

**W&OD At-Grade Crossings
Comments - September 2022**

***Revised August 2023:** Per VA Code § 46.2-924 was amended requiring drivers to stop rather than yield for crosswalk users. This project’s signs and markings will indicate for drivers to stop. Stop signs for trail users will remain creating a 4-way stop.

Comment: I bike the W&OD all the time in Loudoun County as a W&OD Trail Patroller. I have two concerns with these improvements. First, you don't indicate the road speed limits. That is essential for people to understand the type of safety needed at a crossing. Second, you have all those unenforceable stop signs. VA Code says stop signs on trails are enforceable if the local jurisdiction passes legislation to make them so -- and then they have to enforce them. As far as I know, Loudoun County hasn't passed that legislation. Instead of putting the onus on the more vulnerable trail users, why don't you get VDOT to put the stop sign on the ROADS for the people driving 2000+lb weapons? Adding yield signs isn't going to slow any of them down. Except for where the intersections are being re-aligned (yay for that), the rest of these are band-aids that aren't going to change anyone's behavior - not the trail users or the drivers.

Response: We appreciate your feedback on the proposed improvements. The improvements depicted on the plans only depict new signs or signs that will be replaced. Speed limit signs located along the roadways in advance of the crossings would need to be reviewed by VDOT and is outside of this County project's scope. The County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure is not responsible for enforcement of signs along the W&OD Trail and the County has not passed legislation to determine enforcement responsibility. Per VA Code*, only "yield here to pedestrians" signs and not "stop here for pedestrians" signs are allowed on a VDOT maintained road when approaching an uncontrolled ped/cyclist crossing.

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Comment: Look forward to any improvement in the on-grade crossings of W&OD Trail in Loudoun Cty - zebra striping, demand stop light, flashers, etc.

Response: We appreciate your support of the project and the safety features that are proposed to be installed at each crossing location.

Comment: Definitely needed. These improvements will help improve safety!!

Response: We appreciate your support of the project.

Comment: I'm a frequent user of the W&OD trail as a cyclist. My wife would like to use it more, but frankly is concerned about some of the crossings. For me the two worst crossings are Wiehle road (which thankfully has a bridge coming eventually) and the crossing in Stirling which goes across two

lanes in either direction. Honestly I don't have a great idea either way. Stirling has warning lights and signs up, but 80% of the time cars just ignore it.

Then you have the even smaller crossings by planes like smith switch where cars scream down those roads oblivious to the crossing. I'm not sure warning lights would even help here. I do feel that angles of crossing would help in places like smith switch and dry mill. Those sharp angles are not easy to view for both cyclists and drivers. Ultimately drivers need to be held responsible at all these crossings. In a perfect world every crossing would have a bridge but I know that's financially infeasible. Clearing out some vegetation at the edges can help a bit, but that destroys some habitat as well as putting the responsibility back to the cyclist again. Either way, I'm intrigued to see what is being offered to make the trail safer and to see more local folks using the trail to commute!

Response: We appreciate your comments. The W&OD Trail crossings located at Wiehle Avenue is located in Fairfax County and a project is currently underway that will provide a bridge for the W&OD Trail users to safely cross Wiehle Avenue. Loudoun County is currently in the process of designing a pedestrian bridge crossing for the W&OD to crossover Sterling Boulevard. Information regarding this crossing can be found on the project website at <https://www.loudoun.gov/trailoverpass>

A pedestrian bridge crossing at the W&OD Trail crossing of Sterling Boulevard is currently under design and construction is anticipated to begin in 2024.

The design team is proposing to realign the trail at the W&OD Trail crossing of Smith Switch Road to improve sight distance for drivers and pedestrians alike. Pedestrian activated flashing lights will be installed to alert approaching drivers that a pedestrian or cyclist is crossing the road.

We appreciate your support of the proposed improvements at the W&OD Trail crossings at Smith Switch Road and Dry Mill Road where the W&OD Trail will be realigned in advance of each crossing to provide adequate sight distance.

Vegetation will be cleared or trimmed at all W&OD Trail crossing locations identified within the plans. Removal of this vegetation will not only allow drivers to see other motorists, but also will allow drivers to see trails users and vice versa as they approach the crossing.

Comment: I'm curious as to why the stop signs are always on the bicycle path side instead of on the street side. I believe it would be much safer for everyone if the cars on the streets had stop signs before crossing the trail. This would force the drivers to pay attention. Adding speed bumps on each side of the trail would also help reduce crashes.

By putting the stop signs on the bicycle path it doesn't really do much. Bicycles will slow or sometimes stop. Cars won't even slow down and sometimes bikes won't see the vehicles approaching until its too late. I don't believe its as effective as preventing accidents as putting the stop signs on the street side.

Ashburn Road isn't a bottle neck road either so it wouldn't really disrupt the traffic at all.

Overpasses are ideal, but unfortunately they are very expensive.

Response: Per VA Code*, only "yield here to pedestrians" signs and not "stop here for pedestrians" signs are allowed on a VDOT maintained road when approaching an uncontrolled ped/cyclist crossing.

The signage and use of pavement markings are consistent with the W&OD Trail Standards provided to the Project Team by the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority who is the owner and operator of the W&OD Trail.

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The project team has reviewed the sight distance for motorists and pedestrian and the proposed parking restrictions, tree trimming and trail realignments will ensure that adequate stopping sight distance is provided at all crossings.

An overpass is not currently within the scope of this project.

Comment: I am a member of the W&OD Trail Patrol and have ridden on the W&OD, through these intersections, multiple times a week for the last 15 years. Comments on proposed changes:

@ Ashburn

OK, this has not been a particularly troublesome intersection

@ Cochran Mill

OK, agree that trimming foliage at SE corner is needed/required

@ Dry Mill

Would suggest additional signage on Dry Mill another 100-150 feet on either side of the intersection. Somewhat agree with the rework of trail; there are two concerns. 1) S curves are not always helpful, especially when the road is curving. The crossing at Maple Avenue is an example of a bad crossing made worse by changing to a S curve approach. (the sightline of traffic westbound on trail is now worse) 2) Before the current trail layout, trucks with trailers were continually clipping the eastern side of the trail as they cut the corner. The continuing resultant damage led to the current alignment of the crossing. The S curve places the trail in the same location; further landscaping may be required.

@ Hamilton Station

OK, prime concern at this intersection is the sightlines to the south when west bound.

@ Hirst Road

OK

@ Ivandale

OK, sightlines to north and south are most important - thus foliage trimming always needed.

@ N Hatcher

OK, please FIX the flashing signal buttons to be on the correct side for trail users; currently they're on the opposite side of the trail

@ Smiths Switch

OK, would recommend more trail warning signs on road and, possibly, some speed bumps ...

Crossings not referenced but probably should be:

@ King St

Especially on weekends the volume of trail traffic leads to tense conditions. Traffic on King Street rarely stops for trail users and when it does, trail users tend to take advantage and not yield to traffic. Either traffic control or a flashing light might ameliorate.

@ Rt 7 eastbound off ramp in Purcellville

A dangerous intersection for westbound trail users; the sightline is poor and drivers tend to use the crosswalk markings as the stop line indicator. Recommend aggressive trimming of the NW corner to improve the sightline.

Response: We appreciate your feedback and support of the proposed improvements at the W&OD Trail crossings.

Cochran Mill & Hamilton Station & Ivandale: Foliage trimming is proposed to improve the sight lines

Dry Mill Road: The project team will review the existing and proposed signage in advance of the crossing and consider adding any signage that may be permitted by the governing authorities. The purpose of the S-Curve is to realign the trail so that the crossing of Dry Mill Road is perpendicular to roadway to improve sight distance. The project team will review the landscaping to ensure that it is not obstructing the line of sight.

North Hatcher: There is no ped/cyclist signal at this crossing

Smith Switch: The project team will review the existing and proposed signage in advance of the crossing and consider adding any signage that may be permitted by the governing authorities.

The noted additional crossings (King Street and Rte. 7 eastbound off ramp at Purcellville) can be considered by the County as part of a future improvement project.

Comment: The increased signages and markings are pretty insignificant change (drivers regularly ignore those things), but the realignments to cross roads perpendicular at Dry Mill and Hirst are welcome and necessary changes. Thank you for planning these!

Response: We appreciate your comment and support of the Dry Mill Road and Hirst Road improvements.

Comment: Thank you for addressing the crossings on the W&OD. The signage will heavily impact trail users. This signage will remove the rural "country" feel of the trail. The usage of stop coming, stop signs, and rumble strips for trail cyclists will not reduce the speed of automobiles approaching these intersections. Why can't the rumble strips be applied to the road to low traffic entering the triangle yield marking area?

Response: We appreciate your comments. Many of the proposed signs on the trail will be replacing existing signs due to realignment of the trail. The signage* and use of pavement markings are consistent with the W&OD Trail Standards provided to the Project Team by the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority who is the owner and operator of the W&OD Trail. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

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Comment: I support making WOD crossings safer. So many people use this trail throughout the year. The safer you make it, the more people will use it and even cut down on fatalities. Please make these improvements!

Response: We appreciate your feedback and support of the proposed improvements at the W&OD Trail crossings.

Comment: I am an avid cyclist and ride on the W&OD on almost a daily basis. Here are my opinions about the proposal.

Ashburn Rd: Crossing is generally good. Add flashing lights and rumble strips to the road.

Hirst Rd: Vehicles cross at high speed. Reduce vehicle speed limit and add flashing lights and rumble strips.

Smith Switch Rd: Visibility is limited. Suggest adding stop signs both directions for vehicles. Add flashing lights and rumble strips to the road.

North Hatcher Ave: Crossing is adequate.

Dry Mill Rd: Visibility is limited looking eastbound. Trim back shrubbery, add flashing lights and rumble strips, and resurface the trail. Surface is severely deteriorated and is likely to cause an accident.

Hamilton Station Rd: Visibility is limited traveling west on the trail, and vehicles cross at high speed. Add flashing lights, and rumble strips on both the road and the trail.

Cochran Mill Rd: Trail carries much more traffic than the road. Add stop signs both directions for vehicles.

Ivandale Rd: Visibility is limited. Add flashing lights and rumble strips. Work to improve visibility from the trail.

Response: Ashburn Rd.: The standard green crosswalk signs have been determined to be in-line with VDOT recommendations and flashing lights will not be added. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

Hirst Rd.: Reducing the vehicle speed limit is outside the project's scope, but can be considered by the County, Town of Purcellville, and VDOT if a problem persists. A crosswalk sign with flashing lights is proposed for both approaches to the Hirst crossing. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

Smith Switch Rd.: The proposed improvements of W&OD Trail crossing at Smith Switch Road includes realignment of the trail to provide adequate sight distance. Per VA Code*, only "yield here to pedestrians" signs and not "stop here for pedestrians" signs are allowed on a VDOT maintained road when approaching an uncontrolled ped/cyclist crossing. A crosswalk sign with flashing lights is proposed for both approaches to the Smith Switch crossing. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

Dry Mill Rd.: The proposed improvements of W&OD Trail crossing at Dry Mill Road includes realignment of the trail to provide adequate sight distance. Vegetation will be cleared as a part of the trail realignment. A crosswalk sign with flashing lights is proposed for both approaches to the Dry Mill crossing. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements. New pavement will be placed where the trail is realigned.

Hamilton Station Rd.: The proposed improvements of W&OD Trail crossing at Hamilton Station Road includes realignment of the trail to provide adequate sight distance. Additionally, parking will be

restricted along the roadway by adding curb and gutter (eliminating the shoulder area used for parking) and no parking signs. A crosswalk sign with flashing lights is proposed for both approaches to the Hamilton Station crossing. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

Cochran Mill Road: While true that the number of trail users exceeds the number of vehicular crossings, only "yield here for pedestrians" signs and not "stop here for pedestrians" signs can be added per VA Code* to VDOT maintained roads.

Ivandale Rd.: Vegetation will be cleared to improve visibility. The standard green crosswalk signs have been determined to be in-line with VDOT recommendations and flashing lights will not be added. The addition of rumble strips will be considered by the County and VDOT post-construction of these improvements.

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Comment: Thank you for the information. I can't understand proposed changes.

Suggestions:

25 mi/hr speed on road.

Realign trail for visibility.

Keep police visibility high at the intersection.

Post \$500 fine sign for speeding on road.

Speed bumps on road.

Response: We appreciate your comments on the W&OD Trail crossings. The project team is unable to reduce the speed on the roadways as this is only allowed to be completed after a speed study has been conducted by VDOT. The W&OD Trail has been realigned at four locations in order to increase visibility and the project team has checked the sight distance to ensure it is adequate at each crossing. Proposed signage is per VDOT and Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority standards and guidance and none of the roadways within this project meet VDOT's criteria for speed humps.

Comment: To whom it may concern, I am writing regarding the W&OD At-Grade Crossing Improvements project on behalf of the Ashburn Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department. The Ashburn Road crossing is located adjacent to Fire Station 6. We request that any permanent alterations to the roadway do not interfere with our ability to turn out apparatus onto Ashburn Road. Further, we request consideration of any alterations that could impede our large apparatus from executing a turn from Ashburn Road onto Hay Road. Heavy apparatus must swing wide, often into oncoming (Northbound) lane to make the turn into Hay Road due to the limited amount of space available in the intersection due to narrow lanes, telephone pole location, and the proximity of buildings to lanes of travel.

Please let me and Chief Bill Graham (copied) know if you have questions or require additional information.

Yours in service,

Josh Townsend

President

Firefighter / EMT - Sunday Crew Lieutenant

Ashburn Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department

Response: We appreciate your comment regarding the proposed improvements at Ashburn Road. The proposed improvements at the W&OD Trail crossing at Ashburn Road are limited to tree trimming, signing and pavement markings. There are no proposed changes to the roadway that'll interfere with your ability to turn your fire and rescue apparatus.

Comment: To whom it may concern: I would like to submit a comment regarding the study to improve the crossing of the W&OD at the following intersections:

1. Smith Switch Rd. This crossing poses a significant safety issue with limited sight distances and high vehicle approach speeds. Safety improvements such as safety lights or (even better) a traffic light with electronic walk signal would be appropriate.
 2. Dry Mill Rd. Due to the traffic circle on route 9, W&OD trail users cannot determine a safe crossing time. It is impossible for W&OD users to determine if vehicles will continue on the traffic circle or bear right onto route 9 (crossing the W&OD).
- Thank you for your consideration.

Response: We appreciate your comments on the W&OD Trail crossings. The proposed improvements of the W&OD Trail at the Smith Switch Road crossing include realigning the trail to ensure adequate sight distance is provided and adding crosswalk signs with flashing lights.

The W&OD Trail crossing of Dry Mill Road for this project is located approximately 2,000 feet to the south of the Route 9 interchange (i.e. far beyond the traffic circles at the Route 9 interchange). This project's crossing improvements include enhanced sight distance and adding signs, signs with flashing lights, and markings.

Comment: Writing in total support of proposed improvements to the various W&OD road crossings. I ride the trail (Ashburn to Purcellville) 3-4 times a week and find a number of these crossings to be dangerous to cyclists and drivers alike due to their grade (Ivendale/Hamilton Station for example) or difficult sight lines on higher speed roads. With the rising popularity of Loudoun gravel riding, the W&OD is also heavily used now by gravel club group rides making their way to unpaved access points west. As the cycling lifestyle continues to grow in our county, Improvements to these crossings will become more critically necessary.

Response: We appreciate your comments on and support of the W&OD Trail crossings. The project team has prepared sight distance exhibits for each crossing location to ensure that adequate sight distance is provided at each crossing location after the improvements are constructed.

Comment: I have cycled the W&OD Trail from Sterling to Purcellville, crossing all of the listed areas for comment. Aside from the Sterling Boulevard planned bridge over the boulevard here is my thought on bridging and potential cost savings.

Knowing nothing or engineering factors I have been impressed at how fast the Army can construct a bridge crossing when needed. Just wondering if something similar could be used to reduce costs and construction time.

We trail users don't need anything fancy or expensive. Just safe for us and for the traffic flow.

Response: We appreciate your comments on the W&OD Trail crossings. Accelerated bridge construction techniques are explored during the development and implementation of projects, however the cost of utilizing these techniques is often a limiting factor. The project team must also

ensure the design and construction of any proposed structure carrying pedestrians over a roadway is in compliance with VDOT's standards. Utility Relocations, environmental constraints, public outreach and additional items must be considered when developing a bridge crossing of a public roadway.