



Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study

March 11, 2026

To: Fairfax County Planning Commission & Board of Supervisors

The Friends of Accotink Creek fully endorse the letter of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, appended below.

In particular, we emphatically endorse the charge to avoid creation of new paved trails within stream valleys, large natural areas that do not currently have trails, and sensitive natural areas. The maps and language of the Study must more clearly provide for preservation of such areas.

As we have been doing since 2015, we once more urge the County to turn away from one such trail, the pointless and regrettable [Cinder Bed Road Bikeway](#), for all the reasons so ably summed up in the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park letter.

Another such trail on the [ActiveFairfax](#) map is that shown in Accotink Stream Valley Park in the vicinity of Fullerton Road. This is the [Accotink Gorge](#), an area of exceptional native plant communities that should be protected instead of paved.

Sincerely,

Friends of Accotink Creek : : www.accotink.org : :

><(((e>.....>(((e> "Find just one other person who cares." >(((e>.....>(((e>.....>(((e>

[#SaveCinderBedWoods](#)

Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
3701 Lockheed Blvd
Alexandria, VA 22306

Date: March 1, 2026

Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Members of the Fairfax County Planning Commission

Subject: Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study

Dear Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and
Fairfax County Planning Commission,

I am writing to provide comments on the Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study on behalf of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP).

FOHMP was founded in 1985 and is a nonprofit organization of individuals dedicated to the protection of Fairfax County's premier wetland wildlife sanctuary—Huntley Meadows Park. FOHMP was formed to protect the park's resources following impacts from development in the 1980s that caused significant damage to the central wetland. Periodically, proposals to develop transportation trails through or around the park as well as adjacent land-development actions have threatened park resources. Most recently the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive plan amendment on February 5, 2019 (Plan Amendments No 2017-20 and 2017 P-06) to delete proposed trail segments from the southern and eastern edges of Huntley Meadows Park and along Hayfield Road from its intersection with Lockheed Boulevard to its intersection with Telegraph Road from the Countywide Transportation Plan Map.

The Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map shows the proposed transportation improvements along Lockheed Boulevard next to Huntley Meadows Park. In September 2024, FOHMP submitted comments to Fairfax County on the proposed Active Transportation Access and Safety Improvements for Lockheed Boulevard. FOHMP supports the project overall as it provides improved non-motorized access along Lockheed Boulevard. However, the last set of plans reviewed by FOHMP included proposed impacts on park parcel 0923 01 0006 (DB4323 P0587), which has a federal deed restriction that prohibits transportation uses. FOHMP asked that the plans be revised to remove all proposed impacts to park parcel 0923 01 0006 and include a trailside fence which would help limit social-trail development and trash accumulation in the parkland. We have not seen revised plans and continue to support the project so long as all proposed impacts onto park parcel 0923 01 0006 have been removed.

FOHMP supports trails and non-motorized access that improve the lives of residents and provide access to natural areas so long as those trails would not cause negative impacts to natural and cultural resources or conflict with appropriate management of public or private lands. FOHMP also opposes the creation of new paved trails within stream valleys, large natural areas that do not currently have trails and sensitive natural areas. The Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map has numerous instances where proposed new trails or trail improvements may negatively impact natural and cultural resources and conflict with their management. We ask that those proposed trail segments be removed from the Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map and that the County establish criteria to evaluate any proposed new trail or paved trail in natural areas to ensure protection and management of natural and cultural resources.

Several examples of trails shown on the Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map that should be either removed or modified include:

- Stream Valley Trail – Scotts Run Nature Preserve (Dranesville District):
Scotts Run NP contains rare plants and communities that are sensitive to

human uses. Stream valley trails often allow bicycle access. Bicycles have been prohibited at Scotts Run due to the history of social trail development and heavy use for mountain biking that has been problematic at many natural areas throughout the region. Scotts Run should remain for pedestrian access only and the proposed trail type should be altered to limit use types to protect site resources and support Fairfax County Park Authority resource management.

- Stream Valley Trail – Elklick Preserve (Sully District): The proposed trail along Elklick Run west of Pleasant Valley Road would run through rare plant communities and vernal pools. Attempts to route the trail away from these areas could conflict with other rare plant communities, and this area is not suitable for bicycle use. The Elklick Preserve is a rare example of trailless areas within Fairfax County that also harbor rare species and communities. This trail segment should be removed from the map.
- Stream Valley Trail – Madeira School (Dranesville District): This is private property with numerous documented rare plant species and communities. In addition, the owners have objected to placement of such a trail on their land without consent with the very real concerns of the security of the communities they serve. Rare plants and plant communities have been decimated in adjacent Great Falls National Park due to heavy foot traffic. Creating a trail on the private property at Madeira School is counter to the wishes of the owner and poses serious direct threats to natural resources. This trail segment should be removed from the map.

In addition to specific concerns about shown trail locations on the Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map, FOHMP has concerns about the process used by county agencies to develop paved transportation trails in the county. The Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study, its supporting documents, and related trail language are vague, and past trail projects have been developed without the knowledge of large portions of the community.

The worst example in recent times is the **Cinder Bed Road Bikeway** in Franconia District, which would effectively place a 10-foot-wide paved road through a stream valley, having significant direct impacts to resources, altering hydrology, contributing light pollution to a natural area and opening the corridor up to invasive plant species. This project was developed largely without public knowledge. The initial environmental studies were significantly flawed. No transportation study has been produced to justify the impacts despite numerous requests by stakeholders. Existing redundant trails exist. This trail will have tremendous impacts, cannot be adequately justified, and the planning was done without the knowledge of most of the community.

It was largely due to the fundamental gaps and incomplete planning process of the Cinder Bed Road Bikeway project that the Directors of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) wrote a joint memo to the Director of the Fairfax County

Department of Transportation (3/5/2025) stating in part: “DPWES and FCPA conclude that hard surface trails/SUPs [shared use paths] should not be shown in RPAs [resource protection areas] on the countywide plan to include the Active Transportation and Trail Network program unless environmental assessments are completed beforehand and show de minimis impact to water quality and sensitive resources.” FOHMP agrees with the Directors of DPWES and FCPA.

In summary, FOHMP opposes the creation of new paved trails within stream valleys, large natural areas that do not currently have trails, and sensitive natural areas. We ask that:

1. The Active Transportation and Trails Plan Map be revised to remove proposed new trails or trail improvements that may negatively impact natural and cultural resources and conflict with their management, including the following specific cases:
 - a. Stream Valley Trail – Scotts Run Nature Preserve: Scotts Run Nature Preserve contains rare plants and communities that are sensitive to human uses.
 - b. Stream Valley Trail – Ellick Preserve: The proposed trail along Ellick Run west of Pleasant Valley Road would run through rare plant communities and vernal pools.
 - c. Stream Valley Trail – Madeira School: This is private property with numerous documented rare plant species and communities.

2. The County establish criteria to evaluate any proposed new trail or paved trail in natural areas to ensure protection and management of natural and cultural resources;
 - a. We suggest that these criteria include provisions to avoid creation of new paved trails within stream valleys, large natural areas that do not currently have trails, and sensitive natural areas.
 - b. We suggest hard surface trails/shared use paths not be shown in resource protection areas on the countywide plan to include the Active Transportation and Trail Network program unless environmental assessments are completed beforehand and show de minimis impact to water quality and sensitive resources.

3. FOHMP be sent a revised copy of the plans for proposed Active Transportation Access and Safety Improvements for Lockheed Boulevard, honoring FOHMP’s ask to remove all proposed impacts to park parcel 0923 01 0006 and including a trailside fence which would help limit social- trail development and trash accumulation in the parkland.

4. The Active Fairfax Transportation Plan Study team work to develop trail projects with the local community being informed in a timely manner to the extent possible so that the local community can better provide input.

Thank you for considering our input. We appreciate your efforts in these areas of shared concern and stand ready to work with you to revise and carry them forward.

Sincerely,
President, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park

Friends of Accotink Creek

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