affordability of housing are all items that are commonly cited. Increasingly, citizens claim that access to alternative means of transportation and access to quality recreational opportunities such as parks, trails, greenways and bicycle routes, are important factors for them in determining their overall pleasure within their community.

Communities with bikeway and trail amenities can attract new businesses, industries and in turn, new residents. Furthermore, quality of life is

positively impacted by walking and bicycling through the increased social connections that take place by residents being active, talking to one another and spending more time outdoors and in their communities. According to the Brookings Institution, the number of older Americans is expected to double over the next 25 years.<sup>56</sup> All but the most fortunate seniors will confront an array of medical and other constraints on their mobility even as they continue to seek both an active community life, and the ability to age in place. Off-road trails generally do not allow for motor vehicles; however, they do accommodate motorized wheelchairs, which is an important asset for the growing number of senior citizens who deserve access to independent mobility. For those seniors who remain ambulatory, off-road trails provide an excellent and safe opportunity for exercise and fitness.

Children under 16 are another important subset of our society who deserve access to safe mobility and a higher quality of life. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, fewer children walk or bike to school than did so a generation ago. In 1969, 48 percent of students walked or biked to school, but by 2001, less than 16 percent of students between 5 and 15 walked or biked to or from school.<sup>57</sup> According to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, "Walking or biking to school gives children time for physical activity and a sense of responsibility and independence; allows them to enjoy being outside; and provides them with time to socialize with their parents and friends and to get to know their neighborhoods."<sup>58</sup>

In a 2004 CDC survey, 1,588 adults answered questions about barriers to walking to school for their youngest child aged 5 to 18 years.<sup>69</sup> The main reasons cited by parents included distance to school, at 62% and traffic-related danger, at 30%. The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail and associated spur trails could reduce the travel distance from homes to schools, and overall pedestrians and bicycle improvements can improve the safety of our roadways. The availability of a good trail network has become a hallmark of a community with a high quality of life – one of the reasons that they are almost always included in newly planned communities.

The creation of a safe trail network will serve as a link to the outdoors, providing residents of Virginia easily accessible opportunities for community-building, recreation, education, exercise and transportation. Bikeways and paths/trails are facilities that are available to all income groups, all community groups, regardless of background and experiences. Not only will the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail bridge communities and landscapes across southern Virginia, but it will provide another connection among its most important resource, people.

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# Chapter 3: Public Outreach

## Overview

Targeted stakeholder and public outreach was developed as part of this plan, and will continue after plan adoption. The communication plan centered on a multifaceted campaign to inform, educate and engage the public and project stakeholders to facilitate the acceptance of input and feedback on the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in order to develop plan priorities and disseminate information.

### GOALS OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

1. To complete the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Master Plan using an open, transparent and inclusive planning process that conveys the meaning of this trail and its benefits to the community, and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to give feedback on the alignment.
2. Upon the conclusion of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Master Plan, create an awareness and understanding of the importance of the project to the sustainability and livability of the state and to educate the public and elected officials on funding alternatives recommended to implement the plan.

### AUDIENCE

- General Population
- Stakeholder Groups
- Media
- Elected Officials

## Project Website

A Beaches to Bluegrass website was created and was hosted by VDOT. The site provides general information about the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail project and included links to project resources such as archived webinars, maps and other background items.

## Project Webinars

Project webinars were presented to targeted agency officials and the general public in the spring of 2013. Approximately 50 people participated in the webinars and all materials were available on the project website following the presentation.

## Staff Review

Staff from DCR made presentations about the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail and discussed the trail with individuals and agency representatives in each region. Staff also analyzed heat maps depicting routes used by cyclists to evaluate interim routes developed by the consultants. Staff worked closely with gateway cities and identified anchors in consultation with the planning districts.

## Virginia Bicycling Federation

The Virginia Bicycling Federation supports the State's long-distance trails and led the effort to get a resolution of support signed by the General Assembly. They provided information on alternate routes, spur trails and map revisions.

## Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholders were organized by region and asked to provide feedback on a list of questions. Local government, parks and recreation departments, land managers, trail groups, local visitors bureaus, local commissioners and other agencies along the corridor were invited to the teleconferences. A draft alignment map of each region was provided in advance of the call. The consultant team presented the trail alignment, followed by stakeholders engaging in an open discussion.

The following questions were asked of stakeholders prior to the call:

1. *What has your role/involvement been with the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail to date?*

2. *Are there any of the following associated with your agency that the Planning Team should be aware of?*

- *Planned and/or funded trail connections or spurs along the draft Beaches to Bluegrass Trail alignment*
- *Planned and/or funded trail amenities (such as benches, signage)*
- *Relevant projects adjacent to the draft Beaches to Bluegrass Trail*
- *Programs, events, or activities related to active living, biking, bike parking, horseback riding, or the alignment in general (such as parks, open space, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, equestrian trailer parking or campgrounds)*
- *Potential donors or other funding partnerships*

3. *How are existing trails in southern Virginia impacting local economic development from your perspective? Are there current trail events that are particularly important? (any quantifiable or qualitative data or anecdotes available to support? E.g., increased sales, number of visitors, etc.)*

4. *Have any concerns been specifically voiced from local residents in your area regarding trail development? Please detail any of these or other general concerns that have been raised, and how they have or have not been addressed.*

5. *Should the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail include signage and wayfinding along its entire route or should the trail and amenities be mapped and promoted through electronic devices?*

6. *Where along the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass Trail corridor should there be trailheads or kiosks or major trailheads with parking, and restrooms to increase access and awareness? Is the county positioned to develop and maintain these kiosks or trailheads if federal grant money is available to help with development costs?*

7. *At the local level, what organizations are likely to play the biggest role in helping develop and care for the trail? Do they have a good track record for working with local governments?*

8. *What can be done to raise awareness and/or promote the importance of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail project on a state, regional and/or national level that will increase agency and stakeholder participation and public support?*

9. *What can be done on a local level that will increase agency and stakeholder participation and public support?*

10. *Is the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail currently mentioned in your comprehensive plan? If not, how could this plan provide the information you need to move in that direction?*

The majority of stakeholders representing local government agreed that connecting as many town and city centers as possible along the corridor was a positive way to encourage visitation and tourism. Other stakeholders described concurrent projects or opportunities to connect to trails and destinations.

Some stakeholders provided letters or resolutions in support of the trail. Copies of those documents are available in the Appendix.

## Previous Outreach

The following workshops, symposiums and regional meetings specific to trail development across southern Virginia were held from 2004-2008. These covered various topics including the process of trail development for abandoned railroad corridors, the merits of active transportation and green infrastructure in community and economic development, stakeholders and potential partners in trail development, funding resources and other topics related to regional trail development across southern Virginia. These were all part of the evolution and formation of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept that is coalescing into a defined trail corridor today.

### **Southside Virginia Rails-to-Trails Workshop: 11/5/2004**

This workshop, held at the Southside Virginia Community College Keysville Campus, focused on rail trail development in southern Virginia as a component of local and regional economic diversification. In particular, workshop themes covered the benefits, challenges, processes and techniques for transforming abandoned railroad corridors into beneficial community assets. Several speakers, including former Governor of Virginia, Mark Warner, covered related topics throughout the session. Also part of this session was a field trip and tour of a rail trail in Staunton River Battlefield State Park. Over 150 people participated representing agencies, stakeholders and interested citizens across southern Virginia.

### **West Piedmont Trails Symposium: 10/28/2005**

The West Piedmont Trails Symposium was held at The Institute for Advanced Learning & Research in Danville. It also focused on green infrastructure and trails in particular. Myths vs. realities of trail benefits and challenges, connectivity, economic and community benefits and other discussions related to trails were led by trail managers and other trail experts in the region. Tours of sections of the Danville Riverwalk and the Richmond and Danville Trail were also conducted. Blueways, trail system master planning, arboretums, special events, signage and other trail facilities were explored. Regional trail connectivity was also identified as an important component in regional trail planning. Attendees and participants included various agencies, interested citizens and stakeholders in the region.

### **Southern Virginia Roundtable: 5/17/2006**

This meeting consisted of 16 people representing regional counties, towns and other agencies involved in trail development. Broader discussions included funding dedicated by former Governor Mark Warner that was essential in railroad corridor acquisition for the developing Tobacco Heritage Trail. Discussions also revolved around the potential for a Cumberland Gap to Chesapeake Bay Trail, utilizing state park trails and existing long-distance trails like the Daniel Boone Trail, the Mendota Trail, the Creeper Trail and trails and roads on U.S. Forest Service land. Other

topics included trail infrastructure, trail studies, potential partners, other funding possibilities and rail trail examples and developments in each jurisdiction.

### **Southeastern Virginia Trails Symposium: 10/19/2007**

This southeastern Virginia Trails Symposium at the Paul D. Camp Community College Workforce Development Center in Franklin was also attended by an array of people representing various agencies, stakeholders and interested citizens. Discussion topics included connectivity across Virginia, the ecotourism industry, green infrastructure economics, active communities and health savings and trail myths and realities.

### **Southern Virginia Trails Roundtable: 11/1/2007**

This meeting in South Boston covered project updates in the Southside region. Some of these included the potential to expand the Fieldale Trail (Martinsville area) along the Smith River corridor both north to the Philpott Lake Area and south past the North Carolina border to Eden. Additionally, linking the Fieldale Trail across the Smith River into Martinsville was also highlighted. Many other developments were highlighted such as planned expansion of the Danville Riverwalk, development of the Ringgold Trail and other initiatives throughout the region. Funding opportunities and resources for active transportation projects were detailed by VDOT and VDCR representatives. Operations management of the New River Trail was detailed with opportunities, challenges and recommendations for other managers of similar trail systems. Potential partnerships, trail events and promotional activities were also discussed.

### **Trans-Virginia Southern Trail Meetings (8/2008)**

In August 2008, four separate meetings were held across southern Virginia regarding a potential Trans-Virginia Southern Trail. The Trail concept was presented by VDCR in collaboration with local and regional agencies. These were held in Hampton Roads, Southside, Mount Rogers and Lenowisco.

These meetings included visioning exercises regarding trail expectations as well as discussions on specific trails in each region that could connect to or be part of a 'Trans-Virginia Southern Trail' trunk line. A need for a better

understanding of local jurisdictions' roles was highlighted. Having clear maps that show trail development across the state was also discussed as an important branding component that will increase exposure and help drive momentum. Other topics included possible stakeholders, destinations, challenges and a suitable name for the trail, one of which was the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.



Southeastern Trail Symposium in Franklin, Virginia

October 19, 2007



# CHAPTER 4: Existing Conditions and Recommendations

## Trail System Overview

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is made up of paths and trails in all stages of development. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the existing conditions along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail corridor, acknowledge gaps that exist and make recommendations for both the ideal off-road and interim on-road route. Examining these conditions reveals where future trail development efforts should be focused along with the energy of stakeholders and team members involved in next steps and implementation.

This narrative provides a better understanding of the current Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept that is envisioned to serve the needs of all parts of southern Virginia--contributing to local economies, revealing compelling history and stunning scenery, and strengthening alternative transportation networks that will become an integral part of local and regional infrastructure.

The regional analysis, provided later in this chapter, divides the trail alignment into five regions across southern Virginia:

1. Outer and Southern Coastal Plain  
Virginia Beach/First Landing to Emporia (I-95)
2. Southern Piedmont  
Emporia (I-95) to Danville
3. Southern Piedmont/Southern Blue Ridge  
Danville to Radford/Galax
4. Southern Blue Ridge/Ridge and Valley  
Radford/Galax to Bristol
5. Ridge and Valley/Cumberland Mountains  
Bristol to Cumberland Gap

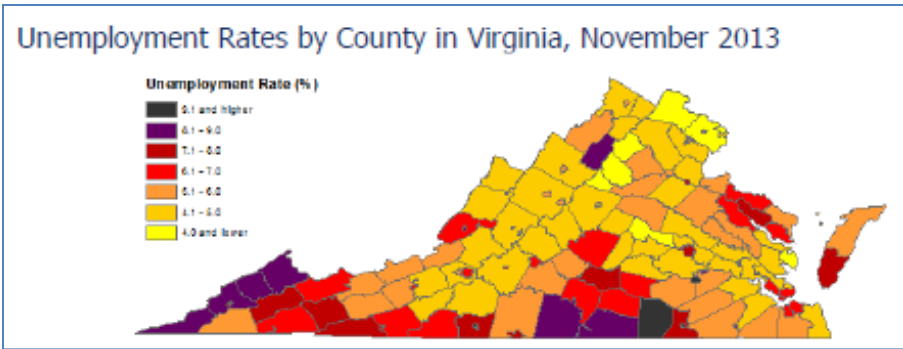
These five regions are delineated based on both geographical differences and approximate mileage so that regions are fairly evenly divided and can stand on their own to provide an exciting long-distance trail experience. They begin and end with a gateway city in Virginia where long-term parking, services and orientation will be provided. Also serving as a gateway, the Town of Cumberland Gap in Tennessee provides lodging and restaurants at the end of the trail.

## Climate, Culture and Conditions

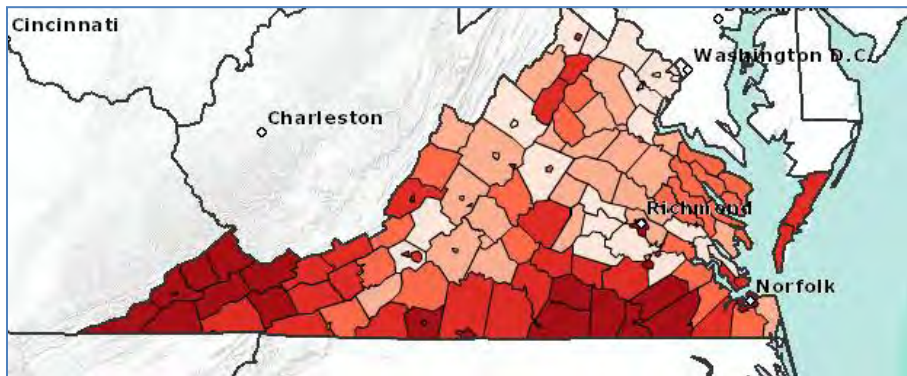
The climate from Virginia Beach to Cumberland Gap ranges from the temperate ocean ecozone to subtropical conditions to subalpine conditions through the highest mountainous area of Virginia, with peaks well over 5,000 feet. Through the summer months, conditions can be uncomfortably hot and humid, especially in the lower elevations. Since this trail will be year-round, itineraries can be packaged to take advantage of water-related recreation opportunities during summer months and snow-related experiences in higher elevations during the winter. Fall and spring will offer the best conditions for long-distance trips.

Culturally, one travels from cities in Tidewater—a former English colony where tradition is valued and authority respected, to remote and rugged sections of Greater Appalachia, populated by the descendants of American Indian, Irish, German and Scottish settlers who value individual liberty. The descendants of the first free and enslaved African-Americans are a significant segment of the population, particularly in Tidewater. Many plantations, cemeteries, churches schools and other sites reflect this heritage along the corridor.

Some of the areas along the corridor are the poorest in the state, and have high unemployment levels as well as high levels of preventable chronic disease. See the maps on the following page.

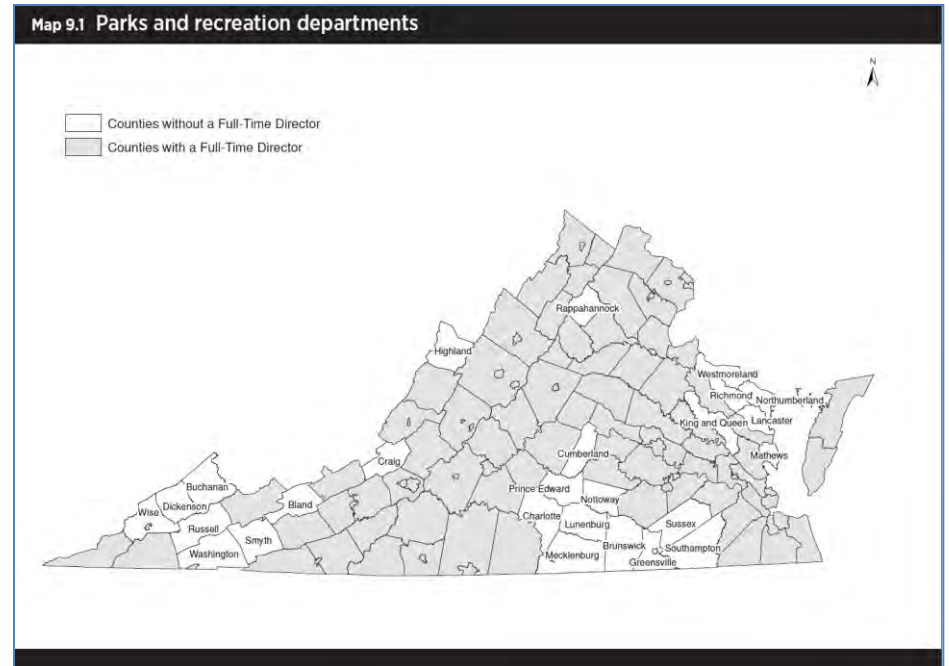


Bureau of Labor Statistics, figures are not seasonally adjusted



Centers for Disease Control—darkest colors represent highest levels of preventable heart disease 1

Following industry abandonment in many areas, railroads have also been abandoned—leaving hundreds of miles of corridor available for a connected, off-road trail system that could help address the deficit of alternative transportation and public recreation facilities that exists in many areas. What is less clear is how this trail system could be managed, since many counties along the corridor do not have a parks and recreation director or department (see labeled counties in map from the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan in the next column).



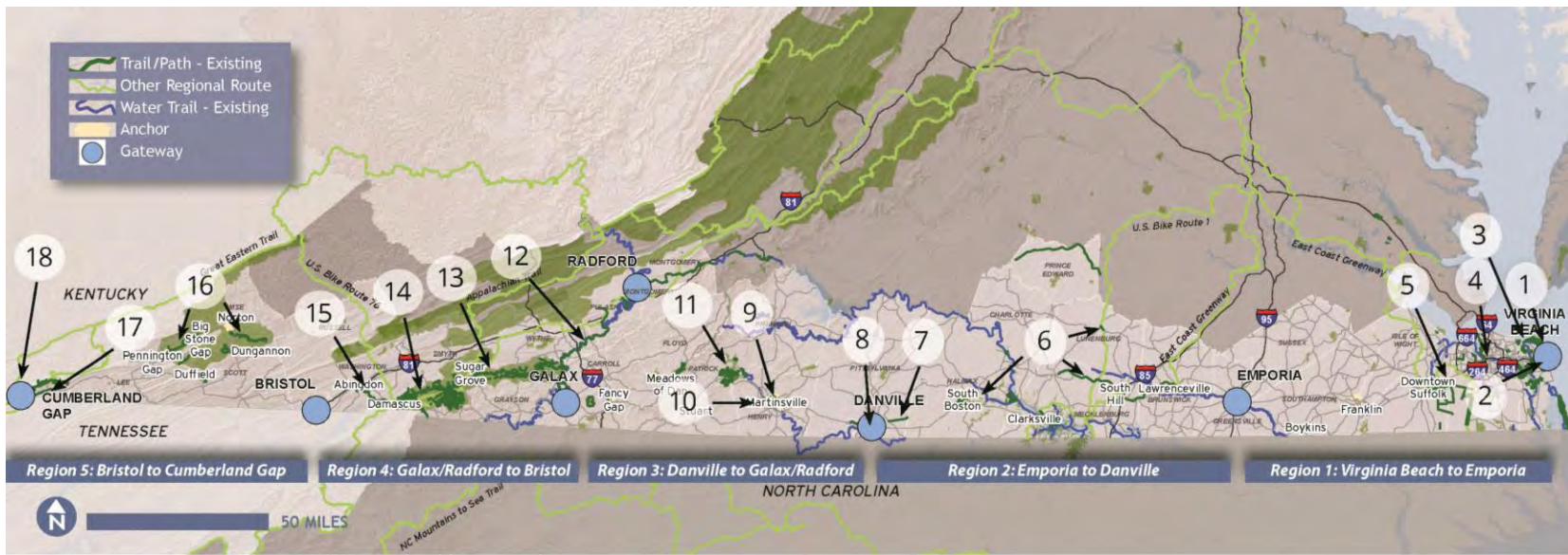
## Existing Trails and Gap Areas

The predominance of existing trails and existing abandoned railroad corridor that can be found between Cumberland Gap and the Chesapeake Bay sparked the idea for a connected, cross-state route.

The existing conditions map below identifies the regions and gateways along with the existing trails that could be part of the Beaches to Bluegrass trunkline trail.

Trails and Paths identified as having shared/multiple uses means that, at a minimum, pedestrian and bicycles are permitted. Existing trails highlighted with an \*asterisk in the tables that follow also include equestrian use.

Existing shared-use paths and multi-use trails are listed in Table 4.1 with corresponding numbers pointing to each path/trail on the overview map.



**Table 4.1: Existing Multi-Use Trails & Shared-Use Paths Along the Beaches to Bluegrass Corridor**

<u>Trail Name</u>	<u>Managing Agencies</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Uses; Trail Type</u>	<u>Character</u>
1. Virginia Beach Boardwalk	City of Virginia Beach	Virginia Beach	2.7	Multiple; paved, boardwalk	Commercial; resort
2. Norfolk Avenue Trail	City of Virginia Beach	Virginia Beach	1.4	Multiple; paved	Suburban
3. Cape Henry Trail	Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	Virginia Beach	6.1	Multiple; paved and Crushed Stone	Coastal, urban fringe
4. Elizabeth River Trail	City of Norfolk	Norfolk	1.5	Multiple; paved	Industrial, suburban, urban
5. Suffolk Seaboard Coastline Trail	City of Suffolk	Suffolk	1.5	Multiple; paved	Suburban
6. *Tobacco Heritage Trail	Roanoke River Rails to Trails (RRRT), Southside PDC	South Boston, Victoria, La Crosse, Brodnax, Lawrenceville	19	Multiple; crushed stone	Rural, small town; Piedmont
7. *Ringgold Trail	Danville, Pittsylvania County, Danville River Basin Association	Pittsylvania County	6	Multiple; crushed stone	Rural

The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

	(DRBA)				
8. <i>Danville Riverwalk</i>	Danville, Pittsylvania County, DRBA	Downtown Danville	8.5	Multiple; paved	Urban
9. <i>Dick and Willie Passage</i>	Martinsville, Henry County, Martinsville-Henry County Rivers and Trails Group (MHCRTG)	Downtown Martinsville	4.5	Multiple; paved	Urban
10. <i>*Fieldale Trail</i>	Martinsville, Henry County, MMHCRTG	Fieldale	2.6	Multiple; crushed stone/natural	Urban fringe
11. <i>*Fairy Stone State Park Trails</i>	Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	Patrick County	14	Multiple; soft/natural	Rural, wooded, reservoir
12. <i>*New River Trail</i>	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	Galax; Carroll County	57	Multiple; crushed stone	Rural, riverine
13. <i>*+Virginia Highlands Horse Trail</i>	George Washington and Jefferson National Forests/Mount Rogers National Recreation Area	Carroll County to Washington County	67	Multiple; natural surface	Remote, mountainous
14. <i>*+Iron Mountain Trail</i>	George Washington and Jefferson National Forests/Mount Rogers National Recreation Area	Smyth County; Washington County	47	Multiple; natural surface	Remote, mountainous
15. <i>*Virginia Creeper Trail</i>	US Forest Service; Town of Damascus; Town of Abingdon; Virginia Creeper Trail Club	Washington County	34.3	Multiple; crushed stone	Remote, mountainous
16. <i>*USFS Clinch Ranger District Trails (Little Stony NRT, Chief Benge Scout Trail, and the Stone Mountain Trail)</i>	Clinch Ranger District	Scott County; Wise County	33	Multiple; natural surface	Remote, mountainous
17. <i>*Wilderness Road Trail</i>	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	Lee County	8.5	Multiple; crushed stone	Remote, mountain valley
18. <i>*Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Trails</i>	National Park Service; Cumberland Gap National Historical Park	Lee County	50	Multiple; natural surface	Remote, mountain valley and mountainous

*\*Trails that currently accommodate horseback riding +Trails that currently accommodate seasonal motorized use*

## Regional Analysis

The analysis that follows highlights existing conditions within each of the five regions. Information in this analysis was compiled from public involvement, stakeholder meetings, a review of aerial imagery, a review of heat maps that depict current roads used by cyclists, fieldwork conducted in April 2013, and Internet research. Population figures in the narrative are based on American Community Survey 2012 estimates, if available or 2010 Census figures. Data under the heading “Jurisdictions” on leisure time physical activity, recreation and fitness facilities and population density were taken from maps and data available at Community Commons ([www.communitycommons.org](http://www.communitycommons.org)), so population figures may differ slightly from newer estimates in the narrative. Self-reports of no leisure time for activity were based on the question: "During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?" This indicator is relevant because current behaviors are determinants of future health and this indicator may illustrate a cause of significant health issues, such as obesity and poor cardiovascular health.

Potential coalition members have been identified for future partnership efforts. The managed public lands within a few miles of the corridor provide a snapshot of existing green infrastructure and/or visitor services that complement the trail experience. Each region is further detailed in this order:

- General Character
- Existing Conditions
- Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Status
  - Opportunities
  - Challenges
    - Gaps
- Recommendations
  - Map
  - Trunkline Trail Segments
  - Spurs and Connectivity

## REGION ONE: VIRGINIA BEACH TO EMPORIA

### GENERAL CHARACTER

This region is made up of the Outer and Southern Coastal Plain. The topography is generally flat – well suited for gentle trail experiences that serve a wide range of abilities. The trail will be very popular for families and tourists --people visiting the beaches may stay longer to explore the trail, or choose to travel to their oceanfront hotel on foot or bike to avoid traffic. The greatest benefit will accrue to residents, who will have healthier options for local trips and safer places to ride bikes.

This low-lying area has many swamps and marshes, and infrastructure is subject to damage from sea level rise as the coast continues to sink. A multipurpose trail system through this region could provide added benefits through use as an evacuation route or a passage for emergency personnel during major storm events.

As the eastern terminus of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, this section traverses the dense and bustling oceanfront, shipyards and ports of Hampton Roads, one of the world’s largest natural harbors. The density of land use decreases in Chesapeake and Suffolk, and farming becomes the predominant land use west of Suffolk. Development pressures are increasing as the population in Hampton Roads expands; for example, Suffolk had a growth rate of 32.83% from 2000 to 2010.

A publically owned abandoned railroad corridor converted to a public utility corridor through most of this region offers an incredible opportunity to connect the gateway cities of Emporia and Virginia Beach. Anchors that could provide services at appropriate intervals along the multipurpose path/trail include the Norfolk/Portsmouth waterfronts on the Elizabeth River, downtown Suffolk, Sedley (population 470) and Jarratt (population 638). The City of Franklin and the Town of Boykins (population 564) provide services that will anchor the interim on-road route west of Suffolk.

In the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Survey, residents in Hampton Roads identified the most needed recreational opportunities as “trails for walking and hiking” (72 percent of households) and “trails for bicycling” (62 percent of households). Public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use was the third most needed recreational opportunity (59 percent), and “trails for wildlife watching and nature study” made the top 10 at 47 percent. In the Crater region (Greensville and Southampton), access to water was the greatest need (59 percent) followed by “trails for hiking and walking” (58 percent), “trails for bicycling” (54 percent) and “trails for wildlife watching and nature study” (49 percent). “Trails for horseback riding” made the top 10 at 34 percent.

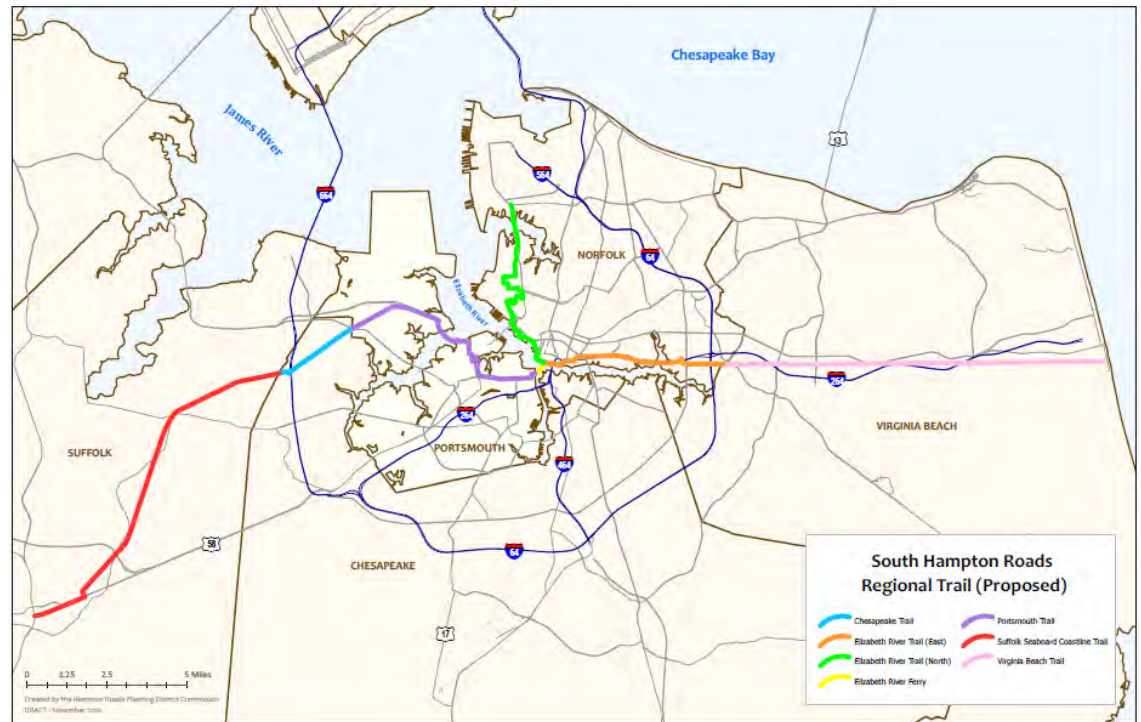
### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The region of Hampton Roads has been working on a route to connect the cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Chesapeake in what has been called the Multi-City Trail or the South Hampton Roads Trail. There is a growing coalition of outdoor enthusiasts who support long-distance routes throughout the region.

Potential Coalition Members include bike shops and outfitters, Virginia State Parks District 1, local governments, Tidewater Horse Council, Southeastern Association of Trail Riders, Tidewater Bicycle Association, Peninsula Bicycling Association, Bike Norfolk, Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association, Boy Scouts (Tidewater and Colonial Virginia Council), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Family YMCA of Emporia/Greensville, recreation associations, Master Naturalists-Tidewater Chapter and Old Dominion University Parks, Recreation and Tourism Studies.

Managed public lands along the corridor include the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Suffolk Seaboard Coastline Trail, Commonwealth/Western Branch trail, Elizabeth River Trail, Norfolk Town Point, Virginia Beach Boardwalk and associated parks and First Landing State Park.

Potential interpretive themes include nature: (Chesapeake Bay, beaches, coasts, swamps, wildlife, large old trees), colonial life, military, ports/trade, Intercoastal Waterway, art, American Indians, War of 1812 and Captain John Smith’s adventures.



### BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL STATUS

#### Virginia Beach

For people who don’t start from First Landing State Park, the trail begins on the Virginia Beach Boardwalk at 6th Street, providing a beautiful setting on the Atlantic Ocean. **The ideal alignment** follows the Norfolk Avenue Trail from 6th Street to Birdneck Road, where it will connect to the proposed Norfolk-Virginia Beach Transit Corridor. This rail-with-trail project is a top priority for the City, but significant concerns about right-of-way and costs must be addressed in the next planning stages of the transit project. The alignment travels through predominately residential areas of Virginia

## Jurisdictions

### City of Virginia Beach

A total of 436,979 people live in the 248.95 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,755.29 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 77,703 or 24.20% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 48 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides numerous local parks, beaches and trails, two state parks, natural area preserves and hunting and fishing opportunities. The beachfront of Virginia Beach has numerous attractions, and is an easy bike ride to First Landing State Park and the Virginia Aquarium.

### City of Norfolk

A total of 241,943 people live in the 54.11 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 4,471.64 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 46,289 or 26.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 19 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails, a botanical garden and fishing opportunities. The riverfront area has museums, historic ships and other attractions, and the popular "Tide" light rail system travels 7.4 miles to the border of Virginia Beach.

### City of Portsmouth

A total of 96,066 people live in the 33.64 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 2,855.39 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 19,530 or 27.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 4 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails and fishing opportunities. The historic downtown area has restaurants, museums and a visitor center, with connections to the Elizabeth River Ferry. This City has been recognized as "bicycle-friendly" by the League of American Bicyclists.

### City of Chesapeake

A total of 220,837 people live in the 340.71 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 648.17 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 34,003 or 21.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 18 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides numerous local parks and trails, The Great Dismal Swamp and hunting and fishing opportunities.

### City of Suffolk

A total of 83,465 people live in the 400.06 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 208.63 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 15,988 or 26% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 4 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and The Great Dismal Swamp for recreation. The Suffolk Seaboard Station Railroad Museum is a charming stop along the completed section of the Seaboard Coastline Trail.

### Isle of Wight County

A total of 35,092 people live in the 315.53 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 111.22 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 7,227 or 26% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 4 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and hunting and fishing opportunities.

### Southampton County (Town of Boykins and Sedley CDP)

A total of 18,573 people live in the 598.99 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 31.01 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 4,268 or 28.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 3 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides hunting and fishing opportunities.

### City of Franklin

A total of 8,570 people live in the 8.2 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,045 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,070 or 31.5% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported no Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and programs.

### Sussex County (and part of the Town of Jarratt)

A total of 12,147 people live in the 490.09 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 24.79 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,815 or 28.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 2 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state natural area preserve, a state forest and hunting and fishing opportunities.

### Greensville (and part of the Town of Jarratt)

A total of 12,194 people live in the 295.15 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 41.31 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,965 or 29.40% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported no Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011.

### City of Emporia

A total of 5,850 people live in the 6.89 square mile report area--the population density for this City along the I-95 corridor is estimated at 848.81 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 1,268 or 28.90% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 10 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011.

- *No Leisure Time Physical Activity- Centers for Disease Control County-level Estimates of Leisure-time Physical Inactivity among Adults aged ≥ 20 year, 2010*
  - *Recreation and Fitness Facilities Rate per 100,000 by County-County Business Patterns 2011*
- *Population and Population Density (persons per square mile)-American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates*



Norfolk Bike Network: <http://norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1387>

Beach and connects to the expanding Virginia Beach Town Center and to other smaller commercial areas/shopping centers. The ideal alignment provides the most direct connection to Norfolk and is part of the South Hampton Roads Trail proposed by the HRTPO.

**The interim route** for this segment begins on the Virginia Beach Boardwalk and travels north the length of the boardwalk. After a brief on-street section, trail users access the six-mile Cape Henry Trail in First Landing State Park. A Trail Center there has restrooms and vending machines. West of the park, the City plans for bike lanes and/or paved shoulders along Shore Drive for most of the distance to the Norfolk City Line. This route provides an on-road interim alignment for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail until an off-road route is constructed. Some upgrade of the existing roadways is recommended.

### Norfolk Segment

Norfolk has a growing number of bicycle commuters and is working to expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the City. However, the City does not currently support including a trail as part of the light rail connection to Virginia Beach. The right of way is more constrained in Norfolk and adjacent property owners have expressed concerns. Additionally, crossing Broad Creek could be difficult. A VDOT feasibility study from 2005 recommends an eastern extension of the Elizabeth River Trail along this corridor.

**The interim route** uses less traveled roads from the Virginia Beach boundary/Norfolk International Airport to the Elizabeth River Trail or “Ride the Tide” by connecting to transit.

**The ideal route** shown on the South Hampton Roads Trail Map begins at the northeastern City line near Little Creek, connects to Granby Street and then follows a planned path parallel to Terminal Boulevard which joins the Elizabeth River Trail (ERT). Sections of the ERT are currently routed on sidewalks, so adjacent on-road routes for experienced cyclists may be needed until the ideal route is complete.

Once reaching the waterfront area of downtown Norfolk, **the interim route** connects to the Elizabeth River Ferry and cross to Portsmouth via the ferry, adding a unique feature to the trail experience. The waterfront areas of both Norfolk and Portsmouth provide many visitor services that will anchor the trail experience. In cases where the ferry is not running or



available, another option is to use the Berkley/I-264 bridge to connect across the Elizabeth River to the south side of Norfolk and ultimately to Portsmouth using on-road routes.

#### Portsmouth Segment

The City of Portsmouth does not have many opportunities to create off-road separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Much of the City has been developed. However, the downtown and neighborhoods near downtown are built with a predominately grid pattern of streets which serves pedestrian and bicycle access well. The City has installed bicycle lanes, and future bicycle facilities are proposed along High Street, the east-west arterial through town. These planned bike lanes will connect to existing bike lanes on Mount Vernon Avenue, which then connect to the West Norfolk Bridge, providing a good alignment for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail for both cyclists and pedestrians. The crossing on the West Norfolk Bridge, which is a limited access road, is a road shoulder without separation from adjacent vehicle traffic, but is the only crossing of the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River to accommodate non-motorized users. The bridge also connects to the recently abandoned rail line, the corridor for the proposed Commonwealth Railway Trail, which will link to the planned Seaboard Coastline Trail in Suffolk.

#### Chesapeake and Suffolk Segment

Rail to trail conversions will be the **ideal alignment** for Chesapeake and Suffolk. Design work is underway for a 3.3-mile section of the Seaboard Coastline Trail west of Chesapeake, and a section is constructed in downtown Suffolk. Once completed, this 11.5-mile trail will connect to the Commonwealth Railway Trail in Chesapeake and make up a significant section of the proposed 41-mile alignment for the South Hampton Roads trail system. Where the Seaboard Coastline Trail currently ends in downtown Suffolk, there are many visitor services to anchor the trail experience. The **interim route** generally follows roads parallel to this corridor.

#### Isle of Wight/Sussex/Southampton/Greensville Segment

West of Suffolk, land uses are almost exclusively agricultural, with the occasional small town providing services such as retail stores and restaurants. Franklin and Emporia are the only cities located within this region. The rural areas include western Suffolk City and the counties of Isle of Wight, Southampton, Sussex and the eastern edge of Greensville. There are currently no separated trail or bicycle facilities located within this region. Trails have been discussed within the right-of-way of the abandoned Norfolk and Western railroad corridor that traverses the region and is also the location of the Virginia Beach-Lake Gaston water pipeline, **the ideal route** for the trail in the long term.

The concept of a trail within the pipeline right-of-way owned by Virginia Beach has been proposed and discussed for many years. When construction of the Virginia Beach pipeline was approved in the early 1990s, both the City of Virginia Beach and the counties along the pipeline indicated a willingness to pursue trail construction, but no agreement was reached and the idea has not since been pursued. Issues regarding maintenance of the potential trail appear to be the biggest obstacle. During the 1990s, staff from the Department of Conservation worked with officials from Virginia Beach and the affected counties but were not able to reach agreements for the management and maintenance of a trail. They were also unable to identify funding sources to begin planning and design of this section.

With renewed interest in the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, the Norfolk and Western/Pipeline right-of-way trail concept is gaining momentum again. Planners in Isle of Wight County are considering the idea, and representatives of the Virginia Beach Water Department do not oppose construction of a trail within the right-of-way. The Virginia Beach Public Utilities Department is concerned about the five exposed sections of pipe at stream crossings and requests the trail be located some distance away from the pipeline at these locations. Construction of a trail could reduce maintenance costs for the City of Virginia Beach by reducing the amount of grass that needs to be cut and providing management partners. The trail would also be designed to provide access for any maintenance vehicles that

would occasionally need to reach the pipeline area, and could provide a route for emergency vehicles when other roads are closed or congested.

The portion of the abandoned right-of-way from Kilby to Walters, which does not contain the Virginia Beach Pipeline, could also be converted to a trail. The right-of-way appears to be generally intact along this corridor and could fairly easily be converted to a rail-trail facility.

Should existing active rail lines through this region face abandonment sometime in the future, there may be an opportunity to route the trail closer to services using the newly abandoned corridor in Southampton and Greensville counties. Another opportunity is the abandoned rail line that almost connects the Dismal Swamp to the City of Franklin.

Southampton County does not endorse the ideal route, but officials have agreed to an **interim on-road route** for bicyclists. This route follows less-traveled roads south of the pipeline and connects the City of Franklin and Town of Boykins to Emporia. Proposed spur trails connect to existing campgrounds and the Amtrak Station near Petersburg.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Using the Oceanfront and Boardwalk or First Landing State Park as a gateway to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail
- Utilizing existing trails and bikeways in Virginia Beach and providing better beach access to western areas of the City
- Providing additional public support for development of Light Rail with the Trail component
- Taking advantage of the proposed Light Rail alignment and providing a good bicycle and pedestrian connection between eastern Norfolk and downtown
- Using both the Norfolk and Portsmouth waterfronts as anchors for the trail system
- Using the Elizabeth River Ferry as a trail amenity

- Connecting to US Bike Route 76 and Yorktown and the East Coast Greenway historic coastal route
- Connections to the Great Dismal Swamp
- Adding bike lanes as relatively low cost facilities
- Growing support for bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Downtown Suffolk provides all the services necessary to serve as an anchor for the trail system.
- The abandoned Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way used by the Virginia Beach Pipeline provides an opportunity to construct a significant shared-use facility in a part of the Commonwealth where these types of facilities are lacking. The trail could also reduce maintenance costs for the City of Virginia Beach and provide better access for maintenance and emergency vehicles.
- The Commonwealth and Seaboard abandoned rail line runs for 31 miles from the Suffolk train station to Ocean View in Norfolk and will be utilized as part of the Hampton Roads multi-city project.
- Construction of a trail may spur economic development along rural portions of the corridor, similar to other trails such as the Virginia Creeper and the Allegheny Highlands Trail in Pennsylvania.
- The City of Franklin and the Town of Boykins provide services needed to anchor the trail system, offering opportunities for business development as the trail becomes more popular.
- The Gateway City of Emporia is only 8 miles from North Carolina and the first exit on I-95 north of the state line. The Interstate provides an easy access for people who want to experience the trail heading east or west. The municipal building is located on Main Street along the interim route and could provide parking and information in the interim.

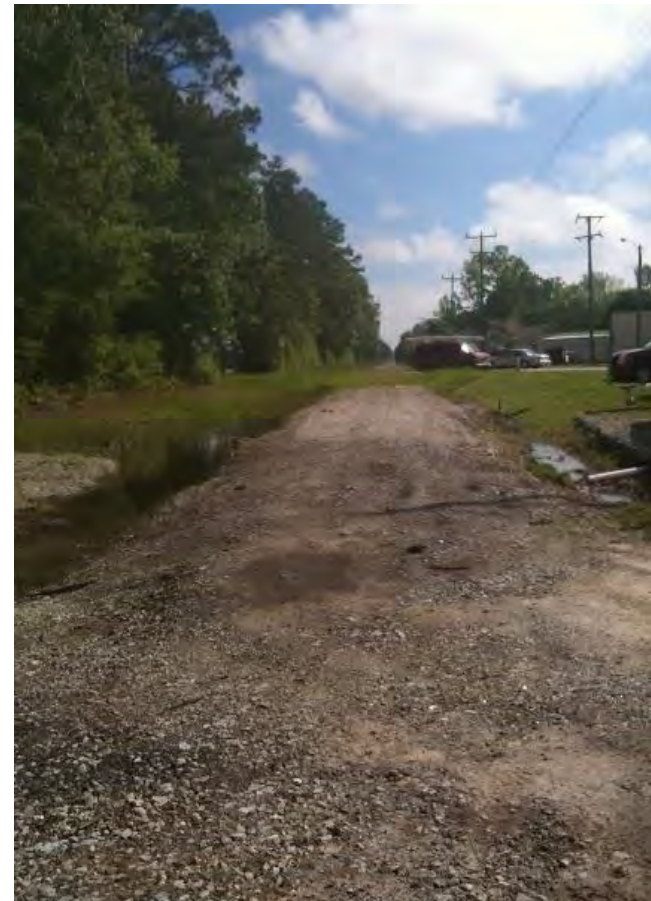
## CHALLENGES

- Building greater support for Light Rail Trail as a multi-modal corridor
- Improving the Elizabeth River Trail for cyclists
- Crossing Broad Creek in Norfolk and other waterways and wetlands throughout the region
- Construction of the westbound Lesner bridge lanes (north span) should be completed by November 2015, and construction of the eastbound bridge and lanes (south span) will begin in April 2016 and is scheduled for completion in May 2017. The sidewalk on westbound Shore Drive is closed to pedestrians and cyclists between Page Avenue and East Stratford Street. If pedestrians need to cross the bridge, they will need to cross the eastbound bridge where a temporary 4-foot wide pedestrian/cyclist access has been provided.
- Lack of opportunities for separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities in built-out environments
- Challenging road crossings on the proposed trail alignment through high-use areas
- Possible opposition from landowners adjacent to the pipeline right-of-way
- A current lack of amenities to support trail users along rural areas of the corridor
- No existing parks and recreation departments or related civic groups in some areas of the region
- Gaps in the ideal trail network:
  - Norfolk: between the terminus of the proposed light rail with trail and the Commonwealth Railway Trail
  - Isle of Wight: between the western end of the Suffolk Seaboard Coastline Trail and the Virginia Beach Pipeline at Kilby

- An off-road connection from Jarratt to Emporia will be needed if the trail along the pipeline is realized. Quiet, scenic roads for cycling have been identified in the near term but further analysis will be needed for off-road trail development.

## Recommendations

The following text and map summarizes the recommended route through the region.



Suffolk: Seaboard Coastline Trail corridor



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

## TRUNKLINE TRAIL SEGMENTS (EAST TO WEST)

### 1. VIRGINIA BEACH BOARDWALK AND CAPE HENRY TRAIL

- The Virginia Beach Boardwalk and/or Cape Henry Trail serves as the eastern terminus of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

#### Mileage

- Existing Shared-Use Path: 2.7 & 6.1 respectively

### 2. NORFOLK AVENUE TRAIL

- The Norfolk Avenue Trail segment runs between Pacific Avenue and Birdneck Road in Virginia Beach.

#### Mileage

- Existing Shared-Use Path: 1.4

### 3. NORFOLK - VIRGINIA BEACH TRANSIT CORRIDOR

- For the **ideal route**, incorporate proposals to include a trail within the right-of-way for the Norfolk - Virginia Beach Transit Corridor.
- Develop a detailed study exploring opportunities for a path/trail from the proposed Light Rail line extension with a trail to the eastern end of the Elizabeth River Trail and East Brambleton Avenue. This study should also consider bicycle lanes and sidewalk connections. This is an essential connection that is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.

- ◇ As a near term, **interim route**, utilize the following: Pacific Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, Shore Drive, Diamond Springs Road, Bayside Drive, Miller Store Road, Robin Hood Road, Alameda Avenue, Cape Henry Avenue, Norcova Avenue, Azalea Garden Road, Cape Henry Avenue, Ingleside Road, Princess Anne Road, and Park Avenue to the Elizabeth River Trail.
- ◇ Hikers and bicycles may board the Light Rail at the Harbor Park Station and head west into Downtown Norfolk or east to Newtown Rd at the Norfolk /Virginia Beach border. The Norfolk Amtrak station is also located here. Only folding bicycles can board or de-board the Amtrak

train at this station. Since there are is no luggage service boxed bicycles cannot unload in Norfolk.

- ◇ Walkers may wish to continue straight on Shore Dr then left onto Flowerfield Road, right onto Heutte Drive, and then left Azalea Garden rejoining the main route at Robin Hood Road. This route offers better sidewalk coverage. Robin Hood Road and Miller Store Road have low traffic volumes are ideal for cyclists but have little sidewalk coverage.

- If the Bay Coast Railroad is abandoned, there may be opportunities for an off-road trail in Norfolk along Cape Henry Avenue.

#### Mileage

- Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 11
- Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 4.1
- On-Road Interim Route: 25

### 4. ELIZABETH RIVER TRAIL

- The Elizabeth River Trail segment runs from East Brambleton Avenue to Town Point Park in Norfolk.

#### Mileage

- Existing Shared-Use Path: 1.5

### 5. ELIZABETH RIVER FERRY

- The Elizabeth River Ferry runs between Norfolk and Portsmouth.

#### Mileage

- River/Bay Crossing: 0.5

## 6. MOUNT VERNON AVENUE BICYCLE LANES

- The Mount Vernon Avenue bicycle lanes run between High Street and Bayview Boulevard in Portsmouth.

### Mileage

- Existing Bike Lanes: 1

## 7. WEST NORFOLK BRIDGE

- The West Norfolk Bridge includes paved shoulders for non-motorized crossings. Improve shoulders to include separation between the pathway user and the road. Non-motorized users must enter and exit between the West Norfolk pedestrian ramp and the West Norfolk Road exit.

### Mileage

- Existing Paved Shoulder: 0.5

## 8. COMMONWEALTH RAILWAY TRAIL

- The Commonwealth Railway Trail corridor in Chesapeake runs from the Portsmouth line to Suffolk.

### Mileage

- Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path City of Chesapeake: 3.2 (partially funded)
- Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path City of Portsmouth: 1.8 (funded)

## 9. \*SEABOARD COASTLINE TRAIL

- The entire length of the proposed Seaboard Coastline Trail in Suffolk will be included in the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. Segments of this trail are under construction at the time of this writing.
  - ◇ As a near-term interim route, utilize the following on-road connection: Norfolk Road, Lilac Drive, Binham Drive, Stamford Road, High Street, Taylor Road, Pughsville Road, Shoulders Hill Road, Nansemond Parkway and East Constance Road to the Suffolk Seaboard Coastline Trail.

### Mileage

- Existing Shared-Use Path: 1.25
- Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 10.5 (partially funded)
- On-Road interim route: 20

## 10. \*VIRGINIA BEACH PIPELINE/NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILROAD

- Incorporate the proposed trail within the Virginia Beach Pipeline/abandoned Norfolk and Western rail corridor right-of-way from Suffolk to Jarratt. This is an essential link for an off-road connection from the Coastal area to the Tobacco Heritage Trail; it is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.
  - ◇ As a near term, on-road **interim route**, utilize the following: West Constance Road, Holland Road, Lake Cahoon Road, Indian Trail Road (644), Carrsville Highway (58), East 2nd Avenue (58), South Main Street, (258) Dogwood Bend Road (684), Sycamore Church Road (684), Monroe Road (684), Mount Horeb Road, Cypress Bridge Road (672), Old Chapel Road, Cross Keys Road, General Thomas Highway (671), Meherrin Road (35) and North Main Street (35) into Boykins. From Boykins, take Beaton Avenue, Pittman Road (186), Darden Street (730), Whitehead Road (730), Little Texas Road, Low Ground Road, Bryants Corner Trail, Low Ground Road and South Main Street into Emporia.

### Mileage

- Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 51
- On-Road interim route: 58

- ◇ Emporia to Jarratt - Develop a detailed corridor for an off-road connection from Jarratt to the Gateway City of Emporia. In the interim, an on-road connection leaves Emporia on N Main to Sussex Street, Otterdam Road, Allen Road, River Road, Horseshoe Road and Grigg Avenue to Jarratt.

### Mileage: 11

## TRAIL SPURS AND CONNECTIVITY

Trail spurs can serve as important connections to nearby destinations, services or other amenities and attractions. Virginia Beach has many bikeways and trails that provide connections to other amenities within the City. Discover City Park Trails at:

[www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/parks-trails/Pages/bikeways-trails.aspx](http://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/parks-trails/Pages/bikeways-trails.aspx).

The following should be incorporated into the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as spur routes.

- A. Elizabeth River Trail - This trail provides connections to northern Norfolk including the Eastern Virginia Medical School and Old Dominion University. Portions of the trail are currently routed on sidewalks, which is not optimal for bicyclists. On-road bikeways should be considered for these segments of the trail.
  - a. *Mileage: 8*
- B. Suffolk/Seaboard Coastline Trail to Dismal Swamp Trail: Connecting the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail with the Great Dismal Swamp will provide both residents and visitors to the Hampton Roads area with a non-motorized option for visiting the National Wildlife Refuge.
- C. US Bike Route 76 eastern terminus - Yorktown: Additionally, US Bike Route 76 begins in Yorktown and a link should be identified to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. Challenges include crossing the Chesapeake Bay.
- D. Continuing north from Jarratt on River Road and Little Mill Road, a connection can be made to the Amtrak station near Petersburg following Flatfoot Road, Baugh Road, Shady Lane, Old Stage Road, Vaughn Road, Halifax Road, West Street, South Street, Canal Street, Fleet Street, Chesterfield Avenue, Granger Street and Bessie Lane to the Ettrick Amtrak Station.
- E. Connection to campgrounds: since lodging is not available between Franklin and Emporia, several proposed spur connections to campgrounds have been identified.

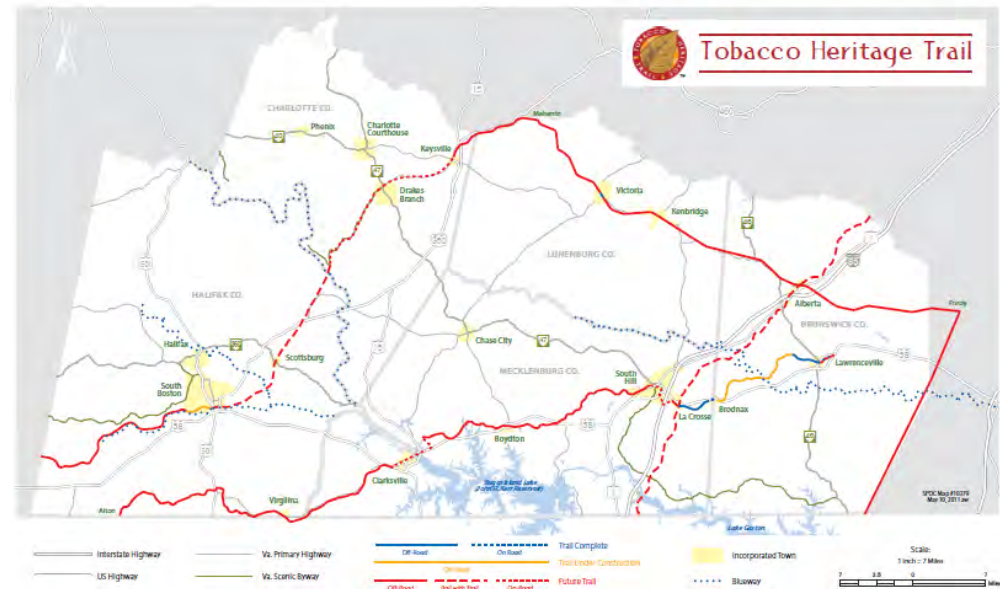
## REGION TWO: Emporia (I-95) TO Danville

### GENERAL CHARACTER

The generally flat to gently rolling landscape of the Southern Piedmont is covered with forests and a mix of crops and livestock. Small towns and villages are scattered throughout this rural area. This region is well suited for packaged tours and special events that feature trail rides, river recreation, historic tours and agritourism.

Following abandoned rail corridors, trail users will pass through communities once supported by train traffic. Lodging, amenities and attractions are available in Lawrenceville (population - 1,438), South Hill (population 4,650), Clarksville (population 1,139) and South Boston (population 8,142), the anchors in this region.

Completed sections of the Tobacco Heritage Trail connect Lawrenceville to Brodnax (population 298) and La Crosse (population 604). These smaller towns along the Tobacco Heritage Trail provide amenities like kiosks, parking areas, trash receptacles, and seating. A signed, on-road route makes



the connection to South Hill, which provides access to the I-85 corridor.

Lake Gaston, the Kerr Reservoir and a developing water trail network bring tourists to the area for river recreation. Kerr Reservoir is flanked by Clarksville on the south, Occoneechee State Park on the north and Staunton River State Park on the west. Along with water-related amenities, these state parks offer equestrian trails and camping.

In the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Survey, residents in the Southside Planning District identified the most needed recreational opportunities as “public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use” (63 percent) and “trails for walking and hiking” (59 percent of households). Trails for wildlife watching and nature study ranked fourth (48 percent of households), followed by trails for bicycling (45 percent).

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The major trail system through this region is the Tobacco Heritage Trail. A map from the master plan is pictured on the next page. As the Tobacco

Heritage Trail has grown, support for trails in the region is growing.

Potential coalition members include bike shops and outfitters, Roanoke River Rails to Trails, friends groups of the Tobacco Heritage Trail, Virginia State Parks District 5, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, local governments, Old Dominion Resource and Development Council, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Tourism, Boy Scouts (Heart of Virginia Council).

Managed public lands along the corridor include the Tobacco Heritage Trail, John H. Kerr Reservoir/Buggs Island Lake, Staunton River State Park, Occoneechee State Park, Dick Cross Wildlife Management Area, the Ringgold Trail (part of the Tobacco Heritage Trail) and the Danville Riverwalk.

Potential interpretive themes include agritourism, plantation life, tobacco heritage, lake/river recreation, batteaus and river commerce, American Indians, arms conflicts and African-American heritage.

## Jurisdictions

### Brunswick County (and the towns of Brodnax (part) and Lawrenceville)

A total of 17,553 people live in the 566.02 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 31.01 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 4,263 or 30.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails.

### Mecklenburg County (and the towns of Clarksville, Boynton, South Hill, La Crosse, Brodnax (part) and Baskerville CDP)

A total of 32,778 people live in the 625.32 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 52.42 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 6,900 or 25.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 2 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails, hunting and fishing opportunities, a state park and Kerr Reservoir/Buggs Island Lake for recreation.

### Halifax County (and the towns of Virgilina, South Boston, Halifax and Scottsburg, Cluster Springs CDP)

A total of 36,248 people live in the 817.62 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 44.33 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 8,580 or 29.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 4 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails, a state park and river access for recreation.

### Pittsylvania County

A total of 63,194 people live in the 968.68 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 65.24 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 13,854 or 27% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported no Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides the Ringgold Trail and hunting and fishing opportunities.

### City of Danville

A total of 43,433 people live in the 42.92 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,011.89 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 10,374 or 30.40% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 8 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails for recreation.

- *No Leisure Time Physical Activity- Centers for Disease Control County-level Estimates of Leisure-time Physical Inactivity among Adults aged ≥ 20 year, 2010*
  - *Recreation and Fitness Facilities Rate per 100,000 by County-County Business Patterns 2011*
- *Population and Population Density (persons per square mile)-American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates*



## BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL STATUS

The Tobacco Heritage Trail (THT) is the most significant component of **the ideal route** through this region of Virginia. Spearheaded by Roanoke River Rails-to-Trails, Inc. (RRRT), the THT is composed of over 200 miles of rail-trail opportunities. Much of the abandoned rail corridor in the area has been acquired from the Norfolk and Southern Corporation. This long distance, multiuse corridor is a unique opportunity, not only for the communities of Virginia's southern Piedmont, but also in serving as a link in the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. While less than 20 miles of existing trail is currently in place, RRRT owns 140 miles of corridor and trail development continues with emphasis on connecting towns. Most of the trail is crushed stone, suitable for joggers, walkers, hybrid bicycles and equestrians—even carriages through a special event permit process. The section from La Crosse to Brodnax has been paved, and there is an on-road section connecting La Crosse to South Hill.

**The ideal route** begins in this region where the Virginia Beach Pipeline ends in Jarratt, connects to Emporia and continues on to existing THT trail in Lawrenceville. It then follows the southern branch of the THT through Brunswick and Mecklenburg, and the northern branch from South Boston to the Ringgold Trail in Pittsylvania County. Plans are in place to make the link from the Ringgold Trail to the Danville Riverwalk.

Existing off-road sections of the THT connect Brodnax, La Crosse and Lawrenceville (17 miles), and another 2 mile section is complete in South Boston. Many more miles of trail are planned as part of the Tobacco Heritage Trail Plan.

There is potential for a seasonal connection from Occoneechee State Park to Staunton River State Park by boat, which would provide a lovely experience on the Kerr Reservoir. This connection would require a licensed operator and a pontoon boat for hire, but may be an opportunity for a local entrepreneur as the trail grows in popularity. An on-road connection from the park to South Boston is included as an interim route, and there are plans to make an off-road connection along the Dan River.

The **interim on-road** route connects the Gateway City of Emporia to Lawrenceville, South Hill to Clarksville and South Boston. From South Boston there are portions of off-road trail in place, but an interim route to the Ringgold Trail has also been identified.

Highlighting broader regional linkages are important considerations for strengthening and enhancing connectivity. Regional trail systems that connect through here include the East Coast Greenway and US Bike Route 1.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Regional connectivity:** The Tobacco Heritage Trail makes up a significant portion of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail through this area and is a key link between the Piedmont and coastal regions.
- **The Danville-Pittsylvania Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2012 Connector Study:** Dan River to Ringgold identifies an ideal five mile connector that links the western terminus of the Ringgold Trail to the eastern branches of the Danville Riverwalk and the City of Danville.
- **Local connectivity:** The THT alignment will help to link a series of towns that serve as anchors for the trail, each with their own unique local character. South Boston, Clarksville, South Hill and Lawrenceville have the services required to serve as anchors for the trail system. Other small towns and villages in this area have similar opportunities to diversify their economic base, transportation options, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Pleasant conditions for cycling:** Connections exist on low-traffic roads throughout this region that pass through gently rolling farmland.
- **Trail development progress:** In addition to sections of completed trail connecting La Crosse to Lawrenceville, effective signage and parking is available at trailheads. The completion of these sections is building momentum for continued development.
- **South Hill/La Crosse connection:** A signed, shared roadway provides an interim connection between La Crosse and South Hill, but there

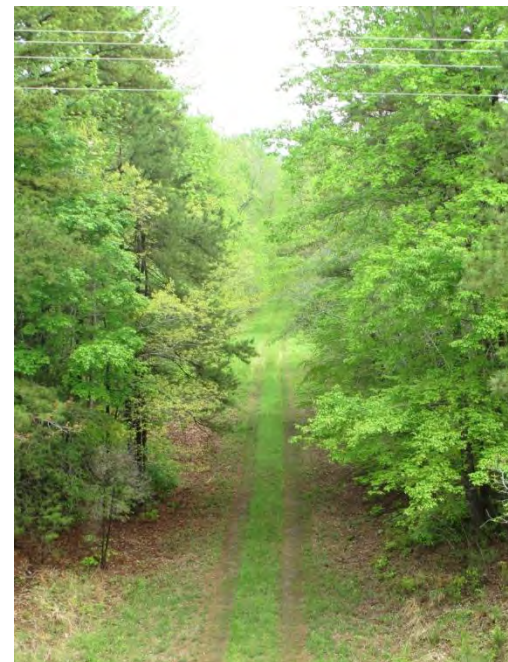
may be an opportunity to link these towns with a side path under the I-85 corridor through quiet neighborhood streets.

- Riverine connections: This region is rich in water recreation opportunities that will provide a welcome change of pace for long-distance trail users. Equipment rental and storage options will be needed to encourage other forms of recreation in the area.
- Highway access: Because of its proximity to the I-85 corridor and therefore its increased accessibility, the South Hill/La Crosse exit area could serve as a popular access point for the Tobacco Heritage Trail, and a great place to advertise the trail.
- Highlighting historical landmarks can be an important way to display the unique history and small town opportunities along the Tobacco Heritage Trail. West of South Boston, a conference center and resort occupies 650 acres along the trail, part of the original Berry Hill Plantation.
- Dan River corridor: A connection to the Danville Riverwalk will provide a paved, shared-use path entrance to this gateway city. Newton's Landing parking lot in the River District may provide a location for long-term parking and could serve as the trailhead. The Riverwalk also passes by Anglers Park and Dan Daniel Memorial Park southeast of downtown.
- Riparian corridor opportunities along the Dan River (southeast of Danville) have connectivity potential as a spur route, but likely require crossing into North Carolina for a significant distance. This spur would include rural on-road links between abandoned rail line and the Dan River (routing through the town of Milton, NC).
- Expanding and building upon the local trail network in Danville could continue stimulating downtown revitalization. There are

already over 30 miles of single track for mountain bikers, recently ranked by Singletracks ([www.singletracks.com](http://www.singletracks.com)) as 20th in the nation and best in Virginia.

## CHALLENGES

- Limited services and amenities: This region is fairly remote and services and amenities may be limited in some areas.
- Civic support and local capacity: While general plans for the development of over 100 miles of the northern segment of the Tobacco Heritage Trail are in place, currently only several miles have been constructed. In this rural area, outside support will be needed for the development and maintenance of this trail system.
- Gaps in the planned/proposed and existing trail network (see item 11 under Trunkline Trail Segments).



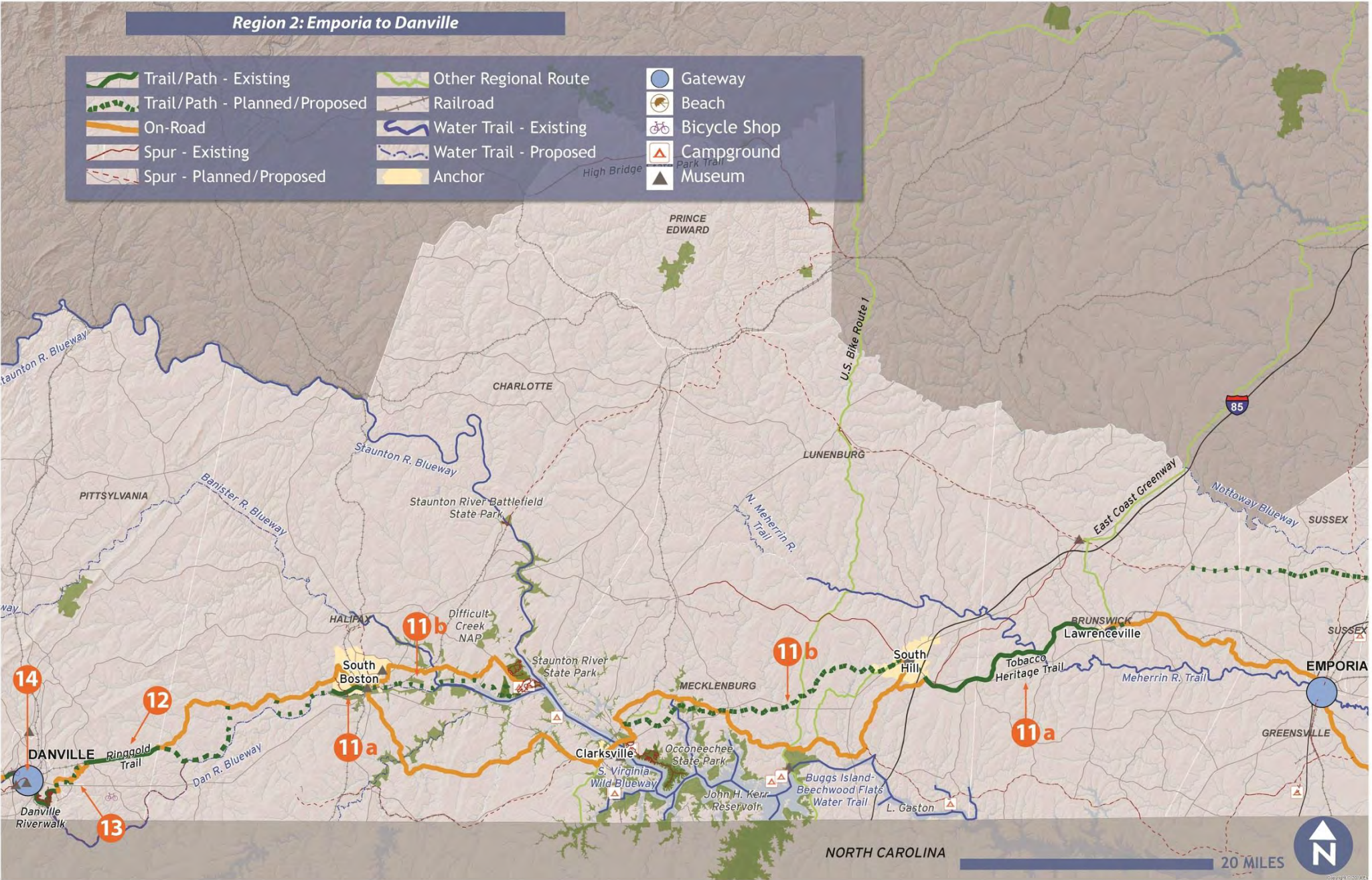
Abandoned railroad between South Hill and Boydton (THT)

## Recommendations

The following text and map summarizes the recommended route through the region.

**Region 2: Emporia to Danville**

	Trail/Path - Existing		Other Regional Route		Gateway
	Trail/Path - Planned/Proposed		Railroad		Beach
	On-Road		Water Trail - Existing		Bicycle Shop
	Spur - Existing		Water Trail - Proposed		Campground
	Spur - Planned/Proposed		Anchor		Museum



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

## TRUNKLINE TRAIL SEGMENTS

### 11. \*TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL

- The southern section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail (THT) will serve as part of the **ideal route** for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail to Clarksville, including the existing section between Lawrenceville and La Crosse. The northern route from South Boston to Ringgold will be utilized west of Clarksville. As other sections of the Tobacco Heritage Trail (from its connection to the Virginia Beach Pipeline near the I-95 corridor to its connection to the Ringgold Trail near Danville) are complete, they should be incorporated as part of the main Beaches to Bluegrass trunk line.
- Four relatively short stretches of the Tobacco Heritage Trail corridor do not have an existing or planned/proposed path or trail. These gap areas are in Brunswick County, between La Crosse and South Hill, the crossing of Kerr Lake, and Clarksville to South Boston. These are highlighted in Chapter 5 (3A-3D) as high priority projects requiring detailed corridor studies. The segments below detail the Tobacco Heritage Trail that will become part of the Beaches to Bluegrass trunk line.
  - a. Brunswick County - Lawrenceville east to Emporia/Jarratt
    - ◇ The **interim route** uses (from east to west) Brunswick Road, Rogers Road, Lewis Drive, Belfield Road, Old Stage Road, Brooks Crossing Road and Route 58 to make the connection between Emporia and Lawrenceville.
  - b. The off-road connection from La Crosse to South Hill (an on-road route is signed)
  - c. South Hill to Clarksville - Kerr Lake crossing
    - ◇ The **interim route** cross over on Business 58, which is posted at 25 mph and has sidewalks
    - ◇ From La Crosse/South Hill to Clarksville, the **interim route** uses Rocky Branch Road (642), Goodes Ferry Road (903/637), Redlawn Road (615), Phillis Road (707) to Boydton, US 58 Business, Skipwith Road (688), Wilbourne Road (701), VA 49 into Clarksville.

- d. Staunton River State Park to South Boston
  - ◇ For the **interim route**, use McDonald Road, Falkland Road Wolftrap Road, Dan River Church Road and the trail through Edmunds Park to make the connection to South Boston. From the Park, follow Plywood Trail, Eastover Drive, Vaughan Street, Hughes Street, Route 129, Route 501 and Seymour Drive to the existing section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail in South Boston.
- e. Clarksville to South Boston: Although these Towns are connected by U.S. Army Corps of Engineer flowage easements along the Dan River, an off-road trail connection will be challenging.
  - ◇ For the **interim route**, follow Route 58 to Hites Drive (735), White House Road (602), Hites Mill Road, (602), North Fork Church Road (602), East Hyco Road (744) and Huell Matthews Highway (501) into South Boston. Take a left on Seymour Drive to reach the Tobacco Heritage Trail.
- f. The undeveloped section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail from South Boston to Ringgold.
  - ◇ The **interim route** uses roads identified as bike routes on the Halifax County bike plan: From the Tobacco Heritage Trail, turn right on Lomax avenue and follow Berry Hill Road, River Road, Goodes Road, Kerns Mill Road and Kerns Church Road to the Ringgold Trailhead.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: Lawrenceville to La Crosse: 17*
- *Existing Shared-Use Path: South Boston: 2*
- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 88*
- *Gap - (no existing or planned/proposed shared-use path) On-Road interim route for the near term: 16*
- *On-Road interim route: 139*

## 12. \*RINGGOLD TRAIL

- The existing Ringgold Trail will continue the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail toward Danville.

### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 6*

## 13. RINGGOLD TO THE DANVILLE RIVERWALK

- The plans detailed in The Danville-Pittsylvania Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2012 Connector Study: Dan River to Ringgold. This detailed report identifies an **ideal route** that links the western terminus of the Ringgold Trail to a branch of the Danville Riverwalk along Stinson Drive.

- ◇ As a near term on-road **interim route**, utilize the following upon connecting from the Ringgold Trail to the existing Danville Riverwalk: Ringgold Road, Barker Road, Cane Creek Parkway, Tom Fork Road, Halifax Road and Airport Drive in connecting to the Danville Riverwalk along Stinson Road.

### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 5*
- *On-Road interim route: 5*

## 14. DANVILLE RIVERWALK

- Existing segments of the Danville Riverwalk serve as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail (only 7 of the 8.5 miles of the Riverwalk are used). From the **ideal route** detailed in the Connector Study: Dan River to Ringgold, utilize the existing Danville Riverwalk branch connecting the Stinson Drive trail to the Dan River through Anglers Park. Then utilize the existing Danville Riverwalk section along the Dan River from Anglers Park to Danville.

### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 7*

Trail spurs can serve as important connections to nearby destinations, services or other amenities and attractions. The following should be incorporated into the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as spur routes.

- A. Tobacco Heritage Trail, northern segment – another purchased section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail extends north from Purdy through the towns of Alberta, Kenbridge, Victoria and Meherrin. This segment could be connected to Keysville and possibly to High Bridge Trail State Park. These historic small towns contain services and amenities and will be great places to stop along the completed Tobacco Heritage Trail.

*a. Mileage: 106*

- B. Halifax spur north of South Boston - additionally, the Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan Phase I recommends a spur connection between South Boston and the Town of Halifax. This spur should be incorporated into the system as a spur as well.

*a. Mileage: 7*

- C. Tobacco Heritage Trail to the Dan River corridor; North Carolina spur - this spur continues west from Clarksville through Virgilina and Alton along abandoned rail corridor as part of the proposed southern segment of the Tobacco Heritage Trail into North Carolina. Virgilina (population 154) is a very small village with limited general amenities. However, it contains one of the most unique remnants of the old rail line through southern Virginia. An old train depot built in the 1890s still stands today. On-road routing or future off-road trail opportunities can connect this segment with the Dan River corridor just west of Milton, NC as well as the Danville Riverwalk. If this abandoned route is purchased by RRRT, VDOT & VDCR should coordinate with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) regarding cross-border linkages in strengthening the regional network.

*a. Mileage: 13*

- D. South Hill to Chase City—A road route connecting the existing Tobacco Heritage Trail to Chase City has been identified and signed through South Hill.

a. Mileage: 21

E. Lake Country Spur—a route following/connecting Roanoke Rapids, NC, Lake Gaston, and Kerr Reservoir, has been identified based on heat maps that depict popular cycling routes.

a. Mileage: 55

Other regional trails that intersect the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail should be highlighted with wayfinding signage and general details. Two long-distance routes providing additional connections through this region are as follows:

a. East Coast Greenway

b. US Bike Route 1

## REGION THREE Danville to Galax/Radford GENERAL CHARACTER

Outside the coastal plain cities, Danville (population 42,996) and Martinsville (population 13,733) are the two largest urban centers along the corridor west of Hampton Roads. The region once had thriving textile and furniture industries and is part of the Southern Textile Heritage Corridor stretching from Alabama to southern Virginia. Large empty warehouses and empty storefronts offer opportunities for trail-related businesses in the historic downtowns. The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail can serve as an important tool for revitalization as these cities become better known for their outdoor recreation opportunities. Existing cross-town, paths/trails that are widely used by local residents and visitors serve as demonstration projects for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. West of the old industrial towns, the landscape becomes mountainous, remote and scenic.

This region is characterized by the dramatic ascent into the Blue Ridge Mountains as the landscape transitions from the Piedmont to the mountainous terrain of southwestern

Virginia. Over 15 million people from many countries visit the Blue Ridge Parkway, a 469-mile route that crosses this region and offers beautiful vistas, recreation and visitor services and programs. New River Trail State Park, defining the western border of this region, attracts over a million visitors each year. Providing both a northern and southern connection to these linear parks provides a long-distance loop trail with many inviting spur connections. This region will attract experienced and touring cyclists who welcome the challenging terrain. Equestrians equipped to travel can take advantage of many trails on public lands. Hikers will find a range of opportunities from gentle grades on shared-use paths to steep single-track over mountains.

The larger Dan River and Smith River corridors contribute to the unique Piedmont landscape and offer wide floodplain areas ideal for trail development. Along the Smith River corridor northwest of Martinsville, remnants of the industries that flourished through this region are



exemplified in the small industrial towns of Stanleytown (population 1,422) and Bassett (population 1,100).

General amenities can be found in these towns, along the Parkway and the New River Trail, and in the Gateway cities of Radford and Galax. These cities are both known for their bluegrass music, and Galax and the towns of Stuart and Floyd are all stops along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail. The history of Blue Ridge folklife, from moonshine to mining towns, is interpreted on public lands throughout the region.

In the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Survey, residents in the West Piedmont Planning District identified the most needed recreational opportunities as “trails for walking and hiking” (58 percent of households) and “public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use” (57 percent). “Trails for bicycling” (43 percent) and trails for wildlife watching and nature study (38 percent) ranked in the top 10. A similar pattern is seen in the New River Valley: “trails for walking and hiking” (71 percent of households) and “public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use” (64 percent) ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, while trails for bicycling (46 percent) and trails for wildlife watching and nature study (45 percent) ranked in the top 10.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

In addition to a trail network under development in the New River Valley (see the region’s Bikeway, Walkway and Blueway Plan at [www.nrvpdc.org/Transportation/bwwwbw.html](http://www.nrvpdc.org/Transportation/bwwwbw.html) ) and New River Trail State Park (see [www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/new-river-trail.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/new-river-trail.shtml)), the major trail systems under development in this region are cataloged by the Dan River Basin Association at ([www.danriver.org/trails---virginia](http://www.danriver.org/trails---virginia)). The Danville Riverwalk has 8.5 miles of paved shared-use paths that set a standard for the region.

Although the Blue Ridge Parkway is not part of the trail system, there are developed areas near trail crossings. Rocky Knob and Mabry Mill (Milepost 167-176) has a working grist mill, blacksmith shop and cabin, three picnic areas, campground and extensive hiking into Rockcastle Gorge. South of Fancy Gap, the Blue Ridge Music Center (Milepost 215) has an outdoor

amphitheater, visitor center and museum and is considered “the Parkway’s premier site for interpreting and featuring the musical heritage of the region.”

Potential coalition members include bike shops and outfitters, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service (Blue Ridge Parkway), Virginia State Parks District 5, local governments, New River Land Trust, Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, Selu Conservancy, Boy Scouts (Blue Ridge Mountains Council), U.S. Corps of Engineers, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries Activate Martinsville-Henry County, The Harvest Foundation, Dan River Basin Association, Friends of Philpott, Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA, Martinsville-Henry County Children’s Nature Network, Martinsville-Henry County Coalition for Health and Wellness, Southern Virginia Recreation Authority, Riverview Rotary, Danville Regional Foundation, Martinsville-Henry County Gateway Foundation, Radford University, Virginia Tourism, Blue Ridge Bicycle Club, New River Valley Bicycle Association, Cyclists of Danville, Southern Virginia Mountain Bike Association, Henry County Bike Club, New River Valley Sierra Club, Southside Virginia Horse Council, Master Naturalists-Southern Piedmont Chapter, New River Consortium, New River Land Trust, and Partnership for Floyd.

Managed public lands along the corridor include New River Trail and Claytor Lake State Parks, Bissett Park, Radford Riverway, Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve, Blue Ridge Parkway, Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area, Fairy Stone State Park, Philpott Reservoir, Fieldale Trail and other developed sections of the Smith River Trail, Dick and Willie Passage and the Danville Riverwalk and associated parks.

Potential interpretive themes include Blue Ridge folk life, early industries (cotton, textile/furniture, moonshine, mining, hydropower), river ecology and watersheds, geology, music, and racing.

## Jurisdictions

### City of Martinsville

A total of 13,882 people live in the 10.95 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,267.37 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,913 or 26.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 3 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails for recreation.

### Henry County (Bassett, Stanleytown, Fieldale, Collinsville, Chatmoss, Sandy Level CDPs)

A total of 54,524 people live in the 382.23 square mile report area—the population density for this area is estimated at 142.65 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 13,876 or 31.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 5 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and trails, a state park, a natural area preserve, Philpott Reservoir and hunting and fishing lands for recreation.

### Patrick County

A total of 18,573 people live in the 482.97 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 38.46 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 3,816 or 24.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks, a state park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Philpott Reservoir, and fishing and hunting lands for recreation.

### Floyd County

A total of 15,156 people live in the 380.32 square mile report area—the population density for this area is estimated at 39.85 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,808 or 22.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state natural area preserve and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

### Montgomery County

A total of 93,379 people live in the 386.91 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 241.34 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 13,955 or 20.40% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 9 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks, the Huckleberry Trail, a small section of the Appalachian Trail and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### City of Radford

A total of 16,374 people live in the 9.87 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,659.15 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 2,711 or 23.90% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 2 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and the Radford Riverway.

### Pulaski County (and the towns of Pulaski and Dublin, Allisonia, Hiwassee, Draper and Fairlawn CDPs)

A total of 34,900 people live in the 319.77 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 109.14 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 7,008 or 24.20% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 4 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and two state parks, along with U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### Carroll County

A total of 30,002 people live in the 474.56 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 63.22 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 6,606 or 26.80% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides hunting and fishing opportunities, a state park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### City of Galax

A total of 6,959 people live in the 8.24 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 844.80 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 1,335 or 23.30% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides a local park and a state park.

### Wythe County (Ivanhoe CDP)

A total of 29,116 people live in the 461.70 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 63.06 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 6,555 or 27.60% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 2 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides hunting and fishing opportunities, a state park, a small section of the Appalachian Trail, and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

- *No Leisure Time Physical Activity- Centers for Disease Control County-level Estimates of Leisure-time Physical Inactivity among Adults aged ≥ 20 year, 2010*
  - *Recreation and Fitness Facilities Rate per 100,000 by County-County Business Patterns 2011*
- *Population and Population Density (persons per square mile)-American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates*



## BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL STATUS

The Danville Riverwalk represents the eastern extent of this section and the cities of Radford and Galax, connected along the New River Trail and Bike Route 76, are the western extent. The Dick and Willie Passage is Martinsville's east/west urban rail trail that almost completes the connection between Martinsville's downtown and the Smith River corridor. Proposed trails along the Smith River leading northwest present opportunities to connect existing trails in Martinsville and Henry County to Fairy Stone State Park and Philpott Reservoir.

A **southern interim road route** heads south through many woodland areas from Fairy Stone to the Town of Stuart and connects to the Blue Ridge Parkway at Bell Spur. This route follows the Parkway or parallel roads until it reaches Fancy Gap, a census-designated place that will serve as an anchor for the southern route.

A **northern interim road route** follows Route 57 and less-traveled roadways through pastoral scenery and crosses the Parkway between Rocky Knob Recreation Area and Meadows of Dan, the anchor for the northern route.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The Dan River corridor: The broad floodplain of the Dan River corridor presents trail opportunities heading southwest from Danville.
- Dick and Willie Passage extension: Extending east from the Dick and Willie Passage in downtown Martinsville, the abandoned rail corridor meanders in a southeasterly fashion to the North Carolina border, near the Dan River.
- Martinsville has plenty of visitor services and serves as an anchor for both the interim and off-road trail. The Harvest Foundation located here has been a great supporter of active living in Martinsville and Henry County.
- Rail-trail connection: An active rail line along the Dan River also connects the Dan River corridor to the abandoned rail corridor (Dick and Willie Passage) near the North Carolina border. This may

provide an opportunity to link trail sections if this line is abandoned sometime in the future.

- Proposed Smith River Trail: The Smith River corridor leading southeast of downtown Martinsville also presents a riparian trail opportunity, connecting downtown Martinsville with the Dan River. The confluence of these rivers is found in Eden, NC, near the Virginia/North Carolina border. The Martinsville-Henry County Rivers & Trails Recreational Use Plan supports trail development along the Smith River leading southeast of Martinsville as well.
- Plans are in place for an extension of the Dick and Willie Passage from its eastern terminus at Mulberry Creek east to the Smith River Sports Complex.
- Dick and Willie Passage/Smith River connection: The western terminus of the Dick and Willie Passage lies near the Fieldale Trail which runs along the Smith River. Planning for connections west of the Dick and Willie Passage are underway. Existing trails making this connection are the Textile Heritage Trail (.3 miles), Fieldale Trail (3 miles), Silverbell Trail (.6 miles), Dick and Willie Passage (4.5 miles), Uptown Connection (.6 miles)
- Martinsville to Bassett corridor: Few industrial areas remain along the Smith River corridor. An active rail line along this corridor may provide an opportunity if the line is abandoned sometime in the future.
- Smith River corridor northwest: The Smith River corridor, as well as the rail line leading northwest of downtown Martinsville, present a riverine as well as a rail-trail opportunity in connecting Martinsville northwest through Bassett and the Philpott Lake Recreation Area. In *The 2013 Small Towns Collaborative Master Plan: Philpott, Bassett, Stanleytown and Fieldale*, an ideal alignment is identified through this area.
- Fairy Stone State Park and Philpott Lake: These areas have extensive trail systems, campgrounds and other visitor services and will serve

as an anchor for the trail. Fairystone Farms, an adjacent wildlife management area, also has an extensive trail system. A well-designed path/trail could connect through this area heading toward the Blue Ridge Mountains.

- The Town of Stuart (population 1,408) has a developed section of the Mayo River Trail on the old Dick and Willie rail line. This town offers lodging, restaurants, museums and other attractions that will serve as an anchor for the southern interim on-road route. A stop along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail, there is music somewhere nearby almost every Friday or Saturday evening.
- Back-roads: Low volume on-road opportunities link the Fairy Stone State Park area to the Blue Ridge Parkway via Belcher Mountain Road, a dirt road that winds around Rocky Knob Recreation Area. The northern route passes Bob White covered bridge, one of two historic covered bridges in Patrick County.
- Riverine connections: Jack's Creek and Rock Castle Creek may be feasible for riparian trail opportunities to connect Fairy Stone State Park area with the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- Scenic landscapes: Entering the southern toe of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the landscape is very picturesque with mountain streams, stands of rhododendron and tall hardwood forest.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway: This iconic mountain top road reveals stunning vistas and landscapes. Services are provided at intervals along its length, but the northern route of the Beaches to Bluegrass Route crosses between Rocky Knob Recreation Area and Meadows of Dan, an anchor that has places to shop, lodge, and eat. For camping and hiking opportunities, head north on the Parkway to the Rocky Knob Recreation Area campground. The southern route crosses at Fancy Gap, another anchor for the trail. Devil's Den Nature Preserve at Fancy Gap has a hiking trail, and the Blue Ridge Music Center has two hiking trails near Galax.

- New River Trail State Park: This 57-mile multi-use trail offers stunning views of rock faces and the New River, with support facilities planned or developed along its length.
- The Lester Group owns extensive properties in the region and may be willing to negotiate a corridor for the off-road trail.

## CHALLENGES

- Smith River industrial areas: South of Martinsville, an industrial area straddles the Smith River leaving limited space for trail development. A golf course located along the river that is no longer in operation has significant river frontage.
- Property ownership: Diversified property ownership along the proposed Trail corridor will be a constraint in trail development; however, local service groups have had success in negotiating with property owners. Local landowners must be consulted regarding opportunities.
- Martinsville to Bassett corridor: Constraints include steep banks/limited space and a few industrial areas along the Smith River corridor. An active rail line along this corridor may provide an opportunity if the line is abandoned sometime in the future.
- Geography: Steep slopes, reservoir arms and property ownership limitations can make this region (especially the approach to the mountains) difficult to plan, and may require on-road connections. Off-road trail opportunities may be limited to narrow, natural surface trails from Bassett to the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- Blue Ridge Parkway: The Blue Ridge Parkway is generally narrow with no shoulder, principally designed to accommodate automotive traffic. However, it is a popular, iconic corridor with bicyclists and hikers that provides an optional route for connecting to Galax.
- From Fancy Gap to Galax: Unless developed as a shared-use path in road right of way, corridor acquisition for this connection will be challenging. An interim route has been defined following Frog Spur

Road, Chances Creek Road, Joy Ranch Road, Millstone Road, Sleepy Hollow Road, Mallory Road and Poplar Knob Road, Meadow Street and Grayson Street onto Main Street in Galax.

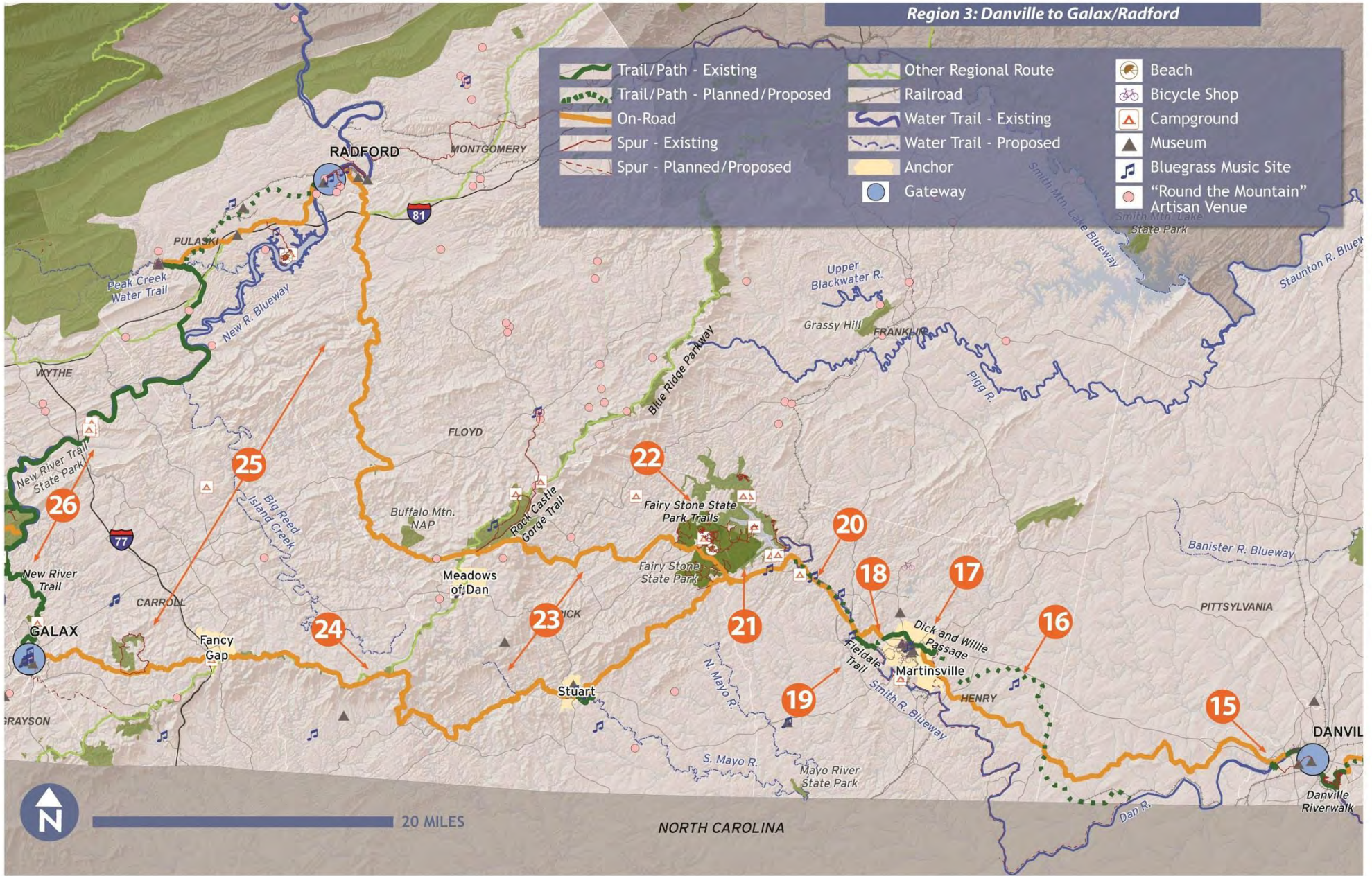
- The following are gaps in the planned/proposed and existing trail network. No trails are currently identified as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail system:
  - Danville to Martinsville - These cities were once connected by the Danville and Western railroad. Part of this corridor was used for the Dick and Willie Passage, but ownership along other sections has reverted to property owners. More study is needed to close the gaps.
  - Bassett/Smith River trails to the Blue Ridge Mountains- This section could utilize trails through the Philpott Lake Recreation Area, Fairy Stone State Park and the Rocky Knob Recreation Area. In general, off-road trail opportunities are limited and on-road connections provide an interim route.



Abandoned railroad between Martinsville and Danville now in private ownership

## Recommendations

The following text and map summarizes the recommended route through the region.



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

## TRUNKLINE TRAIL SEGMENTS

### 15. DANVILLE RIVERWALK

- The **ideal route** involves extending the Danville Riverwalk west along the Dan River through the western end of Danville as delineated by the City of Danville Parks and Recreation's Danville Riverwalk Map.
- ◊ As an on-road **interim route** in the near term, utilize the following: US 58 to Park Avenue and follow existing bike lanes along Westover Drive.

#### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 3*
- *On-Road interim route: 3*

### 16. DANVILLE TO MARTINSVILLE

- Dan River corridor to the abandoned Dick and Willie Passage corridor - No existing or planned/proposed trails are found in this section. Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity through this area. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5. The focus of this corridor study will form the ideal route and should follow the Dan River corridor, extending west from the Danville Riverwalk to the eastern extent of the abandoned Dick and Willie Passage rail line near the North Carolina border. Utility corridors should be considered in making the short link between the Dan River corridor and the abandoned Dick and Willie Passage corridor.
- Abandoned Dick and Willie (Danville and Western) railroad corridor to Martinsville. This corridor may still be used for a path/trail, but some areas will need to be acquired from willing sellers.
  - ◊ The on-road alternative that serves as the **interim route** utilizes the following from downtown Danville to downtown Martinsville: Westover Drive, Vandola Drive, Vandola Church, Oak Ridge Farms, Bachelor Hall Farm, Berry Hill Road (311), Loomfixer Lake Road (874), Horseshoe Road (875), Ed Hardy Road (621), Oak Hill Road (862), Huntington Trail, Cascade, Unicorn, Cascade Mill, Loblolly-Cascade Road, Axton Road,

Irisburg, Spruce Street, Brookdale Street, and Fisher Street to the Dick and Willie Passage.

#### Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 40*
- *On-Road interim route (Danville to Martinsville): 35*

### 17. DICK AND WILLIE PASSAGE

- The Dick and Willie Passage passes through downtown Martinsville.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 4.5*

### 18. DICK AND WILLIE PASSAGE EXTENSION

- Plans for extending the western terminus of the Dick and Willie Passage to the Smith River as supported by the Martinsville-Henry County Rivers & Trails Recreational Use Plan form the **ideal route**. Connect with the Fieldale Trail and proposed Smith River Trail.
  - ◊ As the on-road **interim route**, utilize the following: Virginia Avenue, 5th Avenue, South Belmont Street, Longview Drive, Brandon Road, Appalachian Drive and South Daniels Creek Road to North River Road.

#### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 1*
- *On-Road interim route: 3*

### 19. \*FIELDALE TRAIL

- The Fieldale Trail northwest of Martinsville, through the Fieldale community and Smith River corridor, will serve as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 2.6*

## 20. \*SMITH RIVER TRAIL - MARTINSVILLE TO PHILPOTT LAKE RECREATION AREA

- The **ideal route** alignment is delineated in the Small Towns Collaborative Master Plan: Philpott, Bassett, Stanleytown and Fieldale for the development of the Smith River Trail from its intersection with the proposed extension of the Dick and Willie Passage, connecting through the Fieldale Trail north to Philpott Lake Recreation Area.
  - ◇ The **interim route**, utilize the following: North River Road, Riverside Drive, Bullocks Drive, Fairy Stone Park Highway, Lenoir Street and Trent Hill Drive to Fairy Stone Park Highway.

### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 8+ with loop options*
- *On-Road interim route: 8*

## 21. PHILPOTT LAKE RECREATION AREA TO FAIRY STONE STATE PARK

- Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity for this segment. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5. This corridor study will focus on making a continuous connection from Philpott Lake Recreation Area trails and Fairy Stone State Park trails.
  - ◇ As the **interim route**, utilize Fairy Stone Park Highway in the near term.

### Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Shared-Use Path: 6*
- *On-Road interim route: 10*

## 22. \*FAIRY STONE STATE PARK TRAILS

- Parts of Fairy Stone State Park multi-use trails, Little Mountain Falls and Oak Hickory, are included as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

### Mileage

- *Existing Multi-Use Trail: 2*

## 23. FAIRY STONE STATE PARK TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

- No existing or planned/proposed trails are found in this section. Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity for this segment. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.
  - ◇ The **interim route** utilizes the following on-road options:
    - a. *Northern interim route: From Fairy Stone Park Highway, take Iron Bridge Road, New Hope Road, Elamsville Road, Woolwine Road, Jacks Creek Road, Millhouse Road and Belcher Mountain Road to ascend the Blue Ridge Mountains.*
    - b. *Southern interim route: From Fairy Stone Park Highway, take Route 912 or Microfilm Road (687) to Egg Farm Road, Pleasant View Drive, Bull Mountain Road, Tudor Orchard Road, Rhody Creek Loop, Woodland Drive, and Commerce Street to the Mayo River Trail through Stuart. From Commerce Street, head west to Route 8, South Main Street, Dobyys Road, 631, 644, 645, 646, 738, 773, 648, 831, 614, 608/Groundhog Mountain/Pilot View Road, Boundary Road, Keno Road, Parkside Drive, Lightning Ridge Road, to the Blue Ridge Parkway at Fancy Gap and Ranger Road.*

### Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Path/Trail: 17*
- *On-Road interim route: 17*

## 24. BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

- The Blue Ridge Parkway between its connection with Rocky Knob Recreation area and Fancy Gap can be utilized as an alternative route along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. The Parkway provides services and interpretation of the area, along with connections to spur trails and campgrounds.

## 25. BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY TO GALAX/RADFORD

- Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity for both the northern and southern routes. These sections are highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.

- ◇ Northern interim route: Follow bike routes identified for Floyd County—Buffalo Mountain Road (758), Route 221 and Indian Valley Road (787). Continue on 787 in Montgomery County to connect to U.S. Bike Route 76 and the Gateway City of Radford, a stop along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail.
- ◇ Southern interim route: As a near term on-road **interim route**, utilize lower-traffic and scenic roadways including: Frog Spur Road (goes by Foxtail Campground), Chances Creek Road, Joy Ranch Road, Millstone Road (goes by Crooked Creek Equine and Recreation Trail), Sleepy Hollow Road, Mallory Road, Poplar Knob Road, Meadow Street, East Stuart Drive to connect with the New River Trail in Galax. The City of Galax is also a stop along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail.

Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Path/Trail: 9*
- *On- interim route: 9*

**26. \*NEW RIVER TRAIL**

- The existing New River Trail segment runs from Galax to the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail intersection and through to Pulaski (5.5 miles to Fries, VA is a ‘spur’ connection).

Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 51.5 (Galax to Pulaski)*

**TRAIL SPURS AND CONNECTIVITY**

- A. To the south of Stuart and Martinsville respectively, connection opportunities exist with proposed NC state bike routes 10A and 10B.
- B. Proposed Smith River Trail south of Martinsville - This spur connection follows the Smith River corridor to the North Carolina border. It ultimately connects through Eden, NC where it meets the Dan River. The Dan River corridor can then be followed to the northeast where it connects with the recommended Beaches to

Bluegrass Trail just across the border back into Virginia. Coordinate with NCDOT. The *Martinsville-Henry County Rivers & Trails Recreational Use Plan* supports trail development south along the Smith River from Martinsville. These corridors will require further study and detail for trail development.

*a. Mileage: 41*

- C. Proposed Mulberry Creek Trail spur - This north/south spur along the east side of Martinsville would connect the existing Dick and Willie Passage to the Smith River as well as the Smith River Sports Complex.

*a. Mileage: 5*

- D. Proposed Smith River Trail spur; Bassett to Philpott Dam - This spur delineated in the Small Towns Collaborative Master Plan: Philpott, Bassett, Stanleytown and Fieldale, follows the Smith River corridor in linking Bassett and the Philpott Dam.

*a. Mileage: 6*

- E. Philpott Lake Recreation Area – Surrounding a lake with 100 miles of shoreline, this recreation area offers boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping and about 10 miles of trail.

*a. Mileage: 10*

- F. Fairy Stone State Park provides cabins, camping (including equestrian camping), a conference center, lake swimming, boat rental, picnicking, playgrounds and about 16 miles of trail.

- G. Patrick Springs: from the southern interim route, follow Route 680 into Patrick Springs. Take Route 694 and 768 to Virginia Tech’s Reynolds Homestead, a Forest Resources Research Center that offers seasonal tours of the birthplace of R.J. Reynolds.

- H. Rock Castle Gorge Trail connection: This 10.7-mile trail in the Rocky Knob Recreation Area takes you through forests, meadows, an old Chimney and Rock Castle Creek.

*a. Mileage: 11*

- I. The Town of Floyd (population 425), located six miles north of the Route 8/Blue Ridge Parkway intersection, is a small, lively town with a strong local food economy, artisan community, entertainment and general accommodations that will serve as an important regional destination along the Trail. The Floyd Country Store is a well-known Appalachian Music venue and a stop along the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail. Further spur connectivity to the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail should be explored along the upper reaches of the Dan River from Eden, NC along with other opportunities.

*a. Mileage: 6*

- J. Fries, VA - New River Trail - Follow the New River Trail southwest along the New River after its confluence with Chestnut Creek to the Town of Fries, VA. Former mill hands from Fries who made names for themselves in bluegrass music include Henry Whittier, Ernest "Pop" Stoneman, John Rector and Kelly Harrell.

*a. Mileage: 4*

- K. The Crooked Creek Equine and Recreational Trail in Carroll County between Fancy Gap and Galax offers over 10 miles of dirt road trail surrounding a wildlife management area.
- L. In Radford, the 3-mile Radford Riverway connects the City to Radford University. Plans are in place to extend the trail from Sundell Drive to Forest Avenue. There are 8 miles of mountain bike trails on 100 acres overlooking Claytor Lake Dam.
- M. Claytor Lake State Park is a short distance from U.S. Bike Route 76 and provides river recreation, cabins, camping, picnicking, playgrounds, programs and trails.
- N. Roanoke, VA - Spur north from the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in Radford to the extensive trail systems in Roanoke. Incorporate Montgomery County planned/proposed trails as shown in the *Montgomery Area Plan*. Incorporate a section of the existing Huckleberry Trail between Christiansburg and Blacksburg. Follow existing and planned/proposed segments of the Roanoke River Greenway as depicted in the Roanoke Valley-Allegheny Regional Commission's maps and plans.

*a. Mileage: 110*

Other regional trails that intersect the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail should be highlighted with wayfinding signage and general details. Two long-distance routes connect through this region and are listed below:

1. Blue Ridge Parkway - The Blue Ridge Parkway, originally designed to accommodate automobiles, attracts visitors utilizing various modes of transportation. The Blue Ridge Parkway continues to the northeast and southwest. The total mileage for this mountain top road is 469 miles.
2. Proposed NC State Bike Routes - SBR 10A and 10B connect to the Virginia border along Route 8 south of Stuart, VA and south of Martinsville, VA respectively. NC State Bike Route 4 runs east-west just south of the Virginia border all the way from the mountains to the coast. This 400-mile route passes six state parks and several other recreation areas, and connects to the Mountains to the Sea Trail at Hanging Rock State Park.

## REGION FOUR: GALAX/RADFORD TO BRISTOL

### GENERAL CHARACTER

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail alignment through this incredibly scenic area is on public lands from Galax to Damascus. Extensive trail systems already connect the Gateway City of Galax to the anchors Sugar Grove (population 758), Damascus (population 814) and Abingdon (population 8,188). Many of these connections are made possible by the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA), part of the U.S. Forest Service Mount Rogers District with approximately 200,000 acres of National Forest land, over 500 miles of trails, four Wilderness Areas, 11 campgrounds and 3 rental cabins. Most long-distance trails through the NRA are rugged, mountainous single-track, well-suited for hikers and equestrians packing their rations and equipment, although forest roads through the recreation area have been identified for cyclists. Thousands of feet of elevation change over the Iron Mountain range into the Holston River Valley will challenge the experienced outdoorsman, but also provide more solitary experiences for those seeking isolation.



The popular Virginia Creeper Trail is a stark contrast, offering a gentle descent into Abingdon on a shared-use path with towns at each end providing a variety of services. With plans in place to complete a shared-use path along Route 11 into Bristol, this region is the most connected along the entire Beaches to Bluegrass corridor.

The Town of Abingdon is home to Heartland, Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway. The Round the Mountain Artisan Network promotes the creative economy of craft in Southwest Virginia; in this region, the Countryside, Smyth County and Woven Mountains and River Bends artisan trails lead to artisan studios, galleries and farms.

In the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Survey, residents in the Mount Rogers planning district identified the most needed recreational opportunities as "public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use" (66 percent) and "trails for walking and hiking" (64 percent of households). "Trails for bicycling" (46 percent), "trails for wildlife watching and nature study" (46 percent) and trails for horseback riding (31 percent) ranked in the top 10.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

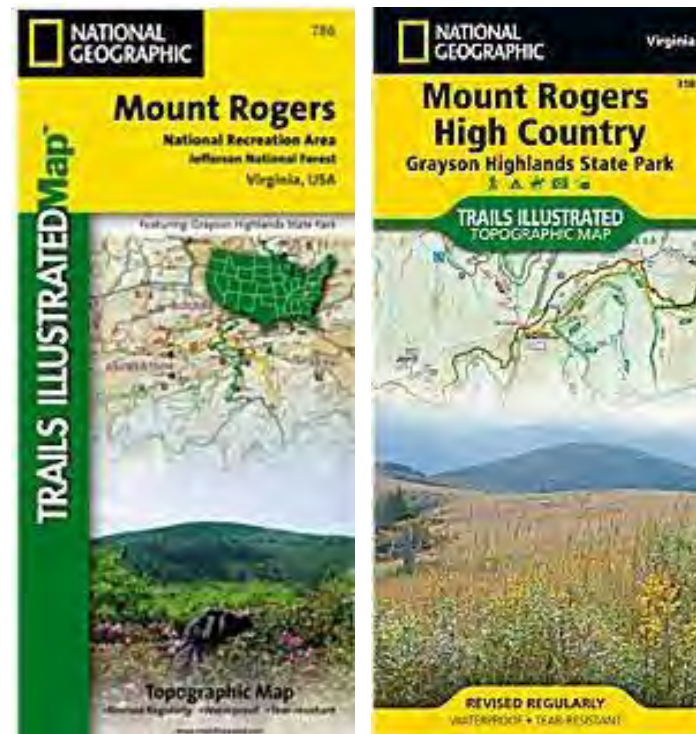
This region has extensive trail systems and detailed maps available for sale to guide visitors. National Geographic has two maps for the Mount Rogers Recreation Area, number 786 (Mount Rogers) and 318 (Mount Rogers High Country). The Virginia Creeper Trail Club has produced maps (email [virginiacreepertrailclub@gmail.com](mailto:virginiacreepertrailclub@gmail.com)) and they are available for purchase in bike shops along the trail.

Potential coalition members include bike shops and outfitters, U.S. Forest Service Mount Rogers District, Virginia State Parks District 6, local governments, Tennessee Valley Authority, The Friends of Mount Rogers,

The New River Coalition, Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, Friends of Southwest Virginia, New River Land Trust, Virginia Creeper Trail Club, Southwest Virginia Cyclists, Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA) Tri-Cities, Keep Bristol Beautiful, Bristol Family YMCA, Believe in Bristol, Iron Mountain Back Country Horsemen of Virginia/Iron Mountain Trail Riders, Boy Scouts (Blue Ridge Mountains Council), Master Naturalists-Holston River Chapter, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Tourism.

Managed public lands along the corridor: Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, South Holston Reservoir, Grayson Highlands State Park, Sugar Hollow Park and Virginia Creeper Trail.

Potential Interpretive themes include artisans, music, the first settlers and the struggle for survival, early industries, scenic views, night skies, horses and wildlife.



## Jurisdictions

### Grayson County (Town of Troutdale)

A total of 15,702 people live in the 442.06 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 35.52 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 3,623 or 27.40% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported no Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state park, a state forest, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### Smyth County (Sugar Grove CDP)

A total of 32,268 people live in the 450.81 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 71.58 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 6,047 or 23.10% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides hunting and fishing opportunities, a state park, the Appalachian Trail and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### Washington County (includes Towns of Abingdon and Damascus)

A total of 54,628 people live in the 560.83 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 97.41 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 12,697 or 28.20% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state natural area preserve, the Appalachian Trail and the Virginia Creeper Trail and the Tennessee Valley Authority and U.S. Forest Service have lands for recreation.

### City of Bristol

A total of 17,718 people live in the 13.01 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 1,361.92 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 3,480 or 24.20% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 3 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011 and the public sector provides local parks.

- *No Leisure Time Physical Activity- Centers for Disease Control County-level Estimates of Leisure-time Physical Inactivity among Adults aged ≥ 20 year, 2010*
  - *Recreation and Fitness Facilities Rate per 100,000 by County-County Business Patterns 2011*
- *Population and Population Density (persons per square mile)-American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates*

## BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL STATUS

Between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Holston River Valley is a vast expanse of mountains. Existing trail networks in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area intersect the Grayson Highlands Plateau and descend into Damascus. Four popular trails meet in Damascus, also known as Trail Town USA -- the Appalachian Trail, U.S. Bike Route 76, the Virginia Creeper Trail and the Iron Mountain Trail. Over 30 businesses serve trail users in this former mining town, providing a unique environment centered on outdoor recreation.

For bicyclists, an **on-road route** has been identified that follows the New River Trail north of Galax to Byllesby Dam, where rural roads connect to Forest Service roads that pass through Speedwell, Sugar Grove and the Town of Troutdale. The interim route joins the Virginia Creeper Trail at the Straight Branch Trailhead along Route 58 four miles east of Damascus.

The Virginia Creeper Trail connects Damascus to Abingdon, home of the famous Barter Theatre and a stop along the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. The proposed Abingdon Urban Path will connect to the planned shared-use path along Lee Highway (Route 11), that will connect

Abingdon to Bristol, providing the **ideal route** through this region. An **on-road interim** route passes between the Great Knobs and South Holston River before connecting to Bristol.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- From Galax to Abingdon: Four multi-use trails connect through this remote area; the New River Trail, Virginia Highlands Horse Trail, Iron Mountain Trail and the Virginia Creeper Trail. These can serve as the off-road backbone of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail through this region, with trail spur and expansion opportunities.
- Pulaski to Damascus (approximately): The Virginia Mountain Bike trail mostly aligns with the Iron Mountain Trail and Virginia Highlands Trail.
- Downtown Abingdon: The Town of Abingdon, Virginia 2027 Comprehensive Plan includes bicycle and pedestrian corridor recommendations through the Town of Abingdon.
- Abingdon to Bristol: North of I-81, in connecting through Sugar Hollow Park, the wide space adjacent to the rail line and Wyndale

- Abingdon to Bristol: Opportunities may exist along the chain of hills/small mountains (the ‘Great Knobs’) between Abingdon and Bristol, particularly utilizing dirt roads and faint informal pathways that currently exist. The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail concept corridor may provide a connection through this area. Such a trail would cross the land of numerous property owners. This area is scenic and wooded, and would provide an ideal natural trail. Trail opportunities may also exist along the South Holston Lake Reservoir.
- Railroad connecting Abingdon and Bristol should be considered if the line is abandoned sometime in the future.
- Abingdon to Bristol: VDOT has plans and partial funding to construct a shared-use path along U.S route 11/19 to connect Abingdon to Bristol.

## CHALLENGES

- The U.S. Forest Service is concerned that portions of the trail overlay areas with heavy use including the Virginia Creeper Trail and trail in the high country of Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. They do not want to encourage more use in areas that are already at capacity. Although bike tours and other group activity can be scheduled for non-peak seasons, if overuse continues to be an issue, it may be necessary to consider a shared-use path along Routes 221 and 58 through Independence and Mouth of Wilson to manage demand.
- The U.S. Forest Service is concerned that overlaying additional designations on existing trails will lead to modifying forest plan direction. Nothing in this plan should preclude future management actions by the Forest Service, including pursuing permits or fees along portions of the route.
- Remote areas with limited services: This southwestern region of Virginia is generally remote with limited services. The Virginia

Highlands Horse Trail and Iron Mountain Trail will have limited access to amenities.

- Geography: This region is comprised of rugged mountainous terrain, and certain sections of trail will be challenging. Trail development opportunities will be limited in some areas by steep slopes and other geographical constraints.
- Gaps in the trail network:
  - A connection from the proposed shared-use path along Route 11/19 to the existing Mendota Trail in Bristol.

## Recommendations

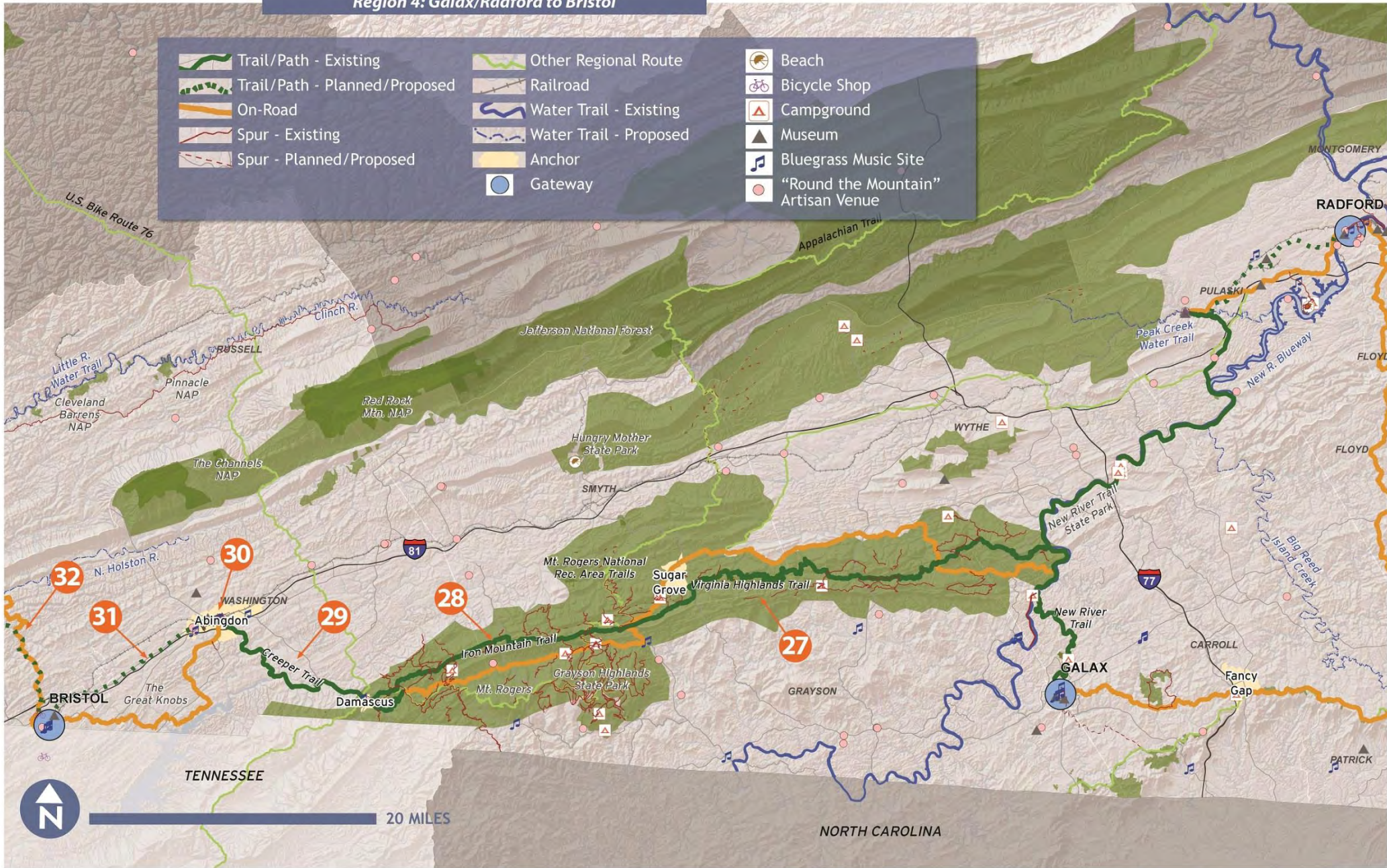
The following text and map summarizes the recommended route through the region.



Grayson County: Iron Mountain Trail

**Region 4: Galax/Radford to Bristol**

	Trail/Path - Existing		Other Regional Route		Beach
	Trail/Path - Planned/Proposed		Railroad		Bicycle Shop
	On-Road		Water Trail - Existing		Campground
	Spur - Existing		Water Trail - Proposed		Museum
	Spur - Planned/Proposed		Anchor		Bluegrass Music Site
	Gateway		"Round the Mountain" Artisan Venue		



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

## TRUNKLINE TRAIL SEGMENTS

### 27. \*+VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS HORSE TRAIL

The existing Virginia Highlands Horse Trail meets the New River Trail north of Buck Dam. It intersects with U.S. Bike Route 76 (Route 16) at Raccoon Branch Campground and meets the Appalachian Trail and the Iron Mountain Trail further west on Hurricane Mountain.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Multi-Use Trail: 50*

### 28. \*+IRON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

The existing Iron Mountain Trail segment runs from its intersection with the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail to its western terminus in Damascus as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail trunk line. Develop path/trail facilities along East 4th Street to South Railroad Avenue to Sundog Outfitters and the intersection with the Virginia Creeper Trail to make the short link through Damascus.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Multi-Use Trail: 16*
- ◇ For the interim on-road route take the New River Trail to Byllesby Dam. Head east on 602 (Ivanhoe Road) to Brush Creek Road, Cripple Creek Road, Street Peters Road, Cedar Springs Road, Dry Road, Camp Road, Cedar Springs Road (USBR 76 to Damascus from here), Skemp Creek Road, Sugar Grove Highway, Troutdale Highway, Fairwood Road, Laurel Valley Road, Konnarock Road and the Virginia Creeper Trailhead at Straight Branch off US 58.
- ◇ As a more direct but higher-traffic on-road **interim route**, take Route 58 through Independence and Volney to join the Virginia Creeper Trail at Whitetop.

#### Mileage

- *On-Road interim route: 64*

### 29. \*VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL

Incorporate the existing Virginia Creeper Trail segment from Straight Branch east of Damascus to its northwestern terminus in Abingdon.

#### Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 19.5*

### 30. ABINGDON URBAN PATH

Follow the proposed Abingdon Urban Path to connect the Virginia Creeper Trail to the proposed shared-use path along US 11/19.

#### Mileage

- *Proposed Shared-Use Path: 1.5*

### 31. ABINGDON TO BRISTOL

Continue implementing a shared-use path along US 11/19 to connect Abingdon with Bristol. Incorporate recommendations from The Town of Abingdon, Virginia 2027 Comprehensive Plan. In Bristol, develop a corridor study to recommend appropriate path/trail facilities.

- ◇ The **interim route** utilizes an on-road route through the 'Great Knobs' and along South Holston Lake in connecting from Abingdon to Bristol, including the following in the direction of Abingdon to Bristol: Cummings Street, Vances Mill Road, Spoon Gap Road, Green Springs Church Road, Lake Road, County Park Road, Green Springs Road, Shell Road, Cleveland Road, Mock Knob Road, Hearst Road, Old Jonesboro Road, Denton Valley Road, Country Park Road, Green Spring Road, Kings Mill Pike, Shakesville Road, Kings Mill Pike, Harlow Place, New Hampshire Avenue, Madison Street, Norfolk Avenue, Mary Street, Martin Luther King Boulevard and State Street to downtown Bristol.

#### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 16*
- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 3*
- *On-Road interim route: 23*

## TRAIL SPURS AND CONNECTIVITY

Trail spurs can serve as important connections to nearby destinations, services or other amenities and attractions. The following should be incorporated into the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as spur routes.

- A. Mount Rogers National Recreation Area trails - Numerous trails in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area connect to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail (via the Iron Mountain Trail and Virginia Highlands Trail). Highlight all Mount Rogers National Recreation Trails and Grayson Highlands State Park Trails as spur opportunities along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

*a. Mileage: Varies by trail*

- B. Abingdon to Bristol - Extending from Abingdon's plans for the development of the Reedy Creek Greenway, develop a corridor study to continue a path/trail between the rail corridor and Wyndale Road/Wallace Pike toward Sugar Hollow Park and Bristol. A path/trail connecting the Overmountain Victory Trail, a new Arts Incubator and Eberhart Park to the existing Creeper Trail is under development.

*a. Mileage: 15*

- C. Proposed connection from Mountain City, TN to the Virginia Creeper Trail in Damascus

Other regional trails that intersect the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail should be highlighted with wayfinding signage and general details. Three long-distance routes connect through this region and are listed below:

- ◇ Appalachian Trail
- ◇ US Bike Route 76
- ◇ Virginia Mountain Bike Trail

- ◇ Proposed NC State Bike Route System - SBR 11 Mountain Route - connection with the Virginia Creeper Trail.

## REGION FIVE: BRISTOL TO CUMBERLAND GAP

### GENERAL CHARACTER

The Gateway City of Bristol, the “Birthplace of Country Music” on the border of Virginia and Tennessee appropriately welcomes visitors to this region – home to music legends like Ernie Ford, Dock Boggs, the Carter Family and a host of practicing bluegrass musicians who perform year-round at special events. The Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail, which begins in Franklin County and passes through many of the places highlighted along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, promotes a number of venues.

The trail through this region passes over Clinch Mountain and through the beautiful Clinch River Valley before climbing over the Powell and Stone Mountain ranges. The Clinch River is considered one of the most ecologically diverse river systems in North America, and there are efforts underway to develop a linear park along it through Russell, Scott and Tazewell counties.

The Wilderness Road Trail leading into Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in the far southwestern reach of Virginia represents the western extent of this region and the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in Virginia, although trail users may want to utilize services in the Town of Cumberland Gap, Tennessee (population 494) or Middlesboro, Kentucky (population 10,334) through connections from the Historical Park. Wilderness Road follows the route taken by Daniel Boone and thousands of pioneers into the frontier territories.

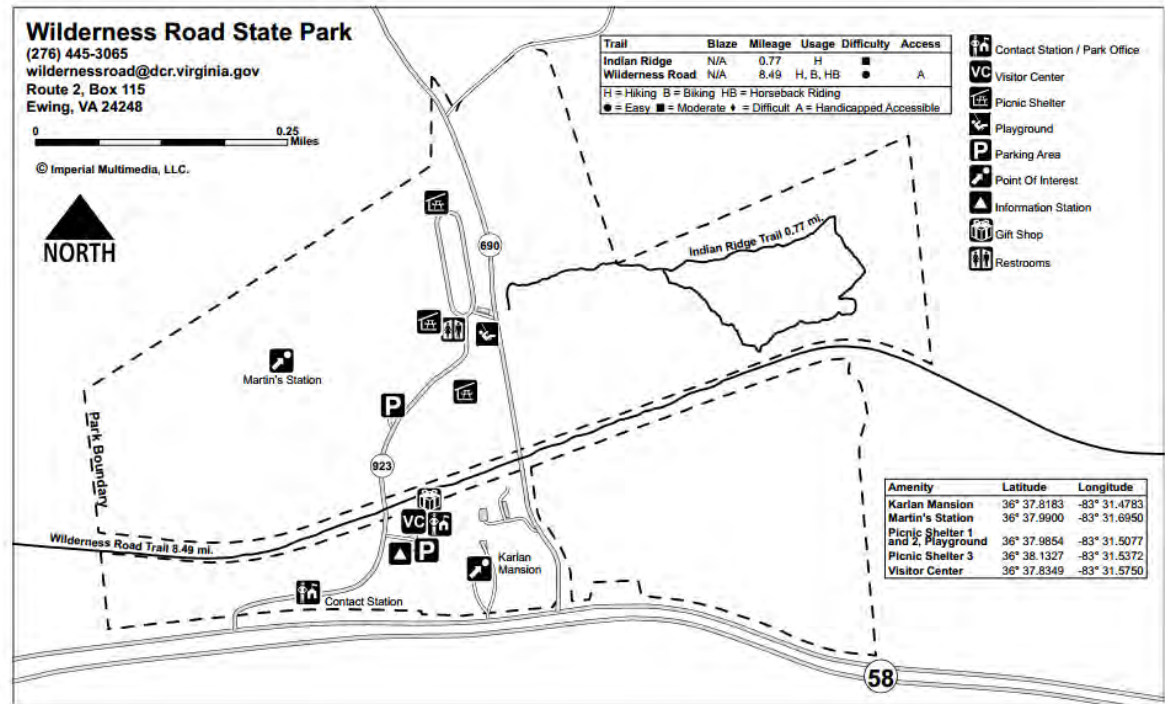
This region is home to the Clinch Ranger District of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. This ranger district is responsible for 92,000 acres of federal lands and 155 miles of trail in Southwestern Virginia. There are many abandoned railroad lines that can be found in the area, developed for timber and mineral extraction until resources dried up. Some of these old lines could become important links in the off-road route.

Mortality rates are higher in this coalfield region than in many other parts of the state. The Southwest Virginia Healthy Authority and the Healthy Appalachia Institute at UVA's College at Wise developed a *Blueprint for Health and Health-Enabled Prosperity* that included this recommendation: "enhance, foster or create connecting multi-use (non-motorized) trails in all our communities." A *Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth* supports regional trail initiatives because they are promoting small business development and helping diversify the economy.

In the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Survey, residents in the Lenowisco planning district identified the most needed recreational opportunities as "public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use" (72 percent) and "trails for walking and hiking" (66 percent of households). "Trails for wildlife watching and nature study" (57 percent), "trails for bicycling" (48 percent) and "trails for off-road motorized vehicles (40 percent) ranked in the top 10.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The U.S. Forest Service Clinch Ranger District has a detailed map of trails and campsites available through Trails Illustrated (Map 793). As with other State Parks along the corridor, a trail map and other park information is available online at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/).



Potential coalition members include the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Spearhead Trails (Southwest Region Recreation Authority), Tennessee Valley Authority, Virginia State Parks District 6, local governments, Friends of Southwest Virginia, Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, The Clinch Coalition and the Clinch River Valley Initiative, Nature Conservancy, Boy Scouts (Sequoyha and Johnson City Councils), Lonesome Pine District, Pine Mountain Conference, Virginia Tourism, Healthy Appalachia Institute and Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance, and Mendota Rails to Trails.

Managed public lands along the corridor include Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Wilderness Road State Park, USFS Clinch District, Natural Tunnel State Park, Alleghany Range Park and Big Cherry Reservoir.

Potential interpretive themes include frontier living (Daniel Boone, Wilderness Road, Martin's Raid), Revolutionary War, coal heritage, Melungeons, Cherokee, music, biodiversity, river valleys, and Trail of the Lonesome Pine.

## Jurisdictions

### Russell County

A total of 28,870 people live in the 473.70 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 60.95 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 8,628 or 36.90% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011, and the public sector provides a state natural area preserve. The B2B trail passes through the lower corner of Russell County for less than four miles.

### Scott County (Towns of Duffield, Dungannon, Nickelsville)

A total of 23,210 people live in the 535.39 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 43.35 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 5,980 or 30.80% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 2 Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides local parks and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### Wise County (and Town of Big Stone Gap)

A total of 41,505 people live in the 403.08 square mile report area --the population density for this area is estimated at 102.97 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 11,789 or 36.60% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported 1 Recreation and Fitness Facility in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state park and U.S. Forest Service lands for recreation.

### Lee County (Town of Pennington Gap and Ewing, Rose Hill and Dryden CDPs)

A total of 25,405 people live in the 435.40 square mile report area--the population density for this area is estimated at 58.35 persons per square mile. Within the report area, 6,425 or 31.50% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity. County Business Patterns reported no Recreation and Fitness Facilities in 2011; however, the public sector provides a state park, U.S. Forest Service lands and the national historical park for recreation.

- *No Leisure Time Physical Activity- Centers for Disease Control County-level Estimates of Leisure-time Physical Inactivity among Adults aged ≥ 20 year, 2010*
- *Recreation and Fitness Facilities Rate per 100,000 by County-County Business Patterns 2011*
- *Population and Population Density (persons per square mile)-American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year estimates*

## **BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL STATUS**

Apart from the gap between the Gateway City of Bristol and the anchoring Town of Dungannon, a connected trail system through this region is mostly realized through the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service and volunteers on the Clinch Ranger District. Another gap exists between Dryden and Wilderness Road State Park, but there may be existing social trails making this connection that could be formalized and brought under a management entity.

The abandoned Mendota rail corridor as well as park and trail possibilities in the Clinch River Valley provide opportunities to connect Bristol to the Clinch Ranger District of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- The Mendota Trail: Although legal issues of ownership have to be resolved, an abandoned rail corridor northwest of Bristol provides a direct link to the Clinch Valley.
- County Road 612 presents an opportunity to cross the Clinch Mountain range from the Mendota area toward the Clinch River Valley. This unpaved road is well maintained, very scenic and very lightly traveled. Once at the ridge line, a small path and a short hike connects County Road 612 to a look-out tower.
- The Clinch River Valley Initiative: The Clinch River Action Group is currently spearheading an initiative to develop a linear park and water trail along the Clinch River corridor. This new linear park would cover much of the Clinch River corridor through Russell, Wise and Scott counties. For the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail network, the broad floodplain of the Clinch River corridor presents an excellent trail opportunity for trail development. An active rail line currently traverses this corridor and may provide opportunities if the rail line is abandoned sometime in the future.
- Clinch River Valley toward Dryden and Pennington Gap: Dirt roads such as State Routes 647, 648 and 650 near Natural Tunnel State Park as well as forest roads can serve as connectors among the scenic landscapes from the Clinch River Valley toward Dryden and Pennington Gap along **the interim route**. Riparian and rail-trail opportunities should also be considered alongside US 23.
- Clinch Ranger District National Forest Roads and Trails: Existing trail networks and forest roads through this area offer excellent opportunities for connecting the **ideal route**.



- The cities of Big Stone Gap and Norton provide anchors for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers who use the **ideal route** through the Clinch Ranger District.
- For bicyclists sharing the roadways, the towns of Dungannon, Duffield and Pennington Gap provide anchors along the interim route.
- For Bluegrass aficionados, consider a detour from Mendota down State Route 614 (A.P. Carter Highway) to Hiltons and the Carter Family Fold for a Saturday evening show. This 1,000 seat music venue celebrates the rich musical heritage brought by early settlers to the region. Continue on Route 614/421 to reach services in Weber City and Gate City, located in the historic Moccasin Gap, a passage for Cherokee and Shawnee years before early settlers passed through on their way to the frontier.
- Big Stone Gap to Cave Springs Recreation Area: Through Big Stone Gap, the five-mile greenbelt, quiet back roads and forest service trails lead to the Stone Mountain Trail system, connecting the two largest parts of the Clinch Ranger District.
- Developed and undeveloped trails along the Stone Mountain ridge line as well as Cumberland Mountain ridge line present excellent connection opportunities.
- Wilderness Road State Park and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park trails: The 8-mile state park trail leads to 50 miles of trail within the national historical park, connecting Virginia to Kentucky and Tennessee.
- Sections of trail through rural Russell, Scott, Wise and Lee counties will have limited access to amenities and proper planning will be needed to obtain supplies along the trail.
- Gaps in the trail:
  - Mendota to George Washington and Jefferson National Forests - This is a scenic and essential connection for the western Trail sections. No existing trails or plans exist but a future Clinch River Linear Park could directly tie into the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.
  - Big Stone Gap - Sandwiched between segments of the Clinch Ranger District, this lively small town will need a trail connection through downtown, linking to the proposed Powell River Trail and the existing Stone Mountain Trail. The existing Greenbelt trail can serve as a spur, southwest through town.
  - Dryden to the Wilderness Road - Some gaps exist between Dryden and Wilderness Road State Park, although a network of social trails may provide a connection. Further planning will be needed to complete a trail system for all user groups.

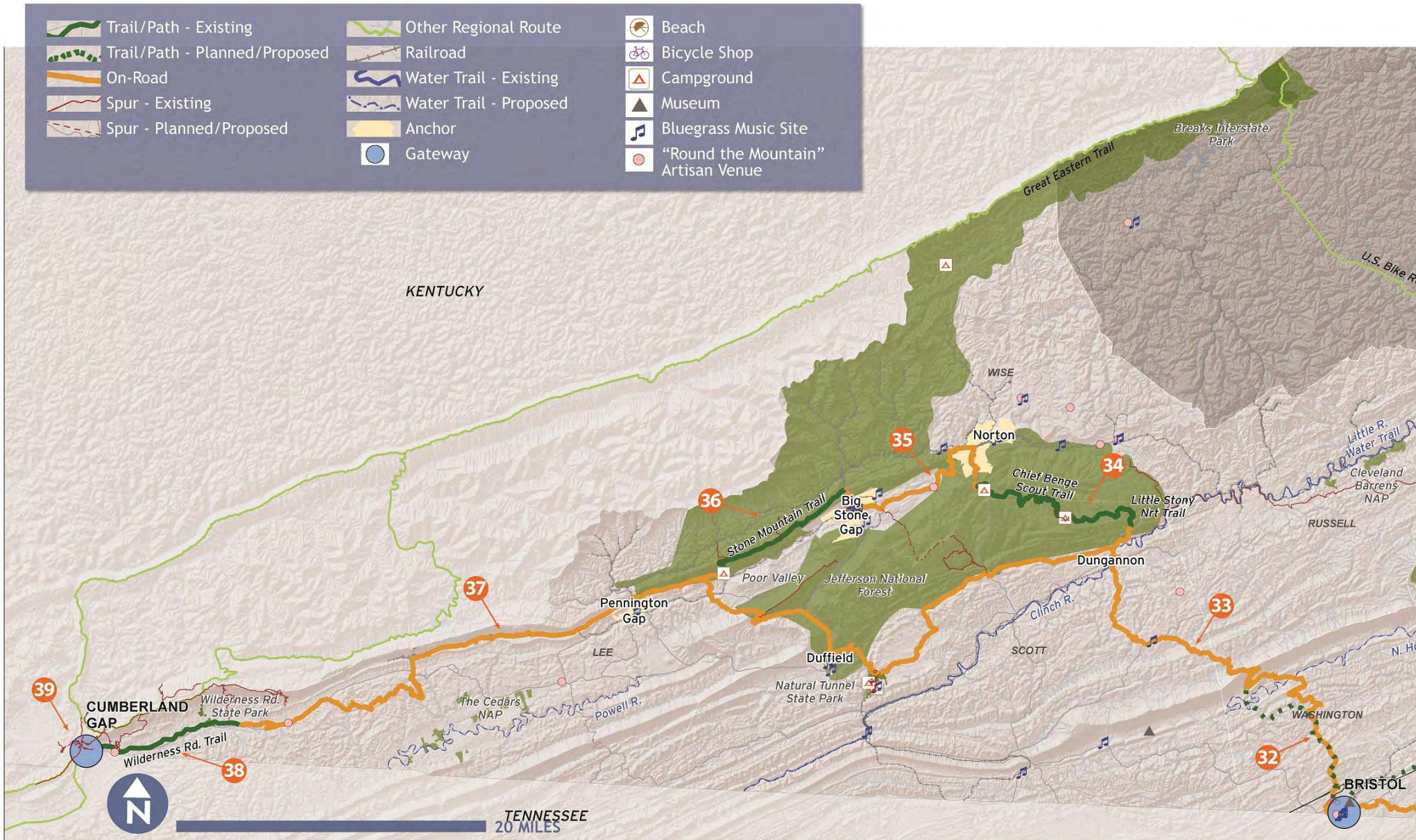
## Recommendations

The following text and map summarizes the recommended route through the region.

## CHALLENGES

- Within the Clinch Ranger District, a portion of the route passes through the Stone Mountain Wilderness area. In Wilderness areas, mountain bikes and mechanized equipment are prohibited and groups are limited to 10 persons. Bicyclists and larger groups should plan to use the interim route through this area.

## Region 5: Bristol to Cumberland Gap



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

*\*Trails that currently accommodate horseback riding*

## TRUNKLINE TRAIL SEGMENTS

### 32. \*MENDOTA TRAIL

- Develop a detailed corridor study for the abandoned Mendota rail line to identify focused opportunities and constraints for a trail along this segment. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.
  - ◇ As an **interim route**, utilize: From downtown Bristol, take State Street, Peter Street, Randolph Street, Elkton Lane, Commonwealth Avenue Extension, Island Road, Campground Road, Cowan Road, Haskell Station Road, Benhams Road, Wolf Run Road, Lone Star Road, Walnut Grove Road, Nordyke Road, Barnrock Road and Mendota Road, to Clinch Mountain and Route 612.

#### Mileage

- *Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 14*
- *On-Road interim route: 23*

### 33. MENDOTA TO GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST

- Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity connecting Mendota to Dungannon. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.
- In the Clinch River Valley Initiative Action Plan, recommendations include the development of a Clinch River Linear Park that will likely include a trail system. This could be a key link for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail trunk line.
  - ◇ As an **interim route**, utilize an on-road connection from Mendota, over Clinch Mountain (via 612) and through the Clinch River Valley via Nickelsville and Dungannon to George Washington and Jefferson National Forests to traverse the valley, including the following roads: Route 802/Mendota Road, Route 612, Route 613, Route 612, Nickelsville Highway through downtown Nickelsville, Twin Springs Road, Sinking Creek Highway (Dungannon) and Route 72 in connecting to

the Little Stony NRT trailhead in George Washington and Jefferson National Forests just north of Dungannon.

#### Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Shared-Use Path: 22*
- *On-Road interim route: 22*

### 34. \*GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST TOWARD BIG STONE GAP OR DRYDEN

- The George Washington and Jefferson National Forest trails identified as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail trunk line include the length of the Little Stony NRT Trail (equestrian not permitted) and parts of the Chief Bengé Scout Trail (equestrian permitted) and the High Knob Loop Trail (equestrian permitted).

#### Mileage

- *Existing Multi-Use Trail: 18.7*

- ◇ From High Knob, follow High Knob Road, National Forest Road SW and Route 619 to 11th Street NW in Norton. To continue to Big Stone Gap, follow Main Avenue SW, Powell Valley Road, Preston Road, East Stone Gap Road, East Spring Street and Wood Avenue to connect to Big Stone Gap. To continue on the trail, take East 5th Street, Powell Avenue, River Street and Roaring Branch Road to connect to Stone Mountain Trail. Plans are in place to connect Big Stone Gap to Appalachia along the Powell River Trail, which will be used to make the connection to Stone Mountain.
- ◇ Due to the challenging terrain through George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and limitations on connectivity to Big Stone Gap, as the alternative **interim route**, utilize the following on-road option from Dungannon to Dryden and the Poor Valley: Route 653, Route 722, Route 649, Route 650, Route 871 (Sunbright Highway), Route 653, Route 775, Route 654, Route 23, Tito Siding lane, Lovelady

Gap Road, Route 619 into Dryden, Dryden Loop Road, Route 726 to Route 621 in the Poor Valley near the southern terminus of the Stone Mountain Trail.

Mileage

- *On-Road interim route: 40*

**35. BIG STONE GAP TO THE STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL**

- While the Big Stone Gap Greenbelt provides a northeast/southwest link through town, no existing or planned trails are found along the corridor to connect the eastern and western sections of the Clinch Ranger District through the town except for the proposed Powell River Trail. Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity for this connection. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5.

Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Path/Trail: 12*

**36. \*STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL - GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST**

- The existing Stone Mountain Trail in George Washington and Jefferson National Forests west of Big Stone Gap is included as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. This trail follows the Stone Mountain ridge line toward Cumberland Mountain. Although this trail is primarily multi-use, the entrance near Big Stone Gap is a series of stairs that will be challenging for equestrians and mountain bikers, and a portion of the trail passes through wilderness where these uses are forbidden.

Mileage

- *Existing Multi-Use Trail: 14.32*

**37. STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL TO THE WILDERNESS ROAD TRAIL**

- Develop a detailed corridor study to identify a path/trail opportunity for this segment. This section is highlighted as a priority project in Chapter 5. The Stone Mountain ridge line, Cumberland

ridgeline and the Poor Valley present possibilities to be further examined.

- ◇ As an **interim route**, utilize the Poor Valley, including the following roads: SR 621, SR T-664, Scott Hollow Road, SR 676/Boones Path Road, SR 667, SR 676/Patchwork Road, SR 671, SR 671 and Drive Thomas Walker Road/US 58 Business, Beulah Road (cross US 58), Chadwell Station Road, connect to the eastern terminus of the Wilderness Road Trail.

Mileage

- *Gap - No Existing or Planned/Proposed Path/Trail: 42*
- *On-Road interim route: 42*

**38. \*WILDERNESS ROAD TRAIL TO CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

- The existing Wilderness Road Trail is included as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. This connects to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.

Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 8*

**39. \*CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK TRAILS**

- The existing Boone and Colston Trails in Cumberland Gap National Historical Park serve as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. These connect to other park hiking trails that branch into Kentucky and Tennessee. Follow a park hiking trail 3/4 of a mile to Cumberland Gap and the Kentucky/Virginia state line. This is the western terminus of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, although the Town of Cumberland Gap in Tennessee provides services to trail users.

Mileage

- *Existing Shared-Use Path: 3*

## TRAIL SPURS AND CONNECTIVITY

- A. Natural Tunnel State Park - from the on-road interim route (connect utilizing SR 646) - include as spur connection.
  - a. *Mileage: several options*
- B. Spur following Forest Service Roads connecting the interim route along Route 653 to Big Cherry Reservoir and Big Stone Gap along the South Fork of the Powell River. Follow Route 619 to Straight Fork Ridge Trail (1.8 mile multi-use trail) to Big Cherry Road/Sentry Road, to Crackers Neck Road (Route 616), to River Road to East Stone Gap Road to Big Stone Gap.
- C. Spur from Big Stone Gap to the Big Stone Gap Greenbelt.
  - a. *Mileage: 2*
- D. Cumberland Gap National Historical Park - Incorporate the trail network (mostly hiking) which includes spur loop opportunities as well as branches to regional trails in Kentucky and Tennessee.
  - a. *Mileage: Several*
- E. Study an alternate route from Mendota through Hiltons and Gate City to Natural Tunnel State Park.

Other regional trails that intersect the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail should be highlighted with wayfinding signage and general details. Three long-distance routes connect through this region and are listed in the following column:

- ◇ *Great Eastern Trail*
- ◇ *Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail (KY)*
- ◇ *Spearhead Trails (non-motorized portions)*

## Moving toward Implementation

This chapter highlighted strategic opportunities for linking existing and developing trail networks and identified opportunities and constraints through gap sections. The existing conditions section suggested potential actors who could drive the implementation process. Together, the existing conditions analysis and trail recommendations lead to implementation found in Chapter 5, which also focuses on bridging the gaps identified in this chapter.

These recommendations are a product of a range of inputs including public involvement, stakeholder meetings, aerial imagery review, existing trail networks and field analysis. Rail trails could link Hampton Roads to the countryside and the expansive Tobacco Heritage Trail. Existing trails through the urban centers of Danville and Martinsville are raising awareness about the many benefits of a trail network. State and federal parks through the rugged mountains of southwestern Virginia currently offer extensive multi-use trail opportunities through some of Virginia's most scenic natural areas. Momentum building for the Spearhead Trail network and Clinch River linear park offer more opportunity to build on this network.

While these recommendations highlight a more cohesive way forward, challenges remain in completing gaps where no existing trail or trail plans can be found. It will take a coordinated effort across several communities to bridge these gaps and complete the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. On many levels, the trail's development will bring southern Virginia together.

# Chapter 5: Implementation

## Overview

With a large network of existing trails and a developing network of planned and proposed trails, Virginia is well-positioned to link scenic landscapes, unique geographies and cultural features with a series of epic trails. These trails will connect communities, local economies and opportunities for outdoor adventure across the state. This section details strategies and actions that will guide this momentum for trail development toward concrete results, benefiting both present and future generations. The contents of this chapter include:

1. Priority Trail Planning and Development
2. Strategy and Action Steps
3. Funding and Resources

## Priority Trail Planning and Development

The first priority in keeping that momentum is to **implement projects** and trails that have already been planned and designed. The following table breaks down the number of trail miles that are planned and proposed, described in detail in the previous chapter

Another priority is to **focus on trail systems that pass through population centers**. Completed and signed segments through the gateways and anchors will raise the visibility of the statewide trail and provide demonstration projects for measuring success. Having paths/trails that are designed, marked, connected and maintained through the heart of each city, town, village and crossroad community along the corridor will be one of the best ways to advertise and expose the general population to this new component of southern Virginia's infrastructure.

Creating a highly accessible and highly visible trail will encourage communities to integrate activity into daily routines. The people who benefit from regular use of the trail will have a vested interest in closing the

gaps. If trail development through the population centers is successfully completed, it will allow local residents and visitors alike to commute across town, experience beautiful country trails and explore beyond their neighborhoods.

As the mileage of completed trail increases, it will be essential to **plan for the gaps** in the system to link trail already on the ground. The gaps are summarized in the Table and Map on the following pages.

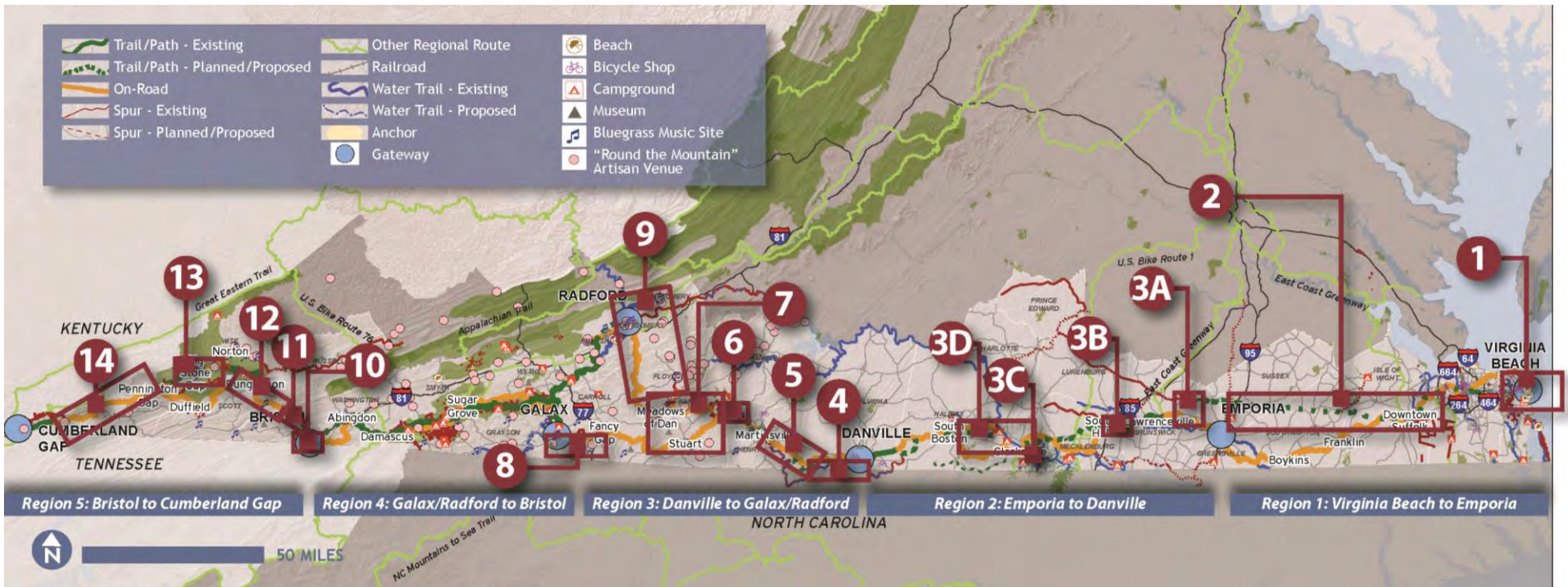
<u>Level of Completion</u>	<u>Mileage</u>
<i>Existing Paths/Trails</i>	237.07
<i>Planned/Proposed Paths/Trails</i>	214
<i>Gaps (no existing or planned/proposed paths/trails)</i>	171.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>622.17</b>

The map below depicts these gaps, highlighted in red boxes and detailed throughout the chapter. Bridging these gaps is an essential next step in trail development.

Note - DCR Division of Natural Heritage: Over 200 natural resources intersect the proposed trail corridor. Proponents of trail projects should contact the Division of Natural Heritage for more information on rare, threatened or endangered species.

**Table 5.2: Gaps along the Beaches to Bluegrass Corridor**

<u>Gap</u>	<u>Region</u>
1. Norfolk-Virginia Beach Light Rail Corridor	1
2. Norfolk and Western/Virginia Beach Water Pipeline Corridor	1
3. Tobacco Heritage Trail Gaps	2
4. Pittsylvania County - Dan River	3
5. Martinsville/Henry County - Dick and Willie Passage	3
6. Philpott Lake Recreation Area To Fairy Stone State Park	3
7. Fairy Stone State Park to the Blue Ridge Mountains	3
8. Blue Ridge Parkway to Galax	3
9. Floyd County	3
10. Downtown Bristol	4/5
11. Mendota Trail	5
12. Clinch River Valley	5
13. Big Stone Gap	5
14. George Washington and Jefferson National Forests to Wilderness Road State Park and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park	5



The following is a link to this full report, large format maps, and a google map of the trunk line: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/trailb2b.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml)

The following sections of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail are high priorities in making the vision of a cross-state trail a reality. Each prioritization segment is described from east to west.

## 1. NORFOLK-VIRGINIA BEACH LIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Incorporate plans for a rail with trail path adjacent to the proposed extension of the light rail line between Norfolk and Virginia Beach. This route runs from the existing end of the rail line to Birdneck Road in Virginia Beach making an essential connection between the Norfolk Avenue Trail and the Elizabeth River Trail.
  - Mileage: 12

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:

- Hampton Roads Transit; Cities of Virginia Beach and Norfolk; Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization; VDOT Hampton Roads District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Tidewater Bicycle Association





## 2. NORFOLK AND WESTERN/VIRGINIA BEACH WATER PIPELINE CORRIDOR

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study from Suffolk to Jarrett, focusing on the abandoned Norfolk and Western rail corridor and Virginia Beach water pipeline corridor that have been considered for trail development. These overlapping corridors offer significant right-of-way offering a strong opportunity for the development of a long-distance path/trail.
  - Mileage: 51

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - City of Virginia Beach Water Department; Hampton Roads and Crater PDCs; City of Suffolk; Counties of Isle of Wight, Southampton and Sussex; VDOT Hampton Roads District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners



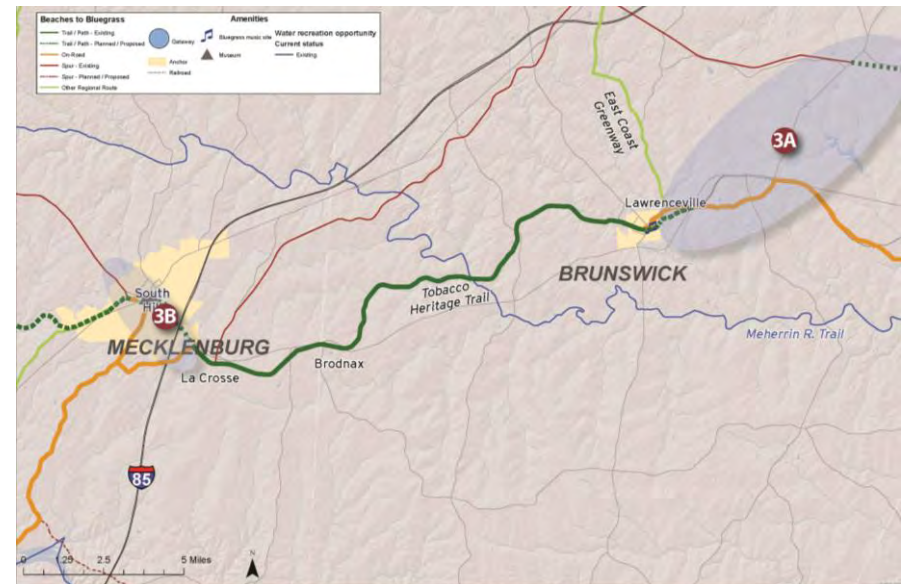
## 3. TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL GAPS

The following recommendations address four locations along the Tobacco Heritage Trail as part of the recommended Beaches to Bluegrass Trail trunk line.

### 3A. BRUNSWICK COUNTY CONNECTION:

#### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study. Currently no existing trails or plans are in place for connecting the existing section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail in Lawrenceville to Emporia or Jarratt. Further study is needed to identify an alignment for a path/trail.
  - Mileage: 9



### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - Town of Lawrenceville; Town of Jarratt; City of Emporia; Greenville County; Brunswick County; Southside PDC; Crater PDC VDOT Richmond District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Roanoke River Rails to Trails (RRRT)

### 3B. LA CROSSE TO SOUTH HILL CONNECTION:

#### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION (MAP ON PREVIOUS PAGE)

- Develop a detailed corridor study to explore the potential for a path/trail along US 58 in connecting through the I-85 corridor and Exit 12A. This side path could connect Cycle Lane in La Crosse to East Main Street in South Hill as part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. Not only would this provide a safe, direct connection for thru-hikers and cyclists, but it would also allow residents of La Crosse and South Hill to utilize this short connection to commute between the neighboring towns on a daily basis. Further study of this corridor is needed.
  - Mileage: 3.5

#### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - Town of La Crosse; Town of South Hill; Mecklenburg County; Southside PDC; VDOT Richmond District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Roanoke River Rails to Trails (RRRT)

### 3C. CLARKSVILLE - KERR LAKE CROSSING:

#### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- The 2007 Tobacco Heritage Trail Phase I Master Plan shows the corridor following (from north to south) Jeffress Road and US 58 in crossing the Virginia Avenue bridge. It also shows a photo simulation of what a shared-use path along the Virginia Avenue bridge could look like. The railroad bridge crossing Kerr Lake west of the Virginia Avenue bridge should also be considered if the railroad is abandoned. A detailed corridor study could include these considerations. A pontoon boat or other simple, seasonal ferry system could provide an appealing option for bicyclists and others trying to make the connection between state parks and Clarksville by water.
  - Mileage: 4.5

#### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:

- Town of Clarksville; Mecklenburg County; Southside PDC; VDOT Richmond District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Roanoke River Rails to Trails (RRRT)

### 3D. CLARKSVILLE TO SOUTH BOSTON CONNECTION:

#### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study for the route through Halifax County. Currently no existing trails or plans are in place for connecting Clarksville to the existing Tobacco Heritage Trail in South Boston.
  - Mileage: 22

#### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - Halifax County; West Piedmont PDC; Towns of Clarksville and South Boston, VDOT Lynchburg District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Dan River Basin Association; Roanoke River Rails to Trails (RRRT)



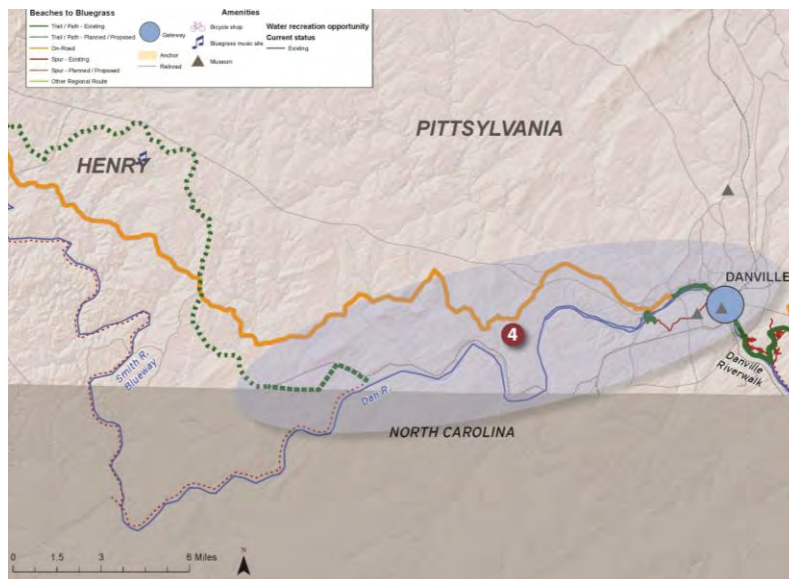
## 4. PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY - DAN RIVER

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study for a path/trail extending west from the Danville Riverwalk along the Dan River corridor. Follow this riparian corridor to the North Carolina border, generally staying north of the Dan River (cross to the south side of the Dan River at the Piedmont Drive bridge in west Danville; follow along the south side of the Dan River, crossing back to the north side at the US 58 intersection). Near the North Carolina border, utilize a patchwork of roads, dirt roads and a utility corridor in connecting to the eastern extent of the abandoned Dick and Willie Passage rail line - which is also near the North Carolina border and halfway between Danville and Martinsville.
  - Mileage: 20

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - City of Danville; Pittsylvania County; West Piedmont PDC; VDOT Lynchburg District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Dan River Basin Association; Cyclists of Danville; Southern Virginia Mountain Bike Association; Piedmont-Triad Regional Council (NC)



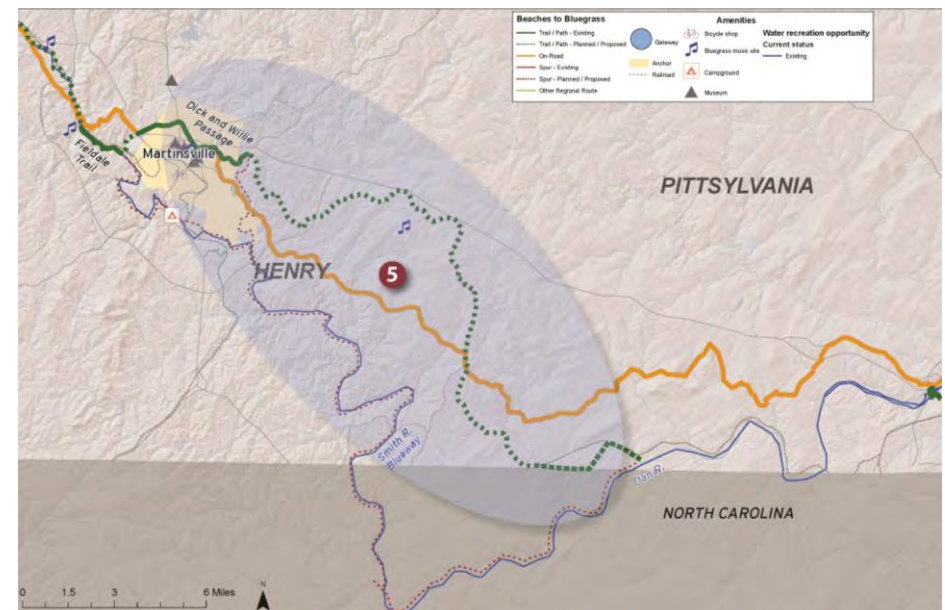
## 5. MARTINSVILLE/HENRY COUNTY - DICK AND WILLIE PASSAGE

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study for a path/trail utilizing the eastern extent of the abandoned Dick and Willie Passage rail line from the North Carolina border to the eastern terminus of the existing Dick and Willie Passage in downtown Martinsville.
  - Mileage: 20
- Develop a detailed corridor study for a path/trail from the western terminus of the existing Dick and Willie Passage Trail to the proposed Smith River Trail System and the existing Fieldale Trail.
  - Mileage: 1

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - City of Martinsville; Henry County; West Piedmont PDC; VDOT Salem District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Dan River Basin Association; Activate Martinsville; Piedmont-Triad Regional Council (NC)



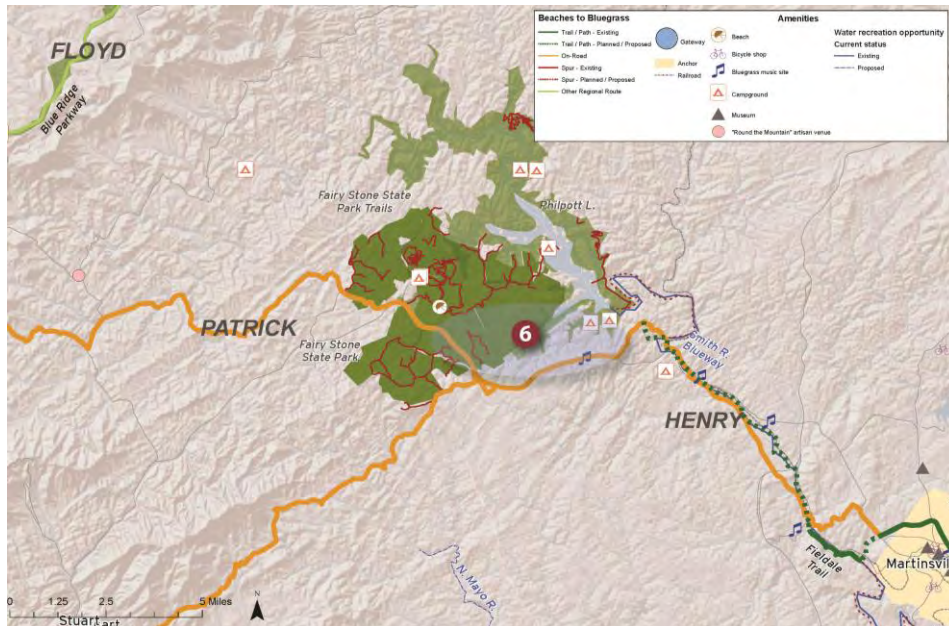
## 6. PHILPOTT LAKE RECREATION AREA TO FAIRY STONE STATE PARK

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a trail connector study between Philpott Lake Recreation Area trails and Fairy Stone State Park trails. Existing hiking and multi-use trails and dirt road linkages through these parks offer connection opportunities. Due to geographical constraints and diversified property ownership, this connection will require detailed study.
  - Mileage: 6

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - Henry County; Patrick County; West Piedmont PDC; VDOT Salem District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; US Army Corps of Engineers (Philpott Lake Recreation Area); Fairy Stone State Park; Department of Game and Inland Fisheries - Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area, adjacent landowners; Dan River Basin Association; Friends of Philpott



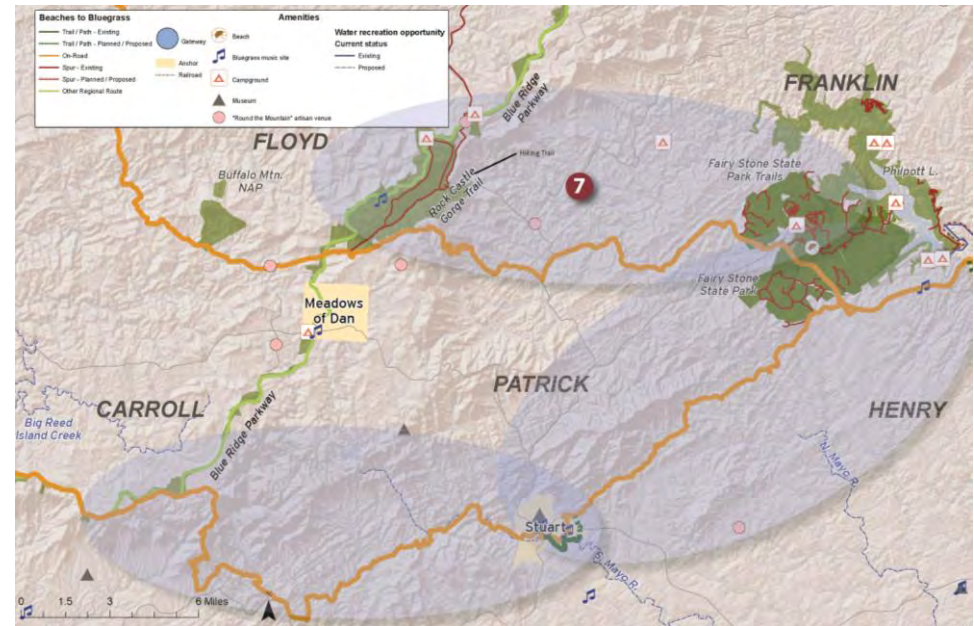
## 7. FAIRY STONE STATE PARK TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study in identifying path/trail opportunities. Geographical and property ownership limitations are constraints for trail development. Path/ Trail opportunities should be explored along the upper Smith River corridor. Additionally, path/trail connections should be sought along the Belcher Mountain Road corridor and/or through the Town of Stuart in ascending the Blue Ridge Mountains. Further study will be needed to identify this area's path/trail possibilities.
  - Mileage: 15-50

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:
  - Patrick County; West Piedmont PDC; VDOT Salem District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; Blue Ridge Parkway/National Park Service; adjacent landowners; Dan River Basin Association; Lester Group



## 8. BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY TO GALAX

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study. This study should consider the Coal Creek and Chestnut Creek corridor from the Blue Ridge Parkway/Coal Creek Road intersection to the Pipers Gap Road/South Main Street Intersection near downtown Galax and continuing along the Chestnut Creek corridor, connecting to the southern terminus of the New River Trail.
- Mileage: 9

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:

- City of Galax; Carroll County; Mount Rogers PDC; VDOT Salem District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Main Street Bike Shop – Galax; Lester Group



## 9. FLOYD COUNTY

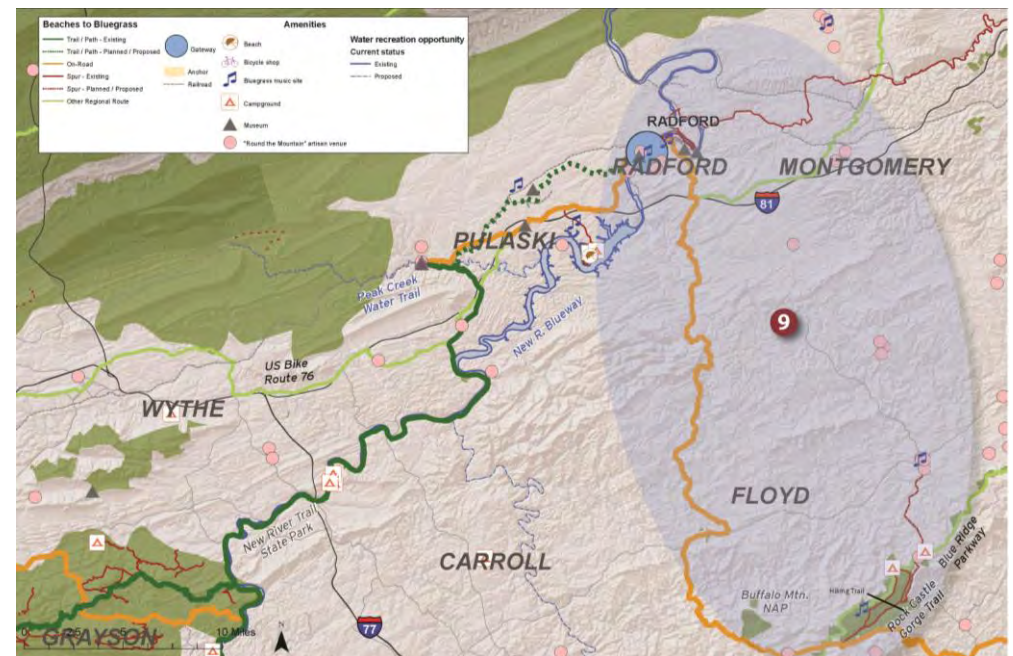
### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study. This study should consider path/trail, bike lane and blue way options identified in the 2011 Floyd Area Plan completed by the New River Planning District Commission. This route should link directly through the Town of Floyd and connect Christiansburg, Blacksburg/Virginia Tech and Radford.
- Mileage: 33

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

The following stakeholders should be considered in the planning and development process for the corridor study:

- Town of Floyd; Town of Christiansburg; Town Blacksburg; Town of Radford; Floyd County; Montgomery County; New River Valley PDC; VDOT Salem District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Bike the US for MS (Blacksburg); local bike shops; Lester Group



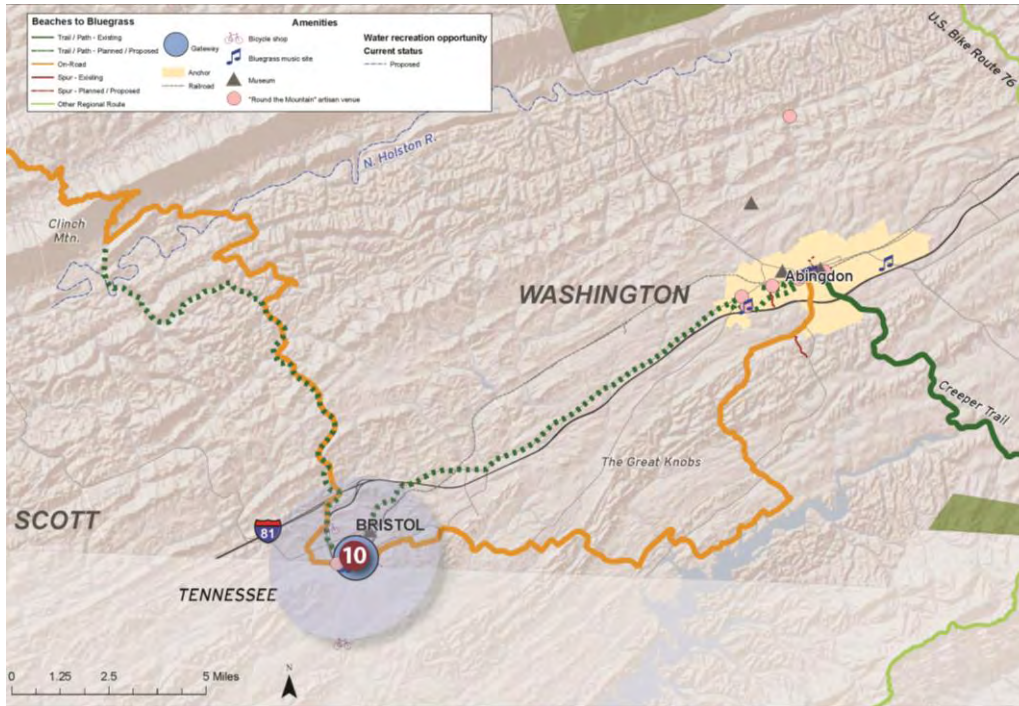
## 10. DOWNTOWN BRISTOL

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a corridor study to recommend appropriate path/trail facilities through downtown Bristol to the beginning of the proposed Mendota Trail.
  - Mileage: 3

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the continued development of this corridor:
  - City of Abingdon; City of Bristol; Washington County; Mount Rogers PDC; VDOT Bristol District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance



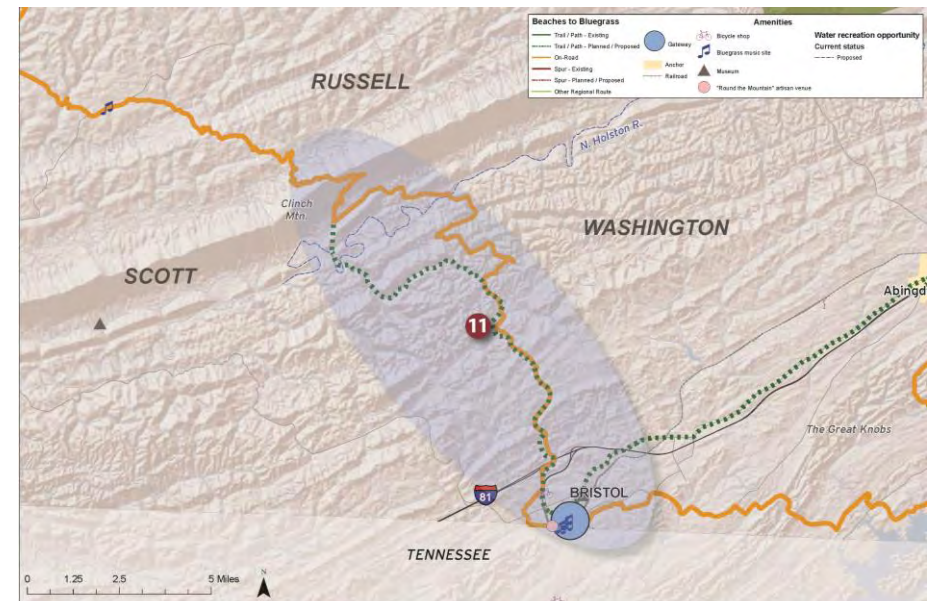
## 11. MENDOTA TRAIL

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study for a path/trail that would follow the abandoned Mendota rail corridor. This is an essential connection from the Bristol area to Clinch Mountain and the far southwestern corner of Virginia. No other trail opportunities exist in connecting this area.
  - Mileage: 14

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the continued development of this corridor:
  - City of Bristol; Washington County; Mount Rogers PDC; VDOT Bristol District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; adjacent landowners; Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance; Virginia Creeper Trail Club; Mendota Rails to Trails



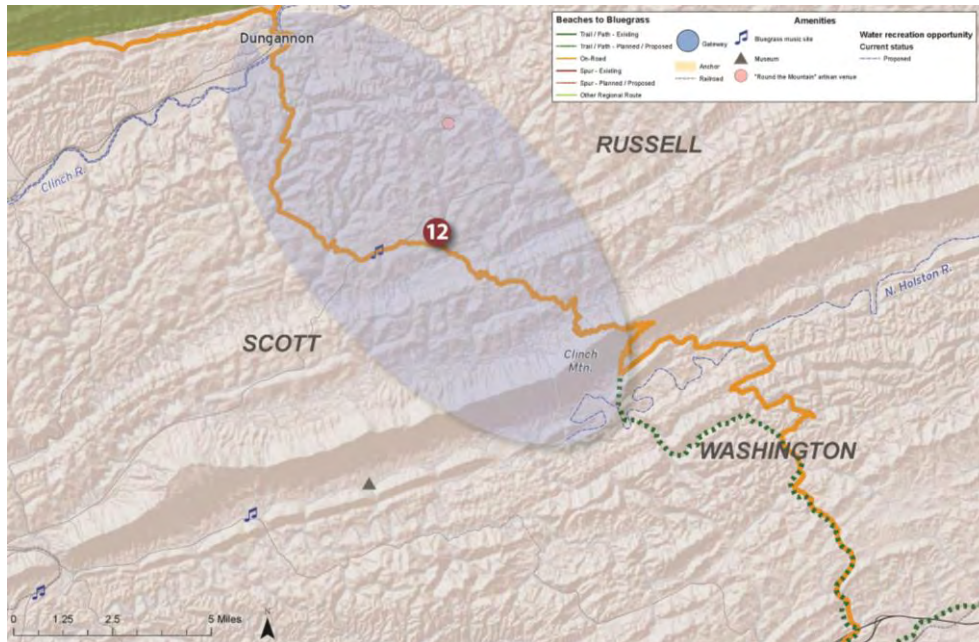
## 12. CLINCH RIVER VALLEY

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study. No existing trails or plans are currently available through this essential Clinch River Valley connection to George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Further study of this corridor should include the present efforts of the Clinch River Valley Initiative toward a Clinch River Linear Park and potential trail system.
  - Mileage: 22

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the continued development of this corridor:
  - Town of Nickelsville; Town of Dungannon; Washington County; Russell County; Scott County; Mount Rogers PDC; Lenowisco PDC; VDOT Bristol District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; Clinch River Valley Initiative; adjacent landowners; Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance; Southwest Regional Recreation Authority



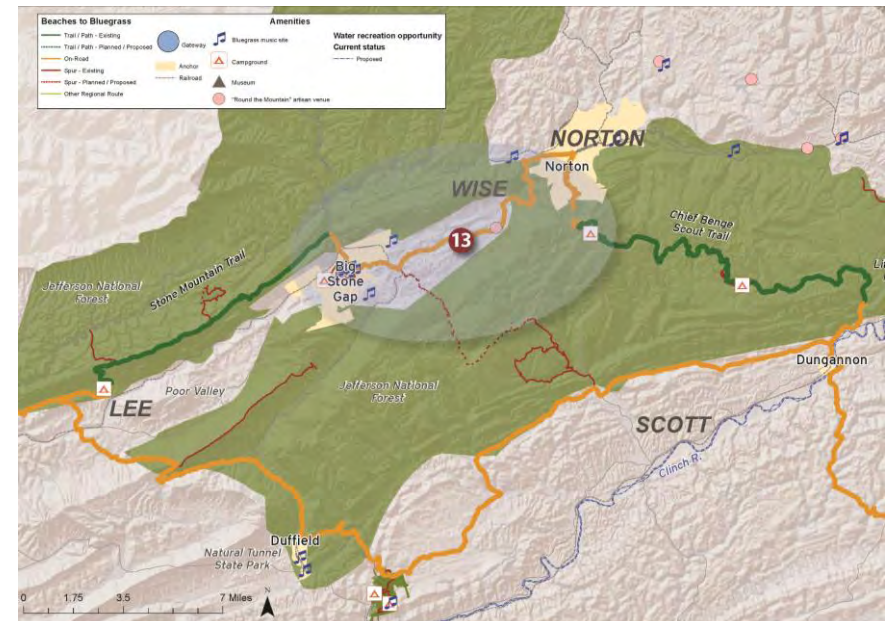
## 13. BIG STONE GAP

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor/trail study through Big Stone Gap to link U.S. Forest Service trails from Powell Mountain through Big Stone Gap to the Stone Mountain Trail.
  - Mileage: 12

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the continued development of this corridor:
  - Town of Big Stone Gap; Lee County; Lenowisco PDC; VDOT Bristol District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; George Washington and Jefferson National Forests; adjacent landowners; Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance; Southwest Regional Recreation Authority



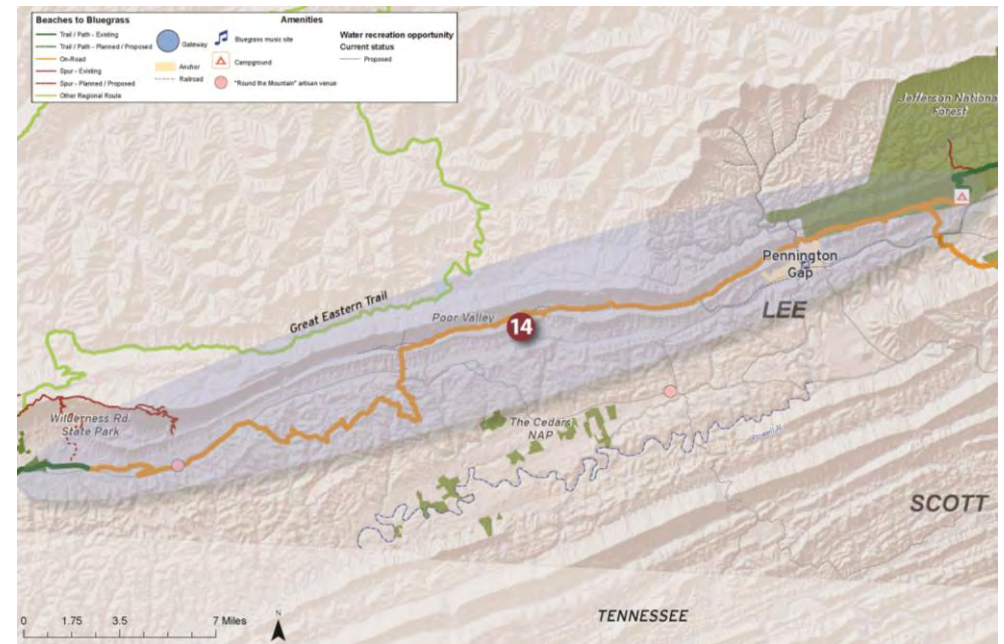
## 14. GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON NATIONAL FORESTS TO WILDERNESS ROAD STATE PARK AND CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

### CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a detailed corridor study. Between the southwestern terminus of the Stone Mountain Trail to the Wilderness Road Trail and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, no existing trails or trail planning efforts are found to make this link. This detailed corridor study should closely examine a multi-use trail opportunity along the Cumberland Mountain and Stone Mountain ridge lines in making this link. Other possibilities could include rail-trail developments and path/trail opportunities through the Poor Valley. Further detailed study is required.
  - Mileage: 42

### STAKEHOLDER TEAM

- The following stakeholders should be considered in the continued development of this corridor:
  - Town of Pennington Gap; Town of Jonesville; Lee County; Lenowisco PDC; VDOT Bristol District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; U.S. Forest Service; National Park Service; Friends of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park; Boy Scout and Girl Scout councils in the area; adjacent landowners; Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance; Southwest Regional Recreation Authority





## Development Strategy

Given the present day economic challenges faced by local governments (as well as their state, federal and private sector partners), competing for public funds will be challenging. However, there are still important actions that could take place in advance of major investments, including key organizational steps and the development of lower-cost, priority trail projects. Following through on these priorities will allow the key stakeholders to prepare for trail development over time, while taking advantage of strategic opportunities as they arise.

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will be a multi-jurisdictional project traversing 22 counties, 13 independent cities and numerous smaller towns and places. Spur connections will link even more populated areas. One centralized agency is needed to plan, develop and maintain facilities in cooperation with local efforts, and to interface with the general public.

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is already designated as a Statewide Trail by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. By building on this and previous efforts, a more coordinated effort can be organized that involves project stakeholders on a more regional level.

## Trail Management Agreements

The linear nature of trail systems traversing through multiple jurisdictions will require regional participation and long-term cost-share commitments for operations and maintenance. Trail planning, development and management efforts could be strengthened through a formal, regional government planning and management process that improves information sharing and builds strong collaborative partnerships. Common concerns, such as the operations and maintenance of the trail system, can be more effectively resolved when partnerships already exist and when decision-making can be coordinated by an entity representing the interests of all involved. Additionally, multi-agency support and collaboration will increase the region's capacity to prioritize and leverage funds for local, county and state non-motorized transportation facilities.

## LOCAL TRAIL MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

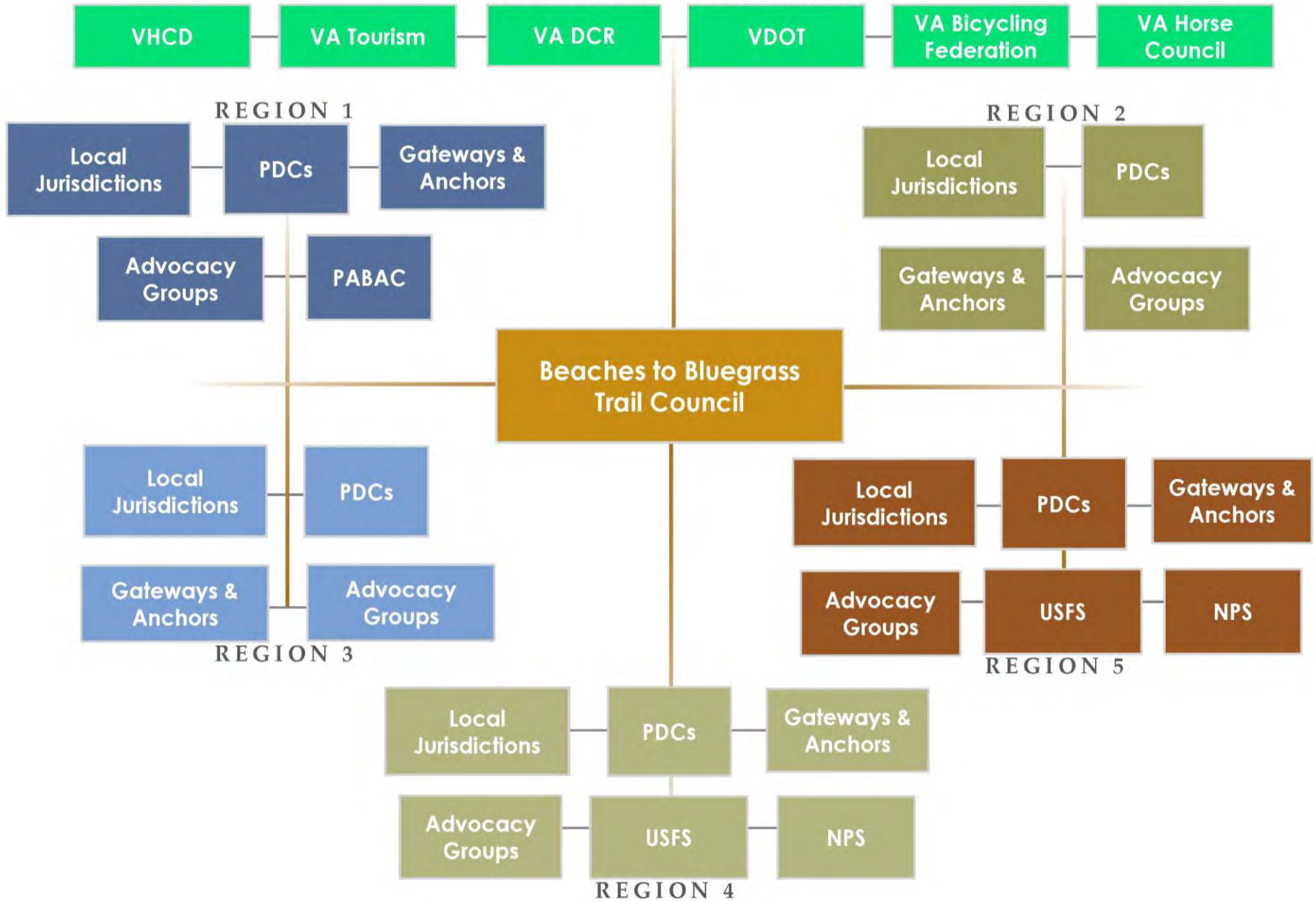
The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will be implemented by multiple jurisdictions over a period of years as opportunities arise. Municipalities and agencies striving to complete the trail through their jurisdictions should work towards development of the physical trail as well as proactively address policies, operations and maintenance issues that could hamper trail development. Addressing potential programmatic barriers to the completion of the trail should be strategically approached by each jurisdiction. Policies that may have an influence on trail development, like comprehensive plan language, design standards, resource protection guidelines and proffer language, should be examined for each region.

The long-term operations and maintenance (O&M) costs for a proposed trail system can often be a substantive barrier to trail development. The O&M capacity of implementing jurisdictions should be assessed before trail implementation is deemed feasible. Many O&M concerns could be addressed systematically among multiple jurisdictions through coordination of resources and formal agreements to jointly manage and maintain trail segments.

During stakeholder outreach for this implementation strategy, participants noted that an interagency partnership has potential to help overcome resource and management shortfalls by sharing resources. Partnerships will require formal agreements to establish clear commitments and roles for each contributor. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is the most common form of agreement serving this purpose. This agreement is a commitment to a partnership for funding, implementation and O&M responsibility of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL COUNCIL

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



## Beaches to Bluegrass Trails Council

The careful creation of a Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Council or “Friends” group should include a cooperative effort with the counties and municipalities affected by the proposed trail. The following proposal outlines the structure for a Beaches to Bluegrass Trails Council. The proposed structure and responsibilities could be expanded over time to include other jurisdictions within Virginia that connect to the trail trunk line, as well as other regional trails in the state.

### ESTABLISHING THE COUNCIL

The initial Council should be comprised of representation from each of the five regions of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail project, ideally one representative from each jurisdiction affected by the trail, or one representing a county and city/town.

A state-led advisory committee could coordinate and facilitate the initial direction of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trails Council in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Virginia Tourism, Virginia Horse Council and the Virginia Bicycling Federation. Over time as the council evolves, the role of the state may shift to a secondary role. A representative from Planning District Commissions (PDC’s), counties, municipalities, trail groups and private sector groups will have complementary and significant roles prior to and during implementation.

### COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Council members will be responsible for making policy decisions, developing a common agenda, prioritizing projects, identifying/securing funding and determining how to measure success. They will convey to other Council members the interests of their jurisdiction, and convey activities of the Council back to their localities. Members should work together on a voluntary, cooperative basis and should meet quarterly. At least one full-time equivalent staff will be required to facilitate meetings, manage data, write reports, manage grant projects, organize and conduct meetings, dispense pertinent information and respond to phone calls and letters.

Meetings will be open to the public, providing local land owners and trail users a forum to address issues and concerns regarding access, maintenance, development standards and daily operations. The Council will establish policies like who has authority to approve special events, what equipment is allowed on the trail, how staff and volunteers are trained and how trail segments get adopted.

### STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The staff will need a centrally located office, preferably a location mid-way along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail corridor. This office will address questions, concerns and complaints about the trail, regardless of jurisdiction.

As the trail develops, additional staff will be needed for maintenance and operations of some segments of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. On-site, full-time staff will be responsible for collecting trash, cutting grass, opening and closing the entrance gates daily, leading group outings and performing necessary maintenance tasks. These duties should be performed in conjunction with trail security, enforcement of regulations and routine patrol of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

Part-time/ seasonal staff will be needed to assist in the growing season. College students seeking work experience to supplement studies in the fields of recreational planning, environmental sciences and governmental affairs could fill these positions at minimal cost. Coordination with the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of America could result in trail improvements through Eagle Scout projects, Gold Award projects, or other service projects.

### LONG TERM

Expanded, long-term responsibilities of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trails Council Staff include land or easement acquisition, facility development and on-going management concerns.

Ideally, the Council will be set up as an autonomous regional government body, organized to receive and administer lands and qualified to receive charitable contributions. This structure will allow interested private

property owners to dedicate additional lands to the program and receive tax credits and deductions for their donations.

Council members should encourage corporate and inter-governmental cooperation; the active pursuit of local, state, federal and private grant funding sources; the use of volunteers; and the ratification of local legislation for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

The PDC's in each of the affected regions could take steps to encourage creation of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trails Council, and help direct funding to priority projects.

## Build Political Will

### ASSESSING HEALTH IMPACTS

New tools are available through the Centers for Disease Control to assess the health impacts of local park and trail projects to help build the case or improve the design. Fairfax County completed a health impact assessment (HIA) for a transportation project in 2014, and other examples are available through the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). Equity is one of the core values of an HIA, and the mobility needs of train passengers or automobile drivers should not trump the mobility needs of those people who live nearby who could walk or bike to destinations.

According to the CDC, “the [Parks and Trails Health Impact Assessment \(HIA\) Toolkit](#) has six components to empower individuals and help community planners address health when designing parks and trails. This framework allows public health departments, city planners, project managers, community groups, and other stakeholders to work together to create healthier environments.”

Community support of trail development is necessary to make trail funding a priority. One method to build wide support for trails is through the “three-legged stool” model. The “three-legged stool” model is a metaphor for a partnership between elected officials, local government staff and independent advocates. Each partner has a passion, commitment, or area of

expertise which complements that of the other partners, and together they support a common goal.

Columbia, Missouri provides an interesting case study for the use of the “three-legged stool” model. The approach is led by mayor Darwin Hindman, the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services and the PedNet Coalition. The three partners worked tirelessly in Columbia to change the transportation culture of the area from a car-centric culture to a non-motorized culture that encourages and facilitates bicycle and pedestrian oriented transportation.

PedNet and independent advocates engaged the community by recruiting volunteers, providing training and encouraging participation in non-motorized transportation activities and events that attracted local media attention.

Mayor Hindman sponsored education initiatives that promoted walking and bicycling. Those education initiatives have included:

- Mayor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Health
- Mayor’s Challenge: Bike, Walk and Wheel Week
- Safe Routes to School Walking School Bus Program
- “Why do YOU do it?” Social Marketing Campaign.

The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services established social marketing campaigns based on information collected from random surveys conducted by the department. The Department of Public Health also had institutional credibility and needed to provide an advisory role in policy decisions to recruit families and children for non-motorized transportation programs (e.g., a Walking School Bus Program).

The partnership or use of the “three-legged stool” model in Columbia has resulted in the passing of local complete streets legislation, a Safe Routes to School program, the successful acquisition of a \$22 million federal Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program grant and a silver-level Bicycle Friendly Communities award from the League of American Cyclists.

The three-legged stool approach could assist the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Council in improving the health and mobility of trail communities. Many jurisdictions along the trail corridor have a plethora of independent advocates working in the community and with local governments to build and manage paths/trails. Local jurisdictions that would like to build political support for the development of non-motorized facilities should cultivate a partnership with the local leaders and independent advocates.

### **DEVELOP A REGIONAL TRAIL IDENTITY**

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail system passes through multiple jurisdictions and a number of unique environments. Without regional coordination and a unified vision, the trail system will be developed piecemeal. This bit-by-bit strategy can result in an incongruous trail network that is difficult for all trail users to access and understand. Creating a system-wide identity is an effective approach to crafting a cohesive trail system. The trail system should convey the unique community and environmental characteristics of the area. This includes providing recognizable themes and unique designs for trails and support facilities. There are several benefits to creating a cohesive trail identity.

- Unique trail amenity design templates, such as those for trailheads, signage, sign structures and directional signage, can be constructed and utilized by local jurisdictions to reduce costs. Artistic templates and design guidelines can be provided to all local governments. Each jurisdiction will install the approved signage at recommended locations.
- A unified Trail identity will help to facilitate and garner regional support.
- A regional approach to trail development could aid in leveraging state and federal financing for trail development.
- A functional and attractive system will also attract users, locally and from outside the area.

### **ADOPTION IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANS**

The statewide trail plan has no adoption process (see § 10.1-204. Statewide system of trails, Item B). The way this plan can move forward is through adoption in local comprehensive plans and/or through legislative action prompted by grassroots support and advocacy.

### **ORIENTATION AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE**

Once an identity has been established with templates for signage, orientation signs should be placed at gateway trailheads depicting the route through the regions in both directions. Each region can determine the amenities to highlight on these regional maps.

Wayfinding can be accomplished through signs, flip books, apps, tour leaders or a combination of these approaches. Guidance on [Bike Route Wayfinding Signage and Markings](#) is available from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). Signs may need to be adapted so they don't conflict with local zoning laws.

### **CUE SHEETS AND ITINERARY DEVELOPMENT**

Bicyclists and other users who want to use the interim route will need cue sheets with specific distances and turns spelled out, along with information on local points of interest. In his inaugural tour of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in October 2013, Allen Turnbull developed excellent examples of these cue sheets and itineraries for four counties in Southern Virginia.

### **COST ESTIMATES**

Once gap areas have been planned, each locality can prepare cost estimates for their section of trail. In some cases, right-of-way is controlled over abandoned rail line and a trail can be established with minimal effort—clearing and/or surfacing with some bridge replacements. In other cases, extensive planning and land acquisition may be needed before construction can begin. For other statewide trails like the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST), these estimates and associated timelines are managed by the localities, with coordination provided by the planning district. Some planning, technical assistance, and funding may be channeled to the project

from state and federal programs. A [corridor analysis](#), like the one for the PHNST done by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, may be needed for some regions along the corridor to provide cost and time estimates.

## SUMMARY NEXT STEPS

- Implement planned projects
- Focus on trail systems that pass through population centers for demonstration projects
- Plan for the gaps
- Develop trail management agreements and partnerships
- Establish the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Council and define responsibilities
- Build political will
  - Assess health impacts
- Develop a regional trail identity and design templates
- Adoption in local and regional plans
- Develop orientation and wayfinding signage
- Cue sheets and itinerary development
- Develop cost estimates and timelines

## Resources and Funding

### Existing and Potential Funding Sources

The following section outlines sources of funding for trail projects in Virginia. Federal, state, local and private sources of funding are identified. The following descriptions are intended to provide an overview of available options and do not represent a comprehensive list. Funding sources could be used for a variety of activities along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail including: planning, design, implementation and maintenance. It should be noted that this section reflects the funding available at the time of writing. The funding amounts, fund cycles and even the programs themselves are susceptible to change without notice.

## PLANNING RESOURCES

The [State Planning and Research Program](#) funds States' statewide planning and research activities. The funds are used to establish a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions and to carry out transportation research activities throughout the State. Some eligible activities include engineering and economic surveys and investigations and the planning of future highway programs and local public transportation systems and planning of the financing of such programs and systems. Read more at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/factsheets/spr.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/factsheets/spr.cfm).

The purpose of [Metropolitan Planning funds](#) is to provide for a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) metropolitan transportation planning process. In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 104 generally, Metropolitan Planning funds shall be made available to each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated for an urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals and responsible for carrying out the 3-C metropolitan planning process. Read more at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidemetroplan.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidemetroplan.cfm).

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Federal transportation funding is typically directed through state agencies to local governments either in the form of grants or direct appropriations, independent from state budgets. Federal funding typically requires a local match of 20%, although there are sometimes exceptions, such as the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds.

The following is a list of possible Federal funding sources that could be used to support construction of many pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Most of these are competitive and involve the completion of extensive applications with clear documentation of the project need, costs and benefits. However, it should be noted that the FHWA encourages the construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as an incidental element of larger ongoing projects. Examples include providing paved shoulders on new and reconstructed roads, or building sidewalks, on-street bikeways, trails and marked crosswalks as part of new highways.

Federally funded projects may require an assessment of environmental justice impacts to minority and low income communities per Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 12898 (1994). Benefits of trail projects for all communities are detailed in Chapter 2.

#### FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY PROGRAM

The largest source of federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is the US DOT's Federal-Aid Highway Program, which Congress has reauthorized roughly every six years since the passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-First Century (MAP-21) was enacted in July 2012 as Public Law 112-141. The Act replaced the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was valid from August 2005 - June 2012. The newest iteration of the bill, the Grow America Act, will be put before Congress in the next session.

MAP-21 authorizes funding for federal surface transportation programs including highways and transit for the 27 month period between July 2012 and September 2014. It is not possible to guarantee the continued availability of any listed MAP-21 programs, or to predict their future funding levels or policy guidance. Nevertheless, many of these programs have been included in some form since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, and thus may continue to provide capital for active transportation projects and programs. The newest version of the surface transportation bill being proposed, called the Grow America Act, will continue to provide support for active transportation.

In Virginia, federal monies are administered through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Most, but not all, of these programs are oriented toward transportation, not recreation, with an emphasis on reducing auto trips and providing inter-modal connections. Federal funding is intended for capital improvements and safety programs, and projects must relate to the surface transportation system.

There are a number of programs identified within MAP-21 that are applicable to bicycle and pedestrian projects. These programs are discussed below.

#### TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Transportation Alternatives (TA) is a new funding source under MAP-21 that consolidates three formerly separate programs under SAFETEA-LU: Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SR2S) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These funds may be used for a variety of pedestrian, bicycle and streetscape projects including sidewalks, bikeways, shared-use paths, multi-use trails and rail-trails. TA funds may also be used for selected education and encouragement programming such as Safe Routes to School, despite the fact that TA does not provide a guaranteed set-aside for this activity as SAFETEA-LU did. Unless the Governor of a given state chooses to opt out of Recreational Trails Program funds, dedicated funds for recreational trails continue to be provided as a subset of TA. MAP-21 provides \$85 million nationally for the RTP.

Complete eligibilities for TA include:

1. **Transportation Alternatives** as defined by Section 1103 (a)(29). This category includes the construction, planning and design of a range of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure including “on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” Infrastructure projects and systems that provide “Safe Routes for Non-Drivers” is a new eligible activity. For the complete list of eligible activities, visit:  
[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm)
2. **Recreational Trails.** TA funds may be used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Examples of trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use and other non-

motorized and motorized uses. These funds are available for both paved and unpaved trails, but may not be used to improve roads for general passenger vehicle use or to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds may be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails, including unpaved trails
- Acquisition or easements of property for trails
- State administrative costs related to this program (limited to seven percent of a state's funds)

Under MAP-21, dedicated funding for the RTP continues at FY 2009 levels – roughly \$85 million annually. Virginia will receive \$1,527,161 in RTP funds per year through FY2014:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/funding/apportionments\\_obligations/recfunds\\_2009.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/funding/apportionments_obligations/recfunds_2009.cfm)

3. **Safe Routes to School.** The purpose of the Safe Routes to Schools eligibility is to promote safe, healthy alternatives to riding the bus or being driven to school. All projects must be within two miles of primary or middle schools (K-8).

Eligible projects may include:

- *Engineering improvements.* These physical improvements are designed to reduce potential bicycle and pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicles. Physical improvements may also reduce motor vehicle traffic volumes around schools, establish safer and more accessible crossings, or construct walkways, trails or bikeways. Eligible improvements include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities and secure bicycle parking facilities.

- *Education and Encouragement Efforts.* These programs are designed to teach children safe bicycling and walking skills while educating them about the health benefits, and environmental impacts. Projects and programs may include creation, distribution and implementation of educational materials; safety based field trips; interactive bicycle/pedestrian safety video games; and promotional events and activities (e.g., assemblies, bicycle rodeos, walking school buses).
- *Enforcement Efforts.* These programs aim to ensure that traffic laws near schools are obeyed. Law enforcement activities apply to cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles alike. Projects may include development of a crossing guard program, enforcement equipment, photo enforcement and pedestrian sting operations.

4. **Planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of-way of former Interstate routes or divided highways.** At the time of writing, detailed guidance from the Federal Highway Administration on this new eligible activity was not available.

Average annual funds available through TA over the life of MAP-21 equal \$814 million nationally, which is based on a 2% set-aside of total MAP-21 authorizations. Projected apportionments for Virginia totals \$991,722,683 for FY 2014. Note that state DOT's may elect to transfer up to 50% of TA funds to other highway programs, so the amount listed above represents the maximum potential funding. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) established an interim policy to guide their selection of projects for the Fiscal Year 2014 funds cycle. An updated TA Program Policy will be adopted this summer to guide Fiscal Year 2015 selections.

**For urban areas in Virginia with populations of 200,000 or above:** 50% of TA funds for the region are automatically allocated directly to the MPO based on population. The MPO then distributes funds to local communities through a competitive grant program.

**For areas of Virginia with populations less than 200,000:** Rural towns or counties are eligible to compete for TA funds through two separate competitive grant programs administered by VDOT. MAP-21 requires VDOT to allocate a set amount of TA funding to rural communities in Virginia.



These funds are distributed through a competitive grant program that is not open to government agencies located in urban areas containing 200,000 or more residents.

Remaining TA funds (those monies not re-directed to other highway programs) are disbursed through a separate competitive grant program administered by VDOT. Local governments, school districts, tribal governments and public lands agencies are permitted to compete for these funds.

More information:

<http://www.virginia.gov/business/prehancegrants.asp>

#### *SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM*

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides states with flexible funds which may be used for a variety of highway, road, bridge and transit projects. A wide variety of bicycle and pedestrian improvements are eligible, including on-street bicycle facilities, off-street trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle and pedestrian signals, parking and other ancillary facilities. Modification of sidewalks to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is also an eligible activity. Unlike most highway projects, STP-funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be located on local and collector roads which are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System. 50% of each state's STP funds are suballocated geographically by population; the remaining 50% may be spent in any area of the state.

#### *HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM*

MAP-21 doubles the amount of funding available through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) relative to SAFETEA-LU. HSIP provides \$2.4 billion nationally for projects and programs that help communities achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, bikeways and walkways. MAP-21 preserves the Railway-Highway Crossings Program within HSIP but discontinues the High-Risk Rural roads set-aside unless safety statistics demonstrate that fatalities are increasing on these roads. Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, enforcement activities, traffic calming projects and crossing treatments for

non-motorized users in school zones are eligible for these funds. VDOT is presently waiting on the amount of the expected additional HSIP funding from MAP-21.

#### *CONGESTION MITIGATION/AIR QUALITY PROGRAM*

The Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) provides funding for projects and programs in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter which reduce transportation related emissions. States with no nonattainment areas may use their CMAQ funds for any CMAQ or STP eligible project. These federal dollars can be used to build bicycle and pedestrian facilities that reduce travel by automobile. Purely recreational facilities generally are not eligible.

#### *NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE*

MAP-21 continues a formula grant program that provides capital and operating costs to provide transportation services and facility improvements that exceed those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Examples of pedestrian/accessibility projects funded in other communities through the New Freedom Initiative include installing Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS), enhancing transit stops to improve accessibility and establishing a mobility coordinator position.

#### *PILOT TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING*

MAP-21 establishes a new pilot program to promote planning for Transit-Oriented Development. At the time of writing the details of this program are not fully clear, although the bill text states that the Secretary of Transportation may make grants available for the planning of projects that seek to "facilitate multimodal connectivity and accessibility," and "increase access to transit hubs for pedestrian and bicycle traffic."

#### **PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

Founded in 2009, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a joint project of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The partnership aims to "improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options and lower transportation

costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide.” The Partnership is based on five Livability Principles, one of which explicitly addresses the need for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: “Provide more transportation choices: Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health”.

The Partnership is not a formal agency with a regular annual grant program. Nevertheless, it is an important effort that has already led to some new grant opportunities (including both TIGER I and TIGER II grants). Agencies should track Partnership communications and be prepared to respond proactively to announcements of new grant programs. Initiatives that speak to multiple livability goals (such as partnerships with counties or with affordable housing groups) are more likely to score well than initiatives that are narrowly limited in scope to bicycle and pedestrian efforts.

More information:

<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/grants.html>

### **TRANSIT FUNDING**

All pedestrian improvements located within one-half mile and all bicycle improvements located within three miles of a public transportation stop or station have a de facto physical and functional relationship to public transportation. Advocacy Advance reports on transit funding in [First Mile](#), [Last Mile](#), a look into who's walking and biking to transit, the types of improvements commonly associated with transit systems, the funding programs available from the Federal Transit Administration, and the policies that support integration between transit and active transportation.

For a matrix on the types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that can be funded with Federal Transit and Federal Highway Funds, click on:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/funding/funding\\_opportunities.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/funding_opportunities.cfm)

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS**

The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program provides money for streetscape revitalization, which may be largely comprised of pedestrian improvements. Federal CDBG grantees may “use Community Development Block Grants funds for activities that include (but are not limited to): acquiring real property; reconstructing or rehabilitating housing and other property; building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, community and senior citizen centers and recreational facilities; paying for planning and administrative expenses, such as costs related to developing a consolidated plan and managing Community Development Block Grants funds; provide public services for youths, seniors, or the disabled; and initiatives such as neighborhood watch programs.”

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan projects that enhance accessibility are the best fit for this funding source. CDBG funds could also be used to write an ADA Transition Plan for the city.

More information: [www.hud.gov/cdbg](http://www.hud.gov/cdbg)

### **COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANTS**

Community Transformation Grants administered through the Center for Disease Control support community-level efforts to reduce chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. Active transportation infrastructure and programs that promote healthy lifestyles are a good fit for this program, particularly if the benefits of such improvements accrue to population groups experiencing the greatest burden of chronic disease.

More info: <http://www.cdc.gov/communitytransformation/>

### **LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides grants for acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Entities eligible to compete for funding are state, local and municipal governments. A key feature of the program is that all property assisted with funding from the program must be maintained in

perpetuity and cannot be utilized for anything other than public outdoor recreation.

More info: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/lwcf.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/lwcf.shtml)

### **RIVERS, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a National Parks Service (NPS) program providing technical assistance via direct NPS staff involvement to establish and restore greenways, rivers, trails, watersheds and open space. The RTCA program provides only for planning assistance—there are no implementation monies available. Projects are prioritized for assistance based on criteria including conserving significant community resources, fostering cooperation between agencies, serving a large number of users, encouraging public involvement in planning and implementation and focusing on lasting accomplishments. This program may benefit trail development in Virginia indirectly through technical assistance, particularly for community organizations, but should not be considered a future capital funding source.

More info: <http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rtca/who-we-are.htm>

### **RECREATION ACCESS PROGRAM**

The Recreational Access Program provides funding for the design and construction of access for motor vehicles or bicycles to a publicly owned or operated recreational area or historical site. Costs associated with provision of right of way or utilities are not eligible under this program. The program is administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation and provides funding for road access, as well as bikeway access. Typically, a project funded under the Recreational Access Program will link visitors from an adequate public roadway to the parking area within the recreational area or historic site.

More info: [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-access-programs.asp#Access\\_Programs](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-access-programs.asp#Access_Programs)

### **APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION GRANTS**

The Appalachian Regional Commission awards grants and contracts from funds appropriated to the Commission annually by Congress. Program grants are awarded to state and local agencies and governmental entities (such as economic development authorities), local governing boards (such as county councils), and nonprofit organizations (such as schools and organizations that build low-cost housing). Contracts are awarded for research on topics that directly impact economic development in the Appalachian Region.

Grants generally fall into these categories: Start-up grants, program/project grants (or part of a program/project), operating grants, challenge grants and in-kind grants.

More info: <http://www.arc.gov/grants>

### **ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDING**

The Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge Grant leveraged existing financial and technical assistance resources from 13 federal agencies and bureaus to spur economic growth in rural areas. The Appalachian Regional Commission, The Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development may all have funding sources related to economic development to assist with trail or service development.

The landscape of federal funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian programs and projects is always changing. A number of Federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency have offered grant programs amenable to bicycle and pedestrian planning and implementation, and may do so again in the future. For up-to-date information about grant programs through all federal agencies, see [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/)

## **VIRGINIA TOBACCO INDEMNIFICATION AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION COMMISSION**

Seven grant programs are intended to accomplish the economic revitalization and diversification of Virginia's tobacco-growing region through project funding to implement economic development activities that are consistent with the Commission's mission, Strategic Plan and each grant program's guidelines.

## **BOND MEASURES**

Bond measures, or levies, are usually initiated by voter-approved general obligation bonds for specific projects. Bond measures are typically limited by time based on the debt load of the local or state government or the project under focus.

## **Local Funding Sources**

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Local Capital Improvement Plans or Programs (CIP) identify projects that localities are planning to fund for planning, design or construction, usually for a six year period. High priority bicycle and pedestrian projects should be included in the CIP and with the funding sources identified for project implementation.

### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING/URBAN RENEWAL FUNDS**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project (e.g., sidewalk improvements) is constructed, surrounding property values generally increase and encourage surrounding development or redevelopment. The increased tax revenues are then dedicated to finance the debt created by the original public improvement project. Tax Increment Financing typically occurs within designated Urban Renewal Areas (URA) that meet certain economic criteria and are approved by a local governing body. To be eligible for this financing, a project (or a portion of it) must be located within the URA.

## **SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CHARGES/DEVELOPER IMPACT FEES**

System Development Charges (SDCs), also known as Developer Impact Fees, represent another potential local funding source. SDCs are typically tied to trip generation rates and traffic impacts produced by a proposed project. A developer may reduce the number of trips (and hence impacts and cost) by paying for on- or off-site pedestrian improvements that will encourage residents to walk or use transit rather than drive. In-lieu parking fees may be used to help construct new or improved pedestrian facilities. Establishing a clear nexus or connection between the impact fee and the project's impacts is critical in avoiding a potential lawsuit.

## **LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (LIDS)**

Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) are most often used by cities to construct localized projects such as streets, sidewalks or bikeways. Through the LID process, the costs of local improvements are generally spread out among a group of property owners within a specified area. The cost can be allocated based on property frontage or other methods such as traffic trip generation.

### **TOPS-STYLE SALES TAX (EXAMPLE FROM COLORADO SPRINGS)**

TOPS (Trails, Open Space and Parks), is the process used by the City of Colorado Springs to administer the Trails, Open Space and Parks ordinance passed by voters in April of 1997. The sales tax, 1/10 of one percent, generates about \$6 million annually for trails, open space and parks.

The process, administered by the Parks and Recreation Department of Colorado Springs, provides for the prudent acquisition, development and preservation of Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) in the Pikes Peak region. More information on the TOPS program, including maps of trails, open space and parks, as well as funding of projects is available at the TOPS web site. To fund a project, an application is submitted to the City of Colorado Springs.

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FINANCING PROGRAM**

The Commonwealth of Virginia has established a financing program for qualified Virginia tourism development projects. The purpose of the program is to provide a gap financing mechanism for projects in partnership with developers, localities, financial institutions, and the state. This program

provides a method of financing to compensate for a shortfall in project funding not to exceed 20% of a qualified project's total cost.

Localities that are interested in pursuing this financing will need to have a defined tourism zone(s) within which the proposed project is contained. Virginia cities, counties, or towns can currently establish such tourism zones as allowed for in the [Code of Virginia](#). Interested localities are encouraged to begin development of the required tourism zones.

### **PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES**

Local businesses can help defray some of the costs associated with trail and greenway development and operation. Some examples include:

- Cash donations
- Donations of services, equipment and labor
- Discounted materials
- Contribution of employee volunteer time

### FOUNDATIONS

Private foundations are an increasingly important source of funds for bicycle and pedestrian planning and implementation. More info:

<http://www.foundationcenter.org/>

Many trail elements, particularly if they have a focus on education, civic issues, health or the environment, can be funded through private foundations. Funding opportunities are better from local foundations and should be approached before national foundations. It is important to keep in mind that many foundations only solicit grant proposals from non-profit organizations. More info: <http://www.vaservice.org>

### LAND TRUSTS

Land trusts are local, regional, or statewide nonprofit conservation organizations directly involved in helping protect natural, scenic, recreational, agricultural, historic, or cultural property. Land trusts work to preserve open land that is important to the communities and regions where they operate. Land trusts are typically more nimble than government agencies and can act more quickly on opportunities to acquire property.

Some land trusts actively manage land; others secure properties for other land management agencies.

### SERVICE CLUBS

Community organizations can be very successful at hosting fundraisers and providing volunteer labor for trail building and maintenance activities. Local examples include 4-H, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Rotary Club, university service clubs, equestrian and cycling groups and others.

### INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS

Individuals, businesses, or corporations can contribute donations to sponsor sections of trail or project elements. Plaques or other forms of recognition are typically placed on constructed pieces in the trail corridor or at a prominent entry point. Sponsorship is a good way to fund trail elements, like benches, trash receptacles and interpretive areas.

Sections of trail can also be sponsored through a "Buy a Foot" program. Community members can purchase a section of trail at a fixed cost per linear foot and have their names (or dedication) listed on a plaque, sign, or inscription.

## Land Ownership, Recreational Access, Agritourism, and Limited Liability

### RECREATIONAL USE STATUTE

Virginia's Recreational Use Statute is one of the strongest statutes in the country protecting land-use owners from liability when such owners open their lands for recreational use to the public. While in America, anyone can sue anyone else over an alleged harm, cases involving this statute are extremely rare in Virginia if the landowner meets the requirements of Virginia Code Section [29.1-509](#) (as of September, 2014).

The landowner shall owe no duty of care to keep the land or premises safe for entry or use by others for any recreational use with the exception of the following:

1. The landowner's liability may not be protected by reason of his gross negligence or willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity. This is a high standard of protection for the landowner in Virginia.
2. The landowner cannot receive a fee for use of the premises; although he can recover administrative costs.
3. The sponsor or operator of a sporting event or competition such as a race or triathlon must exercise ordinary care when such events are held.

### AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY ACT

Another statute to consider is Virginia's Agricultural Activity Act. This statute limits the liability of agritourism professionals who meet the requirements of Virginia Code Section [3.2-6401-6402](#) (as of September 2014).

Any landowner should consult with his or her own attorney regarding the use of their land for recreational or agritourism purposes.

# Appendix A: Design Standards



## Appendix A Contents:

Overview

Guiding Principles of Design

Design Needs of Various User Types

Bicycle Facility Selection Standards

Shared-Use Paths and Off-Street Facilities

Accessible Trail Design

Beaches to Bluegrass Signage and Wayfinding

Bristol: Abandoned rail line disappearing

## Overview

The sections that follow serve as an inventory of resources for shared-use path and trail design treatments and provide standards for their development. These treatments and design standards are important because they represent the tools for creating a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, safe, accessible community. Some improvements may also require coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for specific design solutions. The following standards are referred to in this guide.

Meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is an important part of any bicycle, pedestrian, shared-use path facility or trail project. Below are U.S. Access Board resources:

- **The United States Access Board's proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>
- **Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>
- **ADA Standards for Accessible Design** contain standards for newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities: <http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADAstandards.htm>

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) houses a number of design resources that are referenced below:

- **Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual, Appendix A, Section A-5:** [http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)
- **Virginia Department of Transportation Supplement to the MUTCD:** [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia\\_mutcd\\_supplement.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia_mutcd_supplement.asp)
- **Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia:** [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)
- **Virginia Department of Transportation Structure & Bridge Design Aids for Pedestrians and/or Bicycle Facilities:** <http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/electronic%20pubs/Bridge%20Manuals/VolumeV-Part2/Chapter6.pdf>
- **Virginia Department of Transportation Road and Bridge Standards:** [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008\\_road\\_and\\_bridge\\_standards.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008_road_and_bridge_standards.asp)



National standards including the following:

- **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities** provides guidance on dimensions, use, and layout of specific bicycle facilities.
- **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities** provides guidance on dimensions, use and layout of specific pedestrian facilities.
- **The National Association of City Transportation Officials' (NACTO) 2012 Urban Bikeway Design Guide** is the newest publication of nationally recognized bikeway design treatments, and offers guidance on the current state of the practice designs. All of the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide treatments are in use internationally and in many cities around the US: <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>
- **The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Chapter 9** is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities: [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)
- **The U.S. Forest Service, Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds** is a publication of nationally recognized Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds design. [http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library\\_card.php?p\\_num=0723%202816](http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library_card.php?p_num=0723%202816);  
[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/publications/fs\\_publications/07232816/toc.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/toc.cfm)

*\*Should the national standards be revised in the future and result in discrepancies with this chapter, the national standards should prevail for all design decisions. The most up-to-date version of the above resources should be referenced.*

### Trail Surfacing Types

Beaches to Bluegrass trail segment construction should provide access and connectivity without damaging the qualities of the natural environment that are most valued and appreciated. Trail surfacing should be selected to support projected intensities of use, ADA accessibility, and to enable multiple user types as appropriate. Trails or shared-use paths that meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines must have a firm and stable, slip-resistant surface typically surfaced with asphalt, concrete, or firmly packed crushed aggregate.

For equestrian use, materials should compact to a firm, slip-resistant surface that can withstand the impact of horseshoes. Paved surfaces provide little traction for horseshoes, and are rarely suitable. If possible, choose a surface material that produces minimal dust and whose color blends with the native soil (For further information see – [Choosing Horse Friendly Surface Materials](#)).

#### Trail Surfacing Resources:

- **Luck Stone Product Application Chart:** [www.luckstone.com/sites/default/files/files/product\\_app\\_chart.pdf](http://www.luckstone.com/sites/default/files/files/product_app_chart.pdf)
- **NCA National Trail Surfaces Study:** [www.ncaonline.org/resources/articles/trails-surfacestudy-finalreport.shtml](http://www.ncaonline.org/resources/articles/trails-surfacestudy-finalreport.shtml)
- **Suitability of Common Surface Materials for Equestrian Trailheads and Campgrounds:**  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/publications/fs\\_publications/07232816/page11.cfm#tbl02](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/page11.cfm#tbl02)
- **Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Studies Trail Reference Documents:** [www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/trails/trails.html](http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/trails/trails.html)

Packed surfaces may be most suitable where equestrians and joggers are frequent users, but they require more maintenance effort and cost over time.

Asphalt trails offer substantial durability for the cost of installation and maintenance. Asphalt is popular with users for its smooth, continuous surface and has the benefit of lower cost, but requires more upkeep than concrete. As a flexible pavement, asphalt can also be considered for installing a paved greenway trail on grades steeper than three percent. Well-constructed asphalt on suitable sub-grade has a life span of about half that of concrete, or 10-15 years.

When properly constructed and maintained on a regular basis, concrete can last 25 years or more. The high cost of concrete is often the most limiting factor since it is one of the most expensive surfaces to install. It is recommended that concrete be used for its superior durability and lower maintenance requirements in areas prone to frequent flooding, and for intensive urban applications.

When determining surface type for Beaches to Bluegrass trails, consider topography, landscape position, surface drainage, underlying soils, user groups, construction cost and funding source, and maintenance. All surfaces have advantages and disadvantages, and each must be analyzed to determine which surface is appropriate in any given location.

## Guiding Principles of Design

### INTRODUCTION

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail network design standards are to be used in the selection and design of shared-use path and trail facilities. These guidelines will serve as a toolbox that helps planners, designers, and engineers select appropriate facilities and treatments given the project context for existing and proposed shared-use paths. The Beaches to Bluegrass trail network, which includes both shared-use paths and trails, will extend beyond the reach of trail users. In order for the trail network to become a highly functional, 21st century system that can be used for recreation and transportation, it is critical to plan and design for modern bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect to trails. This toolbox will take the best bicycle, pedestrian, and shared-use path information and resources that are available nationally and apply them to the local context of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

The design toolbox should be applied using professional judgment. A pedestrian, bicycle, shared-use path and trail design is rapidly evolving, and design manuals should be regularly updated to reflect the latest proven designs and treatments.

### SAFETY

The walking and bicycling environment connecting to, and along the trail network, shall be safe. All shared-use paths and trails shall be physically safe and perceived as safe by all users. Safety means minimal conflicts with external factors, such as noise, vehicular traffic and protruding architectural elements. Safety also means routes are clear and well-marked with appropriate pavement markings and directional signage.

## ACCESSIBILITY AND EASE OF USE

The trail network should be accessible and easy to use. Sidewalks, shared-use paths and crosswalks shall permit the mobility of residents of all ages and abilities and allow all people to easily find a direct route to a destination with minimal delays, regardless of whether these persons have mobility, sensory, or cognitive disability impairments. Bicyclists have a range of skill levels, and facilities should be designed with a goal of providing for inexperienced/recreational bicyclists (especially children and seniors) to the greatest extent possible. Bicyclists have a legal right to use all roads (except freeways, from which they are prohibited unless a separate facility on that right of way is provided). This means that most roads can be used by bicyclists and should be designed, marked and maintained accordingly.

## ECONOMY

The trail network improvements should be economical. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements should achieve the maximum benefit for their cost, including initial cost and maintenance cost, as well as a reduced reliance on more expensive modes of transportation. Where possible, improvements in the right-of-way should stimulate, reinforce and connect with adjacent private improvements.

## CONNECTIVITY

The trail network should connect people to places they want to go. The network should provide continuous direct routes and convenient connections between destinations such as parks, historic sites, other trail networks and recreational opportunities. A complete network of on-street bicycling facilities should connect seamlessly to existing and proposed bicycle facilities, shared-use paths and trails to complete recreational and commuting routes.

## AESTHETIC

The trail environment should be attractive and enhance community livability. Good design should integrate with and support the development of complementary uses and should encourage preservation and construction of art, landscaping and other items that add value to communities. These components might include open spaces such as plazas, courtyards and squares, and amenities like street furniture, banners, art, plantings and special paving. These along with historical elements and cultural references, should promote a sense of place. Public activities should be encouraged and the municipal code should permit commercial activities such as dining, vending and advertising when they do not interfere with safety and accessibility.

Safety

Accessibility and Ease of Use

Economy

Connectivity

Aesthetic

## Design Needs of Bicyclists

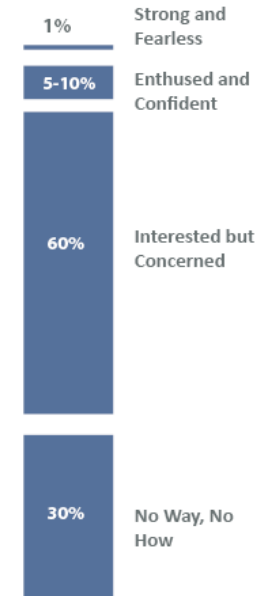
It is important to consider bicyclists of all skill levels when creating a non-motorized plan or project. A detailed understanding of the US population as a whole is illustrated in the figure to the right. Developed by planners in Portland, OR<sup>1</sup> and supported by data collected nationally since 2005, this classification provides the following alternative categories to address varying attitudes towards bicycling in the US:

**Strong and Fearless (approximately 1% of population)** – Characterized by bicyclists that will typically ride anywhere regardless of roadway conditions or weather. These bicyclists can ride faster than other user types, prefer direct routes and will typically choose roadway connections -- even if shared with vehicles -- over separate bicycle facilities such as shared-use paths.

**Enthusied and Confident (5-10% of population)** - This user group encompasses bicyclists who are fairly comfortable riding on all types of bikeways but usually choose low traffic streets or shared-use paths when available. These bicyclists may deviate from a more direct route in favor of a preferred facility type.

**Interested but Concerned (approximately 60% of population)** – This user type comprises the bulk of the cycling population and represents bicyclists who typically only ride a bicycle on low traffic streets or multi-use trails under favorable weather conditions. These bicyclists perceive significant barriers to their increased use of cycling, specifically traffic and other safety issues.

**No Way, No How (approximately 30% of population)** – Persons in this category are not bicyclists, and perceive severe safety issues with riding in traffic. Some people in this group may become more regular cyclists with time and education. A significant portion of these people will not ride a bicycle under any circumstances.

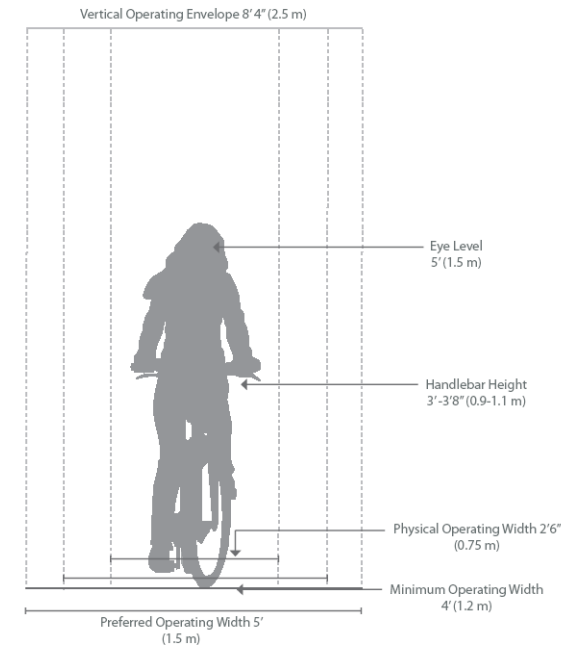
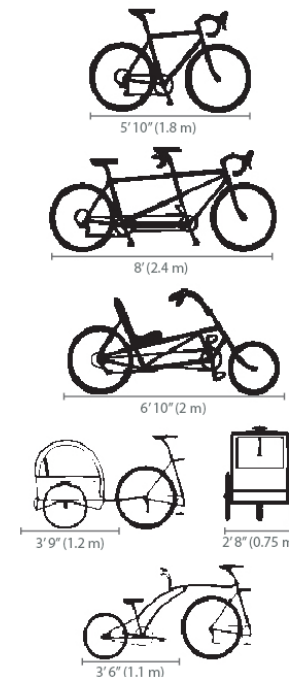


Typical distribution of bicyclist types

## Bicycle as a Design Vehicle

Similar to motor vehicles, bicyclists and their bicycles exist in a variety of sizes and configurations. These variations occur in the types of vehicle (such as a conventional bicycle, a recumbent bicycle or a tricycle), and behavioral characteristics (such as the comfort level of the bicyclist). The design of a bikeway should consider reasonably expected bicycle types on the facility and utilize the appropriate dimensions.

BICYCLE AS DESIGN VEHICLE - TYPICAL



<sup>1</sup> Four Types of Cyclists. (2009). Roger Geller, City of Portland Bureau of Transportation. <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?a=237507>

The figure on the previous page illustrates the operating space and physical dimensions of a typical adult bicyclist, which are the basis for typical facility design. Bicyclists require clear space to operate within a facility. This is why the minimum operating width is greater than the physical dimensions of the bicyclist. Bicyclists prefer five feet or more operating width, although four feet may be minimally acceptable.

#### Standard Bicycle Rider Dimensions

Source: AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition (2012).

Bicycle as Design Vehicle - Design Speed Expectations

Bicycle Type	Feature	Typical Speed
Upright Adult Bicyclist	Paved level surfacing	8-15 mph
	Crossing Intersections	10 mph
	Downhill	20-30 mph
	Uphill	5 -12 mph
Recumbent Bicyclist	Paved level surfacing	11-18 mph

In addition to the design dimensions of a typical bicycle, there are many other commonly used pedal-driven cycles and accessories to consider when planning and designing bicycle facilities. The most common types include tandem bicycles, recumbent bicycles, and trailer accessories. The figure on the previous page illustrates the typical dimensions for bicycle types.

#### DESIGN SPEED EXPECTATIONS

The expected speed that different types of bicyclists can maintain under various conditions also influences the design of facilities such as shared-use paths. The table above and to the right provides typical bicyclist speeds for a variety of conditions.

\*Tandem bicycles and bicyclists with trailers have typical speeds equal to or less than upright adult bicyclists.

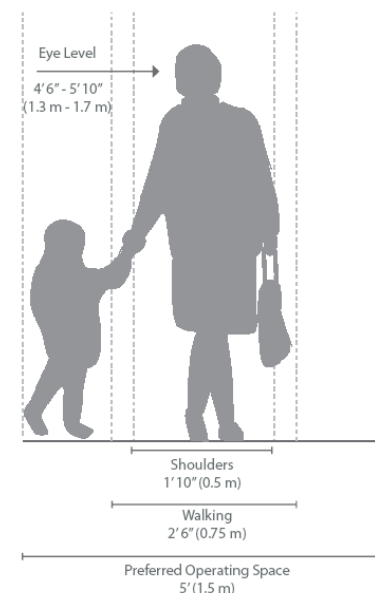
Source: AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition (2012). \*AASHTO does not provide typical dimensions for tricycles.

## Design Needs of Pedestrians

Pedestrians have a variety of characteristics and the transportation network shall accommodate a variety of needs, abilities, and possible impairments. Age is one major factor that affects pedestrians' physical characteristics, walking speed, and environmental perception. Children have low eye height and walk at slower speeds than adults. They also perceive the environment differently at various stages of their cognitive development. Older adults walk more slowly and may require assistive devices for walking stability, sight, and hearing. The table below summarizes common pedestrian characteristics for various age groups.

The MUTCD recommends a normal walking speed of three and a half feet per second when calculating the pedestrian clearance interval at traffic signals. The walking speed can drop to three feet per second for areas with older populations and persons with mobility impairments. While the type and degree of mobility impairment varies greatly across the population, the trail system should accommodate these users to the greatest reasonable extent.

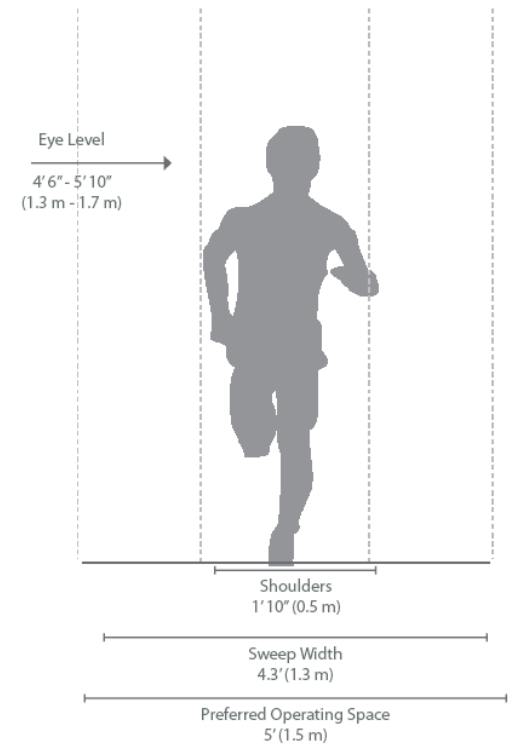
Source: AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (2004).



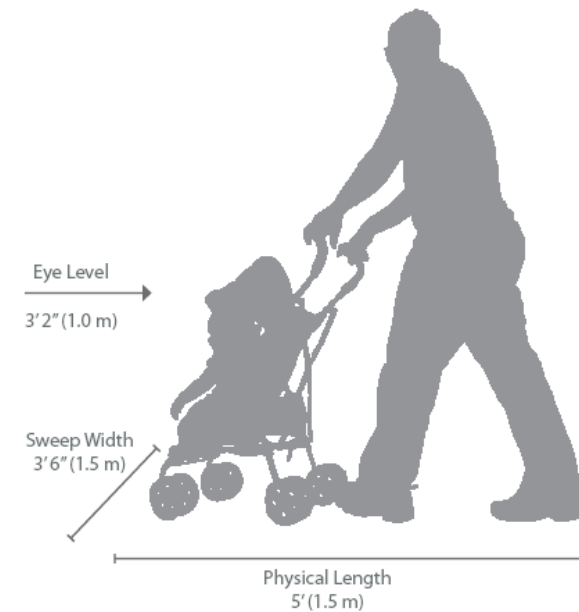
## Design Needs of Runners

Running is an important recreation and fitness activity commonly performed on trails. Most prefer softer surfaces (such as rubber, mulch or crushed rock) to lessen impacts on their knees. Runners can change their speed and direction almost instantaneously. If high volumes are expected, controlled interaction or separation of different types of users should be considered.

Typical Speed	
User	Typical Speed
Runner	6.2 mph



Source: FHWA. *Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and Their Safety*. (2004).



## Design Needs of Strollers

Strollers are wheeled devices pushed by pedestrians to transport babies or small children. Stroller models vary greatly in their design and capacity. Some strollers are designed to accommodate a single child, others can carry 3 or more. Design needs of strollers depend on the wheel size, geometry and ability of the adult who is pushing the stroller.

Strollers commonly have small pivoting front wheels for easy maneuverability, but these wheels may limit their use on unpaved surfaces or rough pavement. Curb ramps are valuable to these users. Lateral overturning is one main safety concern for stroller users.

Typical Speed	
User	Typical Speed
Stroller	3.7 mph

Source: FHWA. *Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and Their Safety*. (2004).

## Design Needs of Wheelchairs

As the American population ages, the number of people using mobility assistive devices (such as manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs) increases.

Manual wheelchairs are self-propelled devices. Users propel themselves using push rims attached to the rear wheels. Braking is done through resisting wheel movement with the hands or arm. Alternatively, a second individual can control the wheelchair using handles attached to the back of the chair.

Power wheelchairs use battery power to move the wheelchair. The size and weight of power wheelchairs limit their ability to negotiate obstacles without a ramp. Various control units are available that enable users to control the wheelchair movement, based on their ability (e.g., joystick control, breath controlled, etc).

Maneuvering around a turn requires additional space for wheelchair devices. Providing adequate space for 180 degree turns at appropriate locations is an important element for accessible design.

Wheelchair User Design Considerations

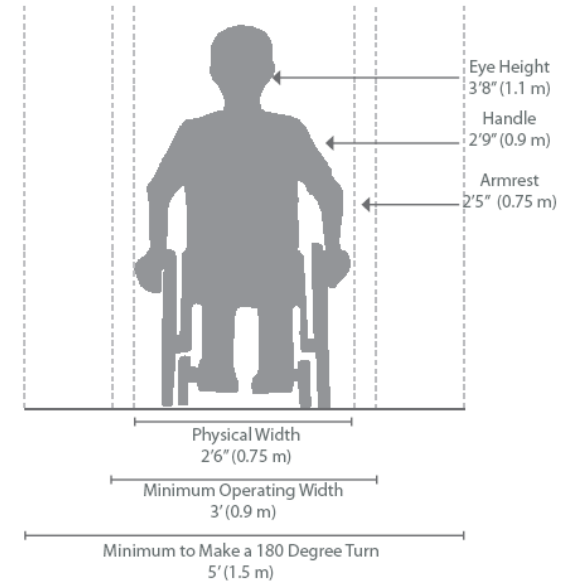
Effect on Mobility	Design Solution
Difficulty propelling over uneven or soft surfaces.	Firm, stable surfaces and structures, including ramps or beveled edges.
Cross-slopes cause wheelchairs to veer downhill.	Cross-slopes of less than two percent.
Require wider path of travel.	Sufficient width and maneuvering space.

Source: FHWA. *Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and Their Safety*. (2004).

USDOJ. *Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way* dated July 26, 2011 and *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design*. (2010).

Wheelchair User Typical Speed

User	Typical Speed
Manual Wheelchair	3.6 mph
Power Wheelchair	6.8 mph

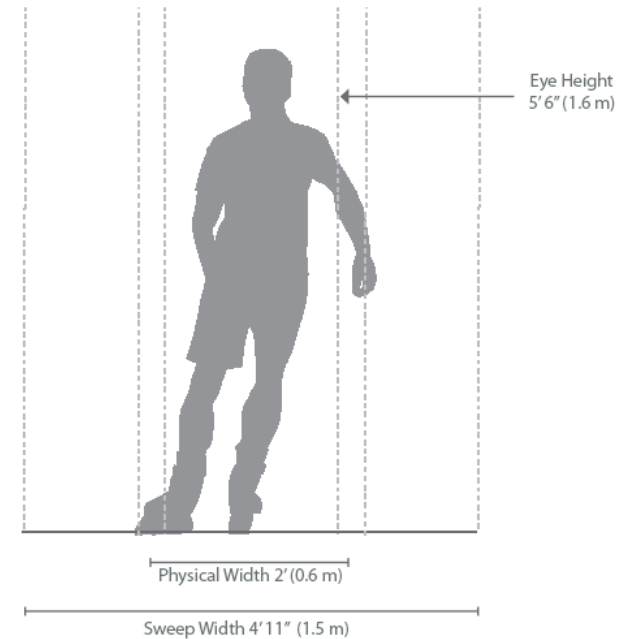


## Design Needs of Skaters

Inline skates are commonly used for recreational and transportation purposes. They typically have three to five wheels of 3 to 4 inches diameter, aligned in a straight line. Inline skate design allows for more efficient and high speed travel than quad wheel skates.

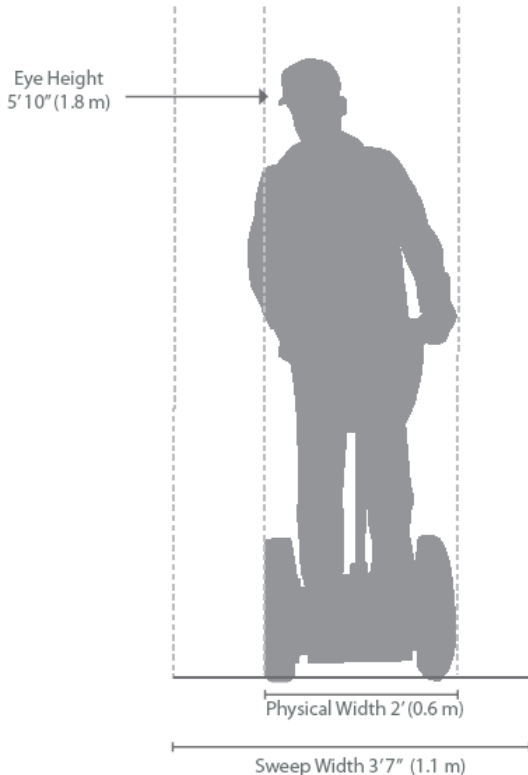
Operational characteristics vary by skill level of the operator. Novice skaters travel more slowly and have a narrower sweep width from advanced skaters. Novice users may also have trouble making sharp turns and stopping quickly, particularly on speed grades.

Inline skates are nearly impossible to use on unpaved surfaces and can be uncomfortable and difficult to operate on rough pavements such as chip seal and asphalt with large aggregate.



Source: FHWA. *Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and Their Safety*. (2004).

Typical Speed	
User	Typical Speed
Inline Skates	9.9 mph



## Design Needs of Electric Personal Mobility Devices (e.g., Segway)

Electric personal mobility devices (EPMDs) such as the Segway, are appearing on paths and roadways around the country. The Segway is a self-balancing, electric-powered transportation device. Its footprint is not much larger than the human body's and has two wheels side by side next to the user's feet. The Segway uses gyroscopes and tilt sensors to monitor the body's movements and balance the device on the single axle. When a person leans forward, the Segway moves forward; leaning backward causes it to move back. The Segway has no brakes; to stop the device, users simply straighten up from their leaning position. Turning is accomplished with a twisting motion on the handlebar. Because both wheels are on one axle, it can turn in place with no turning radius.

Typical Speed	
User	Typical Speed
Segway	10.5 mph

Source: FHWA. *Characteristics of Emerging Road and Trail Users and Their Safety*. (2004).



## Design Needs of Equestrians

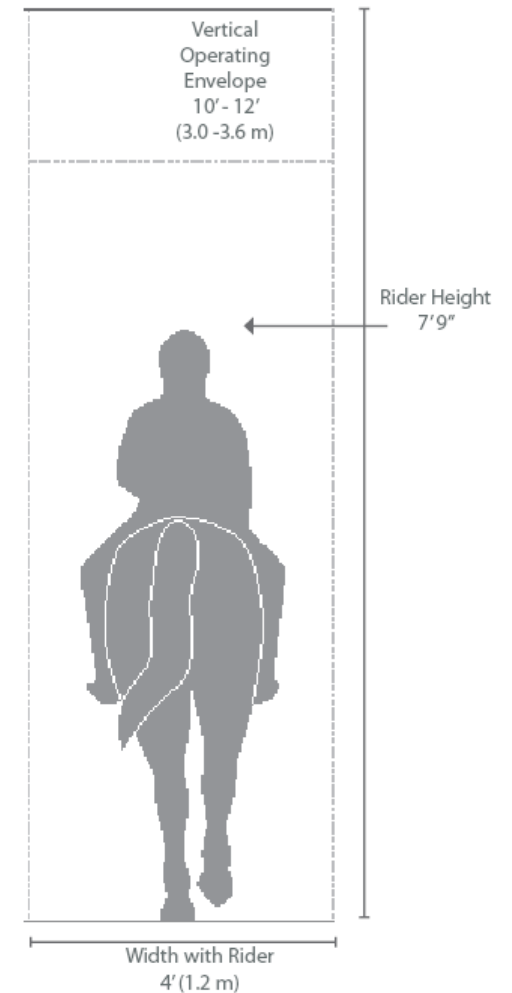
On non-motorized recreational trails and greenways that permit equestrian uses, riders on their mounts are the heaviest, widest and tallest potential user type. Mounts include horses, mules and donkeys, which all vary in size. Size depends on breed and age. Trail stock usually weigh between 800 and 1,500 pounds, and a well-conditioned horse or mule can carry up to 20 percent of their body weight.

Equestrians include: youth, elders, leisure riders, professional riders, organized groups, novices, and people with disabilities. Riders may recreate individually or in groups for pleasure, exercise or challenge. While some equestrians prefer wide, gentle trails, others seek a technically challenging route.

Trails reserved exclusively for equestrians are also called “bridle trails”, “bridle paths”, or “bridleways”. The needs of equestrian trail users are unique due to the natural flight instinct of horses when startled.

Typical Speed	
User	Typical Speed
Walk	2.5-4.0 mph
Trot	8 mph
Canter or Lope	12 mph
Full Gallop	20-30 mph

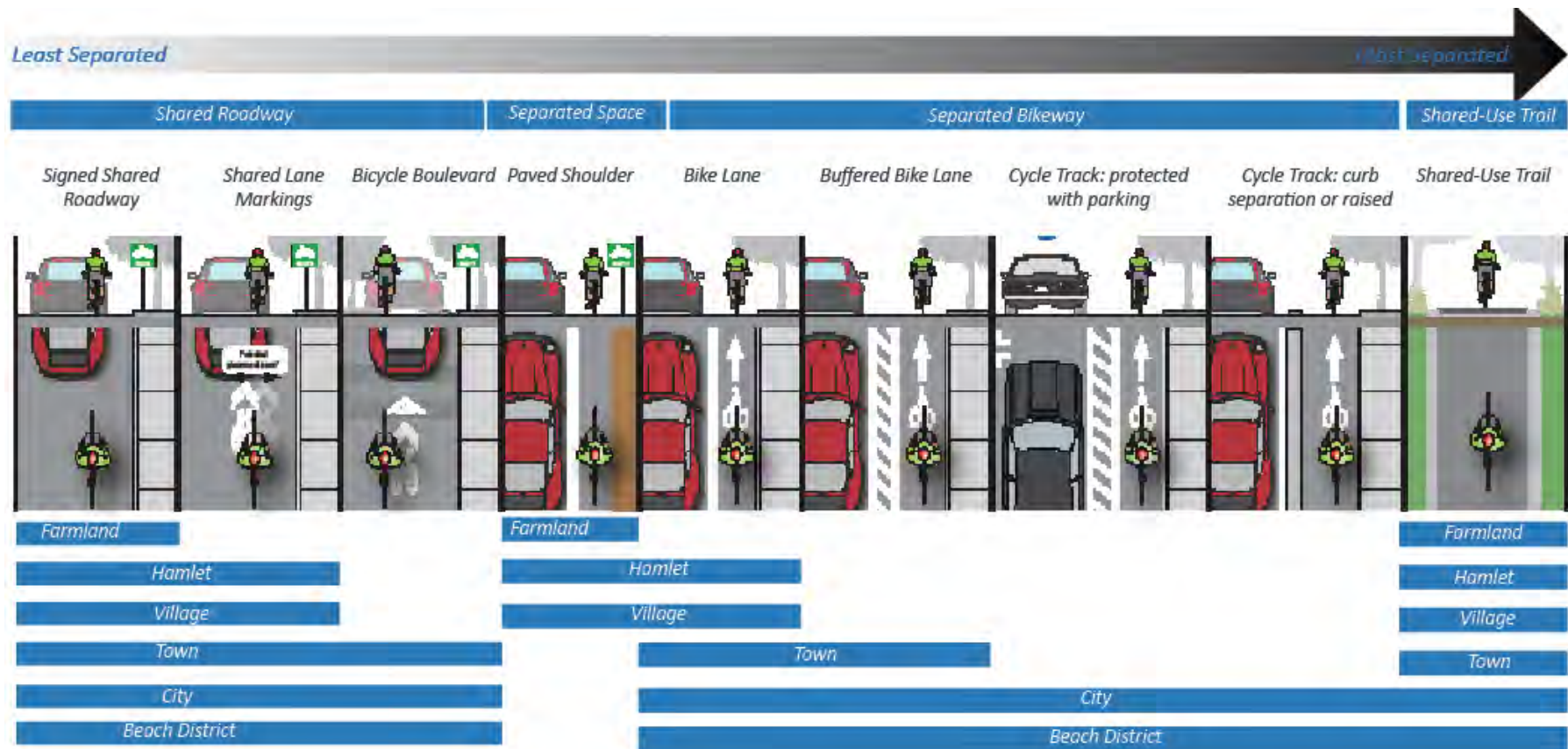
Source: US Forest Service. *Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds*. . (2007).



# Facility Selection Guidelines

## Facility Continua

The following continuum illustrates the range of bicycle facilities commonly applicable to various settlement types found along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. This continuum guided the facility recommendations of this plan and can be used to confirm and refine the recommendations for specific corridors as they are implemented. Engineering judgment, traffic studies, previous municipal planning efforts, community input and local context should also be used to refine criteria when developing bicycle facility recommendations for a particular street. In some corridors, it may be desirable to construct facilities to a higher level of treatment than those recommended in relevant planning documents in order to enhance user safety and comfort. In other cases, existing and/or future motor vehicle speeds and volumes may not justify the recommended level of separation, and a less intensive treatment may be acceptable. For more information, see NATCO Urban Bikeway Design Guide and NACTO Urban Street Design.



## Facility Classification

### SIGNED SHARED ROADWAY (SIGNED ROUTE):

Roadways where bikeway signage and markings are used to increase driver awareness of bicycles on the roadway. Signed Routes may also include traffic calming devices and intersection crossing treatments to enhance bicycle travel. These routes are recommended where roadways linking neighborhoods, schools, and parks serve as alternate routes to unsafe corridors.

### SHARED LANE MARKINGS (SHARROWS):

Pavement markings used to indicate shared space for bicyclists and motorists. Sharrows are used on roads where dedicated bicycle lanes are desirable but not possible due to constraints (roadway width, on-street parking, etc). Sharrows make motorists aware of the potential presence of cyclists, direct cyclists to ride in the proper direction, and alerts road users to the lateral position bicyclists are likely to occupy within the traveled way, therefore encouraging safe passing practices. Sharrows are not appropriate on paved shoulders or in bike lanes. See the MUTCD and the VA Supplement to the MUTCD for the appropriate application and marking placement.

### PAVED SHOULDER:

The part of a roadway that is contiguous to the travel lane, separated by a stripe. A minimum width of four feet is preferred to accommodate bicycle travel. The use of paved shoulders by bicyclist are appropriate on rural roadways with low traffic volumes.



## General Design Practices

### SHARED-USE PATH

#### DESCRIPTION

Shared-use paths are **improved** facilities (accessible routes) that are stable, firm and slip-resistant for use by non-motorized users that are physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and either within highway right of way or within independent right of way.

A stable surface is one that remains unchanged by contaminants or applied-force, so that when the contaminant or force is removed, the surface returns to its original condition. A firm surface resists deformation by either indentations or particles moving on its surface. A slip-resistant surface provides sufficient frictional counterforce to the forces exerted in walking to permit safe ambulation.

Materials such as gravel, wood chips, or sand, often used for outdoor walkways, are neither firm or stable, nor can they be generally considered slip-resistant. Thus, paths surfaced in these materials do not constitute an accessible route. However, some natural surfaces, such as compacted earth, soil treated with consolidants, or materials stabilized and retained by permanent or temporary geotextiles, gridforms, or similar construction may perform satisfactorily for persons using wheelchairs and walking aids.

#### DESIGN CRITERIA

See the following resources for design criteria:

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual, Appendix A, Section A-5:**

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)

**Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:**

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities** provides guidance on dimensions, use and layout of specific pedestrian facilities.

**The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 9** is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities: [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)

Terminate the path where it is easily accessible to and from the street system, preferably at a controlled intersection or at the beginning of a dead-end street.



## TRAILS

A trail is defined as the treadway and shoulders of a cleared or improved path (2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan). Trail design will vary with the primary user group--if a trail is designed to serve pedestrians, federal guidelines for outdoor developed areas apply.

### Natural Surface Multi-Use Trails

#### DESCRIPTION

Sometimes referred to as footpaths or hiking trails, the natural surface trail is used along corridors that are environmentally-sensitive but can support bare earth, wood chip, crushed stone or stone screenings. Natural surface trails are a low-impact solution and found in areas with limited development or where a more primitive experience is desired.

Guidance presented in this section does not include considerations for bicycle users. Natural surface trails designed for bicycle users are typically known as single track trails.

- Base preparation varies from machine-worked surfaces to those worn only by usage.
- Trail surface can be made of dirt, rock, soil, forest litter, or other native materials. Some trails use crushed stone (a.k.a. “crush and run”) that contains about 4% fines by weight, and compacts with use.
- Provide positive, localized drainage for trail tread without extensive removal of existing vegetation; maximum slope is five percent (typical).
- Trail erosion control measures include edging along the low side of the trail, steps and terraces to contain surface material, and water bars to direct surface water off the trail; use bedrock surface where possible to reduce erosion.

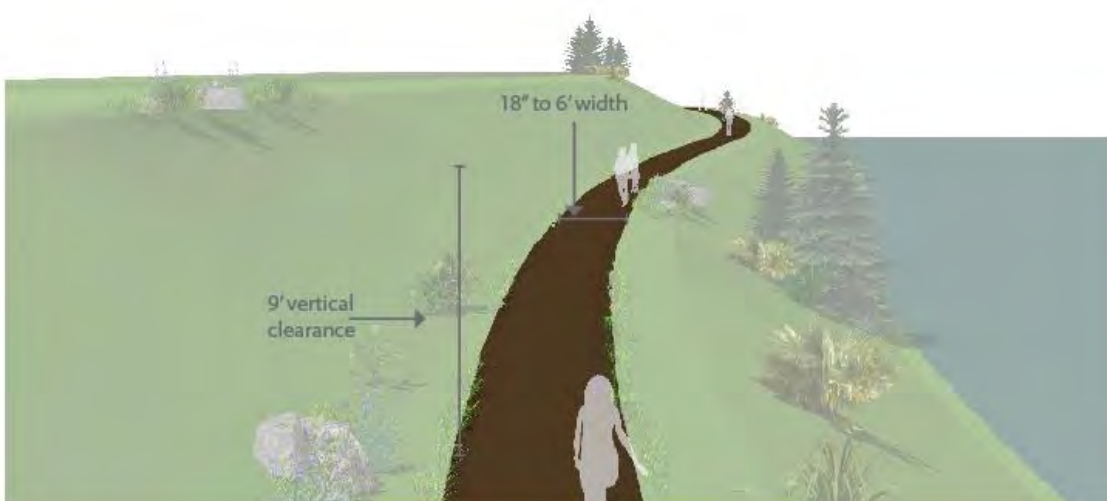
#### DESIGN CRITERIA

##### **Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:**

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

##### **Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia**

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)



## Mountain Bike Trails

### DESCRIPTION

Due to their narrow width and ability to contour with the natural topography, single-track bike trails require minimal disturbance to the landscape and support features of all types of trails.

- Their minimal footprint provides opportunities for localized stormwater management solutions. Localizing the stormwater features at small scales along the network keeps the trails available for use year-round and requires very little long term maintenance.
- Single track bike trails are typically 18-24 inches wide and have compacted bare earth or leaf litter surfacing.
- Single track trails are constructed using hand tools or low impact machinery such as a mini excavator.



### DESIGN CRITERIA

**Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

**Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia:** [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreation\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreation_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)

## Equestrian Trails

### DESCRIPTION

Bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians have successfully been integrated on many shared-use paths and trails in the United States. However, care should be taken in designing these facilities to reduce potential conflicts between users. Bicyclists are often unaware of the need for slower speeds and additional clearance around horses. Horses can be startled easily and may act unpredictably if they perceive approaching bicyclists as a danger. Measures to mitigate bicyclist-equestrian conflicts include provision of separate bridle paths, maintenance of adequate sight lines so that bicyclists and equestrians are able to see each other well in advance, and signing that clarifies appropriate passing techniques and yielding responsibilities. Along shared-use paths and trails with high-to-moderate-use, the separate paved and unpaved treads should be divided by at least a 6 feet wide vegetation buffer or barrier.

- In corridors where adequate right-of-way is available, trail users may be separated by vegetated buffers, elevation changes, or distinctive surfaces suitable to each user group.

### DESIGN CRITERIA

**Connecting our Commonwealth:  
The Virginia Greenways and Trails  
Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the  
Organization, Planning, and  
Development of Local Greenway  
and Trails Programs in Virginia:**  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)

**The U.S. Forest Service, Equestrian  
Design Guidebook for Trails,  
Trailheads and Campgrounds, 2007  
is a publication of nationally  
recognized Trails, Trailheads and  
Campgrounds design:**

[http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library\\_card.php?p\\_num=0723%202816](http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library_card.php?p_num=0723%202816); [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/publications/fs\\_publications/07232816/toc.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/toc.cfm)

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities** provides guidance on dimensions, use, and layout of specific bicycle facilities.



## Shared-Use Paths and Trails in Utility and Waterway Corridors

### DESCRIPTION

Utility and waterway corridors often offer excellent shared-use path and trail development gap closure opportunities. Utility corridors typically include power line and sewer corridors, while waterway corridors include canals, drainage ditches, rivers, streams and beaches. These corridors offer excellent transportation and recreation opportunities for walkers and bicyclists of all ages and skills.

### DESIGN CRITERIA

See the following resources for **Shared-Use Path** design criteria:

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual, Appendix A, Section A-5:**

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)

**Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:**

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation**

**Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities** provides guidance on dimensions, use and layout of specific pedestrian facilities.

**The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 9** is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities: [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)

See the following resources for **Trail** design criteria:

**Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

Any access point to the shared-use path or trail should be well-defined with appropriate signage designating the corridor as a bicycle facility and prohibiting motor vehicles.

### Shared-Use Path and Trail Closure

Public access to the shared-use path or trail may be prohibited during the following events:

- Canal/flood control channel or other utility maintenance activities
- Inclement weather or the prediction of storm conditions





## Shared-Use Paths and Trails in Existing Active Rail Corridors

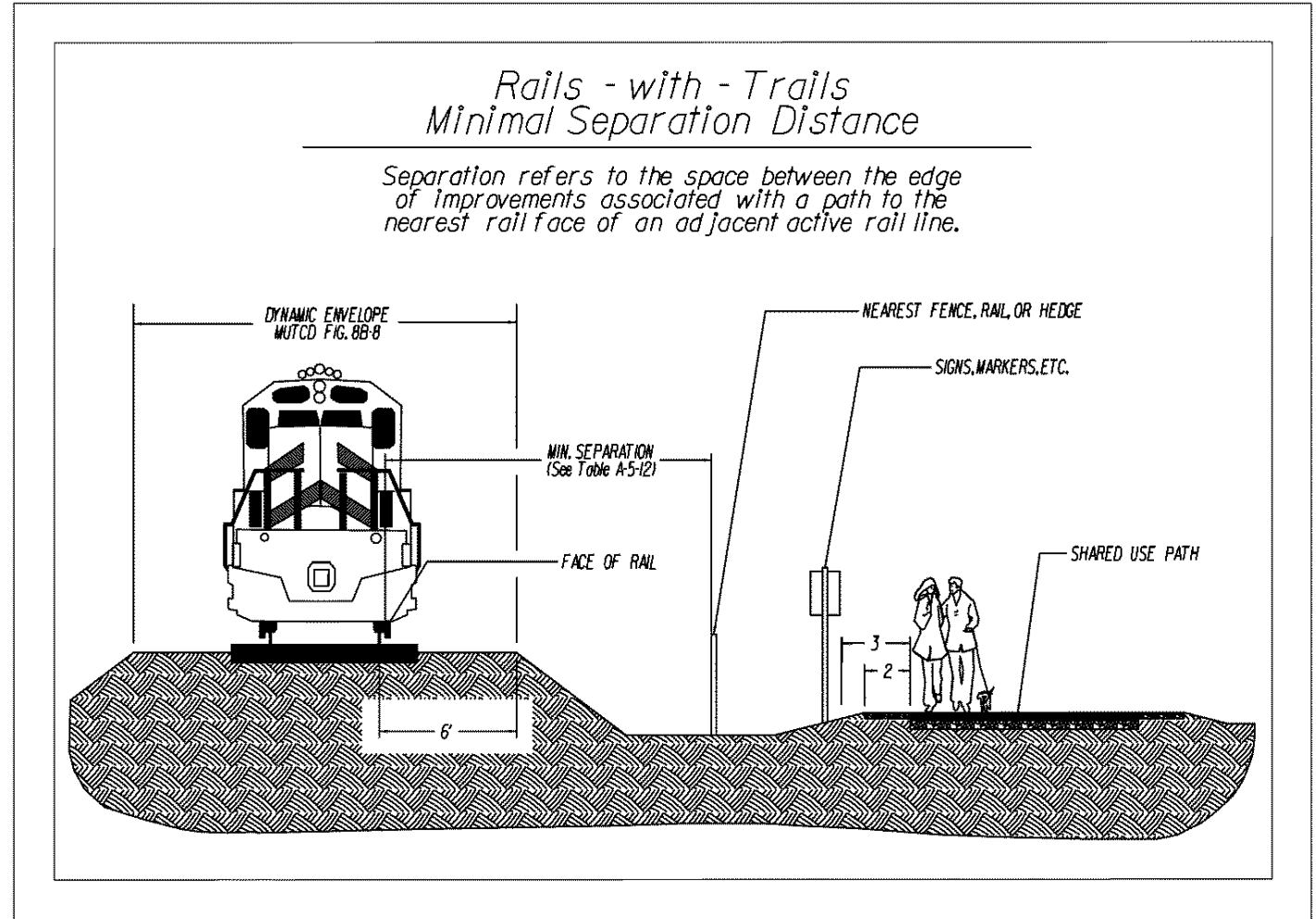
### DESCRIPTION

Rails-with-Trails projects typically consist of shared-use paths or trails adjacent to active railroads. It should be noted that some constraints could impact the feasibility of rail-with-trail projects. In some cases, space needs to be preserved for future planned freight, transit or commuter rail service. In other cases, limited right-of-way width, inadequate setbacks, concerns about safety/trespassing, and numerous mid-block crossings may affect a project's feasibility.

### DESIGN CRITERIA

Virginia Department of Transportation  
Road Design Manual, Appendix A,  
Section A-5:

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/ocdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/ocdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)



Adapted from FHWA Rails with trails Lessons Learned

Source: Adapted from the VTrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual

<b>Recommended Separation between Active Rail Lines and Paths (RWT)</b>		
<b>Type of Rail Operation</b>	<b>Setting Characteristic</b>	<b>Recommended Minimum Separation</b>
<b>High Volume/High Speed</b>		
11 trains or more per day Max speed over 45 mph	Typical Conditions	25 feet with fence
		15 feet with a solid barrier
	Constrained Areas (cut/fill, bridges, etc.)	15 feet with fence or other physical barrier
	Vertical Separation of at least 10 feet	20 feet
<b>Medium Volume/Medium Speed</b>		
Fewer than 11 trains per day Max speed 45 mph	Typical Conditions	25 feet
		15 feet with physical barrier
	Constrained Areas	11 feet with physical barrier
	High Trespassing Areas	11 feet with physical barrier

Adapted from FHWA Rails with trails Lessons Learned

Source: VTrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual

## Shared-Use Paths Along Roadways (Sidepaths)

### DESCRIPTION

A shared-use path is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and allows for two-way, off-street bicycle use and also may be used by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers and other non-motorized users. These facilities are frequently found in parks, along rivers, beaches, and in greenbelts or utility corridors where there are few conflicts with motorized vehicles.

Along roadways, these facilities create a situation where a portion of the bicycle traffic rides against the normal flow of motor vehicle traffic and can result in wrong-way riding where bicyclists enter or leave the path.

### DESIGN CRITERIA

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual, Appendix A, Section A-5**

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)

**Virginia Department of Transportation Supplement to the MUTCD**

[http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia\\_mutcd\\_supplement.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia_mutcd_supplement.asp)

**Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:**

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

**Virginia Department of Transportation Structure & Bridge Design Aids for Pedestrians and/or**

**Bicycle Facilities.** <http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/electronic%20pubs/Bridge%20Manuals/VolumeV-Part2/Chapter6.pdf>

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road and Bridge Standards** [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008\\_road\\_and\\_bridge\\_standards.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008_road_and_bridge_standards.asp)

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities**, provides guidance on dimensions, use, and layout of specific bicycle facilities.

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities**, provides guidance on dimensions, use and layout of specific pedestrian facilities.

**The United States Access Board's proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

**The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2009, Chapter 9** is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities. [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)

Pay special attention to the entrance/exit of the path as bicyclists may continue to travel on the wrong side of the street.



## Shared-Use Paths and Trails in Abandoned or Inactive Rail Corridors

### DESCRIPTION

Commonly referred to as Rails-to-Trails or Rail-Trails, these projects convert inactive or abandoned rail corridors into shared-use paths and trails. Rail corridors offer several advantages, including relatively direct routes between major destinations and generally flat terrain.

Congress passed legislation in 1976 called the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act, creating the first Rails-to-Trails Grant Program. Further, the Rails to Trails Act of 1983 allowed the railroads to “railbank” these corridors by allowing abandoned rail lines to be converted into trails for hiking, biking, equestrian and transportation purposes.

The railroad may form an agreement with any person, public or private, who would like to use the banked rail line as a shared-use path, trail or linear park until it is again needed for rail use.

- Municipalities should acquire abandoned rail rights-of-way whenever possible to preserve the opportunity for shared-use path and/or trail development.
- Trails in abandoned or inactive rail corridors should meet or exceed general design practices.
- In full conversions of abandoned rail corridors, the sub-base, superstructure, drainage, bridges, and crossings are already established. Design becomes a matter of working with the existing infrastructure to meet the needs of a rail-trail.
- If converting a rail bed adjacent to an active rail line, see Shared-Use Paths and Trails in Existing Active Rail Corridors.



## DESIGN CRITERIA

**The United States Access Board's proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:**

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>,

**Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

The **ADA Standards for Accessible Design** contain standards for newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities:

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards.htm>

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual, Appendix A, Section A-5:**

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)

**Virginia Department of Transportation Supplement to the MUTCD:** [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia\\_mutcd\\_supplement.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/virginia_mutcd_supplement.asp)

**Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia:** [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)

**Virginia Department of Transportation Structure & Bridge Design Aids for Pedestrians and/or Bicycle Facilities:**

<http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/electronic%20pubs/Bridge%20Manuals/VolumeV-Part2/Chapter6.pdf>

**Virginia Department of Transportation Road and Bridge Standards:** [http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008\\_road\\_and\\_bridge\\_standards.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008_road_and_bridge_standards.asp)

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities**, provides guidance on dimensions, use, and layout of specific bicycle facilities.

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities**, provides guidance on dimensions, use and layout of specific pedestrian facilities.

**The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 9** is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities: [http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)

**The U.S. Forest Service, Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds, 2007** is a publication of nationally recognized Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds design: [http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library\\_card.php?p\\_num=0723%202816](http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/php/library_card.php?p_num=0723%202816);

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/publications/fs\\_publications/07232816/toc.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/toc.cfm)

## Boardwalks / Pedestrian Bridges

### DESCRIPTION

Boardwalks / Pedestrian Bridges are typically required when crossing wetlands or other poorly drained areas. They are usually constructed of wooden planks or recycled material planks. The recycled material has gained popularity in recent years since it lasts much longer than wood, especially in wet conditions. Therefore, the maintenance cost is much less over time. A number of low-impact support systems are also available that reduce the disturbance within wetland areas to the greatest extent possible.

- If access by vehicles is desired, boardwalks should be designed to structurally support the weight of a small truck or a light-weight vehicle.
- Railing shall be vertical members, not horizontal. See AASHTO Bike Guide, page 5-27 (image below) and VDOT Road and Bridge Standards HR-1.

### DESIGN CRITERIA

#### Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual

##### Appendix A, Section A-5:

[http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic\\_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf](http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic_Pubs/2005%20RDM/RoadDesignCoverVol.1.pdf)

#### Virginia Department of Transportation Structure & Bridge Design Aids for Pedestrians and/or Bicycle Facilities:

<http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/electronic%20pubs/Bridge%20Manuals/VolumeV-Part2/Chapter6.pdf>

#### Virginia Department of Transportation Road and Bridge Standards

[http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008\\_road\\_and\\_bridge\\_standards.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/locdes/2008_road_and_bridge_standards.asp)

The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 9 is the primary source for traffic control for bicycle facilities.

[http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf\\_index.htm](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm)

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities provides guidance on dimensions, use, and layout of specific bicycle facilities.

The United States Access Board's proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Rights-of-Way:

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

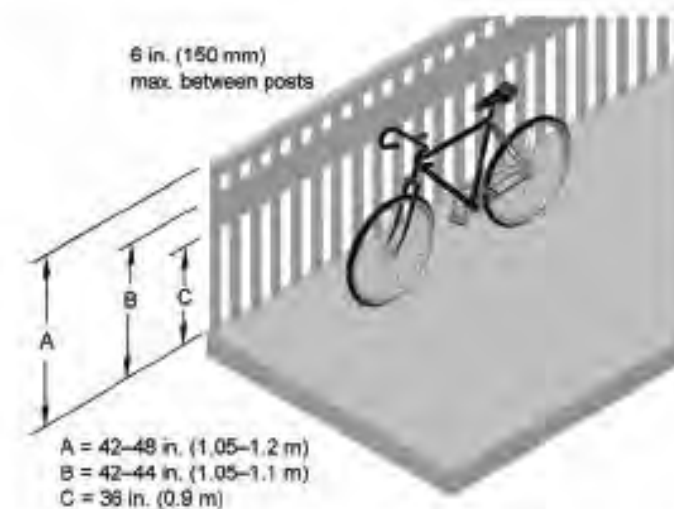


Figure 5-11. Bridge Railing

# Accessible Trail Design

## DESCRIPTION

Constructing outdoor trails may have limitations that make meeting ADA guidelines difficult and sometimes prohibitive. Prohibitive impacts include harm to significant cultural or natural resources; a significant change in the intended purpose of the trail; requirements of construction methods that are against federal, state, or local regulations; or terrain characteristics that prevent compliance.

- Trailhead signage should provide accessibility information, such as trail gradient/profile, distances, tread conditions, location of drinking fountains, and rest stops.
- At trailheads there should be at least one accessible parking area per every 25 vehicle spaces.
- On trails designated as accessible, provide rest areas or widened areas on the trail, optimally at every 300 feet.
- For information on coordinating Rails with Trails and pedestrian crossing projects, see:

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/documents/house-bill-2088.pdf](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/house-bill-2088.pdf)

## DESIGN CRITERIA:

### Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

### Manuals and Guides for Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Operation, and for Signs:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm)

Accessible Trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/>

Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)



## Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Signage and Wayfinding

The ability to navigate through a city or town is informed by landmarks, natural features and other visual cues. Signs throughout the city should indicate to users:

- Direction of travel
- Location of destinations
- Travel time/distance to those destinations

These signs will increase users' comfort and accessibility to the trail system.

Signage can serve both wayfinding and safety purposes including:

- Helping to familiarize users with the trail network
- Helping users identify the best routes to destinations
- Helping to address misperceptions about time and distance
- Helping overcome a "barrier to entry" for people who are not frequent bicyclists (e.g., "interested but concerned" bicyclists)

A trail wayfinding signage plan would identify:

- Sign locations
- Sign type – what information should be included and design features
- Destinations to be highlighted on each sign – key destinations for trail user
- Approximate distance and travel time to each destination

Trail wayfinding signs also visually cue motorists that they are driving along a trail corridor and should use caution. Signs are typically placed at key locations leading to and along trail routes, including the intersection of multiple routes. Too many road signs tend to clutter the right-of-way, and it is recommended that these signs be posted at a level most visible to users rather than per vehicle signage standards.

DESIGN CRITERIA:

**Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:** <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/final-guidelines-for-outdoor-developed-areas>

**Connecting our Commonwealth: The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox: A How-To Guide for the Organization, Planning, and Development of Local Greenway and Trails Programs in Virginia:** [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/greentrailtools.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/greentrailtools.shtml)



Sign Types



Sign Placement



# Appendix B: Resolutions of Support

## Overview

During the planning process, jurisdictions throughout southern Virginia were contacted regarding local support for Beaches to Bluegrass Trail development. Several jurisdictions formally adopted a resolution of support recognizing the economic, health, environmental, social and quality of life benefits of the trail network. In this section are copies of each formally adopted resolution of support for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.



Wythe County: Highlands Trail

2014 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 201

*Commending the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail initiative.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 31, 2014  
Agreed to by the Senate, February 6, 2014

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail initiative, created by the Greenways and Trails Task Force, is one of five programs to establish new statewide trails for the enjoyment of the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept traverses southern Virginia from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay, bringing unique opportunities for economic development, tourism, and recreation to a significant portion of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, linking existing and proposed trails and support resources, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will create a diversified trail system, attracting a significant variety and number of visitors from all over the East Coast to southern Virginia, while serving the daily recreational and alternative transportation needs of the communities from the mountains and the sea; and

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will expose visitors to diverse, spectacular natural scenery, including mountain peaks, river views on both sides of the eastern continental divide, vistas of the Blue Ridge across the Piedmont, mountain meadows, old forests, small streams, black water swamps, tidal marshes, and sandy beaches; and

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will traverse the historical agricultural and industrial regions that were the base of Virginia's formative economy, traveling along the river and rail corridors that supported that economy; and

WHEREAS, local communities will be able to determine how best to offer access to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail throughout the five conceptual trail segments: the mountains, the western Piedmont, the Tobacco Heritage Trail crossing of the eastern Piedmont, the coastal plain, and the Tidewater; and

WHEREAS, local control of trail development will allow each trail section sponsor to tailor its section of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail to its citizens' and visitors' needs by creating on-trail bicycling, equestrian, or pedestrian paths or using existing paved roads; and

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will offer outdoor recreational opportunities, including walking paths on all trail sections, which the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has determined to be of high public interest and which can improve the physical health of the citizens of southern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, in cooperation with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Department of Transportation, commissioned a corridor study in 2013 on the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass route through southern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept utilizes former railroad corridors through southern Virginia because so many abandoned lines follow an east-west course, more of which pass through expanses of undeveloped, rural land than along any other potential statewide corridor; the corridors also provide an easy grade and substantial bed for trail development; and

WHEREAS, a majority of localities along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail have identified practical routes of current, existing roads braided with current and potential trails; however, in a few rural locations, the combination of remote potential rights of way, concerns over trail user safety, possible conflict with adjacent land uses, and a lack of prospects for support facilities has limited local community support, making the need for regional input on alternate routing essential; and

WHEREAS, in a few urban locations, local officials have not yet confirmed support for the optimum routes for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, which would allow the best access to current or future intermodal transportation nodes and commercial support facilities; and

WHEREAS, cooperation among local governments, regional planning organizations, local and regional economic development organizations, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other agencies of the Commonwealth will ensure the best outcomes for route location and development that will enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, citizen health and wellness, transportation connectivity, and business development opportunities for trail user services, such as food, lodging, equestrian support, and equipment maintenance services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail initiative; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Greenways and Trails Task Force, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the potential economic, recreational, and health benefits of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail initiative.

ENROLLED  
HJ201ER

# CRATER PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monument Professional Building • 1964 Wakefield Street • Post Office Box 1808 • Petersburg, Virginia 23805  
PHONE: (804) 861-1666 • FAX: 804-732-8972 • E-MAIL: [info@craterpdc.org](mailto:info@craterpdc.org) • WEBSITE: [www.craterpdc.org](http://www.craterpdc.org)  
Dennis K. Morris, Executive Director

June 27, 2014

Jennifer Wampler  
Trails Coordinator  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 E. Main St, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

**RE: *Beaches To Bluegrass Trail Support***

Dear Ms. Wampler:

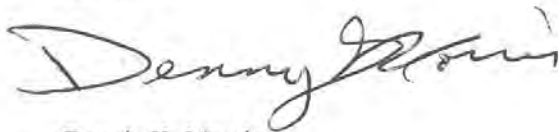
The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed Statewide, multi-use trail which will connect the Cumberland Gap to Virginia Beach through southern Virginia and localities of the Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC). The CPDC supports the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as it will promote recreation, tourism, healthy lifestyles, and connectivity between areas of natural resources throughout the State as well as our region.

The CPDC also supports an alignment that would bring the trail through the City of Emporia. This is a crossroads for the southern CPDC. Emporia would offer many amenities for trail users.

The CPDC also supports exploring potential alignments through Sussex County. Representatives of Sussex have expressed this desire.

The CPDC will continue to work with local, regional, and state partners to refine the preferred Beaches To Bluegrass route through the CPDC which will connect with the planned trail segments in adjacent regions.

Sincerely,



Dennis K. Morris  
Executive Director



*A Region Connected*

## **Cumberland Plateau Planning District**

November 25, 2014

Jennifer Wampler  
Trails Coordinator  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 E. Main St, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Beaches To Bluegrass Trail Support

Dear Ms. Wampler:

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed Statewide, multi-use trail which will connect the Cumberland Gap to Virginia Beach. The CPPDC supports the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as it will promote recreation, tourism, healthy lifestyles, and connectivity between areas of natural resources throughout the State.

The CPPDC will continue to work with local, regional, and state partners to support the many trail initiatives such as The Crooked Road, Coal Heritage Trail and Spearhead Trails.

Sincerely,

James A. Baldwin  
Executive Director

[www.cppdc.org](http://www.cppdc.org) • [www.cumberlandbroadband.com](http://www.cumberlandbroadband.com)

P. O. Box 548 • Phone (276) 889-1778 • Fax (276) 889-5732 • Lebanon, Virginia 24266

*Serving Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell Counties*

MAR 25 2014

MEMBER JURISDICTIONS

March 20, 2014

CHESAPEAKE

Ms. Jennifer Wampler  
Trails Coordinator

FRANKLIN

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation  
600 E. Main St, 24th Floor

GLOUCESTER

Richmond, VA 23219

HAMPTON

RE: Beaches to Bluegrass Trail support

ISLE OF WIGHT

Dear Ms. Wampler:

JAMES CITY

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed Statewide, multi-use trail which will connect the Cumberland Gap to Virginia Beach through southern Virginia and several localities of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC). The HRPDC supports the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass Trail as it will promote recreation, tourism, healthy lifestyles, and connectivity between areas of natural resources throughout the State as well as our region.

NEWPORT NEWS

NORFOLK

POQUOSON

The HRPDC also supports the dual alignment of the proposed South Hampton Roads Trail route as the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail through portions of Hampton Roads. The proposed South Hampton Roads Trail, a regional trail currently in various stages of planning and development, will connect downtown Suffolk to the Virginia Beach oceanfront.

PORTSMOUTH

SOUTHAMPTON

The HRPDC will also continue to work with local, regional, and state partners to refine the preferred Beaches to Bluegrass route through south Hampton Roads which will connect with the planned trail segments to the west of the region.

SUFFOLK

SURRY

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA BEACH



WILLIAMSBURG

Dwight L. Farmer  
Executive Director/Secretary

YORK

SJK/jc

# LENOWISCO

## PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

December 1, 2014

Ms. Jennifer Wampler  
Trails Coordinator  
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 East Main Street; 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

Mr. John Bolecek  
Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Ms. Wampler and Mr. Bolecek:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, I would like to extend my support for funding and construction of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Project. LENOWISCO's encouragement and collaboration on projects such as the B2B Trail have remained a priority in our mission of development and progress for our Planning District. Included in the on-going efforts of invigorating the Southwest Virginia regional economy, a recreational trail system across the Commonwealth would be a keystone for diversity in industry and trade via outdoor recreation. Such an endeavor will continue building a tourism-based economy that has yet to achieve its full market potential.

The partnership between the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Transportation can create a one-of-a-kind product in the proposed B2B Trail. With considerably significant attention on outdoor recreation as an economic driver, completion of this project will see countless benefits across the Commonwealth. The LENOWISCO district is home to the final approximate 119 miles of trail, where almost half of it already exists and currently accommodates horseback riding. This project fits perfectly with several other initiatives that are helping build multi-modal trail systems across the region. Included are various Rails to Trails projects, efforts of the Southwest Regional Recreational Authority, Spearhead Trails and Heart of Appalachia organizations, and assorted localities that are constructing trails for pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and ATV uses themselves. The LENOWISCO PDC continues to assist each as much as possible.



P.O. Box 366 • Duffield, VA 24244-0366  
Phone: 276/431-2206 FAX: 276/431-2208

*Virginia Planning District One • Serving Lee-Norton-Wise-Scott*



Thank you for recognizing that LENOWISCO could be of assistance in the implementation of this trails endeavor. We feel the existence of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is paramount for future successes across the Commonwealth. We stand committed to assist in working with federal, state and local governments, as well as all other stakeholders in the process to help bring the multi-modal system to fruition. Please feel free to include this letter in any application or marketing for implementation or development of the project. If we may be able to further assist you in this worthwhile project, please contact me.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen A. Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glen A. Skinner  
Executive Director



## MOUNT ROGERS PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

DEC - 2 2014

WILLIE GREENE, Chairman  
GUY ODUM, Vice-Chairman

STEVE WINESETT, Treasurer  
AARON SIZEMORE, Executive Director

1021 Terrace Drive

Marion, Virginia 24354

Phone 276-783-5103

Fax 276-783-6949

November 25, 2014

Jennifer Wampler  
Trails Coordinator  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 E. Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Support

Dear Ms. Wampler:

The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed Statewide, multi-use trail which will connect the Cumberland Gap to Virginia Beach through southern Virginia and localities of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC). The Mount Rogers PDC supports the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass trail as it will promote recreation, tourism, healthy lifestyles, and connectivity between areas of natural resources throughout the State and region.

The MRPDC will continue working with local, regional, and state partners to refine the preferred Beaches To Bluegrass route through the Mount Rogers PDC which will connect with the planned trail portions in neighboring regions.

Sincerely,

Aaron Sizemore  
Executive Director

*SERVING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN  
BLAND - CARROLL - GRAYSON - SMYTH - WASHINGTON - WYTHE  
BRISTOL - GALAX*

*MRPDC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



**Counties**

Floyd • Giles • Montgomery • Pulaski

**City**

Radford

**Towns**

Blacksburg • Christiansburg • Floyd •  
Narrows • Pearisburg • Pulaski • Rich Creek

**Universities**

Virginia Tech • Radford University

# New River Valley Planning District Commission



6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124  
Radford, Virginia 24141  
Tel (540) 639-9313  
Fax (540) 831-6093  
e-mail: nrvpdc@nrvpdc.org  
Visit: www.nrvpdc.org

## A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN THE NEW RIVER VALLEY

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to a more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for residents of the New River Valley; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, and attract visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, New River Valley, Virginia has numerous natural resources that support outdoor recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the New River Valley is already a destination for trail users who enjoy New River Trail State Park, US Bicycle Route 76, the Appalachian Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, National Forest trails, and local trails; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the New River Valley Planning District Commission supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the New River Valley Planning District Commission is committed to working with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and other localities to connect trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways to complete the statewide Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

Adopted February 27, 2014

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael S. Patton, Chair



## **SOUTHSIDE PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION**

200 South Mecklenburg Avenue,

South Hill, Virginia 23970 (434) 447-7101

### **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail initiative, created by the Greenways and Trails Task Force, is one of five programs to establish new statewide trails for the enjoyment of the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept traverses southern Virginia from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay, bringing unique opportunities for economic development, tourism, and recreation to a significant portion of the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS**, linking existing and proposed trails and support resources, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will create a diversified trail system, attracting a significant variety and number of visitors from all over the East Coast to southern Virginia, while serving the daily recreational and alternative transportation needs of the communities from the mountains and the sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will expose visitors to diverse, spectacular natural scenery, including mountain peaks, river views on both sides of the eastern continental divide, vistas of the Blue Ridge across the Piedmont, mountain meadows, old forests, small streams, black water swamps, tidal marshes, and sandy beaches; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will traverse the historical agricultural and industrial regions that were the base of Virginia's formative economy, traveling along the river and rail corridors that supported that economy; and

**WHEREAS**, local communities will be able to determine how best to offer access to the Beaches to Bluegrass trail throughout the five conceptual trail segments: the mountains, the western Piedmont, the Tobacco Heritage Trail crossing of the eastern Piedmont, the coastal plain, and the Tidewater; and

**WHEREAS**, local control of trail development will allow each trail section sponsor to tailor its section of the Beaches to Bluegrass trail to its citizens' and visitors' needs by creating on-trail bicycling, equestrian, or pedestrian paths or using existing paved roads; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail will offer outdoor recreational opportunities, including walking paths on all trail sections, which the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has determined to be of high public interest and which can improve the physical health of the citizens of southern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, in cooperation with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and Virginia Department of Transportation, commissioned a corridor study in 2013 on the proposed Beaches to Bluegrass route through southern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept utilizes former railroad corridors through southern Virginia because so many abandoned lines follow an east-west course, more of which pass through expanses of undeveloped, rural land than along any other potential statewide corridor; the corridors also provide an easy grade and substantial bed for trail development; and

**WHEREAS**, a majority of localities along the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail have identified practical routes of current, existing roads, braided with current and potential trails; however, in a few rural locations, the combination of remote potential right of way, concerns over trail user safety, possible conflict with adjacent land uses, and a lack of prospects for support facilities has limited local community support, making the need for regional input on alternate routing essential; and

**WHEREAS**, cooperation among local governments, regional planning organizations, local and regional economic development organizations, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other agencies of the Commonwealth will ensure the best outcomes for route location and development that will enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, citizen health and wellness, transportation connectivity, and business development opportunities for trail user services, such as food, lodging, equestrian support, and equipment maintenance services;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Southside Planning District Commission prepares this resolution as admiration for the potential economic, recreational, and health benefits of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

4/24/14  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN  
THE WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT**

**WHEREAS, the *Beaches to Bluegrass Trail*** is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS,** trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS,** trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our area and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS,** time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body, and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS,** the West Piedmont Planning District of Virginia is blessed with a favorable climate, offering a multitude of inviting, beautiful scenic destinations and an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities year-round; and

**WHEREAS,** the West Piedmont Planning District has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy the Blue Ridge Parkway, Fairystone State Park, the Dick and Willie Passage Trail, the Ringgold Depot Trail, Dan Riverwalk Trail, and many others; and

**WHEREAS,** the jurisdictions of the West Piedmont Planning District have been the host to the Smith River Fest, the Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival, Floydfest, and numerous other events;


**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the West Piedmont Planning District Board of Commissioners strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that West Piedmont Planning District is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the West Piedmont Planning District is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

**ADOPTED BY THE** West Piedmont Planning District Board of Commissioners **ON** December 6, 2013.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director



**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA IN  
SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our county and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Abingdon, Virginia is blessed with the scenic and seasonal beauty of the rivers, streams, mountains, and valleys, as well as the wildlife of Virginia's Great Valley and Southern Appalachian Region; and

**WHEREAS**, Abingdon has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail, the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Crooked Road Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, and the Abingdon Urban Path System ; and

**WHEREAS**, Abingdon has been the host to the Virginia Highlands Festival, the annual January Jams Music Experience, the Thursday Jams Summer Music Experience, the Overmountain Victory Trail Association History Symposium, the Overmountain Victory Trail Association Semi-Annual Conference, the Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance Conference, and the 2011 Biennial Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails; and

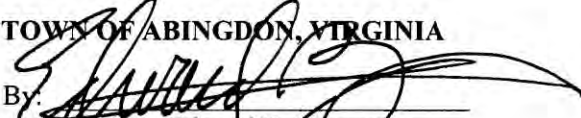
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the Town of Abingdon strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

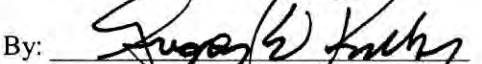
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town of Abingdon is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council of the Town of Abingdon is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation

promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

**TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA**

By:   
Mayor Edward B. Morgan

By:   
Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager

The undersigned Clerk of the Council of the Town of Abingdon, Virginia, certifies that the foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Council of the Town of Abingdon, held on January 6, 2014. I hereby further certify that such a meeting was a regular meeting, duly called and held, and that during the consideration of the foregoing resolution, a quorum was present. I further certify that the minutes of such meeting reflect how each member of Council voted with respect to the adoption of the foregoing resolution as follows:

Member	Attendance	Vote
Edward B. Morgan, Mayor	No	—
Cathy C. Lowe, Vice Mayor	yes	aye
Richard E. Humphreys	yes	aye
Robert M. Howard	yes	aye
Jayne A. Duehring	yes	aye

WITNESS MY HAND and the seal of the Town of Abingdon as of 1/7, 2014.

(SEAL)

  
Clerk, Town of Abingdon

**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN  
Bristol, Virginia**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our City and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Bristol, Virginia is blessed with four beautiful seasons in the heart of the southern Appalachian Mountains, majestic mountain vistas, several fresh water lakes and rivers, abundant hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, and many other outdoor recreation activities; and

**WHEREAS**, Bristol has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy Sugar Hollow Park, Steele's Creek Park, and the close proximity to the Appalachian and Virginia Creeper Trails; and

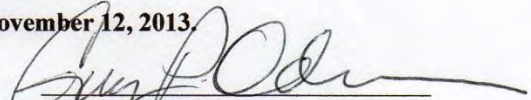
**WHEREAS**, Bristol has been the host to the Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion music festival and Sugar Rush Mountain Bike Race;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Bristol, Virginia City Council strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

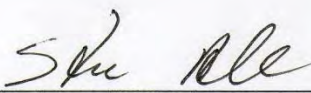
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Bristol is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Bristol is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our City, region, state, and country.

**ADOPTED BY THE Bristol, Virginia City Council ON November 12, 2013.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Guy P. Odum, Mayor

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

PRESENTED: December 3, 2013

ADOPTED: December 3, 2013

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-12 . 07

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING SUPPORT OF THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL, A PROPOSED STATEWIDE SHARED USE TRAIL THAT WILL INCLUDE LINKAGE WITH DANVILLE'S RIVERWALK AS IT CONNECTS THE CUMBERLAND GAP TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN THROUGH VIRGINIA.

WHEREAS, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our City and encourage a healthier and more enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

WHEREAS, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body, and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

WHEREAS, Danville, Virginia is blessed with the scenic Dan River, beautiful parks, and an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Danville has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy Danville's Riverwalk, which links a series of popular parks and public places, and the expansive Anglers Ridge and Dan Daniel Memorial Park mountain bike trail system; and

OFFICE OF THE  
CITY ATTORNEY  
CITY OF  
DANVILLE, VIRGINIA



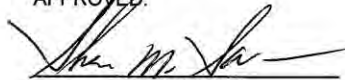
WHEREAS, Danville has been the host to the Festival in the Park, Fourth of July Patriot Run, River District Festival, Danville Half Marathon, Dirty Dan Dash, Green Legs and Hamstrings Trail Run, Shootout on Anglers Ridge Mountain Bike Race, in addition to over twenty races, runs and walks sponsored by community civic organizations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Danville City Council strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

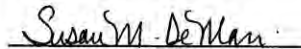
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Danville is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Danville is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our City, region, state, and country.

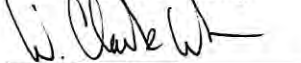
APPROVED:

  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
CLERK

Approved as to  
Form and Legal Sufficiency:

  
City Attorney

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE VIRGINIA  
BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL  
BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF HALIFAX, VIRGINIA**

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of Halifax, Virginia has been awarded by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) an Enhancement Grant Project in the Town of Halifax, the Banister River Gateway Project (EN# 09-230-109, UPC# 94276), to install decorative lighting, interpretive signage, wayside and trailhead leading to a river overlook, river access for a canoe launch (constructed by the Roanoke River Basin Association-Upper Reach with funds from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission), and other facilities for the preservation of scenic and historic sites, the promotion of historic transportation structures, the interconnectivity of neighborhoods and commercial areas in addition to environmental and recreational improvements along the Banister River creating highway corridor "gateway" enhancements into the historic County Seat as part of the town's ongoing revitalization; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town adopted its Comprehensive Plan on July 10, 2007 in which it addresses transportation goals for more pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the town, including an identified "greenway" system within the project area specifically prioritizing historic preservation, natural resource protection and outdoor recreation opportunities along the Banister Lake/Banister River "blueway" which comprises a portion of the regional Tobacco Heritage Trail (THT) along the old Lynchburg & Durham rail spur and references the Old Banister Town neighborhood redevelopment plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail comprehensive planning work now underway has identified the Banister River Gateway and the Banister River Blueway in the Town of Halifax as links to the Tobacco Heritage Trail in Halifax County as part of the regional trail system throughout the surrounding Southern Virginia counties; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and


**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our area and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities improving the town's vitality.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Council of Halifax, Virginia endorses the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Council of Halifax, Virginia hereby expresses its commitment to work with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways in addition to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our town, county, region, state, and country.

This resolution duly adopted at the regular meeting of the Halifax, Virginia Town Council this 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2013.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
G. F. Moore, Mayor

**ATTEST**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Halifax Town Council





*Come live the legend!*  
**LAWRENCEVILLE**<sup>™</sup>  
 THE HISTORIC HOME OF BRUNSWICK COURTHOUSE, VIRGINIA

**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN  
 TOWN OF LAWRENCEVILLE**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our county and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lawrenceville, Virginia is blessed with a historic Downtown within rural Brunswick County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lawrenceville has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy the Tobacco Heritage Trail and East Coast Greenway Trail; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lawrenceville has been the host to Bike VA, the Brunswick Spring Festival and the Lawrenceville Rotary 5 Miler; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town of Lawrenceville strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town of Lawrenceville is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town of Lawrenceville is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

**ADOPTED BY THE LAWRENCEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 8, 2013.**

*Douglas R. Faw* Mayor  
*Wanda E. Peterson* Clerk

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TOWN OF LAWRENCEVILLE  
 400 North Main Street • Lawrenceville, Virginia 23868  
 434.848.2414 • www.lawrenceville-va.com

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## RESOLUTION

### In Support of The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in the City of Martinsville

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our community and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Martinsville, Virginia and the surrounding county are blessed with a moderate climate and exceptional scenery, all well-suited for outdoor recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Martinsville has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy using the Dick & Willie Trail and the Uptown Connection Trail and Silverbell Trails;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** on this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014, that Martinsville City Council strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The City of Martinsville is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The City of Martinsville is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

Kim E. Adkins, Mayor

Attest:

Brenda Prillaman, Clerk of Council



# NORFOLK

*Bicycle & Pedestrian Trails Commission*

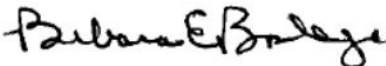
February 6, 2014

Jennifer Wampler  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 E. Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

The City of Norfolk Bicycling and Pedestrian Trails Commission (BPTC) would like to express its full support for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail concept. This statewide shared-use trail will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay. The route will highlight southern and southwestern Virginia, ultimately increasing the quality of life for residents of the Commonwealth and Norfolk through creating more active lifestyles, economic development, and community connectivity. The proposed trail will connect to existing or planned facilities (Elizabeth River Trail, South Hampton Roads Regional Trail) in Norfolk and enhance Norfolk's connection to other Hampton Roads cities.

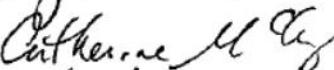
Therefore, the BPTC resolves to work with other localities and the Commonwealth of Virginia to connect this system of trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways. Additionally, we are committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our city, the region, and commonwealth.

Regards,  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Commission  
City of Norfolk, VA

Barbara E. Boslego 


Wesley Cheney

Steven Johnson 

Catherine McCoy 

Elizabeth Schleeper 

Markus Wegener 

Brian Wilson 

City of Norfolk • 501 Boush Street • Norfolk, VA 23510 • 757-441-2400





**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN  
TOWN OF VICTORIA**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our county and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Victoria, Virginia is blessed with an abundance of wildlife, lakes, and naturalized areas already directly connected to a section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail that runs directly through the downtown business district and through a 23 acre downtown park. The Town of Victoria is also in the process of constructing a campgrounds for trail users; and

**WHEREAS**, Victoria, Virginia has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy walking, biking, bird and wildlife observation, Geocaching, and horseback riding; and

**WHEREAS**, Victoria, Virginia has been the host to National Day of the Cowboy, Autumn Days, and Small Town Christmas events/festivals that either promote or attract trail users; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Victoria Town Council strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Victoria, Virginia is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Victoria, Virginia is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

**ADOPTED BY THE VICTORIA TOWN COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 8, 2013.**

*I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Town Council of Victoria, Virginia at a regular council in Victoria, Virginia at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 6 in favor and 0 opposed, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2013.*

*Carol R. Watson*  
Carol R. Watson, Mayor

Attest:  
*Pamela Mundherk*  
Pamela Mundherk, Clerk

**Recorded Vote: Unanimous 6-0 vote.**



**RESOLUTION OF THE  
HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**In Support of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail in Henry County**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our community and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Henry County, Virginia and the surrounding counties are blessed with a moderate climate and exceptional scenery, all well-suited for outdoor recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, Henry County, Virginia has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy using the Dick & Willie Trail;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014, that Henry County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Henry County is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Henry County is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state and country.

*H.G. Vaughn*

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H.G. Vaughn, Chairman  
Henry County Board of Supervisors

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE  
BEACHES TO BLUEGRASS TRAIL IN LEE COUNTY  
13-042**

**WHEREAS**, the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed, statewide, shared-use trail that will connect the Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean through southern and southwestern Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bicycle routes and lanes, pedestrian walkways, and greenways encourage walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding, which lead to healthier lifestyles for our citizens, as well as energy independence and reduced carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways foster economic development, create jobs, attract visitors to our county and encourage a better, more healthy and enjoyable quality of life for our workers and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, time spent in nature helps renew the mind, body and spirit and trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways contribute to safer, more livable, family-friendly communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Lee County, Virginia is blessed with an agreeable climate, varying levels of topography and unsurpassed natural beauty; and

**WHEREAS**, Lee County has the good fortune to already be a destination for trail users who enjoy our hospitable environment and citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, Lee County has been the host to colonial militia and Civil War re-enactments, festivals, fairs and cultural events;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Lee County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the development of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Lee County is committed to working with other localities to connect these trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways;

**BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED** that Lee County is committed to working with our state and congressional representatives to support legislation promoting active, human-powered transportation facilities for the betterment of our county, region, state, and country.

Adopted this the 19<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2013.



  
CLERK OF THE BOARD



**Administration**

143 3rd Street, NW Suite 1  
Pulaski, Virginia 24301  
540-980-7705  
540-980-7717



**PULASKI COUNTY**  
**IN VIRGINIA'S NEW RIVER VALLEY**

December 11, 2014

Ms. Jennifer Wampler  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Recreation Planning  
600 E. Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Ms. Wampler:

The Pulaski County Board of Supervisors, at its meeting on Monday, November 24, 2014, by a unanimous vote endorsed the establishment of the Beaches to Bluegrass cycling trail across the southern part of Virginia. The location of this cycling route through Pulaski County provides an excellent opportunity to interconnect the Beaches to Bluegrass trail with the TransAmerica Bikecentennial 76 Route and the 52-mile off road New River Trail State Park.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Peter M. Huber  
County Administrator

PMH/gh

Web: [www.pulaskicounty.org](http://www.pulaskicounty.org)  
Email: [bos@pulaskicounty.org](mailto:bos@pulaskicounty.org)

NOV 25 2014

## PARTNERSHIP FOR FLOYD, INC.

P.O. Box 53, Floyd, VA 24091

November 18, 2014

Ms. Jennifer Wampler, Trail Coordinator  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 E. Main St., 24<sup>th</sup> floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Ms. Wampler:

Partnership for Floyd applauds the concept of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail and endorses the plan to cross the Blue Ridge through Floyd County. We who live here need more recreational opportunities, and our visitors are always looking for healthy activities. Development of the outlined corridor for hiking and a bicycle route will address both needs.

As we discussed this at our meeting last night, members immediately began thinking of ways to link your outlined route with the Town of Floyd, where Floyd Country Store is an important stop on the popular Crooked Road music tour and our restaurants and art galleries offer refreshment for body and mind.

Partnership for Floyd is an active volunteer civic group working with the Town and County to preserve and enhance the unique life and beauty of Floyd and its surroundings since 2004.

Please keep us informed as you proceed, and let us know how we might help to bring this exciting vision to reality.

Sincerely,



Anne Pendrak, President

cc: Floyd County Board of Supervisors  
Floyd Town Council

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Partnership for Floyd is a 501(c)(3) organization.



Virginia Tourism Corporation  
901 East Byrd Street  
Richmond, VA 23219-4048 USA

TEL (804) 545-5500  
FAX (804) 545-5501  
[www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org) (consumer)  
[www.vatc.org](http://www.vatc.org) (industry)

Jennifer Wampler  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Planning and Recreation Resources Division  
203 Governor Street, Suite 326  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Jennifer,

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is very pleased to hear that the Virginia Department of Transportation is on board with planning assistance for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail that will transverse Southern Virginia and ultimately stretch from the Chesapeake Bay to the Cumberland Gap. This trail concept is one that VTC fully supports. Beaches to Bluegrass will be a braided trail utilizing existing non-motorized trails on abandoned railroad right of way, and also includes constructing new connector trails in areas that trails do not currently exist. The trail also provides an alternate transportation corridor following US Route 58.

This new transportation corridor will assist with tourism development in the small towns and counties in Southern Virginia – a region of Virginia that is seeing increased tourism growth. The trail will provide new ways for visitors to access the towns, tour attractions, shop, and stay at bed and breakfasts along the way.

Trails are economic drivers for small towns through visitor spending, and for small business growth and development. Trail development gives the towns the opportunity to develop tourism assets to help them become destinations. Trails also gives farmers, who once grew tobacco, a new use for their land by developing camping facilities, pick your own orchards, farm-to-table restaurants, and unique lodging opportunities.

VTC looks forward to seeing the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail develop and welcomes working with you and the other partners as the trail progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Galyean".

Steve Galyean  
Director of Development