

Windsor Castle Park to Nike Park Trail Project (Park to Park)

A four mile, off road, multi use path that would connect the 150 acre Nike District Park, in the Newport Development Service District, with the 200 acre Windsor Castle Park and Historic Downtown Smithfield.

Initial funding has been awarded through a VDOT transportation enhancement grant (\$647,000) which will be used for environmental review and preliminary design of entire trail, and detailed design and initial construction of Phase 1 (1.3 miles along Battery Park Road).

This trail serves to connect over 7,500 households in Isle of Wight County with historic sites, shopping facilities, recreation facilities, county and town services, blue ways and docks.

The Park To Park Trail Improves the Quality Of Life in Isle Of Wight through:

Health

Providing easy access to multi use trails has proven to increase physical activity of residents. This is of particular interest for us in IOW County as we work to combat childhood obesity and lessen health issues related to high percentage of residents who are overweight (60%).

Transportation & Safety

Providing residents connected to route ability to safely walk or bike to shopping, dining, recreation, historic sites and service facilities without a car.

Environmental

Providing the most densely populated area of the county an opportunity to decrease vehicular emissions by accessible walking and biking options for work, home, shopping and recreational facilities.

Recreation

Providing safe access to trails, water ways and parks to over 7,500 Isle of Wight households and businesses. Allows for both self directed recreation – biking, walking, running, roller blading, and organized programs to be conducted - community walks/runs, low impact exercise programs, interpretive nature walks, historical site walk, Art in the Park programs and Park to Park events

What this 4 mile route accomplishes:

- Connects over 7,500 households to more than ten miles of trails
- Connects 12 developed communities/neighborhoods with shopping facilities, District Park with multiple recreation facilities, Windsor Castle Park and the Smithfield Historic District
- Accessible trail for residents and business owners to increase physical activity from homes and work
- Studies of communities that provide jogging and walking trails demonstrate a 55% increase in physical activity level
- Multiplies recreational opportunities several fold as citizens can move between two developed parks with multitude of recreation facilities.

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Park to Park Trail Project Update:

Phase 1: From intersection of Battery Park Road and South Church Street to intersection of Battery Park Road and Nike Park Road (1.3 miles)

Status: Funded (through VDOT Enhancement Grant) and work initiated. Environmental Documents & Preliminary Design for entire trail and Detailed Design and Initial Construction for Phase 1 are in progress.

Phase 2: From Nike District Park to intersection of Nike Park Road and Battery Park Road (1.7 miles)

Note: Due to the length of this section, 1.7 miles with a pedestrian bridge, it is broken into three sub phases

Phase 2a: The light at Nike Park Road and Battery Park Road to the Fulgham Bridge (.7 mile)

Phase 2b: Pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Jones Creek

Phase 2c: The Fulgham Bridge to Nike District Park (1 mile)

Plans are to seek grant funding for Phases 2a and 2b next year.

Phase 3: From South Church Street and Battery Park road intersection to Cypress Creek Bridge (.8 miles)

Note: This portion of the trail was originally covered in a Safety Grant submitted by the Town of Smithfield to widen and add a middle turn lane on the lower section of South Church Street. Sidewalks were a part of that project. The funding for that project has been redirected to other projects within the Town. Therefore we have now included those sidewalks, originally designed for the Safety Grant project, in the Park to Park Trail project as Phase 3.

The sidewalk design was to parallel South Church Street, from the intersection of Battery Park Road, and connect to the Cypress Creek Bridge. This will provide access to Windsor Castle Park, Smithfield Historic District and a plethora of shopping and dining facilities.

This connection will also provide those residents who are interested in longer trails and bike rides access to hundreds of rural county routes identified in books such as the nationally published 'Bicycling in Virginia' which features the Smithfield Cruise. The Smithfield/Isle of Wight Tourism office provides information and mileage for routes to Fort Huger, Chippokes State Park, the Surry to Jamestown Pedestrian and Bike Friendly Ferry and all points beyond!

The Bike and Pedestrian Committee has requested that the Town of Smithfield consider redirecting some of the original Safety Grant funding back to this area. It is our hope that they will consider that request and use a portion of those funds to complete Phase 3 of the Park to Park Trail project.

Isle of Wight County is seeking two types of funding for this project:

- 1) Overall trail construction funding to complement the VDOT grants. Isle of Wight will be applying for additional transportation enhancement funding in upcoming grant cycles, but is seeking additional funding from other sources to expedite the construction of the trail and to be used to contribute toward the 20% match requirement for the VDOT grants.

- 2) Administrative funding for Trail Coordinator position. Minimal staff costs are reimbursable through the VDOT grant. Additional funding would allow for Trail Coordinator to seek additional resources for trail construction, network with other localities, and seek and complete additional grant applications.

Isle of Wight Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Facts

- IOW Bike and Ped committee was originally formed in 1996 to identify appropriate paths in IOW county.
 - 1996 HRPDC identified the corridor from S Church Street to Nike Park as the highest priority.
 - 2000 Chamber of Commerce/IOW/Smithfield committee identified same corridor as the priority – sought funding through IOW and Town
 - 2006 Master Plan developed which identified this same route as a short term objective
 - 2006 Master Plan included in County’s comprehensive plan in order to allow developers and business owners to participate in development of trail system
 - 2008 Bike and Ped committee identifies the route from Smithfield to Nike Park as the highest priority

- Center for Disease Control and department of Health and Human Services recommend development of multi use paths in communities in order to increase activity for prevention and reduction of illness and disease
 - 60% of IOW citizens are overweight (VA healthy communities, 2005) – higher than the state and national average.
 - This trail is located in an area of the county that has experienced an explosion of growth over the past two decades.
 - What we have in this area is a collection of communities with one road access and no connection, or ability to walk even short distances between neighborhoods or to shopping or recreational facilities.

- Health benefits from increase in physical activity include:
 - Control weight
 - Control high blood pressure
 - Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, colon cancer
 - Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
 - Reduce arthritis pain and disability
 - Prevent osteoporosis and falls

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- Active living research data indicates that for every \$1 invested in a trail system there is a \$5.20 savings in health care for their members.

- Creating bicycle and pedestrian friendly routes in and around Smithfield Historic District supports tourism. Tourism is the second largest industry in Smithfield.
 - Currently come from Williamsburg, Va Beach, Yorktown
 - Exercise and scenic tour – lunch, shops, bakery
 - This industry has grown as baby boomers – physically active for longer – now looking to incorporate moderate adventure and vacations
 - Featured as one of 40 favorite rides in Virginia

- Isle of Wight Citizens respond to need for Bike and Ped facilities through 2006 Survey:
 - When asked the question: 'What prevents you from walking more in IOW?' The highest response was: 'Lack of Sidewalks.' Citizens wrote in concerns about 'no road shoulders' and 'Nike Park Road needs walking and biking trails badly – URGENT.'
 - When asked: "Which of the following factors prevents you from bicycling or bicycling more often?" The overwhelming response (79.3%) was 'Lack of bicycle facilities (such as bike lanes, wide travel lanes, paved shoulders, etc).'
 - When answering the question: 'Which of the following changes would encourage you to bike more often?' 84.5% of the respondents chose 'More bicycle facilities.'
 - When asked on the survey 'On which roads would you like to see bicycle improvements?' respondents overwhelmingly chose 'Battery Park and Nike Park Roads' for that area specific to Isle Of Wight County.