

CHESAPEAKE TRAILS PLAN
GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
(10-16-09)

Goal

Balance the priorities of motor vehicles with those of bicycles, pedestrians and other users in the design of roadways and land use patterns so that most residents have the choice to walk and bicycle for transportation purposes or to recreate throughout the City.

Objectives

1. Enhance connectivity throughout the City with the development of a safe, continuous, and coordinated system of bikeway and trail facilities that provide access to a full range of activity centers.
2. Provide a variety of facilities (on road lanes, and both hard/soft surface shared use paths) to satisfy the transportation and recreation needs of different user types and abilities.
3. Develop a system of hard and soft surface off road trails to follow designated greenway corridors throughout the City, wherever possible, and enhance unique recreation opportunities.
4. Develop a system of safe commuter on-road routes for experienced users to efficiently travel from home to work or to major activity centers.
5. Improve safety, wherever possible, along arterial roads with high speeds and volume so trail users can commute to work or to an activity center.

General Action Steps

1. Ensure that bicycle routing is considered as part of street design within new development so that lanes and pathways form a connected system.
2. Identify weak links and discontinuities in the existing network, and develop a plan for prioritizing and funding solutions.
3. Promote intermodal transportation through the routing of bikeways and trails. Routes should interconnect with bus routes/transit corridors to maximize mobility throughout the region.
4. Establish mechanisms to enable on-going coordination and public involvement in bicycling issues (what mechanisms?).
5. The City's Trails Plan Map is the primary guide for the determination of trail type and location within Chesapeake and will be implemented as follows:

- The City will consider bicycle facilities with the design of all new or widened roadways that are also shown on the Master Transportation Plan. The recommended type of facility will be shown on the adopted Trails Plan. However, there may be instances that after detailed design is conducted a separate type facility may be deemed more appropriate.
 - Road projects consisting of less than ½ linear mile may be exempt from consideration unless adjacent to an existing facility or would otherwise not provide a practical linkage to the system. However, the necessary right-of-way should be reserved and a system of cash contributions for development projects should be pursued.
 - Future shared use path facilities located outside of existing road right of ways are shown as conceptual alignments on the Trails Plan map as exact routes may vary substantially as properties are developed.
6. Future collector and arterial roadways approved for new development but not shown on the Master Transportation Plan should also contain trail facilities that will ideally connect into the larger system.
 7. Develop short and long term projects to pursue special funding opportunities like the FHWA Enhancement Program and Rails to Trails programs. Special funding has been pursued and/or awarded for three of the four regional projects listed in Regional Connectivity Objective #3 above.
 8. Utilize the cluster development provision to develop trails, particularly in the rural southern region of Chesapeake. The proposed ordinance revisions contain the following key provisions that are related to the Trails Plan:
 - Required conservation land shall be configured in general accordance with the city's map of potential conservation lands set out in the comprehensive plan to ensure that an interconnected network of open space will be provided to the greatest extent possible.
 - Existing and planned trails within the property and connecting the tract to other properties should be generally consistent with the adopted Trails Plan Map.
 - Where a cluster development adjoins public parkland, the required conservation land shall be situated adjacent to the park to the maximum extent practicable. In cases where conservation land does not adjoin public parkland, a natural conservation buffer at least one hundred (100) feet in width shall be provided within the cluster development along its common boundary with adjacent property. No new buildings or structures shall be constructed in the 100-foot buffer; nor shall any clearing of trees or understory growth be permitted unless approved by the planning director or designee as necessary for trail construction, active recreational facilities, public and private utilities, spray irrigation systems, or storm water management facilities. Where the 100-foot buffer is unwooded or sparsely wooded, the City Arborist may require that vegetative screening be planted in accordance with the reforestation guidelines in the City's Landscape Specifications Manual.
 - To the extent practicable, designated conservation land shall be contiguous.
 9. Provide access to the designated conservation land within cluster ordinance developments in accordance with the following requirements:
 - One centrally located access point shall be provided for every fifteen (15) lots or less. Said access shall be in conformance with §19-201.6.a of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - Access to designated conservation land managed for agricultural or horticultural purposes may be appropriately restricted or denied as necessary to promote public safety and prevent interference with agricultural and horticultural operations.

- When a cluster development proposal is traversed by or abuts a trail customarily used by pedestrians, cyclists and/or equestrians, or one that is shown on the city's trail plan, the planning director or designee may require the applicant to make provisions for continued use of the trail. The applicant may later alter the course of the trail within the tract for which the cluster development is proposed under the following conditions:
 - a. The points at which the trail enters and exits the tract remain unchanged;
 - b. The proposed alteration exhibits quality trail design according to generally accepted principles of landscape architecture; and
 - c. The proposed alteration does not coincide with an existing or proposed street intended for use by motorized vehicles.
 - Sidewalks are required on both sides of the street in all cluster developments except in the A-1 zoning district. In lieu of sidewalks within an A-1 cluster development, a recreational trail network which provides connectivity to and within designated conservation land and to adjacent parcels shall be provided as determined by the planning director or designee. Cluster developments in other zoning districts shall incorporate a trail network to the maximum extent practicable to provide pedestrian connectivity to such areas as conservation land, schools, playgrounds, shopping areas, adjacent neighborhoods and high-volume streets. New trails shall be subject to the following design criteria:
 - a. Trails intended for public or private use shall be protected by a permanent conservation easement. The language of the conservation easement shall be approved by the city attorney.
 - b. The width of the improved trail surface shall be a minimum of ten feet wide for shared use trails and five feet wide for single use (equestrian or pedestrian). Trails may utilize alternative paving materials, depending on their intended use, provided that the planning director or designee approves same.
 - c. Trails shall have a vertical clearance of no less than ten feet.
 - d. No trail shall be designed or preserved with the intent to accommodate motorized vehicles, nor shall any such trail be used by motorized vehicles.
10. The City should make regional trail projects a top priority to strengthen connections with our neighbors and to the various villages within Chesapeake.
11. Participate in ongoing regional bicycle and pedestrian planning activities.
12. Continue to promote the development of multi-jurisdictional trails to include, but not be limited to:
- **Dismal Swamp Canal Trail** - An existing link in the East Coast Greenway from just north of the North Carolina line (to the south) to Dominion Boulevard (to the north). A northern extension has been funded to connect the existing trail to the Deep Creek Park and suburban neighborhoods to the north. A 2 mile trail extension within Chesapeake to the south is also contemplated to connect the existing trail with an existing trail in North Carolina.
 - **East Coast Greenway** - Designate the safest, enjoyable and most cost effective route to connect the northern terminus of the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail to the Suffolk line.
 - **Four City Trail** from Downtown Suffolk to Norfolk, via the soon to be abandoned rail line, parallel to Taylor Road in the Western Branch region of Chesapeake.

- **Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal** hiking trail from Battlefield Boulevard to Virginia Beach near the North Landing Bridge.

13. Promote intra city regional connections between the various villages within the City to better connect residents to libraries, recreation centers, shopping areas, etc.

On-Road Facility Action Steps

1. Designate lane facilities on the Bicycle/Trails Plan (with a minimum width of 5') along select existing and future roadways where the highest volume of users is expected and there are not major engineering constraints. If there are significant engineering constraints, the provision of wide (14-15' lanes) should be considered on multi-lane roadways and paved 4' shoulders on two lane roadways.
2. Wide outside lanes should be considered with all pavement restriping projects on multi-lane roadways.
3. 4' paved shoulders should be considered when repaving or improving narrow two lane roadway sections that are especially prevalent in Southern Chesapeake. Smaller widths may be considered if roadside ditches are too close to the road and there is not enough funding to relocate the ditches.
4. Provide safe bicycle access across major barriers such as waterways and interstate highways.
5. Coordinate maintenance activities for bikeways to ensure a high quality, safe experience for every user of the facilities.

Off-Road Shared Use Path Action Steps

1. Develop shared use pathways to a minimum width of 10', except in areas with exceptional engineering constraints where exceptions can be made. These facilities should follow linear features such as waterways and railroads or be located within government owned or similarly protected land wherever possible. Intersecting roads and driveways should be kept to a minimum.
2. Shared use paths should take advantage of natural amenities and defined greenways, wherever possible, and connect neighborhoods to park sites. A special emphasis is to connect with parks that provide trail amenities, such as the Indian River Park mountain bike paths and Northwest River Park.
3. Wherever possible, horse trails should be developed adjacent to the paved shared use paths. A network of horse trails should connect to existing and future areas of high usage such as the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail, Northwest River Park and the future Heritage Park.
4. Establish a route signage system that is easily and quickly understood by all users.
5. Provide safe bicycle/pedestrian access across major barriers such as waterways and interstate highways.
6. Coordinate maintenance activities for bikeways to ensure a high quality, safe experience for every user of the facilities.