

Our Vision:

The Capital Trails Coalition seeks to create a world-class network of multi-use trails that are equitably distributed throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan region. The regional trails network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

The Capital Trails Coalition will seek to create a trails network that is:

- **Accessible to people of all ages and abilities**—trails will be designed to accommodate walkers, strollers, runners, bike riders, the mobility-impaired, equestrians, and other non-motorized users.
- **Healthy and Safe**—the trails network will promote healthy bodies, minds and environments, be well-maintained and plowed, feature lighting where appropriate, provide safe crossings at roadways, and be patrolled by conscientious neighbors, trail rangers, volunteers, partners, and law enforcement officers;
- **Equitably Distributed across Jurisdictions**—the network will serve and link all communities in the region; the coalition will emphasize connecting traditionally underserved communities to the network;
- **Reliable for Transportation**—the trails network will provide effective transportation connections within and among urban and suburban neighborhoods, activity centers and the region's core; it will link people with transit stations and entertainment venues, parks and schools, shopping districts and libraries, historic sites and monuments, jobs and public services. The network will provide a healthy, environmentally friendly alternative to motorized travel.
- **Accessible to Open Space**—the trails network will provide respite and recreation close to home; it will connect people to the natural world—traversing parks, stream valleys, and green spaces;
- **World-class**—the trails network will be built to the highest design standards, supported by accessible trailheads, wayfinding maps and signs, comfort stations, interpretation of history and natural environments, public art and sustainable landscapes.

A well-connected regional trails network promises to help transform public life by linking diverse communities, promoting personal and environmental health, and building sustainable local economies.

Bicycle Beltway Vision

Background

In January 2014 a TPB member suggested that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee develop a Vision for a circumferential bicycle route around the core of the Washington Region.

The Atlanta “Beltline” Trail was the apparent model for this proposed circumferential route. The Atlanta Beltline is a trail, currently under development, that circles Atlanta’s core urban neighborhoods on a disused railway right of way. The sections completed thus far have provided a non-motorized link between urban neighborhoods formerly cut off from each other by highways and rail lines, stimulating new trail-oriented development.

The Vision

In response to the TPB’s suggestion, the Subcommittee formed a “Bicycle Beltway” working group, consisting of Three State DOT representatives, a WABA representative, and a couple of citizens. The working group developed a Vision Statement for a Bicycle Beltway, and identified an inner route. The Bicycle Beltway was to be circumferential loop shared-use path connecting the region’s radial shared-use paths. The Bicycle Beltway would:

- Connect major attractions, Activity Centers, and Transit Stations
- Attract both visitors and residents
- Be useable by persons of all ages and abilities
 - Principally off-street, with high-quality on-street connections and crossings
 - Avoid steps and steep grades
- Include clear and consistent wayfinding
- Provide good connections to surrounding communities
- Be an all weather facility
- Be achievable or “within reach” financially and politically
 - Short-term: 5 years
 - Long-term: 30 years
- Use existing Right of Way and existing facilities wherever possible
 - Fill the gaps between
- Be maintained in a State of Good Repair

The Work Group identified the following elements as part of a vision for a bicycle loop route in the Washington Region:

- Loop Shared-Use Path(s) connecting the region’s radial shared-use paths
- Connect major attractions, Activity Centers, and Transit Stations
- Attract both visitors and residents
- Useable by persons of all ages and abilities
 - Principally off-street, with high-quality on-street connections and crossings
 - Avoid steps and steep grades
- Clear and consistent wayfinding
- Good connections to surrounding communities
- All weather facility
- Achievable or “within reach” financially and politically
 - Short-term: 5 years
 - Long-term: 30 years
- Uses existing Right of Way and existing facilities
 - Fills the gaps
- Maintained in a State of Good Repair