



NEW MARKET HEIGHTS TRAIL CONCEPT PLAN

Partners Supporting Preservation, Conservation, and Recreation in the Community of Varina

Summer 2024 - Winter 2026

Henrico County is a recipient of the 2024 – 2025 National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (NPS-RTCA) technical assistance grant. NPS-RTCA provides professional services to help communities achieve their conservation and outdoor recreation project goals. This document was created by the National Park Service in collaboration with Henrico County and their partners, as part of a technical assistance grant. The information within this document does not necessarily represent the views of the National Park Service or the U.S. Department of the Interior.

For more information on the National Park Service – River’s Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, please visit www.nps.gov/rtca.

National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
Interior Region 1, North Atlantic-Appalachian
1234 Market Street, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA.



Representatives from the American Battlefield Trust, Capital Region Land Conservancy, the Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association, the Richmond Battlefields Association, the Varina District, the National Park Service (NPS) - Richmond Battlefield National Park are actively engaged with the County of Henrico in selecting a proposed alignment for the trail that supports their goals and minimizes impacts to sensitive historical and environmental areas. The American Battlefield Trust, Capital Region Land Conservancy, and Henrico County are landowners on this trail alignment and their feedback and recommendations have been reflected throughout this report. This group, formally named the Conserved Varina Partners, co-created input and recommendations, as well as that from the general public, on future trail experiences, such as information on trail access, important resources amenities and resources to highlight, and insight on interpretive themes.

For more information on Henrico County, please visit www.henrico.gov.

Henrico County
4301 East Parham Rd.
Henrico, VA.



In this document, unless otherwise credited, images and maps are credited to NPS or Henrico County staff.

County of Henrico

Steve Yob, Deputy County Manager for Community Operations
Al Azzarone, Parks Planning Supervisor
Sam Hudson, Sustainability Division Director
Ryan Levering, Capital Projects Manager, Public Works
Bryce Stanley, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist
Joe Rizzo, History Manager
Julian Charity, Division Directory of History, Heritage, and Natural Resources
John Zannino, Director of Recreation and Parks
George Vithoulkas, Safety & Environmental Compliance Liaison, Recreation and Parks
Jason Bulluck, Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks
Terrell Hughes, Director of Public Works
Marci Tyndall, Recreation and Parks Special Events Manager
Ryan Eubank, Public Relations
Ben Sheppard, Public Relations
Tyrone Nelson, Varina District Supervisor

American Battlefield Trust

Chuck Laudner, Consultant

Capital Region Land Conservancy

Parker Agelasto, Executive Director
Ashley Moulton, Land Stewardship Manager

The Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association

Tim Talbott, President

The Richmond Battlefields Association

Mark Perreault, Board Member
Bernie Fisher, Board Member

The National Park Service – Richmond Battlefield National Park

Scott Teodorski, Superintendent (Retired)
Vance Noles, Chief Ranger (Acting Superintendent)
Lexie Lowe, Archeologist
Stephanie Pooler, Supervisory Park Ranger
Bert Dunkerly, Park Ranger
Mike Gorman, Historian
Kristen Allen, Integrated Resources Program Manager

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

Anne O’Neill, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Mallory Zink, Historian
Gabriel Levitan, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Arriyan Peagler, Landscape Architect



Table of Contents

Introduction.....6

Vision, Goals, and Objectives.....8

Interpretive Themes.....12

Regional Context.....18

Project Background, Purpose, and Project Planning Process.....24

New Market Heights Trail Design Considerations.....30

Trail Analysis and Recommendations by Segment.....42

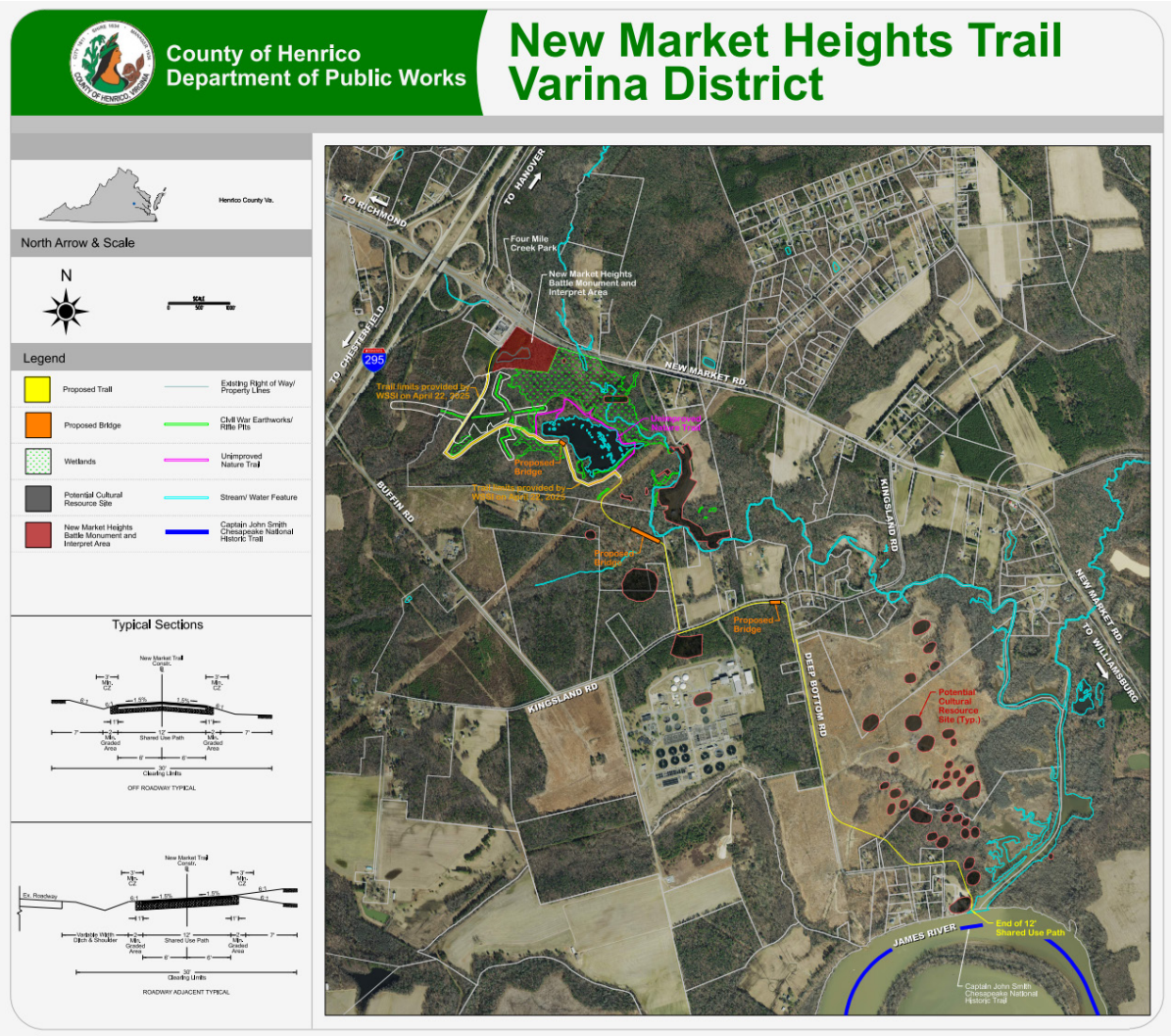
Conclusion and Next Steps.....72

Appendices.....74

Introduction

The New Market Heights Trail is a proposed 3.2-mile, 10–12-foot-wide, paved, universally accessible shared-use trail in Henrico County’s Varina District. It will connect the James River and Deep Bottom Park to the Virginia Capital Trail and Four Mile Creek Park, offering a safe and scenic route where all ages and abilities can recreate through walking, running, biking, and sitting. The trail will pass through the county’s Deep Bottom Park, by the existing network of trails at Capital Regional Land Conservancy’s Varina LandLab, through American Battlefield Trust’s preserved battlefield at New Market Heights, and Richmond National Battlefield Park’s legislative boundary, and through the county’s New Market Park to Four Mile Creek Park. Designed to honor the valor, bravery, and sacrifice of the United States Colored Troops at the little-known Battle of New Market Heights - which aided the Union’s capture of Richmond and helped lead to the Union victory in the Civil War, the trail will feature interpretive signage and amenities that highlight the area’s rich history and natural beauty.

This Trail Concept Plan presents an agreed upon blueprint for the development of this trail, which has been created in partnership with the Conserved Varina Partners and with the support of the following landowners: Henrico County, the Capital Region Land Conservancy, and the American Battlefield Trust. This plan is guided by the Conserved Varina Partners’ planning process and recommendations for implementation, and it is informed by community engagement, historical research, environmental priorities, and a shared commitment to creating a meaningful and inclusive public space for generations to come.



A Brief History of the Battle of New Market Heights

On September 29, 1864, the Battle of New Market Heights unfolded across the fields and ridges of eastern Henrico County, as part of a broader Union campaign to capture Richmond and Petersburg. The U.S. Army’s Tenth Corps crossed the James River and landed at what is now Deep Bottom Park. Their objective was to break through the outer defense line along New Market Road and move on to capture Richmond. The ensuing battle took place along the Confederate lines along New Market Road.

This battle is notable for the participation of three brigades (roughly 3,900 men) of U.S. Colored Troops (USCTs), who played a central role in the Union assault. Despite facing entrenched Confederate positions and withstanding intense enemy fire, these Black soldiers advanced with determination and valor. Their bravery helped secure a Union victory and demonstrated the fighting capability and patriotism of Black troops at a time when their service was still questioned. For their actions, fourteen Black soldiers and two white USCT officers received the Medal of Honor, giving New Market Heights the distinction of having the most Medals of Honor awarded to Black Americans during the Civil War. In addition, U.S. General Benjamin F. Butler created a special medal for the soldiers that distinguished themselves in the campaign. This medal, named the Butler Medal, was intended especially for the Black soldiers who fought here and is among the rarest of Civil War decorations.

The battle was part of a larger operation known as the Battle of Chaffin’s Farm, which included simultaneous attacks on nearby Fort Harrison and other Confederate positions. The Union’s success at New Market Heights forced General Robert E. Lee to divert thousands of troops from Petersburg, weakening his lines. Just weeks earlier, the same landscape had been the site of the Second Battle of Deep Bottom, another Union attempt to threaten Richmond and draw Confederate forces away from Petersburg. Though ultimately inconclusive, this engagement set the stage for the later success at New Market Heights and further underscored the strategic importance of this corridor along the James River.

The New Market Heights Trail will allow residents and visitors to follow the same route and pass sacred grounds where USCTs fought and paid the ultimate sacrifice -not only to preserve the Union, but to claim freedom and equality. This trail will serve as a powerful reminder of the struggles and triumphs of Black soldiers, the evolving meaning of liberty, and the enduring legacy of this pivotal moment in American history.



Image Credit: Battle of New Market Heights - Memorial & Education Association

Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The vision, goals, and objectives for the New Market Heights Trail were created after a series of facilitated conversations and brainstorming sessions with project partners and stakeholder interviews with the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (NPS-RTCA) staff. The Conserved Varina Partners are guided by a set of goals that reflect the community’s values, the natural and historical significance of the landscape, and the desire to create a meaningful and accessible public resource for all. Objectives were created to accomplish these goals.

Vision

The New Market Heights Trail will be an accessible pathway with appropriate signage, artwork, and amenities that highlight significant historical events, local history, nature, and heritage. It connects community open spaces, showcases natural resources and scenic views, offers various types of outdoor recreation, and links national and state trails (both land and water) and nearby neighborhoods.



New Market Heights Trail Users

The New Market Heights Trail will serve a diverse group of trail users; local users, regional and state visitors who come for enjoyment through outdoor recreation, interpretation, education, and volunteer stewardship activities. By accommodating a wide spectrum of users, the trail will become a dynamic community asset, a place where history, health, and nature intersect. Primary trail users could include walkers, hikers, runners, cyclists, pet owners, families with young children, students, and educators.



Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Develop a comprehensive trail concept plan.

Identify and agree on a preferred trail alignment, key access points, parking areas, important natural and cultural resources to interpret and/or protect, amenities and signage that support outdoor recreation (for example: walking, biking, and running), and interpretive and educational experiences along the historic corridor.

Objective: Secure funding and partnerships by working with project partners, Commonwealth of Virginia agencies, and Federal transportation agencies.

Work collaboratively between Henrico County and the Conserved Varina Partners to obtain funding for trail design, construction, and long-term maintenance.

Goal 2: Commemorate the historical significance and contributions of the United States Colored Troops.

Honor the soldiers who fought in the Battle of New Market Heights and the Battle of Second Deep Bottom, with a special focus on the valor and contributions of the USCTs.

Objective: Install historical markers and interpretive signage.

Place educational signage and wayfinding elements along the trail to highlight key events, individuals, and landscapes associated with the battles and the broader Civil War era. Additionally, the Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association, one of the project partners, is seeking funding for a monument to the USCTs.

Goal 3: Promote education and awareness.

Provide interpretive opportunities that deepen public understanding of the Battle of New Market Heights within the context of the Civil War, the struggle for freedom, and the broader historical context of Black military service.

Objective: Host community events and programs.

Collaborate with historical societies, educational institutions, outdoor recreation non-profits, and community groups to support the trail's development and programming. Organize guided tours, history and outdoor recreation events, educational workshops, and volunteer opportunities to activate the trail and deepen public engagement.

Goal 4: Build community pride and ownership of the trail.

Foster a sense of local pride and stewardship by involving residents, schools, and community organizations in the trail’s development, programming, and long-term care.

Objective: Build strong local partnerships.

Engage with historical societies, educational institutions, natural and cultural organizations, outdoor recreation non-profits, and community groups to support trail development, programming, and interpretation.

Goal 5: Encourage inclusive outdoor recreation and wellness.

Create a safe, scenic, and inclusive trail that supports walking, biking, and nature-based outdoor recreation for people of all ages and abilities.

Objective: Ensure trail safety and accessibility.

Design and maintain the trail to be safe, universally accessible, well-maintained, and resilient to environmental challenges such as flooding and extreme heat.

Goal 6: Promote universal access to conserved lands.

Build a trail that serves as a beacon project that allows people of all ages and abilities to connect with conserved greenspace in the Varina District of Henrico County.

Objective: Establish new community connections and preserve greenspace.

Henrico County is committed to preserving greenspace and establishing new community connections to these places. This project will demonstrate this continuing work and practice.

Interpretive Themes

The Battle of New Market Heights is an integral chapter in the U.S. Civil War narrative, representing part of the Union’s effort to capture Richmond and bring the war to a close. It was one of the early actions in General Ulysses S. Grant’s Overland and Petersburg campaigns, which aimed to weaken Confederate forces by providing constant pressure rather than engaging in single decisive battles. The Battle of New Market Heights helped tighten the Union grip around Richmond and symbolized how military strategy and social change were becoming deeply connected in the final year of the war.

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that trail users should leave with after visiting a specific place, they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a site. Themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning,

concepts, contexts, and values represented by trail resources. Themes should go beyond mere descriptions of events; they should encourage exploration of the context in which events occurred and their subsequent effects. The following themes and stories include universal concepts that are connected to each other, reaching broader audiences:

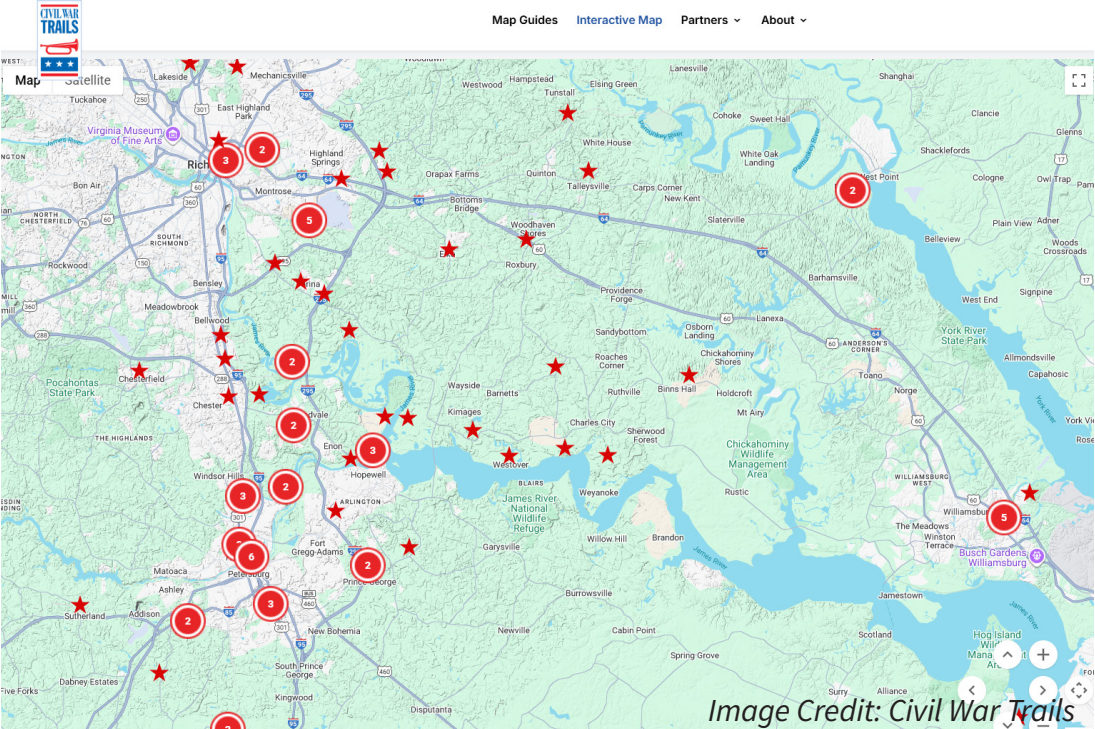


Image Credit: Civil War Trails

Core Interpretive Stories

Core stories offer a glimpse into available interpretation regarding the historical significance of New Market Heights Battlefield. These stories can be organized into the following primary and secondary interpretive stories:

Primary Interpretive Themes

United States Colored Troops (USCTs)

When the Civil War began in 1861, many freed Black men in the North were eager to enlist in the U.S. Army to fight against the South and the institution of slavery. They were initially turned away, however, due to a 1792 federal law that barred them from serving in the U.S. Army. Racist attitudes against Black men and their ability to serve as soldiers were prevalent among military personnel and the public, despite the many contributions that formerly enslaved men were making to the Federal war effort in Virginia, including building entrenchments and discharging naval vessels. Eventually, these stories reached the North and advanced the argument for emancipation among military and political leaders. In addition, personnel shortages in the U.S. Army prompted the Federal government to reconsider its stance on Black men in the military.

In May of 1863, the U.S. War Department issued a general order that created the Bureau of Colored Troops (BCT) to provide organizational control over the recruitment of Black soldiers. Under the order, all Black units were incorporated into the United States Colored Troops (USCTs) regiments. On the Virginia Peninsula, U.S. General Benjamin F. Butler recruited thousands of free and enslaved Black men from the Virginia and North Carolina countryside over the 1863/1864 winter. By the Spring of 1864, of the 35,000 troops in Butler’s newly organized Army of the James, 8,000 were free or self-emancipated.

While Black men in many other U.S. Army units were relegated to positions as servants, security guards, or general laborers, the USCTs in the Army of the James, including cavalry and cannoners, were given the best rations and weapons, spearheaded assaults, and secured footholds in contested lands. Black regiments displayed their capabilities as soldiers in several battles fought between July of 1863 and September of 1864.

The Contributions of USCT at New Market Heights

On September 29, 1864, the Army of the James launched a surprise attack on Richmond’s defensive lines. Their attack succeeded and resulted in Confederate troops losing their position at Fort Harrison, the largest Confederate fort south of Richmond, while the USCTs seized New Market Heights to the east. Their contributions resulted in the permanent presence of the Army of the James just five miles south of Richmond.

The New Market Heights Battlefield is a premier landmark in Black military history, as it underscores the contributions and sacrifices made by Black soldiers during the Civil War. As of 2026, only 26 Medals of Honor have been awarded to Black soldiers and sailors for their actions during the Civil War – 14 of those were awarded to men who fought at New Market Heights. Many of the recipients, such as Christian A. Fleetwood of the Fourth USCTs, had picked up and carried flags after the color bearers were gunned down. Other Black Medal of Honor recipients, such as Powhatan Beaty of the Fifth USCTs, rallied their comrades and took charge after their commanding officers were incapacitated.

The USCTs proved their valor during the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign and enabled the Union to capture part of the Confederate Outer Line at Fort Harrison and New Market Heights. Ultimately, their actions helped ensure the passage of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to abolish slavery.

Secondary Interpretive Themes

Battle of New Market Heights

With the 1864 presidential election looming, U.S. General Benjamin F. Butler launched a two-pronged attack on the Confederate defenses of Richmond. At New Market Heights, the eastern prong of the attack, Butler ordered the USCTs under his command to lead the attack. The resulting battle captured the New Market line, forced Confederates to rush to the defense of Richmond, and proved the worthiness of Black soldiers in combat.



Medals of Honor

The use of Black soldiers to lead a major attack was rare and controversial. These men knew that the enemy would likely enslave or execute any taken prisoner. At New Market Heights, 14 USCTs and two of their white officers earned the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest military award. In addition, General Butler had a special medal made for the soldiers that distinguished themselves in the campaign. This medal was meant to be especially for the Black soldiers who fought at New Market Heights and is among the rarest of Civil War decorations.



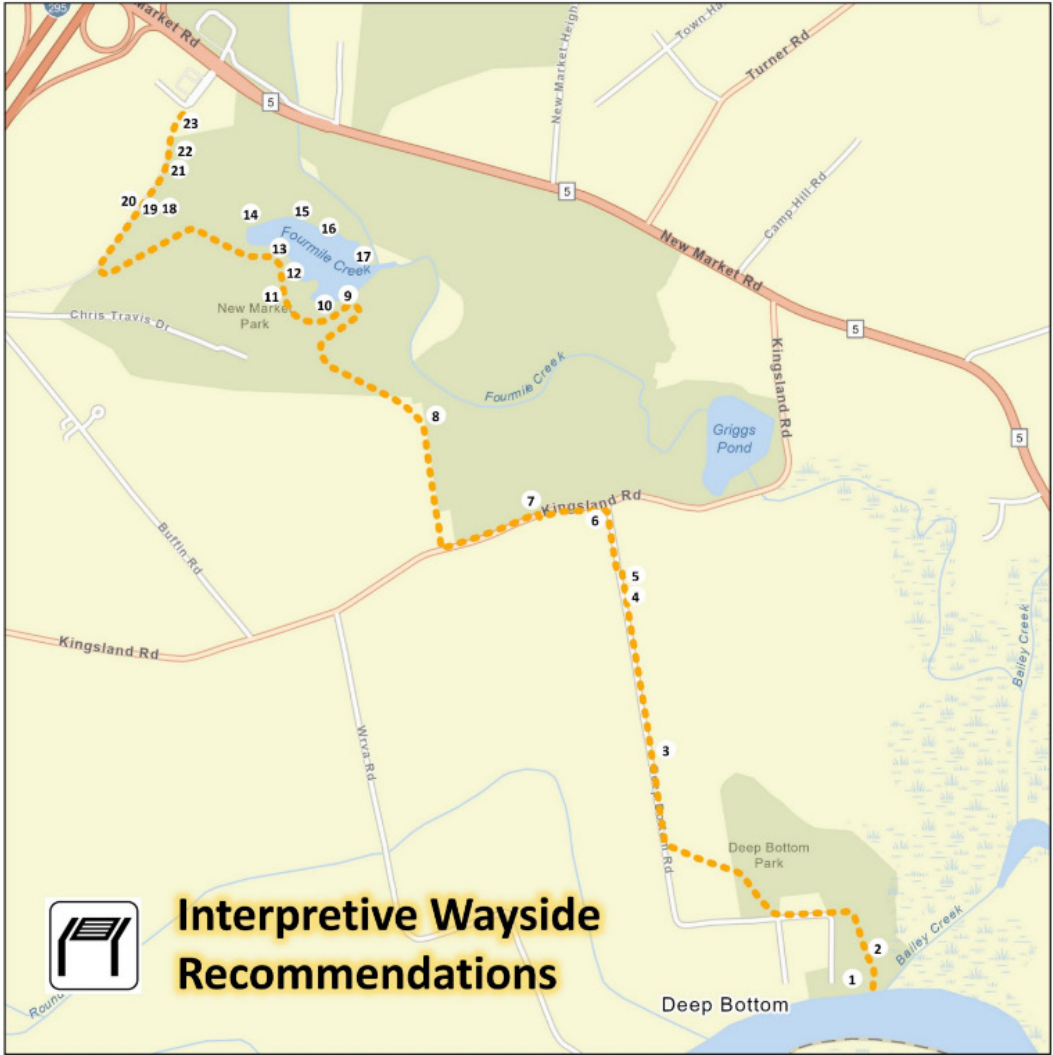
Preservation of Cultural Landscapes

Until recently, the New Market Heights Battlefield has been largely ignored by preservationists and has been significantly altered from its wartime appearance. Twentieth century logging and quarrying operations left a scarred landscape and a large pond in the middle of the most significant part of the battlefield. The landscape today is as much a legacy of the willful ignorance and racism of 20th century Civil War narratives as it is a monument to the valor of the soldiers that fought there. Over the last several years, regional, state, and national organizations have been working together to preserve this historic landscape.



Recommended Interpretive Waysides for the New Market Heights Trail

The interpretive staff at Richmond National Battlefield created the following recommended interpretive wayside stops along the trail. In the segmented trail analysis, there are more maps with the supporting amenities for the signage. The leadership at Richmond National Battlefield, comprised of divisions of Interpretation, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Law Enforcement co-created this suggested flow for interpretive signage after consulting with Conserved Varina partners’ historians. Below is a map of the proposed New Market Heights Trail with the recommended interpretive wayside opportunities along the trail route. These are incorporated throughout the concept plan and further considerations for interpretation are included in the following section.



- 1 Deep Bottom Landing
- 2 Early History
- 3 Historic Landscape
- 4 Dreamland Park
- 5 Avenue of Advance
- 6 Fields of Battle
- 7 Into Battle
- 8 Crossing into Danger
- 9 The First Attack: Duncan
- 10 The Second Attack: Draper
- 11 Who Were the USCTs?
- 12 Stories of Valor
- 13 Battlefield Landscape
- 14 The Texas Brigade
- 15 The Breakthrough
- 16 Missed Opportunities
- 17 Devastated Landscape
- 18 Confederate Earthworks
- 19 I Saw Him Murdered
- 20 Aftermath
- 21 Butler Medal
- 22 Medals of Honor
- 23 The Stakes in 1864



Successful Wayside Interpretive Guiding Questions

Choosing the Right Place

Is the sign inviting?

Is the sign located in a safe place?

Is the sign and associated media accessible?

Choosing the Right Type

What media format will best express the intended message(s)? (e.g., text, maps, quotes, audio, photographs, illustrations, etc.)

Is there a certain media type that will best engage current and future audiences?

What resources are needed to begin developing interpretive media and signage?

Considerations

What are the interpretive needs for the trail?

What are the desired outcomes? What should trail users gain from these stories and interpretation?

How and where will these stories be shared?

What are the expectations amongst partner or public groups?

Are there broader messages, events, or circumstances that provide important context?

Preparations

What concepts should be shared?

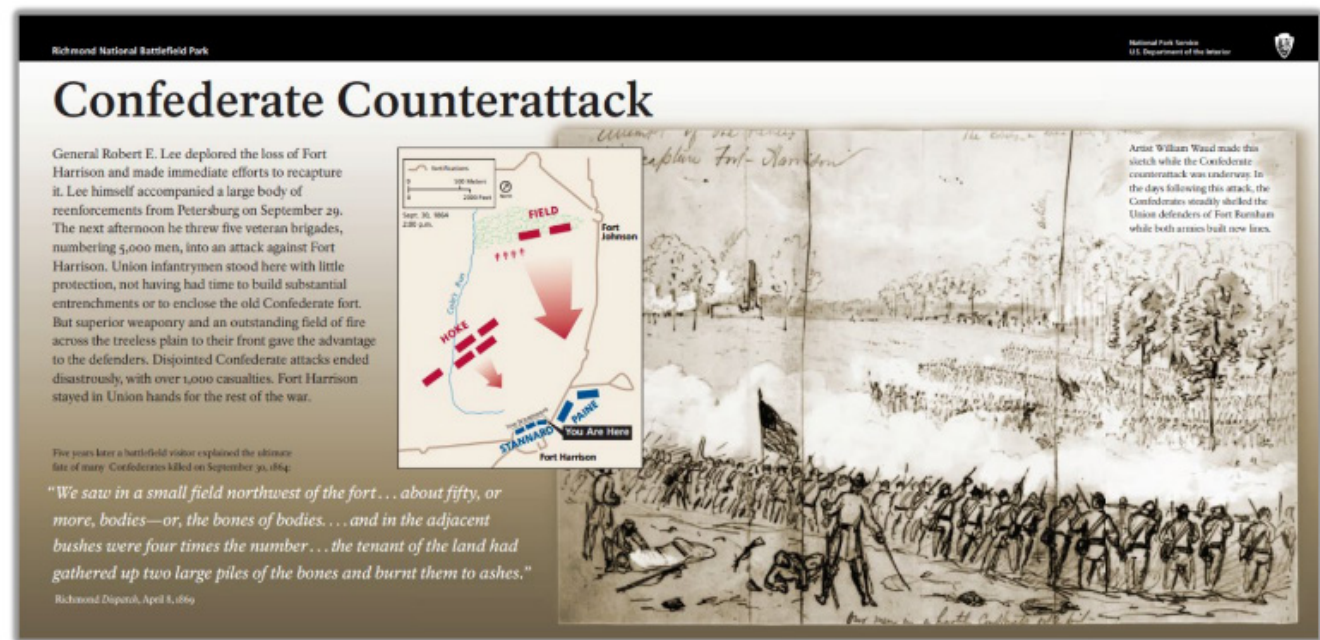
Are there multiple perspectives on the site's story?

What knowledge is required to identify and protect resources? Who are the subject matter experts?

What knowledge is required to anticipate the needs of the audience? Who are the subject matter experts?

What is the significance of the site? Why is it important to share these stories?

What are the primary and secondary interpretive themes for the trail and site?



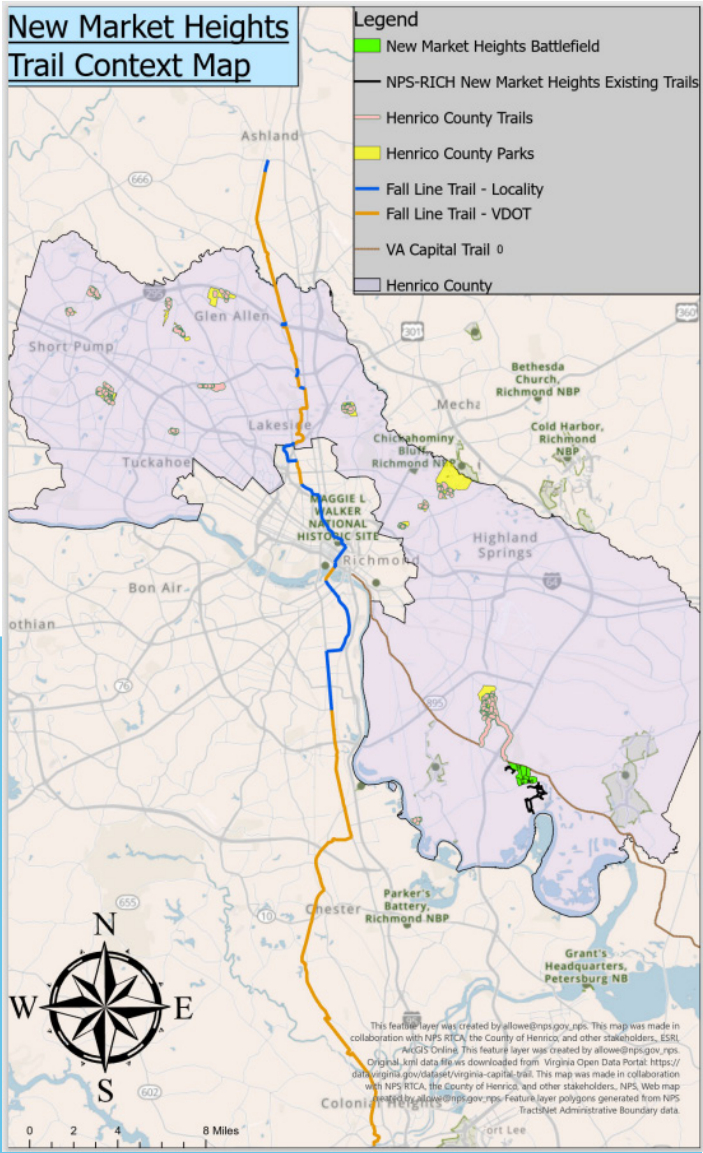
Example of a wayside from Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Regional Context

The New Market Heights Trail will contribute to a growing network of regional, state, and national trails and conservation initiatives. Located in eastern Henrico County, the trail corridor connects historically significant landscapes with preserved natural areas, schools, neighborhoods, and regional greenways—offering a unique opportunity to blend heritage tourism, environmental stewardship, and community health. This section offers context to a broader United State’s history and focuses most importantly on the Varina community and New Market Heights Trail users.

Community Health Characteristics of Trail Users in Varina County*

The Varina District of Henrico County, VA, is a rural area within the Greater Richmond area with a population of 62,839 residents. The area is diverse along racial and ethnic lines, with African Americans making up the largest group (59.5%), followed by white (36.1%), mixed race (4.9%), Hispanic or Latino (4.3%), some other race (2.2%), Asian (0.9%), and American Indians (0.05%). The median age is 43.2 years old; the population is older than the national average (39.2).



The map shows the New Market Heights Trail corridor in eastern Henrico County, Virginia. The trail is highlighted in blue, running from the north near Ashland and Lakeside down to the south near Grant's Headquarters. The map includes a legend with categories: New Market Heights Battlefield (green), NPS-RICH New Market Heights Existing Trails (black), Henrico County Trails (red), Henrico County Parks (yellow), Fall Line Trail - Locality (blue), Fall Line Trail - VDOT (orange), VA Capital Trail (purple), and Henrico County (light blue). Key locations marked include Ashland, Glen Allen, Short Pump, Tuckahoe, Bon Air, Chester, Parker's Battery, Richmond NBP, Chickahominy NBP, Bethesda Church, Cold Harbor, Highland Springs, Grant's Headquarters, and Petersburg NBP. A compass rose and a scale bar (0 to 8 miles) are also present.

Economic data shows that the Varina District’s median household income is \$66,694, notably lower than the Henrico County median of \$85,817 and the national median of \$83,730. This is indicative of a high poverty rate (11.5%), which is variably disparate among age groups: 22.8% of youth, under the age 18, live in poverty, while 8.4% of adults aged 18 to 64 and 11.6% of seniors live under the poverty level.

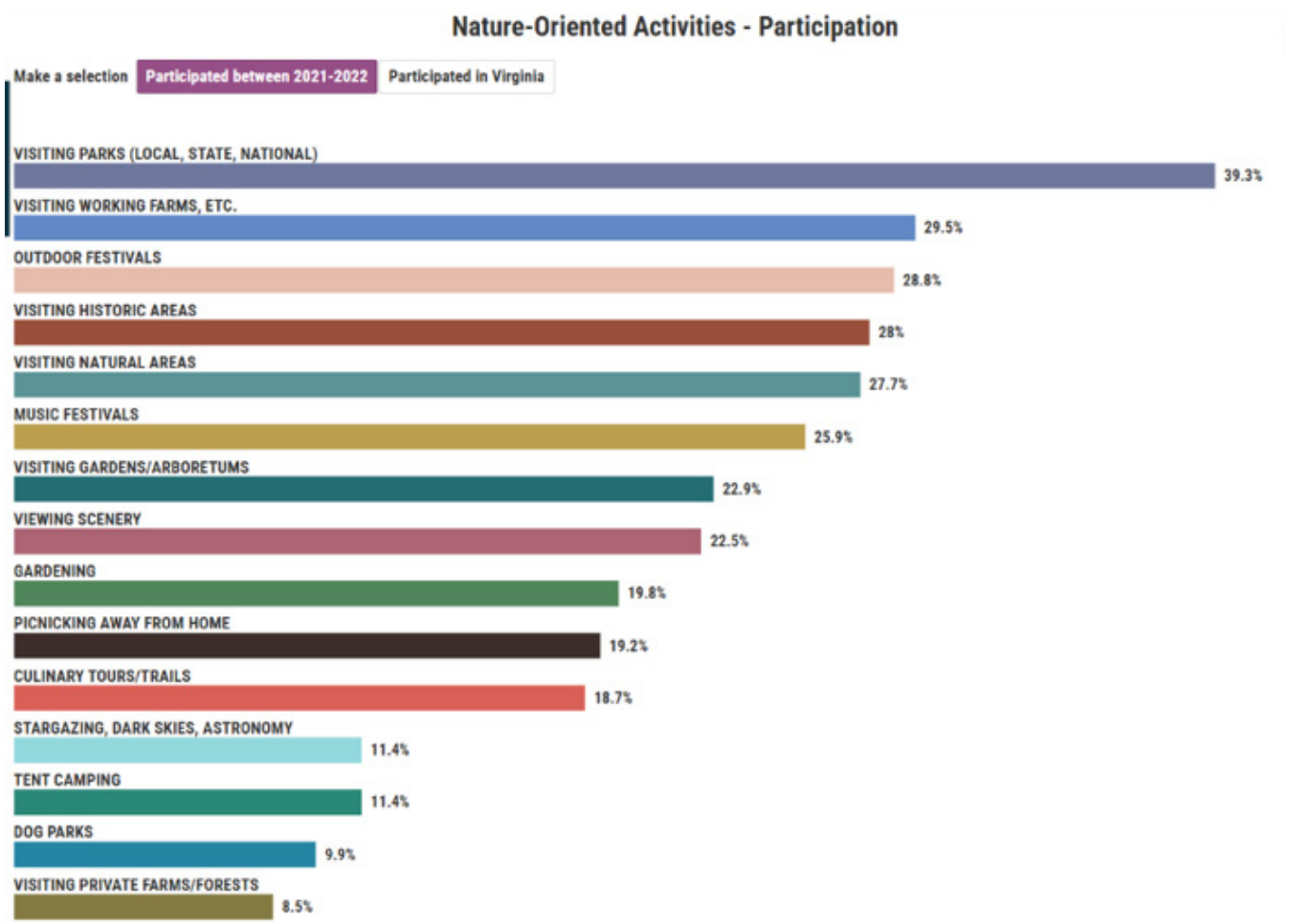
Health indicators (from the VCU Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021) show major opportunities for promoting wellness and increasing access to outdoor recreation. Approximately 34% of adults are overweight (32% of youth) and 22% reported no physical activity in the past 30 days. Additionally, 36% of the adult population have high blood pressure and 30% have high cholesterol, while the highest cause of death is heart disease. The creation of the New Market Heights Trail will expand trail connectivity and access to greenspace, reduce some of the listed health indicators, and encourage a healthier population.

*(All data below is from the U.S. Census Bureau unless noted otherwise.)

Outdoor Recreation in Virginia

From the Atlantic coastline to the Blue Ridge Mountains and Appalachian Mountains, Virginia has long been a hot spot for outdoor recreation among tourists and residents. State parks and forests, wildlife management areas, natural area preserves, regional parks, land and water trails, playgrounds, and national parks provide excellent access to the natural world. As a result of investment in recreation amenities, facilities, staff, and activities, Virginia’s outdoor recreation economy is booming. In 2023 alone, outdoor recreation contributed nearly \$11.3 billion to Virginia’s economy, accounting for 1.7% of the state’s GDP. Additionally, outdoor recreation supports more than 120,000 jobs and \$5.58 billion in wages across the state (Virginia Outdoors Plan, 2024).

95.8% of respondents to the 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey said that access to outdoor recreation is very important. 39.3% of respondents said that they had visited a park between 2021 and 2022. 48% of respondents said that they seek outdoor recreation experiences because they want to experience nature, and more than half of those responses stated that outdoor recreation reduces stress and improves their overall mental health. Another area that ranked high was “to experience history and culture”. Respondents noted that natural areas, trails, and parks were the most needed recreation opportunities statewide, with 75.4% of respondents using trails for pleasure or relaxation and 61.6% for scenery or natural environment. Additionally, 42.7% noted that the best way recreation facilities could improve participation in outdoor recreation was to add easy to walk/paved trails.



The 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan outlined the following outdoor recreation priorities for the state over the next five years to prioritize funding for projects that expand outdoor recreation, with a special focus on recreation for all:

Prioritize projects that improve outdoor recreation access through programming such as immersive outdoor experiences, skill-building and confidence in the outdoors, guided experiences, and free or affordable opportunities for adults and children.

Prioritize projects that address common barriers people with disabilities may encounter outdoors.

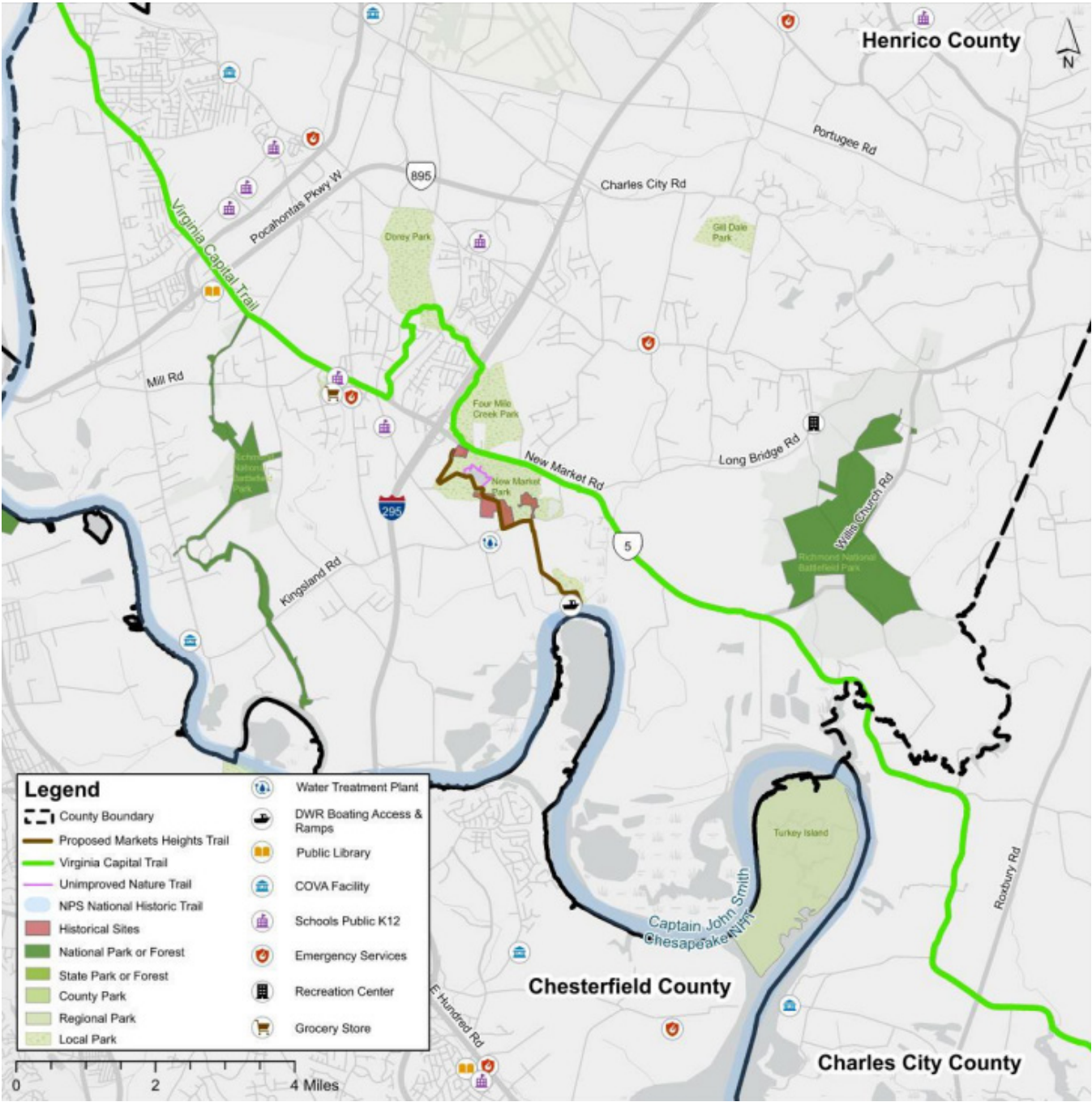
Prioritize projects in communities that have been historically underserved, underfunded, and underdeveloped with regard to recreation opportunities.

This plan’s priorities and survey results, combined with the extensive outdoor recreation opportunities statewide, support the creation of the New Market Heights Trail. The trail will not only address these priorities but will also expand outdoor recreation access in the Varina District and Henrico County. (Virginia Outdoors Plan, 2024)

“Trails are frequently mentioned and highly valued in surveys about outdoor recreation. Seventy-five percent (75.4%) of Virginians use trails for pleasure or relaxation, 61.6% to enjoy nature and scenery, 56% for health and fitness, and 36.8% use trails to spend time with family and friends. They are an expected recreation amenity within most parks and recreation areas. They commonly support multiple recreation uses or may connect users to significant cultural resources or historic events. A trail’s setting, purpose, and recreational focus best determine its planning needs, design, and goals.” - Virginia Outdoors Plan

Outdoor Recreation in Henrico County

With over 3,300 acres of open space across 28 parks in Henrico County, open space and outdoor recreation are a high priority for residents, non-profit partners, and government officials. The Henrico County’s Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan (2024) provides useful context and justified precedent for the creation of the New Market Heights Trail. The mission of the Henrico Recreation and Parks Department is “to create and deliver exceptional recreation and park experiences that foster well-being and a sense of belonging.” (pg. 5), guided by core values of community, inclusion, stewardship, and wellness. The New Market Heights Trail stands to represent these values and build on them.



The Open Space Master Plan inventoried recreation sites and amenities of all types to delve deeper and create priorities and recommendations based on what is needed in the county. Some of the relevant top priorities include:

- Improving accessibility.
- Loop trails within parks.
- Bike and pedestrian connections to parks.
- Neighborhood park access.

In creating Open Space Master Plan priorities, the County also created a Priority Need Analysis, listing outdoor fitness, paved trails, and gravel trails as the highest needs in the county. The complete list is shown to the right

The New Market Heights Trail meets state and county needs by adding trails for walking and biking, granting access to nature and conserved lands, offering opportunities to learn about history and culture, enhancing community connections, and providing safe routes to trails and parks for adjacent landowners. Henrico County’s 2024 Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan sets this project up for success and aims to tackle multiple priorities laid out in the plan. The implementation of this project will allow for greater access to open space for all in Varina and will ultimately support the tourism economy both in this region and statewide.

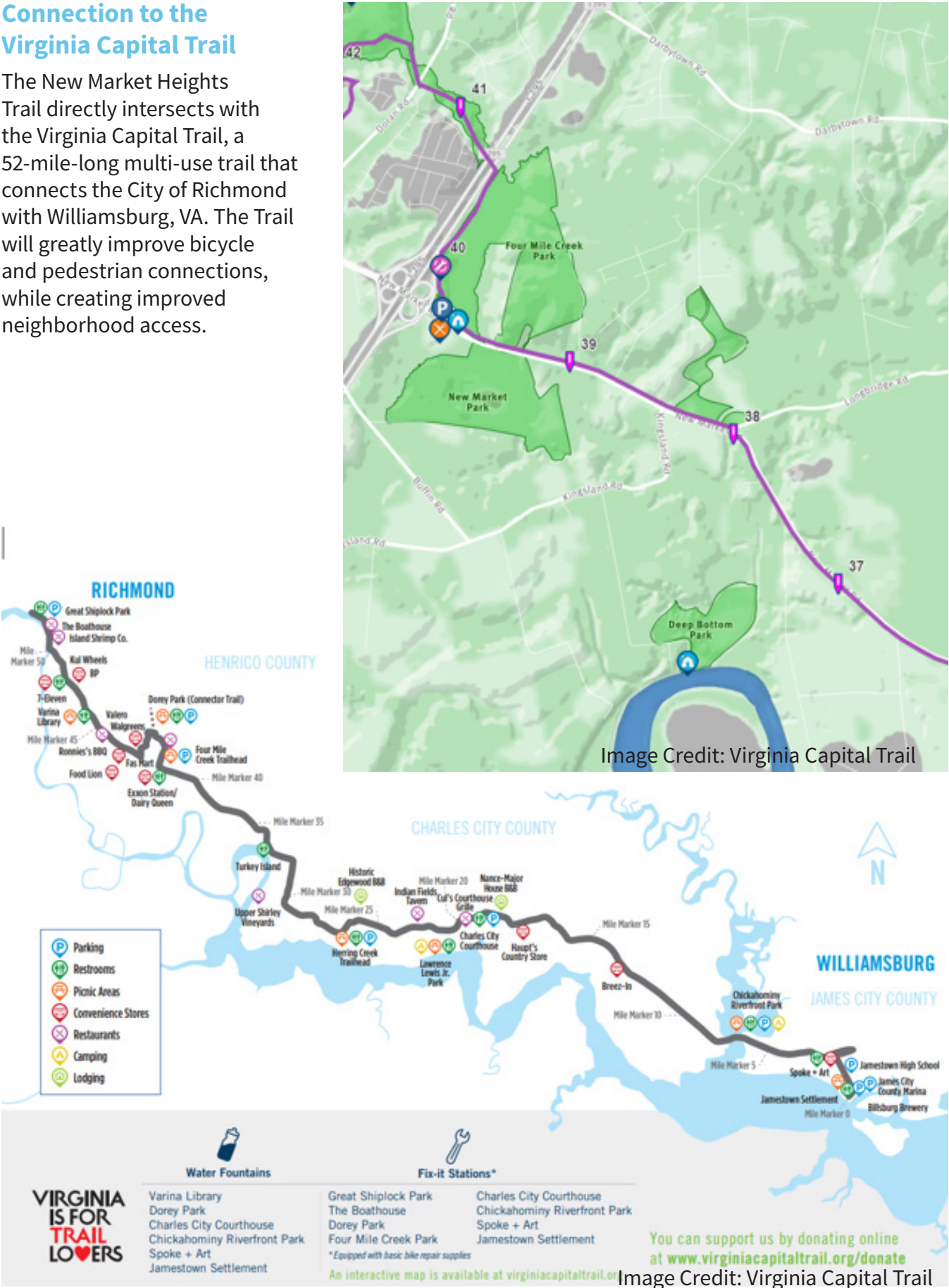
TABLE 14 // PRIORITY NEED ASSESSMENT

Type of Facility	Priority
Outdoor Fitness	High Need
Paved Trail	
Gravel Trail	
Aquatic Center	
Ampitheater	
Gymnasium	
Basketball Court	Medium Need
Neighborhood Park	
Multi-Use Field	
Canoe/Kayak Launch	
Disc Golf Course	
Playground	
Tennis Court	
Cricket Field	
Dog Park	
Pickleball Court	
Picnic Shelter	
Community Park	
District Park	
Recreation Center	
Boat Ramp/Slide	Some Need
Nature Center	

“The 2024 Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan replaces the 2015 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, which was adopted in August 1999, and included as part of the Vision 2026 Comprehensive Plan. The newly adopted Plan examines the current park system and includes an inventory of amenities and facilities, an existing conditions report, and a level of service (LOS) analysis. Based on public input, demographic and recreational trends, best practices, and alignment with county goals, it provides recommended population-based LOS standards, identifies shortfalls of amenities, and projects recreation and park needs into 2033. The Plan also contains a series of recommendations for the improvement of existing parks and facilities and the expansion of the parks system, phased into a 10-year implementation plan.” - Open Space Master Plan

Connection to the Virginia Capital Trail

The New Market Heights Trail directly intersects with the Virginia Capital Trail, a 52-mile-long multi-use trail that connects the City of Richmond with Williamsburg, VA. The Trail will greatly improve bicycle and pedestrian connections, while creating improved neighborhood access.



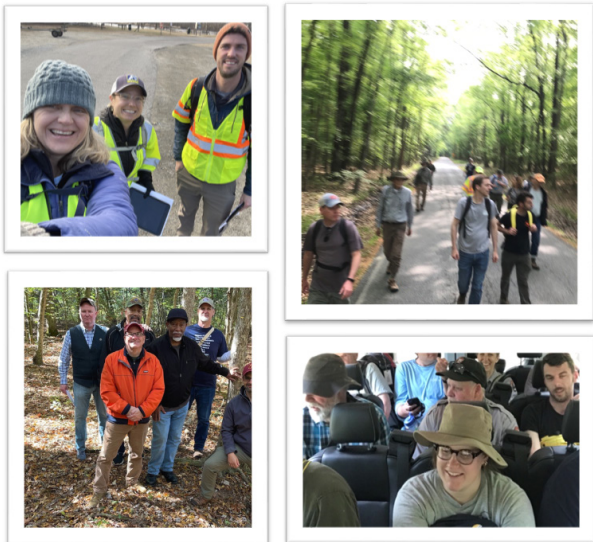
Project Background, Purpose, and Project Planning Process

Henrico County’s vision is to be a regional leader in preserving open greenspace and maintaining the area’s rural and historic character through both independent efforts and community partnerships. This vision emphasizes the protection of large, continuous swaths of undeveloped land that provide significant intrinsic values, such as ecological health, scenic beauty, and cultural heritage—as well as extrinsic values through recreation, education, and quality-of-life benefits for residents. Central to this approach is the goal of connecting parks, greenspaces, and conserved lands throughout Varina, improving access to nature, historic resources, and new parklands while ensuring long-term conservation of County-owned and protected private properties. The County also recognizes opportunities to enhance these landscapes through environmental restoration, including wetland and stream restoration efforts. An active wetland restoration project is currently underway at New Market Park, where the future New Market Heights Trail will provide access to restored natural areas while supporting broader conservation, recreation, and sustainability objectives.

Work on the New Market Heights Trail project began in September 2023 with the establishment of the Conserved Varina Partners, followed by an aerial survey of the trail in December 2023. The Capital Region Land Conservancy, American Battlefield Trust, and Richmond Battlefield Association have worked for years to preserve and protect the historic and natural landscapes of the Varina District. Through conservation easements, land acquisition, and stewardship, they have safeguarded key portions of the battlefield and surrounding open space.

In the spring of 2024, Henrico County applied for and received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (NPS-RTCA) program. Typically, work is done with the NPS-RTCA program over one to three years. NPS-RTCA was asked to assist with research, facilitating organizational capacity support with the Conserved Varina Partners, conducting trail assessments (in person and virtual), planning and implementing community engagement efforts, and co-developing sections of the draft trail concept plan. Ultimately, the end goal was to develop a plan for the New Market Heights Trail that showcases a landscaped pathway with signage, artwork, and amenities, highlights local history, and connects neighborhoods and community spaces.

Over the past year and a half, the project partners have grown stronger by collaborating with each other. The Conserved Varina Partners, local and federal government entities, regional and national land trusts, and non-profit organizations actively participated in all aspects of this planning process. These project partners created and agreed to this trail concept plan to assist Henrico County and each other in fundraising for the trail design and construction with connections to nearby regional and national trails and other important cultural resources. The planning process for the New Market Heights Trail has been deeply collaborative, involving local and federal government officials, land trusts, historians, and community members. With support from NPS-RTCA, Conserved Varina Partners have worked together to ensure the trail reflects regional priorities and gains national significance.



Project Planning Process

The planning process has been collaborative, inclusive, and iterative, emphasizing partnership development with Conserved Varina Partners and community engagement. With guidance from NPS-RTCA, the Partners transitioned from information sharing to active co-creation of the trail vision and framework, including the identification of important natural and cultural resources, and the themes and stories to interpret along the trail. Since October 2024, the project has emphasized transparency, good communication, and listening for understanding and reaching agreement among the Conserved Varina Partners. The Partners will ensure that the trail reflects the values, needs, and aspirations of the Varina District and Henrico County. This joint process laid the foundation for a trail concept plan that reflects both the historical significance of the landscape and the shared vision of the partners and the greater community. The completion of the New Market Heights Trail Concept Plan demonstrates the power of partnerships; a remarkable vision and collaboration of land trusts with Henrico County to protect and preserve sacred grounds for the possibility of this trail to come into fruition, honoring the past, educating and healing the present, and inspiring the future.

These are the key milestones and public engagement events that took place with the support of NPS-RTCA:

Stakeholder Interviews and Site Visits (Late Spring/Summer 2024)

Interviews with partner organizations to understand their goals, capacities, and perspectives. These conversations informed a stakeholder analysis that helped shape the collaborative process. County partners also led site visits with NPS-RTCA to assess trail feasibility and landscape conditions.

Community Health Profile (Fall 2024)

A simple Community Health Profile was created to highlight how the trail could address public health needs by improving safe walking and biking opportunities in nature.

Sample Agreements for County to Establish with Landowners (January 2025)

NPS-RTCA shared sample agreements for Henrico County to establish a Memorandum of Agreement with the Capital Region Land Conservancy and the American Battlefield Trust. Henrico County will manage and maintain the trail route as it traverses on partners’ properties.

Virtual History Walk by Trail Segment (February 2025)

A virtual history trail walk was conducted with Conserved Varina Partners’ historians to learn, explore, and document the significant historical events and landscapes within each segment. This session helped build a shared understanding of the trail’s interpretive potential and informed the development of key interpretive themes.

Conserved Varina Partners Walk (April 2025)

Partners convened for an on-the-ground trail assessment walk along the proposed trail alignment, allowing participants to experience the landscape firsthand, assess trail feasibility, and begin identifying potential access points, changes to the trail route, interpretive opportunities, and design considerations.

SWOT Analysis with Conserved Varina Partners (May 2025)

A virtual Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) session was conducted with partners to assess the trail corridor, reach agreement, and inform development of maps and posters in preparation for a July public meeting.

Public Information Meeting and Presentation (July 2025)

The Conserved Varina Partners gathered bi-weekly in preparation for a public meeting to formally introduce the concept of the project to the community. The partners co-created content for the maps and posters, the public meeting presentation, and provided feedback on the County’s trail website and brochure. Partners also participated in the public meeting logistics, like set up, presentation, and clean up.

On July 29, 2025, Henrico County led an evening public meeting with the Conserved Varina Partners at the Varina Library to unveil the vision for the New Market Heights Trail. There were approximately 60 people in person and 5-6 people virtually on YouTube Live. There were participants from the local tribe, which the County acknowledged, as well as historically freed Black communities such as Gravel Hill, Virginia Capital Trail bike enthusiasts, and adjacent neighbors and other interested residents. It was the first time the County planners had utilized a sign language interpreter, the County will be fully ADA compliant by Spring 2026 for future meetings.

Henrico County’s Office of Communications recorded the presentation and produced a trail promotional video for the County. It was the first time the County encouraged each partner organization to speak about the future trail and its significance to them, signifying that partners are crucial for Henrico County to lead the project forward. At the conclusion of the presentation, there was a short question and answer period, followed by an opportunity for community input. Community members were encouraged to view and provide feedback on seven trail map posters and a sticky dot activity board. Virtual participants were able to view the posters and activity on the County website and were encouraged to email their comments to the County.

Interpretive Planning Trail Walk: Agreement on Key Themes by Trail Segment (September 2025)

In September, a smaller cohort of historians from the Conserved Varina Partners, led by partners and NPS historians staff from NPS-Richmond Battlefield National Park, conducted a final walk of the proposed trail route to confirm the following: the trail alignment, important and appropriate stops to view natural and cultural resources and/or scenic views with future interpretive waysides, final interpretive themes and stories by location within each segment, orientation and wayfinding signage by access area, and other desired amenities. This walk served to reach consensus on key features and potential stops for future wayside exhibits and signage and ensure that the Concept Plan reflects a unified vision and is ready for the next phase of implementation. Every partner expressed desire to co-develop the interpretive panels for the Interpretive Trail Plan and Signage and Wayfinding Plan.



Survey Analysis and Results from the July Meeting

A brochure and survey were shared after the public meeting; there were 35 respondents. The results and analysis are on the following pages.



County of Henrico
Department of Public Works

Terrell C. Hughes, P.E. Director
(804) 501-4393

Public Information Meeting
New Market Heights Trail

July 29, 2025
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Varina Area Library
1875 New Market Road, Richmond, VA 23231

Welcome to the County of Henrico public information meeting on the proposed New Market Heights Trail project. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for citizens or organizations to provide comments. The County wants all members of the community to have the opportunity to participate in public involvement on projects affecting them. Representatives are present from a variety of relevant stakeholders to discuss the study and answer your questions.

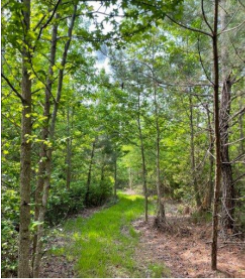
Project Overview

The New Market Heights Trail will provide an approximately 3.2-mile-long and 10-12 foot wide, paved shared-use trail from New Market Road to the Deep Bottom Park. The trail will highlight areas of natural and historical significance, including the County's New Market Park property, Deep Bottom Park, the U.S. Civil War Battlefield of New Market Heights, and the Capital Region Land Conservancy's Varina LandLab.

Portions of the project will be **locally-funded**, while others are seeking **grant funding** assistance for construction. The project will be split into five phases:

Phase 1 & 2: Connection to VA Capital Trail, New Market Park
Phase 3: New Market Park to Kingsland Road
Phase 4: Kingsland Road to Deep Bottom Park
Phase 5: Deep Bottom Park to James River

Estimated Project Cost: \$16 million
Estimated Construction Start Date: 2026/2027



View of the proposed trail within New Market Park

Project Stakeholders

Representatives from the American Battlefield Trust, the Capital Region Land Conservancy, the Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association, the Richmond Battlefields Association, and the National Park Service, are actively engaged with the County of Henrico in selecting a proposed alignment for the trail that aligns with their goals and minimizes impacts to sensitive historical and environmental areas. They are also providing input on future trail amenities and interpretive opportunities.

The County is also working with landowner partners to establish necessary easements for constructing the trail.



The Battle of New Market Heights and Area Significance

In September 1864, the United States Army's Tenth Corps crossed the James River and moved inland at what is now Deep Bottom Park. Their objective was to break through the outer defence line on along the New Market Road and move on to capture Richmond. The ensuing battle took place along the Confederate lines that hadsettled along New Market Road. The Union army forces included three brigades of U.S. Colored Troops (roughly 3,800 men), fourteen of whom earned fourteen Medals of Honor for their actions during the battle. The New Market Heights Trail will provide visitors with the chance to immerse themselves in the space where these troops fought, increasing awareness and visibility of this historic area.

The New Market Heights Trail will also provide visitors access to intact forests and open greenspace. Though some properties along this route were farmed and quarried, efforts are underway to restore many of these areas. The trail will cross through a portion of the 350 acre Varina LandLab managed by the CRLC, whichoffers over 4 miles of hiking trails and wildlife viewing. Deep Bottom and New Market Parks also offer opportunities to appreciate the riparian and wetland habitats of the James River and Four Mile Creek.

Preliminary Trail Features

- Major crossing improvements at Route 5 from Four Mile Creek Park/VA Capital Trail
- Trailhead with parking and New Market Heights Battle Monument & Interpretation Area
- 3 or 4 bridges or boardwalks
- Connections to other trail systems at Four Mile Creek Park, New Market Park, the Varina LandLab, and Deep Bottom Park
- Improved facilities at Deep Bottom Park

Right of Way

Much of the work proposed does not require additional right of way. As the County continues to refine the designs and a clear timeline for construction emerges for these segments, property owners will be informed of the exact location of the easements during the right of way acquisition process and prior to construction.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the easement and right of way acquisition process, please contact Ryan Levering, Transportation Development Division via lev004@henrico.gov or (804) 501-4244.

Environmental Review

The County will review the potential environmental impacts of the project as the design is refined. During construction, all reasonable efforts will be made to avoid or minimize dust, siltation, erosion, and impacts to significant natural habitats and resources. Construction will conform to the County's specifications and regulatory requirements of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Division of Soil and Water Conservation. The county will also seek input and guidance from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and DCR's Natural Heritage Division.

Civil Rights

Representatives from the County are present to discuss the project and answer your questions. It is the responsibility of the County to ensure that all members of the community are afforded the opportunity to provide comments and participate in public decisions on projects affecting them. The County ensures nondiscrimination in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Get Involved

The public comment period will close on August 12, 2025, following the public information meeting. County representatives will review and evaluate any information received. Comments can also be submitted to Ryan Levering (lev004@henrico.us) or at the contact address below. However, information must be postmarked, e-mailed or delivered to the County by August 12, 2025, to be included in the public information meeting record. Comments can either be submitted using the comment form or via the online survey at the QR code:

Contact Information

Ryan Levering
Capital Projects Manager
(804) 501-4244
lev004@henrico.us

County of Henrico Public Works
Transportation Development Division
P. O. Box 90775
Henrico, VA 23273-0775



In response to the question: “What concerns do you have about adding a trail like this to the area?,” most respondents expressed strong support for the proposed trail and reported no concerns, frequently describing it as “an exciting asset that would enhance connectivity, recreation, and access to natural spaces.” Among those who did identify issues, the most common concern centered on “safety, particularly dangerous crossings on Kingsland Road and Route 5, where high speeds, blind corners, and traffic volumes pose risks for cyclists and pedestrians.” Several respondents emphasized the need for safe, fully separated paths and improved access points to and from the Virginia Capital Trail and nearby neighborhoods such as Darbytown.

Others raised environmental considerations, such as “using permeable pavement, preventing flooding, protecting conservation land, and maintaining habitat.” A few comments highlighted practical needs including sufficient parking, accessible design for mobility devices, trash receptacles, and long-term maintenance of the trail surface and structures. A few respondents also noted a desire for privacy for nearby homeowners and clarity about the exact trail alignment. The overall sentiment was overwhelmingly positive, with many respondents eager to see the trail built and integrated into the area’s greenspace network.

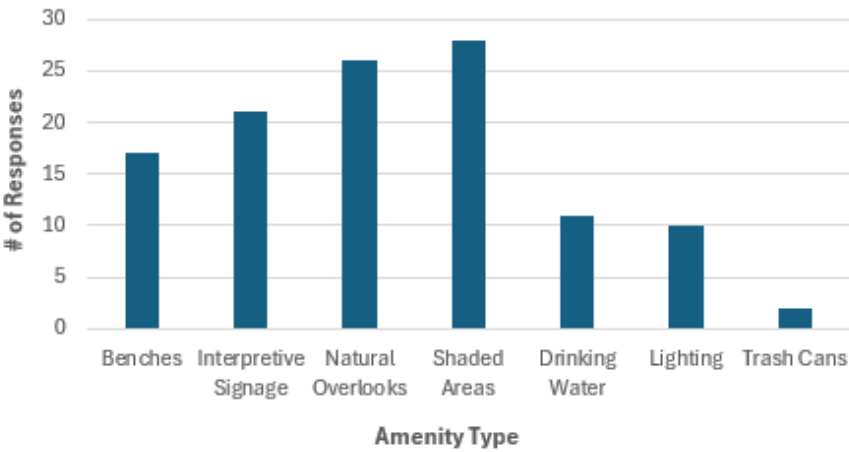
21

22

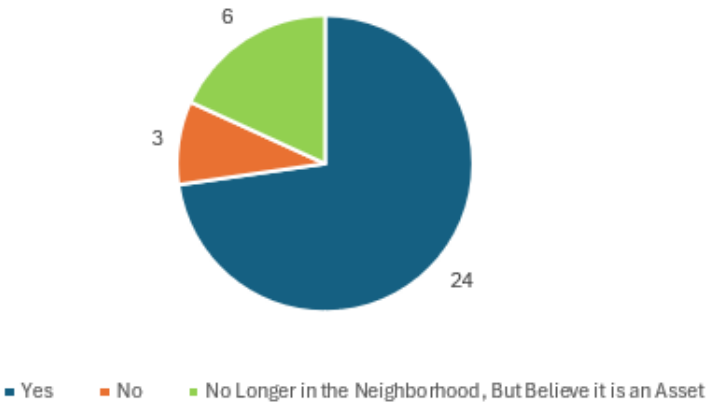
The final question on the survey was an open-ended question: “Is there anything else you would like to share?” Participants were overwhelmingly positive and expressed excitement and strong support for the new trail, praising the preservation of natural and historic resources and appreciating the opportunity for community input. Several respondents encouraged the creation of additional connections, such as links to Osborne Turnpike, safer access from Route 5 and nearby neighborhoods, and potential loop options with the VA Capital Trail.

Other respondents emphasized the need to preserve the area’s environmental and historic character, suggesting using features like permeable pavement, adjacent horse trails, historic markers, and interpretive signage - some even offering organizational support. A few participants asked for more information about the exact route or potential access to certain areas, while one respondent voiced concern about tree removal and land management practices. Overall, the feedback reflects strong enthusiasm for the trail project and a desire to see it designed safely, sustainably, and in a way that enriches the region’s historical and recreational value.

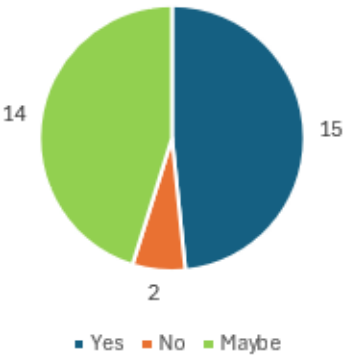
What amenities would make you or your family more likely to use this trail?



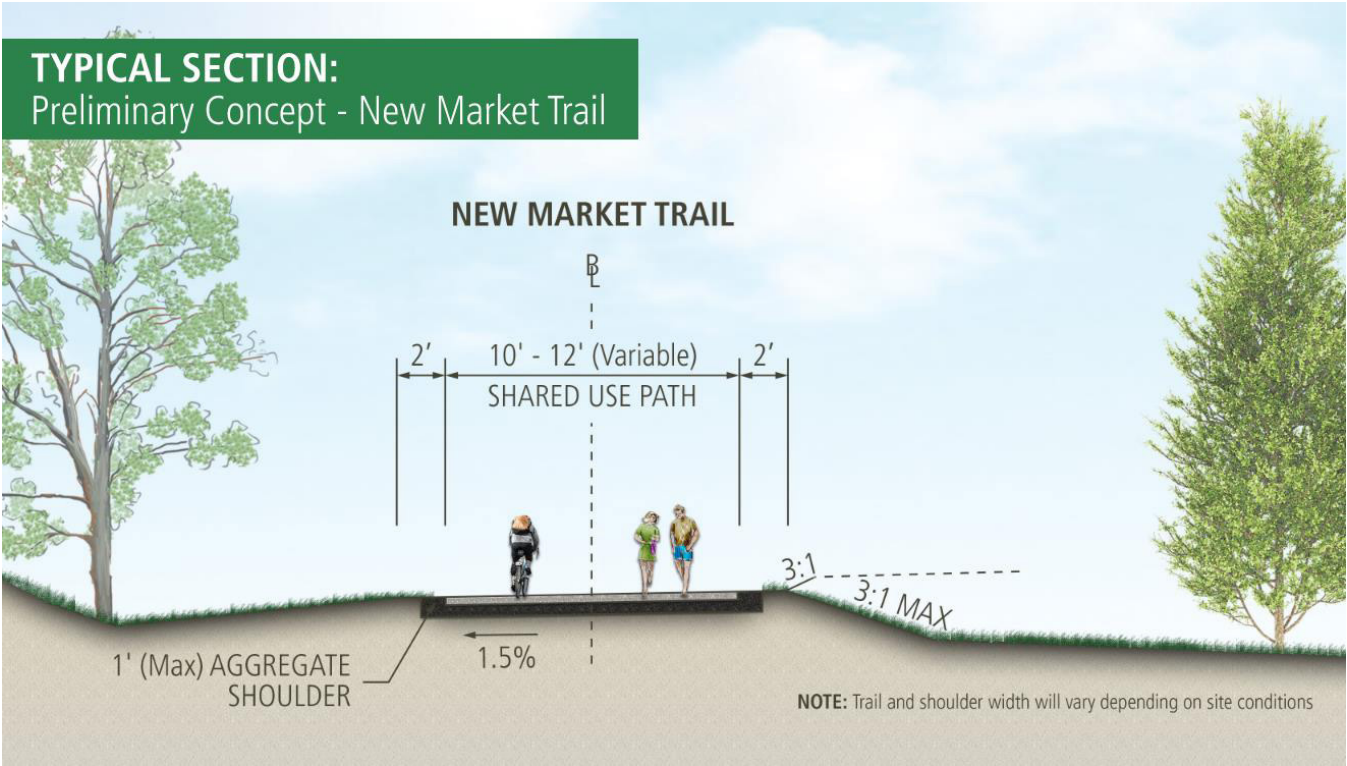
Would this trail feel like an asset to your neighborhood?



Would you be interested in guided walks, interpretive signs, or community events related to features along the trail?



New Market Heights Trail Design Considerations



In designing and implementing an accessible, paved multi-use trail with interpretive signage and sections that border waterways within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, there are many important considerations that one must factor. The trail must be built of a material that will not impair the Bay, should be sustainable and require low maintenance within the Fall Zones of the transition Piedmont and Coastal Plain geography, where ripples cause erosion, and are resistant to humid and wet environmental conditions. It is important to consider the material that the trail surface is made of, as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements note that the surface must be “firm, stable, and slip resistant.” Surface materials such as crushed gravel are accessible to all user groups while also allowing stormwater to be absorbed into the ground, limiting stormwater runoff from the trail. Selecting the most appropriate material is subject to several considerations, including the setting of the proposed trail, physical features and potential obstacles, the needs for various users, and the desired appearance overall. For multi-use trails, hard, all-weather pavement surfaces are generally preferred over those of crushed aggregate, sand, clay, or stabilized earth. Yet, we want the New Market Trail to distinguish itself from the intersecting Virginia Capital Trail and to consider the historical context.

The trail must meet ADA slope and width requirements for full accessibility. To prevent the proposed trail from having a series of sections with steep segments, grades should not be greater than five percent. Since the trail would be in a setting with varying terrain elevations, excessive slope and grade would need to be mitigated through features such as signage or resting intervals. The current design reflects the ADA requirement for trail width of at least 10 feet to accommodate two-way traffic and at least two-foot-wide shoulders on each end, making the trail between 14 and 16 feet wide. Other design considerations required by ADA and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) standards include accessible, compliant bathrooms located within a short distance from all major trail areas (ideally at

each end of the trail and in the middle). The design also makes sure that all ADA compliant features are noted on all signage (for example: initial and ending trail kiosks), messaging, and planning documents so trail users know what to expect and can plan their experience in advance.

Another crucial aspect of good trail design is clear, obvious, and consistent wayfinding signage. A well-designed wayfinding signage system incorporates trailhead signs or kiosks with maps, directional signage, and interpretive signage along the trail. Trail kiosks at the beginning and terminus of the trail should include maps with markers indicating where the reader is on the trail, information on accessibility, and emergency contact information in the event of an emergency. These kiosks can also include historical information on the trail, the impetus for trail construction, and other relevant information. Wayfinding signage on the trails may include trail blazes or trail posts that orient users towards the proper trail paths. These signs must be made obvious for all trail users. Signage on multi-use trails should also include information on proper trail etiquette, including signage that encourages Leave No Trace and Recreate Responsibly, as well as signage that shows what users have right-of-way on the trail.

Broad Recommendations for the Trail Management & Design

The New Market Heights Trail will be a paved, accessible multi-use trail that traverses multiple (varied) landscapes and will service all age groups and multiple outdoor recreation users. As such, there are many different management and design facets that are crucial to ensuring an enjoyable, accessible, and safe trail design while also assuring that the trail leaves minimal impact on the natural world. This includes informative wayfinding and orientation signage, accessible trail design, traffic signs and measures that ensure safety, and everything in between.

The following recommendations encompass the trail as a whole and frame the recommendations in each trail segment. They will be described more broadly in the following pages. The four broad recommendations are:

- Ensure that the guidance from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) are enacted and utilized across the entire trail.*
- Minimize trail user conflict and create a safe, enjoyable experience for all trail users.*
- Prioritize signage (wayfinding and interpretive) along the trail.*
- Plan for the long-term care, operation, and management of the trail.*

Recommendation 1: Ensure that the guidance from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) are enacted and utilized across the entire trail.

The ADA and the ABA provide guidance for designing facilities that welcome trail users and visitors with various mobility needs. State and local jurisdictions are required to comply with ADA guidelines, while federally managed sites and/or projects using federal funds must also comply with ABA. It may be of use to the County to collaborate with an ADA consultant in the future.

For trail accessibility, the ADA requires:

- Trail surfaces are firm and stable.
- Trails must remain wide enough to ensure that wheelchair users are comfortable.
- Passing spaces every 200 feet.
- The grade of the trail should stay below 5%.
- Trailheads must provide accessible parking and clear signage indicating trail accessibility features, with bathrooms located at trailheads and halfway through the trail.

For trailhead and interpretive signage, the ADA requires:

Information on:

- Trail length
- Surface type
- Typical and minimum tread width
- Typical and maximum trail grade
- Typical and maximum cross slope

Clear Space for Sign Access:

- Minimum 30” x 48” floor space in front of the sign

Interpretive Sign Design:

- Use high-contrast colors and large, legible fonts.
- Mount signs at a height accessible to wheelchair users (typically 48” to 60” above ground).
- Consider tactile and braille text for interpretive content when feasible.

The ABA requirements overlap with most ADA requirements, with additional best practices:

- Trails must be regularly inspected for erosion and surface degradation.
- Accessibility details must be published on websites.

In practice, these acts ensure the trail is accessible to users of all ages and abilities, including those using mobility devices, pushing strollers, and with vision or hearing impairments. Additionally, following these requirements provides assurance that all new infrastructure meets ADA standards, including accessible parking and trails, tactiles signage, a firm and stable trail surface, and seating and rest areas with appropriate surface and shade.

Recommendation 2: Minimize trail user conflict and create a safe, enjoyable experience for all trail users.

Conflict is likely to arise on any trail where there are multiple types of trail users. Fast bikers can disturb hikers, walkers, runners, and birdwatchers. Hikers can get in the way of bikers and off leash dogs can scare both hikers and bikers. It is crucial that signage encourages proper trail etiquette to reduce these user conflicts. Also, the New Market Heights Trail abuts private property at multiple points along the trail, so it is important to include signage that encourages trail users to not trespass on private land.

The following steps could be taken at certain areas of the trail to reduce user conflict:

Written Information on Trail Etiquette:

Install visible signage at trailheads and along the route to communicate trail rules, right-of-way guidance (e.g., “bikes yield to pedestrians”), and safe passing practices. Include reminders for dog owners to use leashes and clean up after pets. Some paved trails paint the asphalt in the middle of the trail as a dashed line, to reduce user conflict.

Wider Trail Widths in Key Areas:

Design trail segments with adequate width (10–14 feet) to accommodate multiple users and encourage safety, particularly near access points, scenic overlooks, and interpretive stops.

Sightline Management:

Maintain clear sightlines around curves, intersections, and trail crossings to reduce the risk of collisions and improve visibility for all users.

Speed Management for Cyclists:

Use signage, surface treatments, or subtle design features to encourage slower cycling speeds on turns and in areas with high pedestrian activity.

Wildlife Considerations:

The area is home to deer, rabbits, hummingbirds, pollinators, and other wildlife that may cross or inhabit the trail corridor. Signage should encourage cautious cycling and respectful trail use to minimize conflicts between trail users and wildlife. Considerations may need to be made where sections of the trail are closed in the spring to protect sensitive species.

Dog-Friendly Design:

Encourage a Leave No Trace and Recreate Responsibly principle for dog waste and provide signage on leash use to ensure a clean and safe environment for all trail users. Ensure that water stations are accessible for water bowls for dogs in the summer months.

Lighting:

Consider dark sky-friendly fixtures/low-impact lighting and ensure emergency access points are clearly marked and accessible for first responders. When applicable, utilize solar power to light the signage and direct lighting down to prevent light pollution and protect the night sky in the less developed Varina District. Consider installing motion sensors and timers to save energy.

Recommendation 3: Prioritize signage wayfinding, orientation, and interpretive signage along the trail.

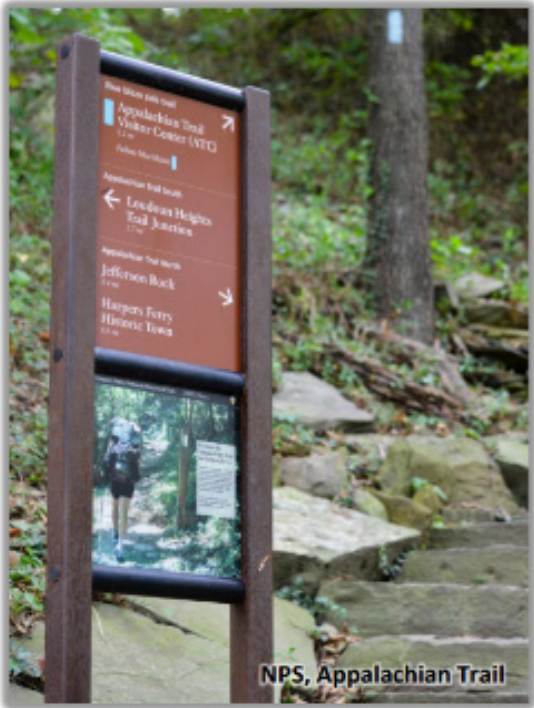
Develop an Interpretive Plan and Wayfinding and Signage Plan. The story of the USCTs is just as important as the outdoor recreation component of the trail. Telling the story of the USCTs and the history of the battles they fought on the land trail users will traverse allows them to feel a deeper and more meaningful connection to the land. Meaningful interpretation can massively improve the overall appeal of the trail itself by making it an experience that is more than just a multi-use trail.

Use consistent, easy-to-read wayfinding and interpretive signage that will help users navigate the trail and understand its historical and ecological context. Effective interpretive waysides enhance direct and meaningful connections between trail users and landscapes, and must attract and focus attention on the site, not the signage. Future development of the trail should be consistent with the interpretive plan for the trail and County-specific signage and wayfinding guidelines. Trail users will likely use a combination of signs and tools for orientation purposes. Consistency in the look, feel, and function of all tools will improve visitor orientation to the sites and route.

For this project, there are four types of orientation signage that are recommended: **Directional Signs and Markers, Trailhead Signage, Regulatory/Road Signs, and Visitor Information Signs.**



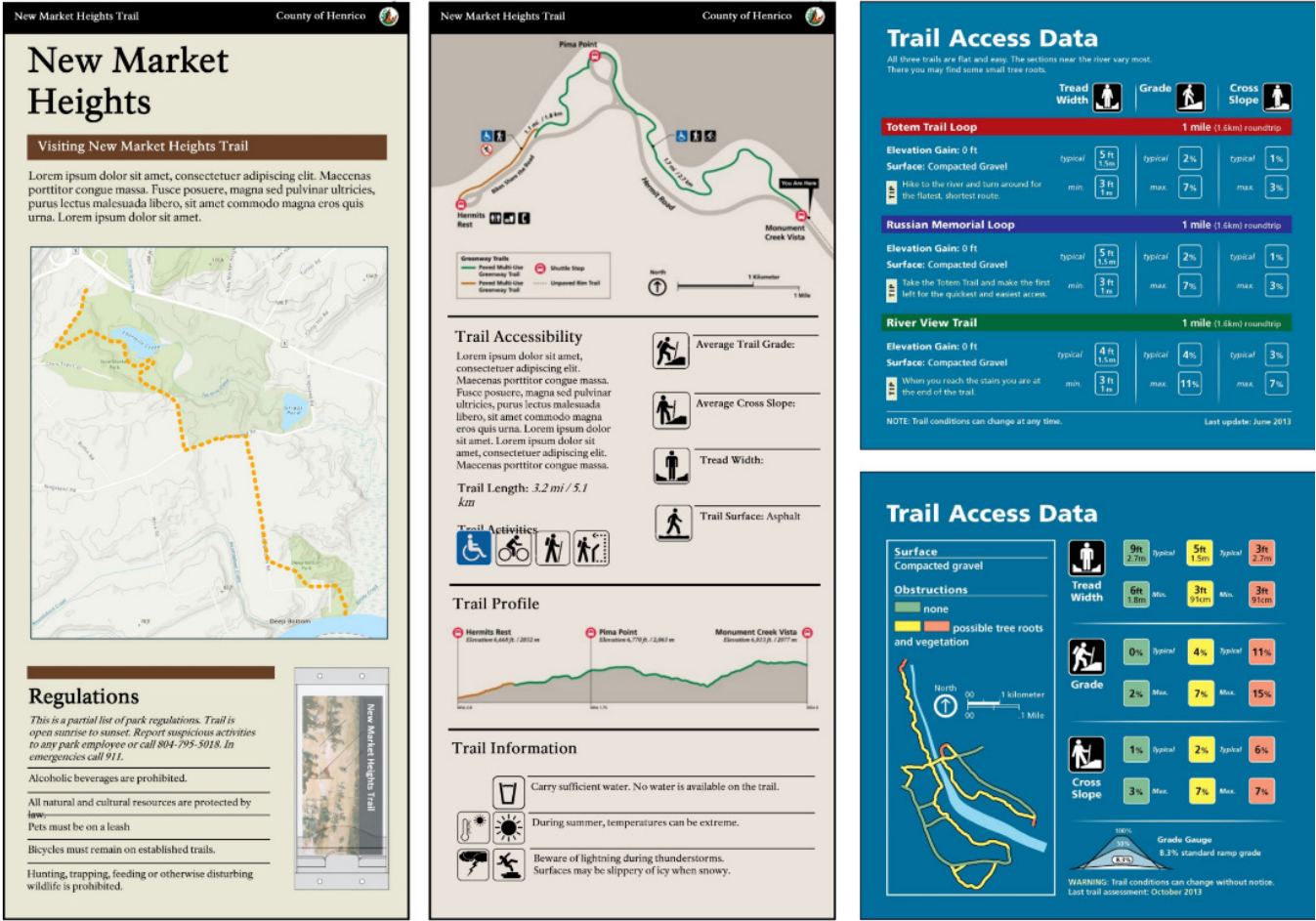
Directional Signs and Markers
Directional signs and markers orient trail users along the designated route and are typically encountered at trailheads, intersections, and between long stretches of trail.



Trailhead Signage

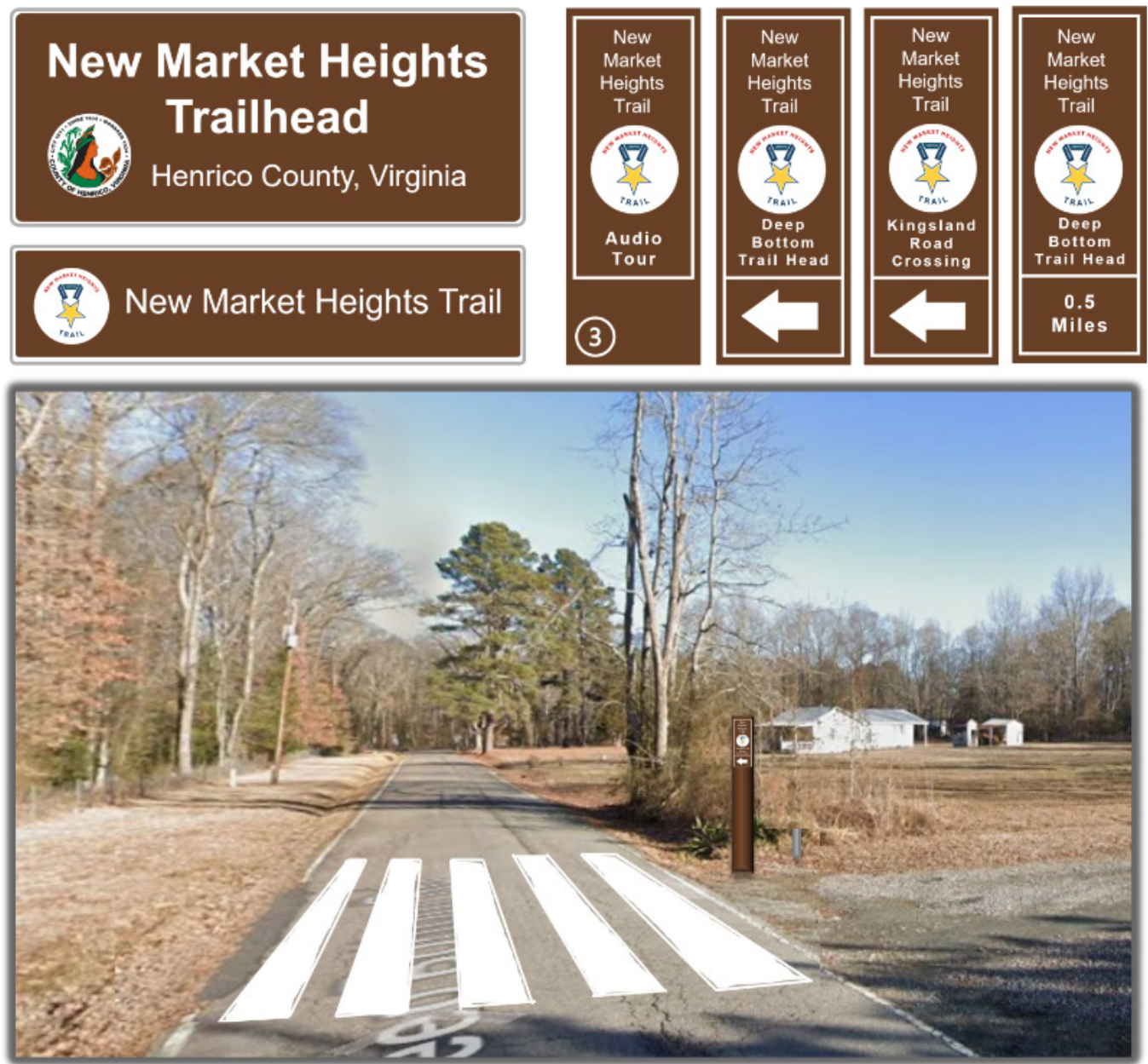
Trailhead signs welcome users to the trails and confirm their location within their intended destination. The signage at trailheads must include information on the accessible characteristics of the trails, including trail surface material, trail width, and trail grade and slope. Consider adding a map of the trail so users can orient themselves. These trail users are mobile, so to be effective, the map must be related to what they are seeing. Consider network functionality, as there may be areas where visitors have no internet service.

Below are mock-ups of potential designs for trailhead signage that could be utilized for the New Market Heights Battlefield Trail. Consider how best to graphically represent trail information through text as well as the trail profile Trail access data, including changes in grade of slope or any possible obstructions can help individuals prepare for trail use. Trail information isn't always static; consider the flexibility of changeable displays if appropriate to update users on changing trail conditions, construction, maintenance, or other anticipated changes.



Regulatory/Road Signs

Regulatory/Road signs are critical for ensuring safe passage across roads and other shared-use paths along the trail route. Below are conceptual graphics of roadside signage and trail marker signage, with a mock- up photo.



Visitor Information Signs

Visitor information signs are utilized along trails to orient pedestrians and cyclists through trail systems and to provide interpretation on the natural and cultural resources along the route. These signs typically display educational information on directions, regulations, safety information as well as resource protection messages and historical narratives (interpretive signage).

Interpretive signage can be displayed on signs in multiple design formats, but they should always be placed in a safe and accessible area that does not disrupt the flow of foot or bicycle traffic. The National Park Service (NPS) uses two types of panels for interpretive signage: *an upright wayside and a low-profile wayside*.

Upright waysides do not direct a trail user’s attention to a specific landscape feature within view. Rather, they introduce the trail and are typically placed at a pedestrian’s decision point. They provide information on trail orientation, safety, and site significance. They should help trail users decide whether to invest the time and energy required to reach the destinations described.

Low-profile waysides are a caption on the landscape – they are not designed to stand alone any more than a caption for a photograph is intended to be read by itself. Specific landscape features should drive the content and focus and should be positioned in a way that orients trail users within the environments they are meant to interpret. The best low-profile waysides illuminate what the trail users see. Make sure that this signage does not block the view for a visitor with a physical disability.



Signage Best Practices

Signage Design

Signage at trailheads should follow the requirements as outlined in the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS). When new signage is provided at trailheads or newly constructed or altered trails designed for use by hikers or pedestrians, the signs should include the following components: Length of the trail or trail segment, Surface type, Typical and minimum tread width, Typical and maximum running slope, Typical and maximum cross slope.

Graphic Panels

Certain color combinations and shades of color may not be discernable for people who are color blind, including red and green combinations. Trail signage should incorporate design techniques that apply different shades and saturations of color to create accessible color combinations. Some maps may still include red and green combinations if, when tested through a greyscale filter, the contrast is still effective. Connecting trails should also be identified by a unique patterned line to further differentiate each trail.

Tactile Panels

Textual information can be conveyed in braille with a limited use of words produced as raised characters. The addition of audio buttons enables users to play descriptions of the map keys and trail maps. If audio description of waysides or other features is available along the trail, the trailhead signage is a good place to note this, especially if the visitor needs to check out equipment.

Additional Considerations

There is no single way to graphically present required data. The length, complexity, and uniformity of a trail or trail system should be considered within the graphic design approach. Consider illustrating trail conditions through photographs and testing your designs to ensure that the information is understandable to people with and without disabilities.

Recommendation 4: Plan for the long-term care, operation, and management of the trail.

The New Market Heights Trail will be an important amenity for current and future county and state residents and visitors. Henrico County will manage the trail in partnership with the Capital Region Land Conservancy and the American Battlefield Trust. It is imperative that the Conserved Varina Partners develop a Trail Maintenance Plan for operation and long-term care planning, along with a system to pursue funding for these efforts. These long-term operational strategies are laid out below in no specific order of priority.

Collaborate with the Conserved Varina Partners to align trail and trailhead development with Henrico County’s 2024 Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan to ensure cohesive, inclusive, and sustainable design.

Recommendations from the 2024 Master Plan for existing and new parks and facilities, that the New Market Heights trail addresses include:

- Address safety hazards.
- Review and address ADA accessibility.
- Continue to increase the quantity of universally accessible amenities and design elements.
- Improve linkages to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Construct appropriate stormwater management facilities and erosion control measures.
- Increase access to shade at all parks.
- Install consistent signage within the parks system.
- Manage historic sites to enhance recreation opportunities.
- Add new amenity types at existing parks.

HENRICO RECREATION AND PARKS MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Mission Statement: Enriching Lives, Connecting Communities

Our mission is to create and deliver exceptional recreation and park experiences that foster well-being and a sense of belonging.

Vision Statement: Innovating Tomorrow’s Parks, Today

We aspire to be leaders in the recreation and park industry by setting the standard of excellence in operations, programs, and services.

Core Values:

Community: We serve the residents of Henrico County by providing parks and facilities where they can gather that are safe, clean, and well-maintained.

Inclusion: We are committed to providing all residents of Henrico County access to our facilities, programs, and services and strive to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Stewardship: We are dedicated to the responsible management and preservation of our open spaces and historic resources for future generations to enjoy.

Wellness: We prioritize the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of our community through recreational programs, fitness opportunities, and outdoor activities.

Develop a Budget Strategy.

Funding and developing a project such as the New Market Heights Trail will take time, patience, and determination to complete. This trail traverses multiple different property lines and will require the development of 3.2 miles of paved trail, multiple trailheads, and multiple interpretive waysides.

The budgeting strategy for the development of the New Market Heights Trail could involve a systematic approach to estimating costs, securing funding, and ensuring financial sustainability throughout the lifecycle of site construction. Initially, detailed cost estimates should be generated for all phases of development, encompassing materials, labor, equipment, and universal design (ADA). A comprehensive budget should be created before each phase of construction on the site and each phase should have its own dedicated budget. It is expected that Henrico County will utilize on-call consultant assistance to develop construction cost estimates for each phase. These estimates will be shared with project partners and the public to help strategize construction activities. For this project, the cost estimates are under development.

The budget should also include a contingency fund to manage unforeseen expenses and cost variations, particularly due to the fluctuating cost of materials. Ongoing monitoring of expenditures and regular adjustments to the budget should be implemented to ensure the project remains on track and financially viable. Assessing stability and feasibility following each phase of construction and development will ultimately provide a clear financial framework for the successful development of the New Market Heights Trail. It is also important to include the potential operational costs of maintaining the trail, hosting events, and paying vendors for event assistance. The challenges and changes faced in each phase should be noted to serve as a basis for the next phase’s budget.

Henrico County and Conserved Varina Partners should develop priority funding goals based on the creation of a budget. To support these efforts, potential funding sources should be identified, including grants, public-private partnerships, and community fundraising initiatives. Engaging stakeholders and community members during the budgeting process will help align financial resources with community priorities and expectations.

Effective cost management and reduction strategies include developing a volunteer network to assist with various tasks, alongside careful consideration of material costs in relation to their durability and sustainability (e.g., considering the need for frequent materials replacement). Additionally, an evaluation of the expected intensity of use should be factored into budgeting decisions to ensure the park can accommodate community needs and use without compromising on longevity, quality, affordability.

Plan for educational programming, volunteer stewardship, and community partnerships to support long-term care and interpretation of the trail.

Define and build out a network of organizations and people that the Conserved Varina Partners team would like to regularly engage with for technical advice, educational programming, volunteers, funding, etc. If needed, consider asking existing businesses and non-profits to assist in the creation of a new non-profit, for the long-term management of the trail.

Build out a communications framework that includes desired key messaging and communication frequency. Steps and tools should include:

- Finalize and implement an Interpretation Plan and Wayfinding Plan.
- Building out the communication resources for the New Market Heights Trail (including a logo).
- Developing succinct talking points about the trail.
- Asking stakeholders what information they need to get involved and support the trail.
- Updating Henrico County and partner websites regularly.
- Keeping communication materials (e.g., branding, logo development, website, social media, and other communication tools) up-to-date and reuse past materials as applicable.

Continue to explore and bolster opportunities to connect the trail to regional trail systems, NPS-managed sites, and heritage tourism routes, including the recreational resources below:

- Richmond National Battlefield Park
- The Virginia Capital Trail
- Dorey Park Trails
- The Jamestown Discovery Trail
- The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network
- The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
- The James River Heritage Trail
- The Fall Line Trail

Trail Analysis and Recommendations by Segment

The following section breaks down the trail corridor into six segments, starting at the southern terminus at the James River Landing at Deep Bottom Park and ending at the northern terminus at Four Mile Creek Park and the Virginia Capital Trail. Each segment includes the following:

Existing Conditions of the Area: A map, a description, and images. (Note: Images are not necessarily in sequential order within the trail segment. They are intended to give the reader a feel for what the land is like and showcase key points.)

Notes from the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis: This was completed by the Conserved Varina Partners in the spring of 2025.

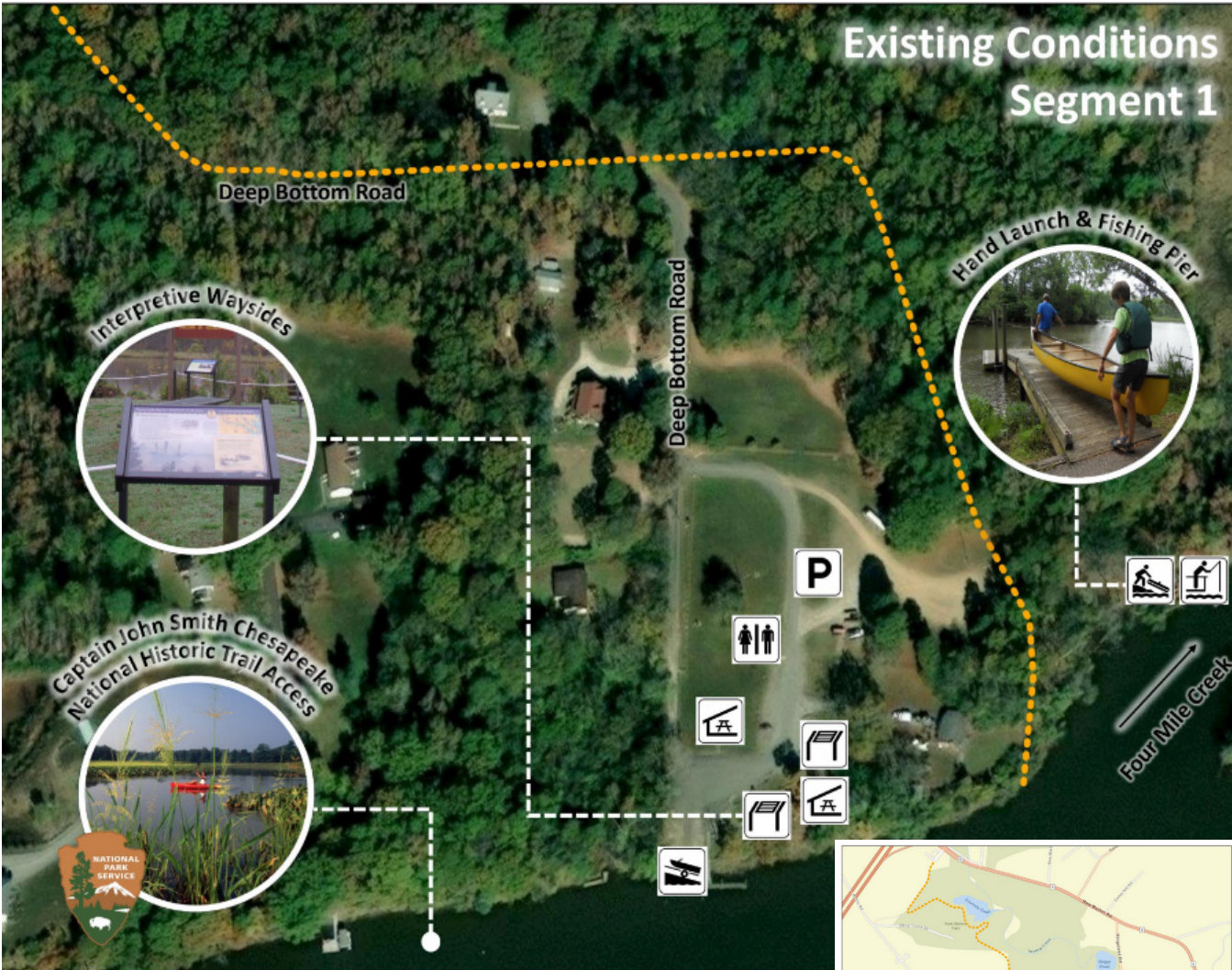
Community Engagement: This was gathered at the first public meeting in July 2025.

Segment-by-Segment Recommendations: Informed by the elements above, the NPS-RTCA team created recommendations for each segment.



Segment 1: Deep Bottom Park Trailhead and James River Landing (Landowner: Henrico County)

Deep Bottom Park will serve as a key trailhead for the New Market Heights Trail and is an important access point to the James River, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As a site of both historical and recreational significance, it must be designed to accommodate a wide range of trail users (land and water) for both active and passive recreation, while preserving the natural and cultural integrity of the landscape.



Map of Segment 1 along the proposed New Market Heights Trail showing and highlighting existing features and amenities. This section starts at Deep Bottom Park along the James River and runs north along Deep Bottom Road. The map above shows the existing amenities along this segment, which include: one boat ramp for motorized boats, a fishing pier, a canoe launch into Four Mile Creek for non-motorized boats and another on the James River, two interpretive waysides, two picnic shelters, a portable restroom, and a small parking lot.

- New Market Heights Trail
- Wayside/Signage
- P Parking
- Restrooms
- Picnic Shelter
- Boat Ramp
- Hand Launch
- Fishing Pier



SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

- Water Access
- Viewshed
- Birding and Wildlife

Existing Weaknesses

- Limited Parking
- Invasive Plants
- Limited Shade
- Limited Amenities

Future Opportunities

- Better Trail Access
- Boat Launch Improvements
- Fuller Interpretation
- Improved Amenities
- Recreational Concessions
- Partnerships

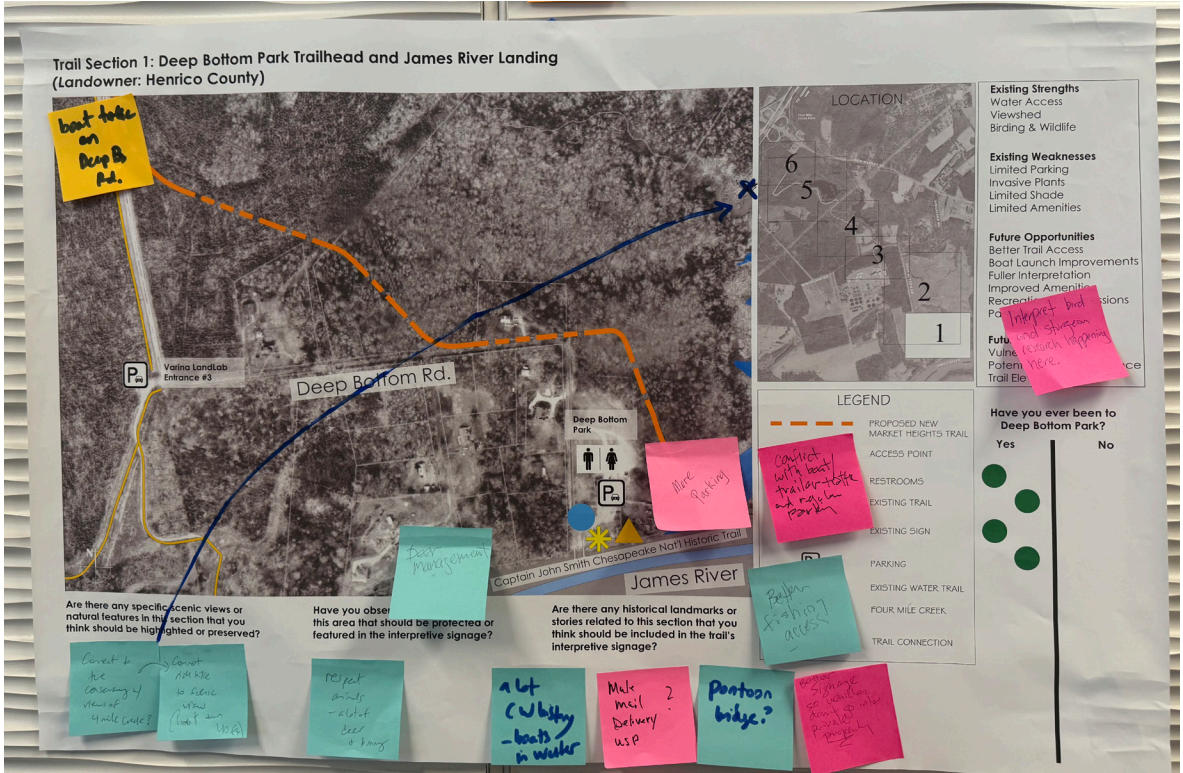
Future Threats

- Vulnerable to the River
- Potential Noise Interference
- Trail Elevation
- Flooding and Tidal Changes

Community Engagement

Participants of the public meeting in summer of July 2025 offered the following comments on the map:

- Better fishing access
- More parking
- Conflict with boats/trailers and regular parking
- Better signage so vehicles don't go into private property
- Interpret bird and sturgeon research happening
- Deer management
- Respect animals; a lot of deer and birding
- Connect to the Conservancy with views of 4-Mile Creek (cannot ride bike down to scenic view)
- Mail and USPS Delivery?
- Pontoon Bridge?



Recommendations for Segment 1: Deep Bottom Park Trailhead and James River Landing

In 2022, Henrico County Citizens approved a bond referendum for \$7 million in improvements to Deep Bottom Park. Bond stated that Recreation and Parks “will update current structures, improve shoreline, add a facility for events and resources to support historical interpretation of the area”. Currently available funding of \$500,000.00 in FY 2025-26 is available for consulting services and VHB, Inc. noted for their work related to shoreline development, has been selected to begin all planning, design, environmental, and permitting services. Construction funding will follow.

Expand parking areas at Deep Bottom Park, ensuring to include ADA-compliant parking spaces.

Henrico County’s planned improvements for Deep Bottom Park should include ADA-compliant parking spaces and accessible routes from parking areas to trailheads, picnic areas, restrooms, and river access points.

Water access features should be built using universal design features.

Water access features, whether for kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, or fishing, should be designed using universal design principles and the factor of tidal changes. The National Park Service’s Accessibility Guidelines offer a practical starting point, including but not limited to the following:

Accessible launch platforms with transfer systems or low-gradient ramps for paddlers with mobility limitations.

Stabilized surfaces and handrails at launch points.

Accessible fishing areas with firm, level surfaces and edge protection.

Clear signage indicating accessible routes and features.



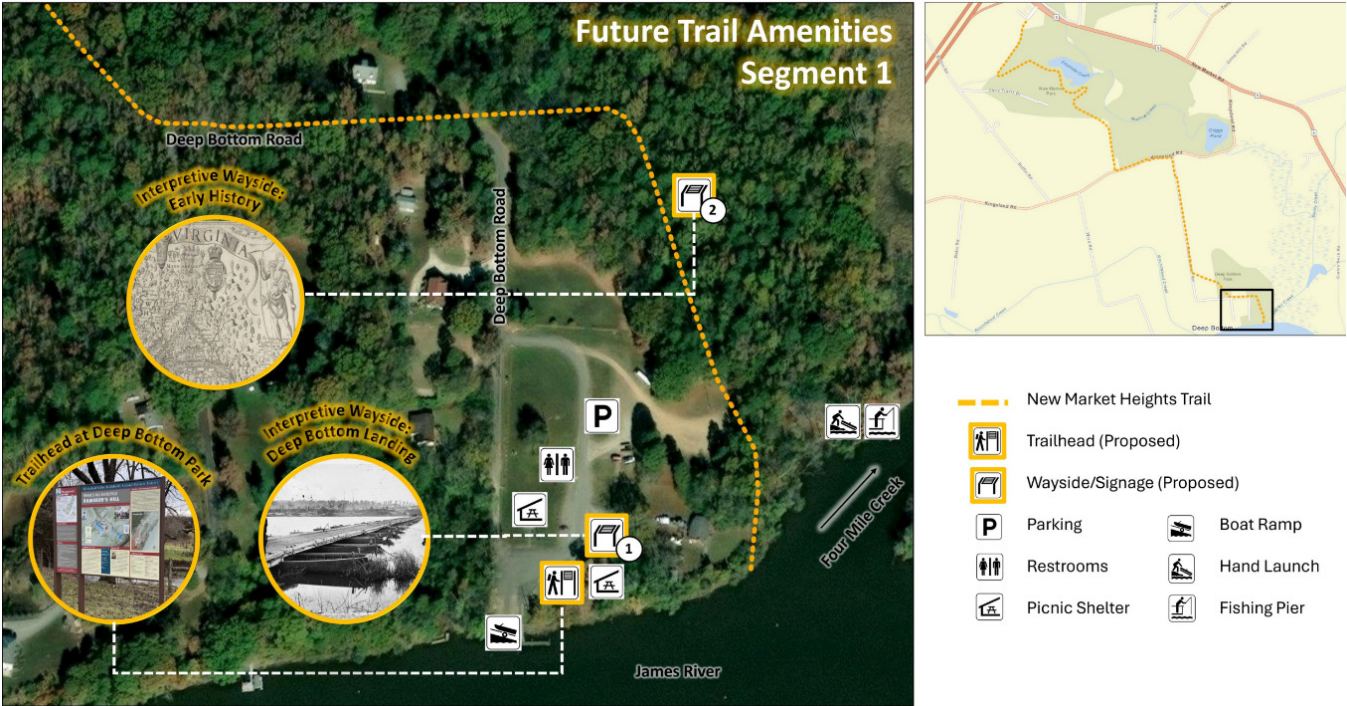
Create separated areas at river launches for motorized and non-motorized watercraft.



Designated areas for motorized and non-motorized watercraft will reduce congestion and improve safety. Accessible non-motorized launch areas should be located away from high-traffic boat ramps. Review the National Park Service’s Active Transportation Guidebook for a practical starting point.

Create interpretive signage with shade amenities that highlight the efforts of the USCT at the Battle of New Market Heights.

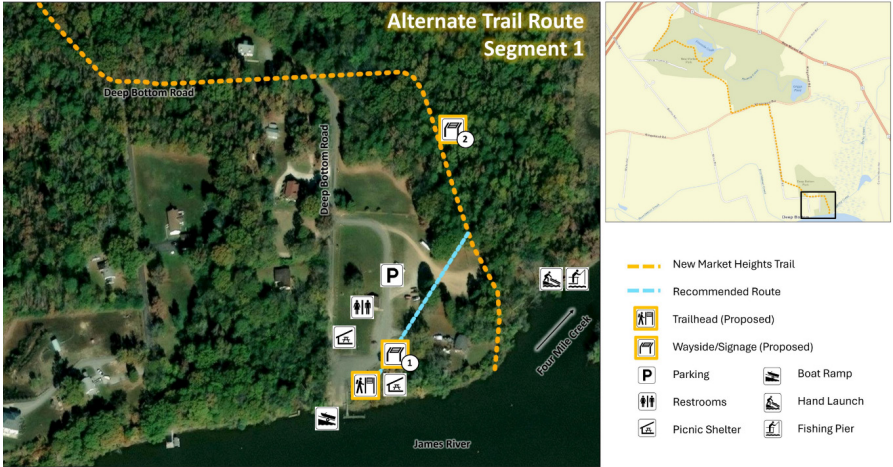
This segment should include interpretive signage about the Battle of New Market Heights that tells the story of the USCTs movement from Fort Monroe to Deep Bottom and their movement from Deep Bottom Park to Fort Monroe (an NPS Unit) and travel by the James River. Signs should be placed at accessible locations, with tactile or audio components where feasible. There may be access to future NPS funding because of the connection to the NPS units associated with the James River.



The concept design above includes a river launch at the southern terminus of Deep Bottom Road with an accompanying trailhead that will show the entire route of the New Market Heights Trail. There will be a parking lot, two picnic shelters, and a restroom facility just above this river launch. In between the picnic shelters, interpretive signage about the history of the Deep Bottom landing will be installed. At the beginning of the trail, there will be another launch site and a fishing pier installed. Further along the trail, before it crosses Deep Bottom Road, there will be another interpretive wayside installed detailing the early history of the surrounding area.

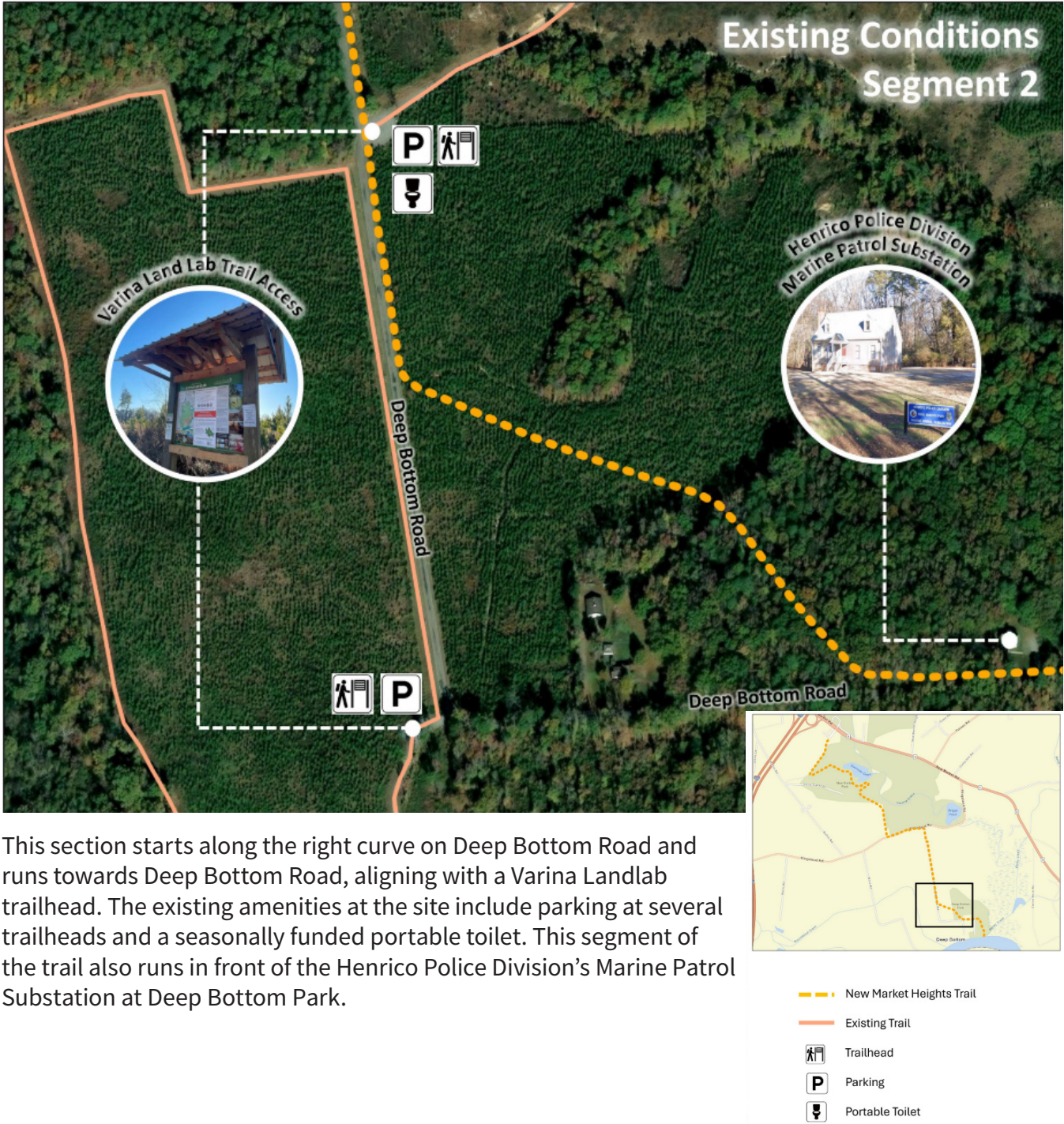
Examine the opportunity for an alternative trail route/access point to the trail.

If the proposed additional water access is not feasible or needs to be completed in a phased approach, see the image of an alternative starting trailhead. It is important to preserve the open views of the James River and create accessible amenities (benches, etc.) that blend in with the landscape.



Segment 2: Deep Bottom Road to Varina LandLab (Landowner: Capital Region Land Conservancy)

Segment 2 transitions the trail from the riverfront into an inland and upland setting, offering access to diverse habitats and five miles of trails at the Varina LandLab, a Chesapeake Gateways Network Site as designated by the National Park Service. A portion of the current alignment runs adjacent to Deep Bottom Road, a corridor with fast-moving vehicle traffic, limited shade, and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. The trail would connect Entrance #1 and Entrance #2 at the Varina LandLab to help establish safer pedestrian connectivity. The County will have easement agreements with Capital Region Land Conservancy for this segment. There are some erosion issues in this area that may affect the trail alignment in the long term.



This section starts along the right curve on Deep Bottom Road and runs towards Deep Bottom Road, aligning with a Varina Landlab trailhead. The existing amenities at the site include parking at several trailheads and a seasonally funded portable toilet. This segment of the trail also runs in front of the Henrico Police Division’s Marine Patrol Substation at Deep Bottom Park.



SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

Multiple Trail Access Points
Existing Trails
Different Habitat

Existing Weaknesses

Limited Amenities
Along the Road
Loblolly Pine Trees*

Future Opportunities

Expansive Interpretation
Safe Bike Routes
Vegetation Buffers
Native Plantings

Future Threats

Traffic to Boat Ramp
Road Crossing
Limited Shade
Close to Road

*The Capital Region Land Conservancy is working on funding for a prescribed burn. The Land Management Plan for the area calls for this to become a pine savannah, in which short-leaf pine will be planted into this area.

Community Engagement

Participants of the public meeting in summer of July 2025 offered the following comments on the map:

No water refill station between 4-Mile Creek to city (20 miles)

A lot of benches along VCT are not in the shade, they are in the sun – too hot

No benches on this trail and VCT need a shade structure. Metal bench is too hot

Relocate VCT benches to shade

Water and Shade (Igloo Cooler with ice and bench)

Trees/Bus shelter with canopy for benches/shade

Recommendations for Segment 2: Deep Bottom Road to Varina LandLab

Install pedestrian infrastructure on Deep Bottom Road to ensure trail user safety.

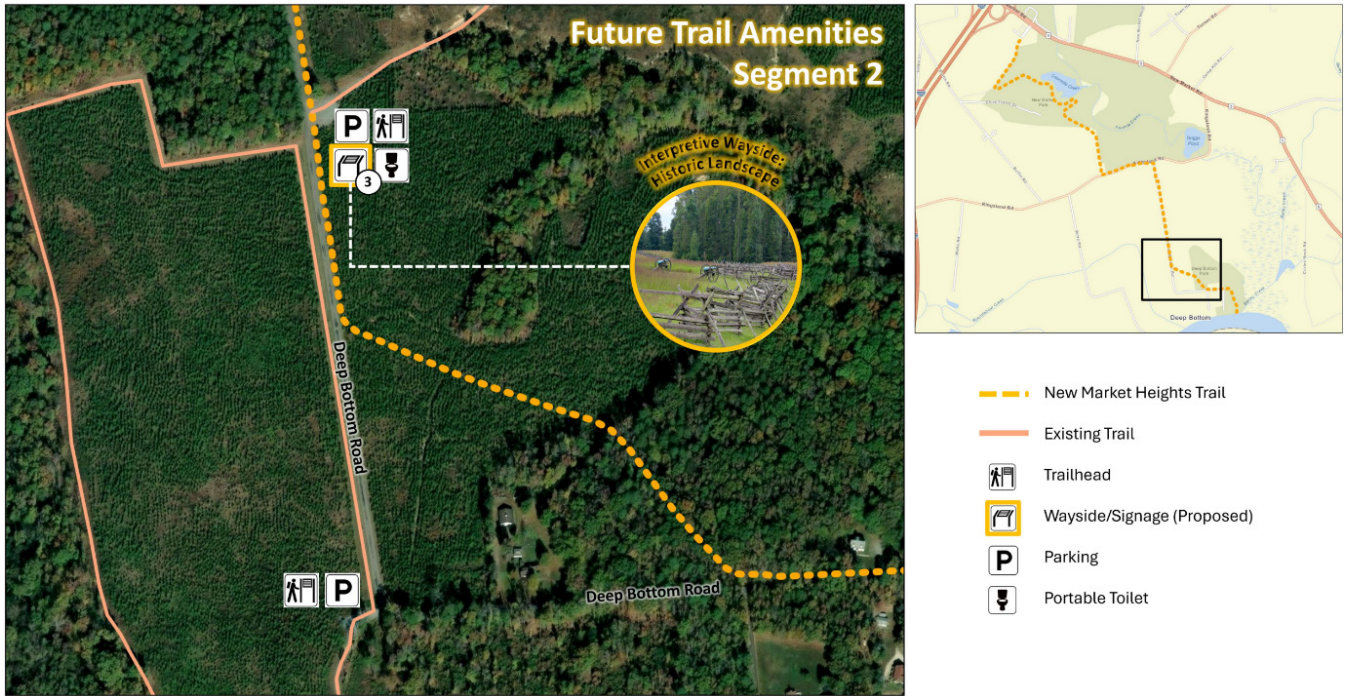
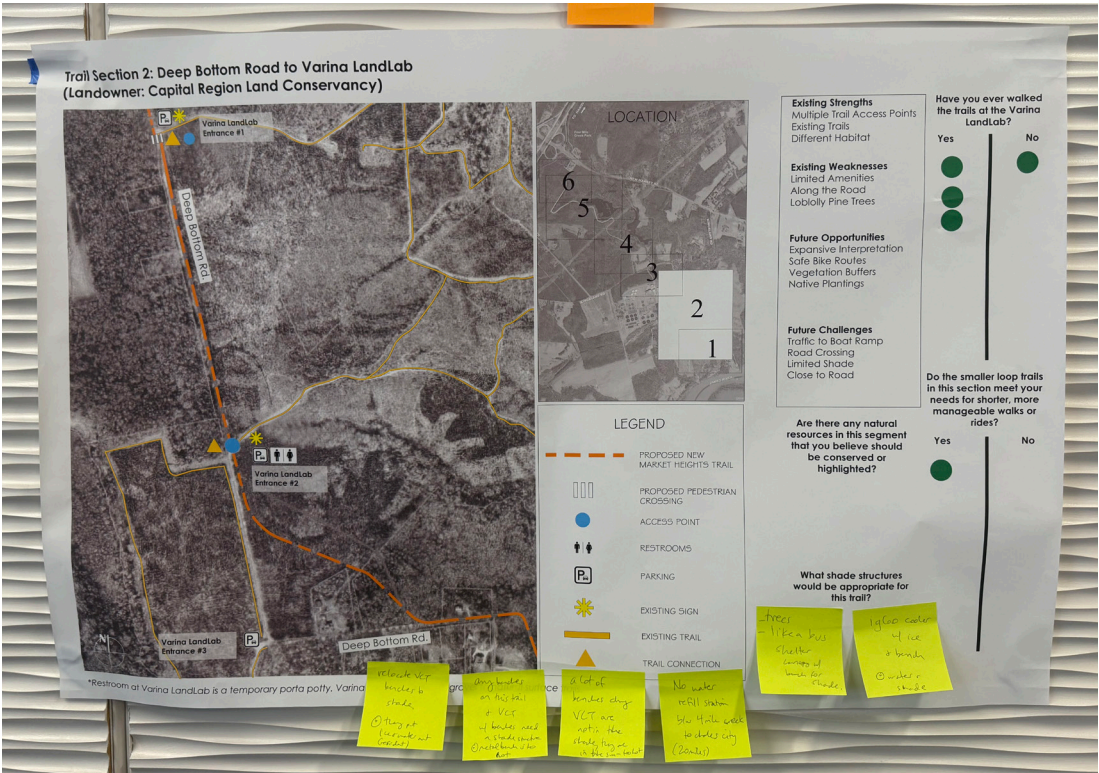
Safe pedestrian crossings are essential. Marked crosswalks, signage, and traffic calming measures (e.g., speed humps) are needed to ensure safe access from parking to the Varina LandLab trails and to the New Market Heights Trail. Additionally, while this section of the New Market Heights Trail is historically appropriate to map the advancement of the Union Army and the USCT into battle, it runs parallel to Deep Bottom Road and raises concerns about safety, noise, and aesthetics. Vegetation buffers and signage can be used to create separation from road traffic and improve the trail experience. Shade structures will also significantly improve the trail experience.

Install restroom facilities at the northernmost Varina LandLab parking lot.

Currently, there is a temporary portable toilet located at Entrance #2 of the Varina LandLab. However, this is not a permanent solution. There is a clear need for an accessible permanent restroom facility with composting toilets, ideally located at the northernmost Varina LandLab parking lot. This could serve trail uses at both New Market Heights Trail and Varina LandLab.

Install clear signage delineating the bike use is prohibited on trails at Varina LandLab and install bike racks in the parking lot for the New Market Heights Trail users.

Bicycles are not permitted on Varina LandLab’s natural surface trails. Trail design and signage must clearly communicate this restriction, provide alternate routes for cyclists, and direct bikers to where bicycle racks are located. There are opportunities for educational signage and community programming that align with the Varina LandLab’s mission while respecting its land use restrictions. The map below shows a concept plan for additional amenities for segment 2 of the New Market Heights Trail. This section goes from the right curve at the bottom of Deep Bottom Road and runs through the woods to intersect with a Varina LandLab trailhead on Deep Bottom Road. In addition to the existing amenities, this concept plan recommends that an interpretive and orientation wayside be added at the Varina LandLab trailhead.

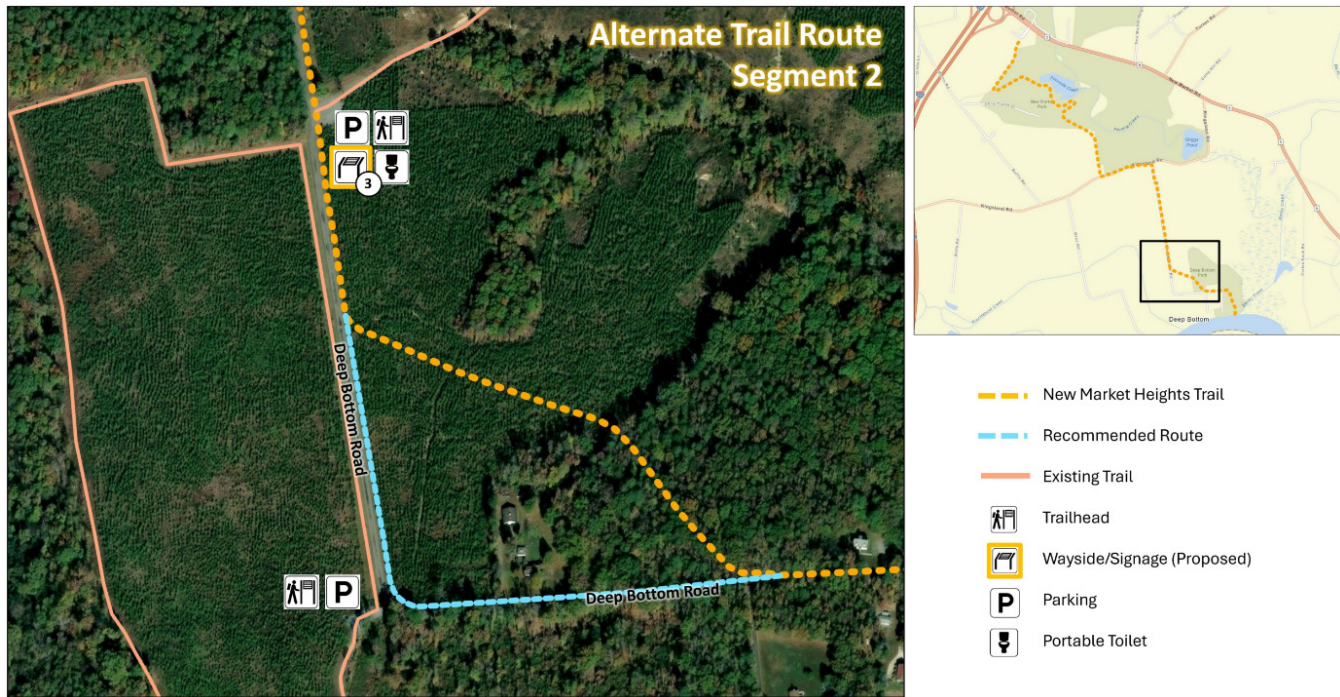


Design the trail in a way that respects the wishes of adjacent private landowners and install signage that clearly marks private land.

Portions of the New Market Heights Trail near the Varina LandLab, especially closer to the James River, are adjacent to privately owned properties. Trail planning and design must respect the privacy and property boundaries of these neighbors, using clear signage, screening, or natural buffers to prevent trespassing and protect wildlife. Maintain good community relations with nearby property owners to reduce conflict.

Explore secondary opportunity for an alternate trail route/access point to the trail.

If the proposed route is not feasible or needs to be completed in a phased approach, see the image below for an alternative suggested route. The map below shows an alternative route (or a phased route) on segment 2 of the New Market Heights Trail. The alternate route (shown in blue) would bring the trail by existing amenities at the Varina LandLab lower parking lot on Deep Bottom Road. This segment of the alternate trail also runs in front of the Henrico Police Division’s Marine Patrol Substation at Deep Bottom Park.



Segment 3: South of Kingsland Road to Henrico Water Reclamation Facility (Landowner: Henrico County)

Segment 3 follows the southern side of Kingsland Road from its intersection with Deep Bottom Road and the crossing of Kingsland Road at the entrance of the American Battlefield Trust’s conserved battlefield property. While the corridor is scenic and lightly developed, fast-moving traffic, a culvert, challenging topography, and a lack of pedestrian infrastructure present challenges to trail safety and comfort. Additionally, large trucks exit the County water treatment facility in this segment, so a safer crossing at their entrance will need to be considered. Lastly, a culvert will need to be added or expanded and some trees will need to be removed to avoid utilities. There will be a crossing near the vicinity of the American Battlefield Trust’s land road access. The existing amenities are at the Varina LandLab trailhead (parking and wayside orientation).



- New Market Heights Trail
- Existing Trail
- Trailhead
- Parking



SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

- Shaded
- Existing Interpretation
- Tree Screen

Existing Weaknesses

- On Road Trail
- Traffic
- Deep Drainage Culvert

Future Opportunities

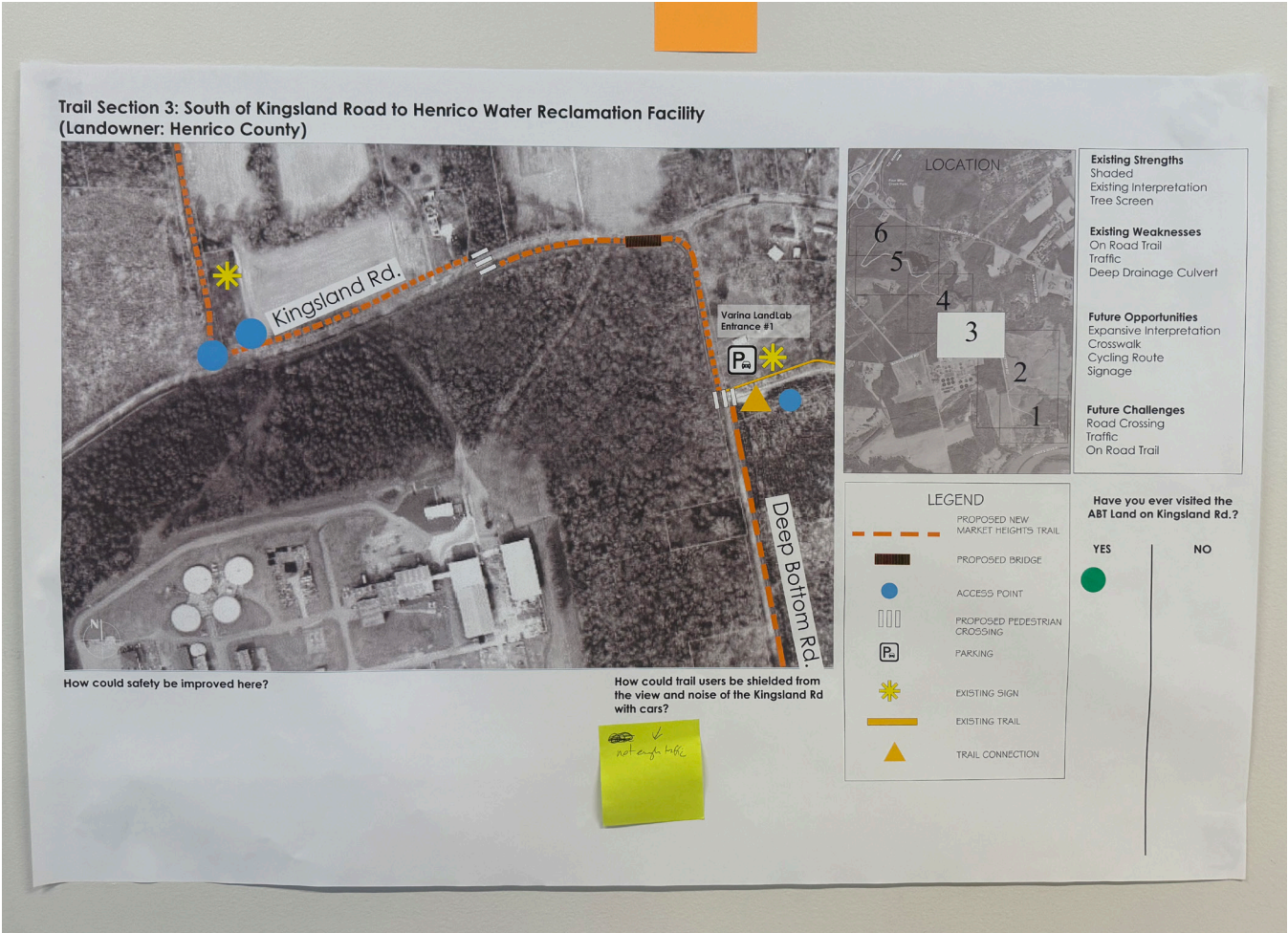
- Expansive Interpretation
- Crosswalk
- Cycling Route
- Signage

Future Threats

- Road Crossing
- Traffic
- On Road Trail

Community Engagement

No comments from the public on this map, except the note that there may not be enough traffic on Kingsland Road for vehicles to threaten trail users and safety measures may not be needed.





SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

Beautiful Mature Trees
Historical and Cultural Resources
Pretty Views of Four Mile Creek

Existing Weaknesses

Old Infrastructure
Thick Brush and Briars
Eroded and Steep Banks to Creek
Close to Neighbors and Existing Utility Lines

Future Opportunities

Powerful Interpretation
Shaded Structures
Connections to Other Trails
Future Spur Trails

Future Threats

Close to Neighbors
Site Lines for Crossings
Moderate Slope Grade

Community Engagement

Participants of the public meeting in the summer of 2025 offered the following comments in response to these questions:

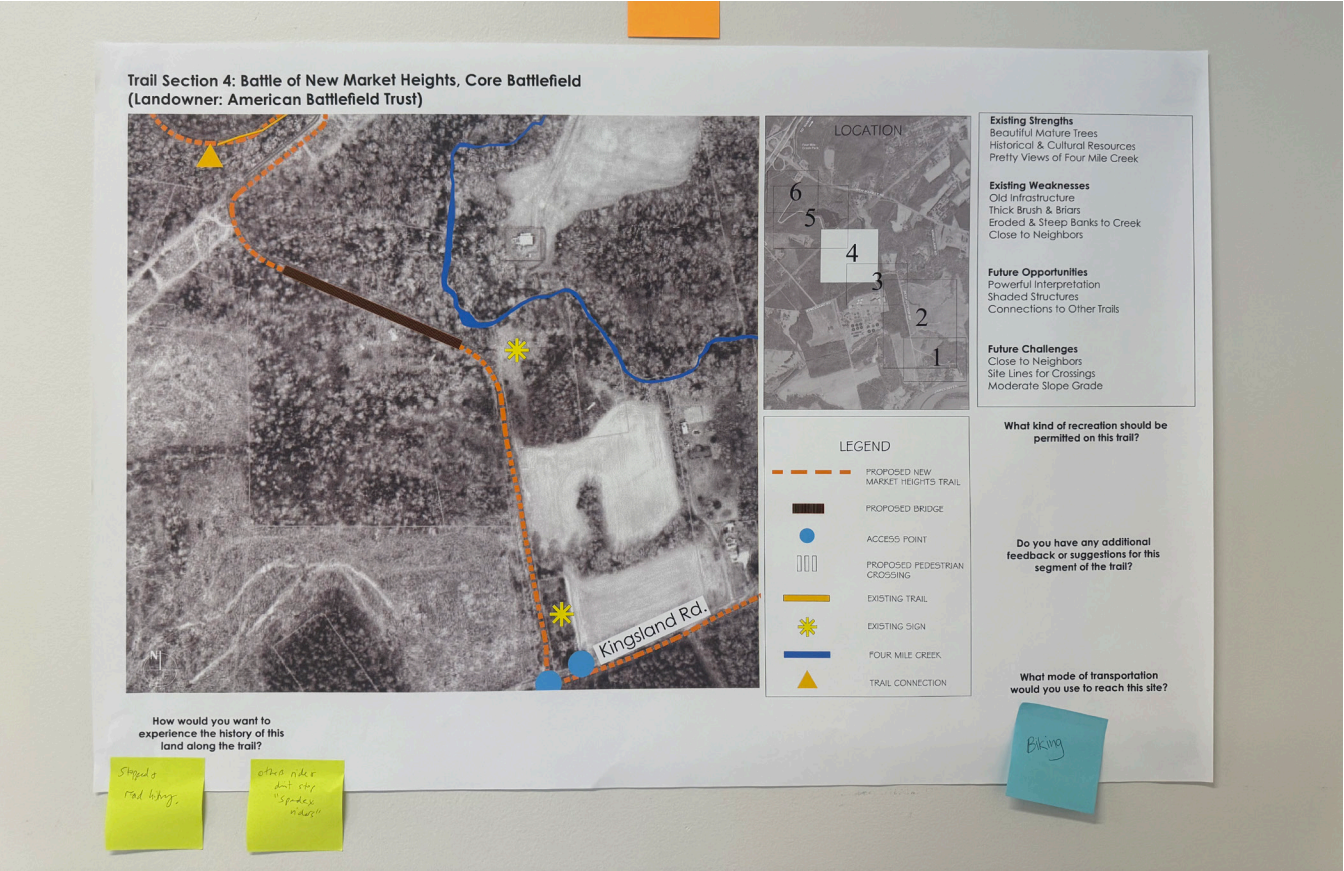
How would you want to experience the history of this land along the trail?

Stop and read the history.

Other riders do not stop ‘spandex riders’

What mode of transportation would you use to reach this site?

Biking

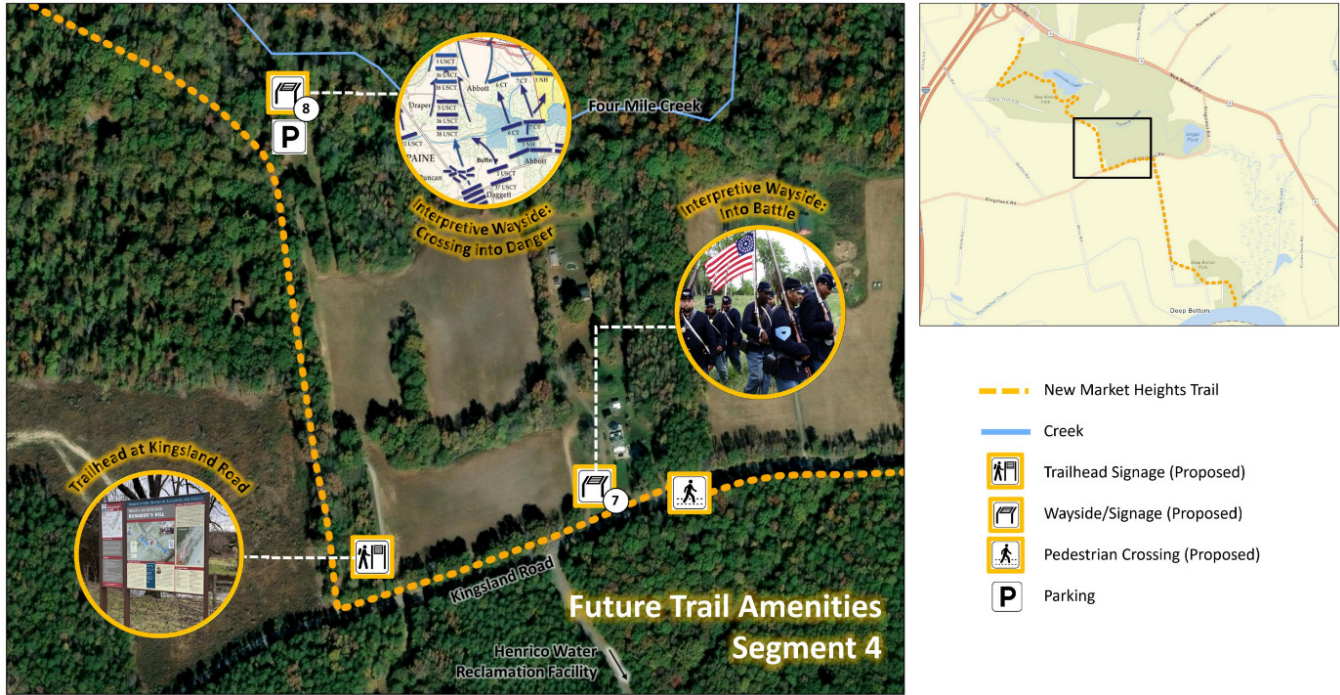


Recommendations for Segment 4: Battle of New Market Heights, Core Battlefield

Enhance existing interpretive signage and create shade amenities.

Enhance the existing American Battlefield Trust’s interpretive signage with additional amenities. In creating a comfortable experience, trail users will be ready and able to engage with the interpretive content. Install shaded rest areas and benches near the historic battlefield. Use QR codes, audio guides, or mobile apps to provide flexible storytelling options for cyclists and other users.

The map below shows an concept design for segment 4 of the New Market Heights Trail with recommendations for interpretive wayside and trailhead installation along this route. A trailhead could be installed at the intersection of the ABT property and Kingsland Road.



Create a trailhead and add signage that directs trail users towards the trail access point.

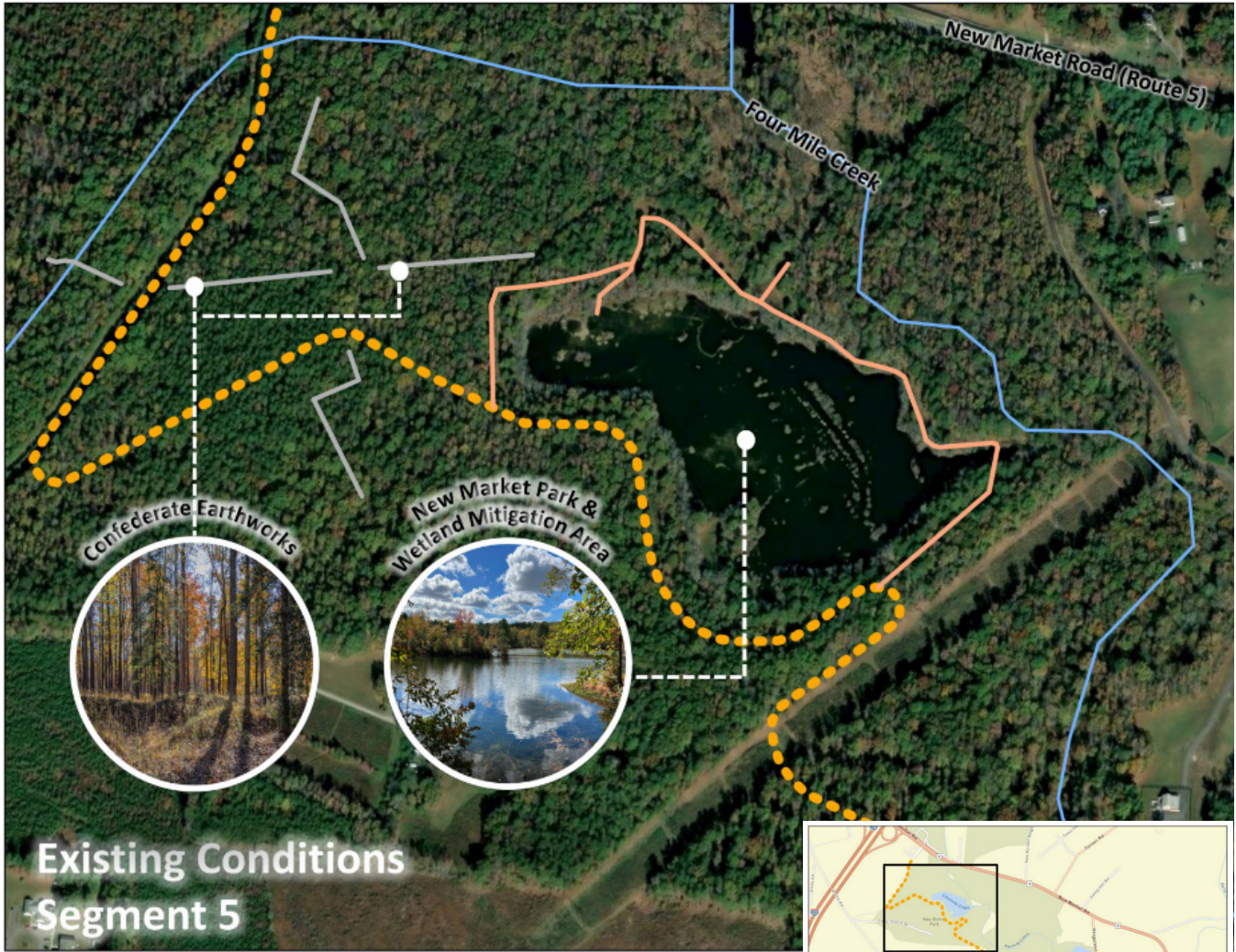
Currently there is no trailhead in this segment although it is a key location to the interpretive history. It could be beneficial to identify a small, low-impact trailhead area for trail users who may be driving to interpretive spots, riding their bikes, or using another mode of transportation besides walking. A small trailhead could include bike racks, wayfinding signage, accessible pathways to the interpretive signage, and a composting restroom.

Install signage that clearly delineates the trail from private property owners.

Clearly mark the American Battlefield Trust-owned house as not open to the public, using respectful and informative signage. Ensure that all trail development aligns with the preservation goals set by American Battlefield Trust and the National Park Service. Delineate property boundaries and encourage trail users to stay on the trail through natural buffers, signage, appropriate fencing (e.g., split rail), or landscaping.

Segment 5: Battle of New Market Heights, Core Battlefield; New Market Park (Landowner: Henrico County)

Segment 5 is a unique and interesting segment, containing a pond, historic earth works, and the potential for a small loop trail within the New Market Park’s trail system. There is already an established nature trail around the pond. The segment can be developed as a natural and historic destination within the trail system, with a focus on USCT interpretation, nature, and resource protection. Enhancements should support inclusive design use while preserving the area’s ecological and cultural character.



The map above shows the existing conditions for segment 5 of the New Market Heights Trail. This segment will run through the New Market Heights Battlefield, with a loop around the Wetland Mitigation Area in New Market Park, continuing through the woods. This section has portions of existing trail around the Wetland Mitigation area, with few existing amenities otherwise.





SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

Wildlife Viewing
Powerful History and Resources
Beautiful Views

Existing Weaknesses

Not ADA Accessible
Noise from Road
Lacking Amenities

Future Opportunities

Resting Places
Water Access
Expanded Interpretation
Expanded ADA Access

Future Threats

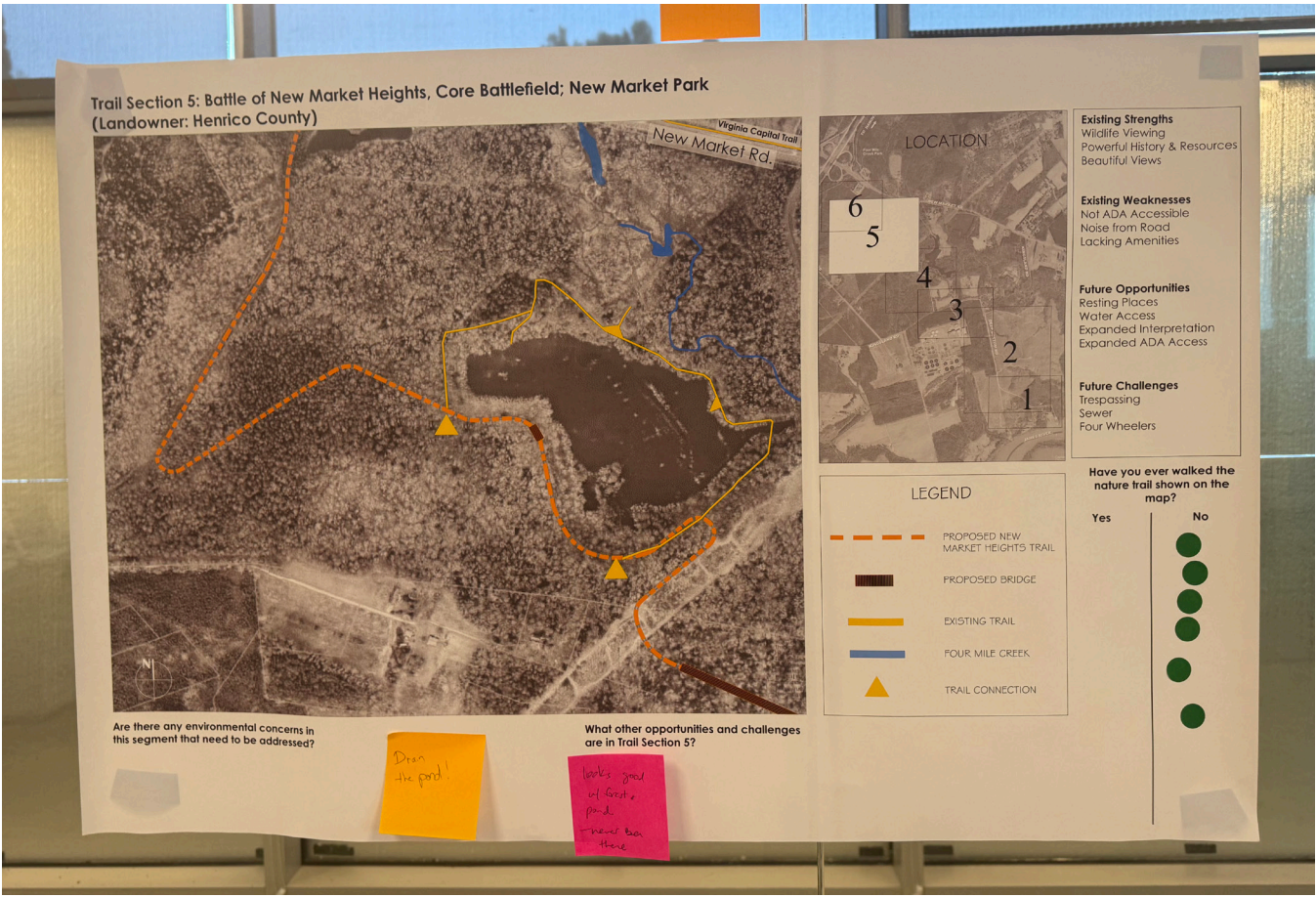
Trespassing
Sewer
Four Wheelers

Community Engagement

Participants in the public engagement meeting showed that they had not walked the existing nature trail around the pond and offered the following comments:

Drain the pond!

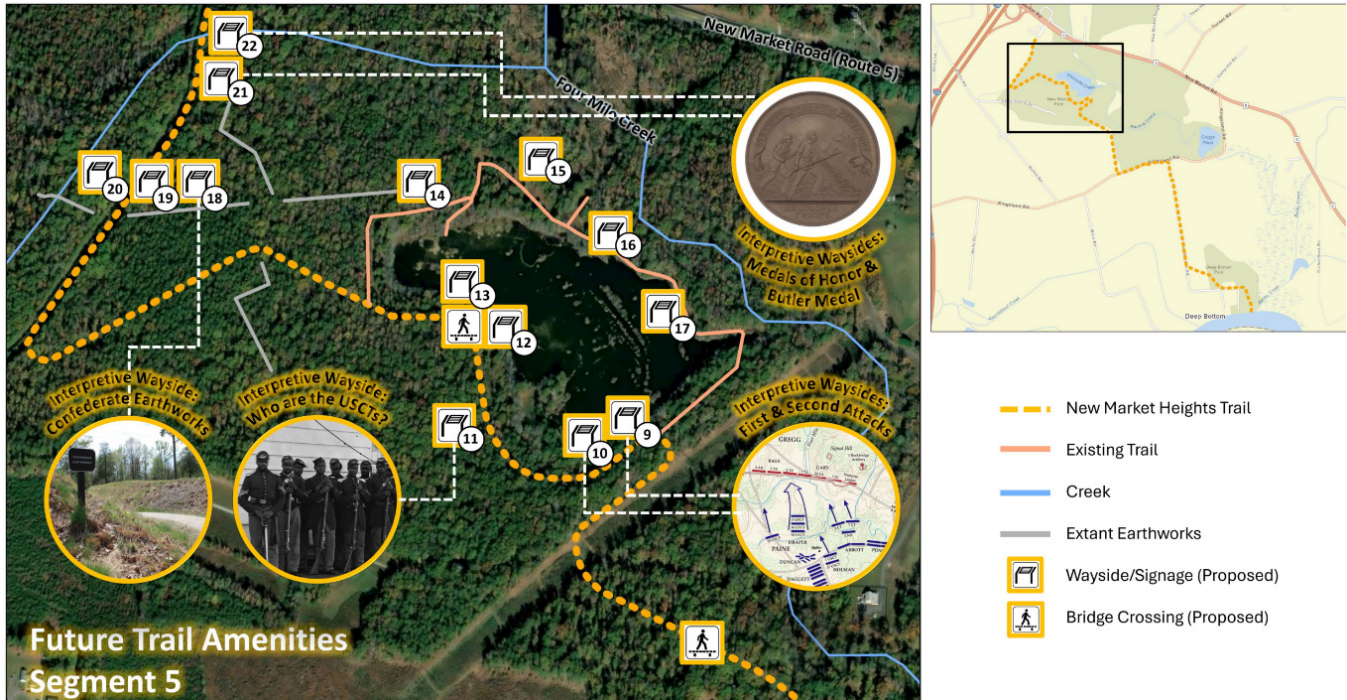
Looks good with forest and pond. Never been there.



Recommendations for Segment 5: Battle of New Market Heights, Core Battlefield; New Market Park

Install interpretive signage of the historical context of the New Market Heights campaign, the importance of stewardship and conservation, and on the ecology of the landscape.

Rest areas, benches, and shade structures could be installed near the interpretive signage. In the future, a low-impact water access feature could be explored, such as a wildlife viewing platform or pond overlook. This should be a contemplative area.

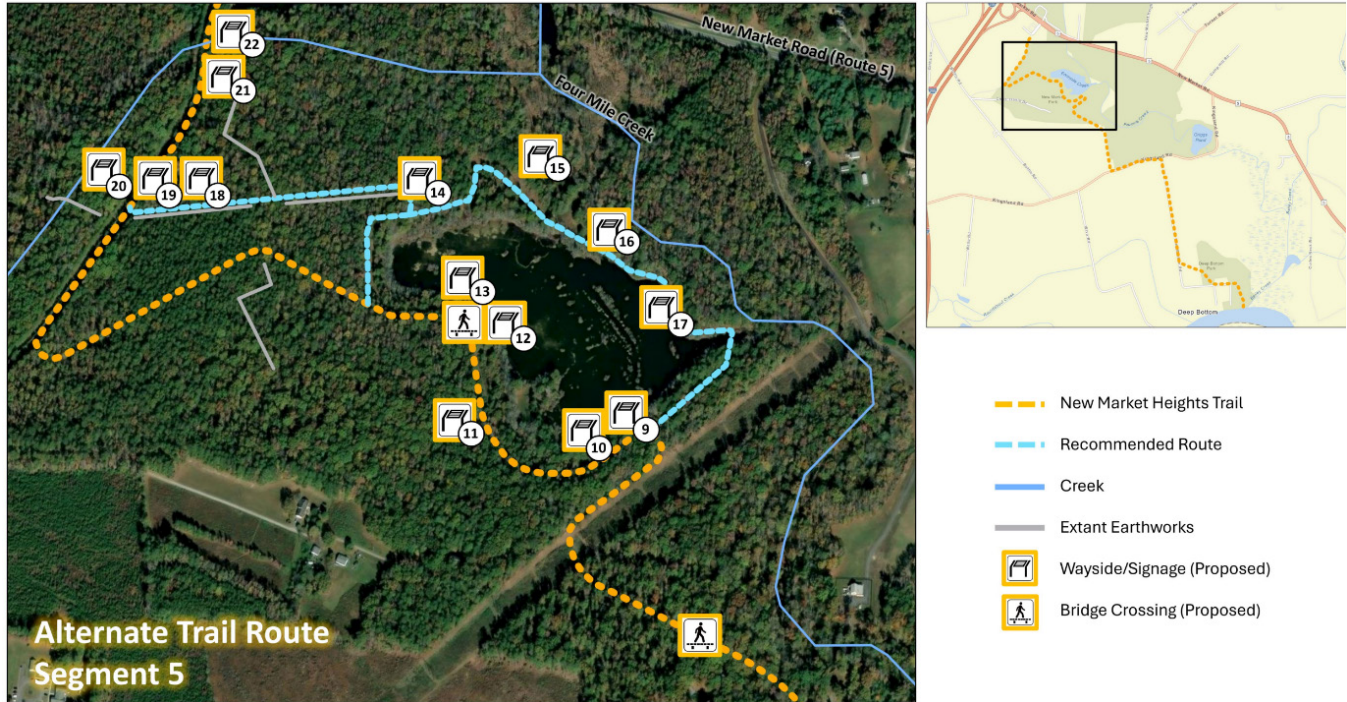


The map above shows a concept design for segment 5 of the New Market Heights Trail with recommendations for interpretive wayside and trailhead installation along this route. This is where most of the interpretive signage will live. This segment will run through the New Market Heights Battlefield, with a loop around the Pond, continue through the woods, and then exit to the Dairy Queen along New Market Road. There may be up to fourteen interpretive waysides installed in this segment. The initial two waysides, along the southwest side of the pond, could discuss the first and second attacks of the Battle of New Market Heights. The next three will be installed along the western edge of the pond, discussing the background, role, and importance of the USCTs in the Battle of New Market Heights. There is also the opportunity to install four more interpretive waysides on the east side of the pond that can discuss the natural and ecological components of the area. There is potential for three more interpretive waysides to be installed at the northern terminus of this portion of the route discussing the Confederate Earthworks property that is adjacent to the trail route. At the northern end of the trail, two more waysides can be installed discussing the Medals of Honor given to those who participated in the Battle of New Market Heights.

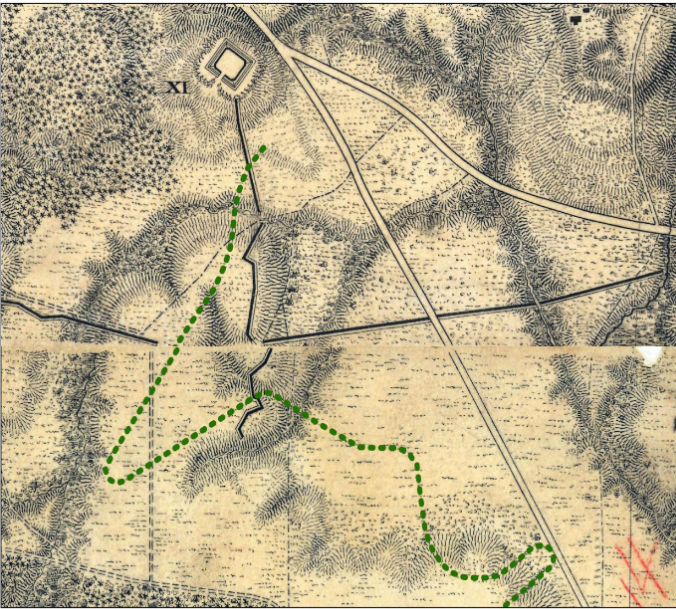
Upgrade the existing trail around the wetland mitigation area to meet ADA requirements.

Upgrade any existing trails around the pond to meet universal design and ADA standards. Add boardwalks or bridges where needed to navigate wet or uneven terrain near the pond. In the past, this area flooded, so it is important to consider the height of the boardwalk for long term sustainability. Minimize disturbance to the existing natural and cultural resources during the building and improvements of the trails. Explore an area that could include bike racks, wayfinding signage, and potentially low-impact restrooms. Additionally, it is important to consider the sewer infrastructure during the trail development process.

Explore the opportunity for an alternative route that would further interpret historic earthworks and core battlefield areas.



There is an opportunity for an alternative route that would offer the opportunity to further interpret historic earthworks and core battlefield areas. See the historic map to the right to view the earthworks and current trail alignment. Additionally, this proposed realignment could assist in a phased approach of trail development of the segment. The alternative route in blue could be considered an additional loop option as it would run parallel and adjacent to a portion of intact earthworks. Of note, this may raise additional National Historic Preservation Act compliance concerns, depending on the scope and recommendations of the previous Phase I survey.

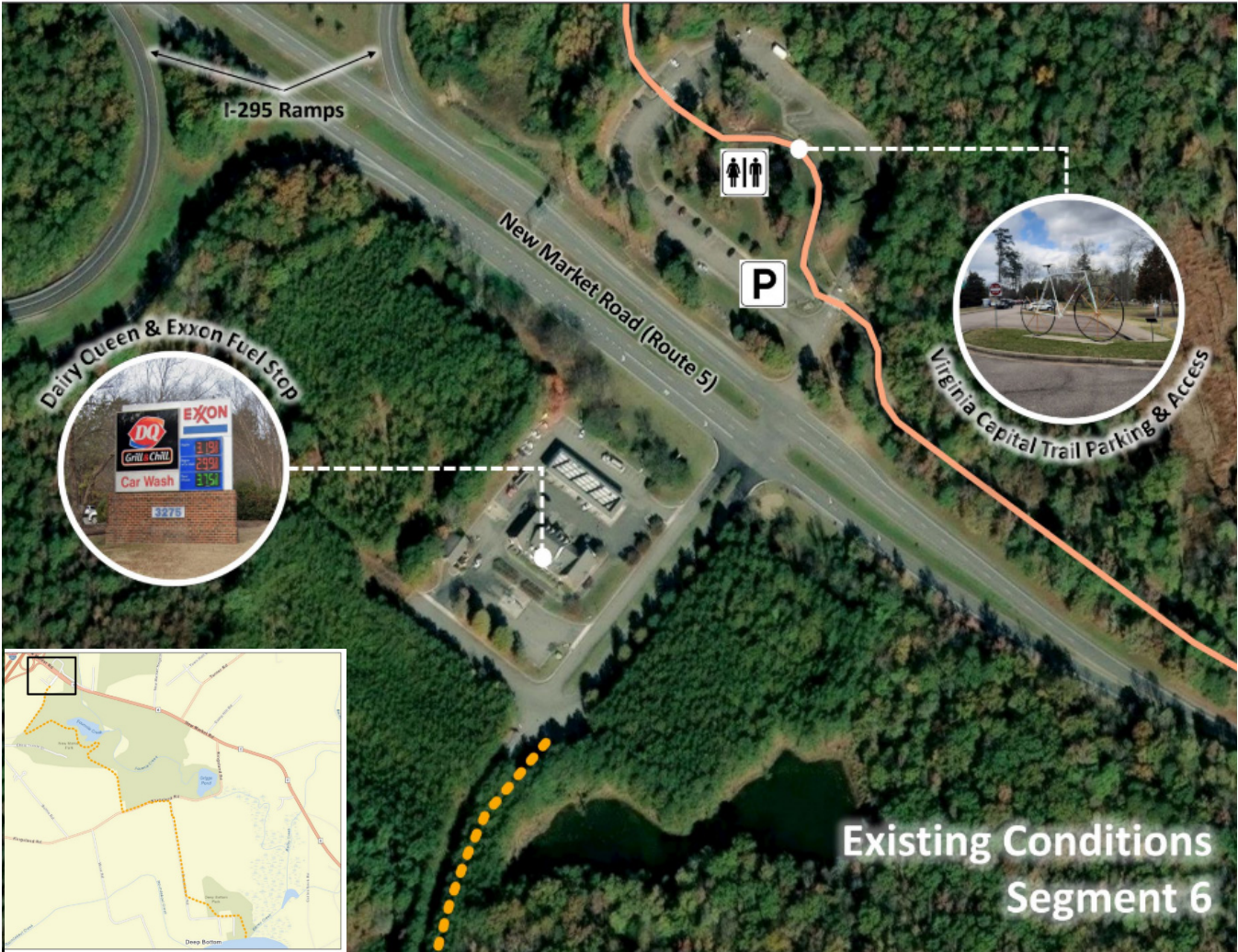


National Archives. 1967 Michler Map showing earthworks in vicinity of proposed trail route

Segment 6: New Market Heights Park and Trailhead to Route 5/New Market Road (Landowner: Henrico County & Private)

Segment 6 is a highly visible and strategically important access point for the New Market Heights Trail. Located near the intersection of Route 5 (New Market Road) and Four Mile Creek Park, this area connects the trail to the Virginia Capital Trail, a major regional greenway, and serves as a potential gateway for heritage tourism, local recreation, and interpretive storytelling. The area benefits from existing infrastructure at Four Mile Creek Park. However, the segment faces several challenges, including road noise, traffic congestion, and safety concerns related to crossing Route 5.

There is currently no safe formal pedestrian/bike crossing of Route 5 to connect the west side of the trail to the east side of Four Mile Creek, limiting safe access and continuity. The area also lacks interpretive signage, resting areas, and native landscaping that could enhance the trail experience. Despite these challenges, Segment 6 presents a major opportunity to expand the trail’s audience, introduce a new trailhead, and potentially establish a memorial honoring the USCTs.



The map above shows the existing conditions for segment 6 of the New Market Heights Trail. This section shows the northern terminus of the trail at the Dairy Queen and Exxon Fuel Stop. The terminus is directly across the street from a Virginia Capital Trail access point and parking lot, which has a restroom facility and parking access.



SWOT Analysis

Existing Strengths

Highly Visible Access Point
Connections to Four Mile Creek Park and
Virginal Capital Trail (Amenities – Bathroom
and Parking)

Existing Weaknesses

No Pedestrian Crossing of Route 5
Invasive Bamboo
Road Noise
Next to Busy Road and Stop

Future Opportunities

Potential for a Memorial for USCTs
Trail Connection to Existing Infrastructure
Potential for New Trailhead
Wider Audience

Future Threats

Noise
High Parking Area
Trash Dumping

Community Engagement

Participants of the public meeting in summer of July
2025 offered the following comments:

Visible access and DQ (Can’t make the left turn.)

Visibility is hard.

Safety at DQ.

Make crossing easier to east side of 4 Mile Creek
(Safety Issue)

Concerned about safety at Rt. 5. Suggestion to move
to different area because of merging/access to DQ.

Question about Visitor Center at Four Mile Creek Park

Start Trail here - Love native plants and shade for dog

Connect Darbytown to Rt. 5/VA Capital Trail

Location for USCT Monument? Trail wider is good, VA
Capital Trail is too narrow.

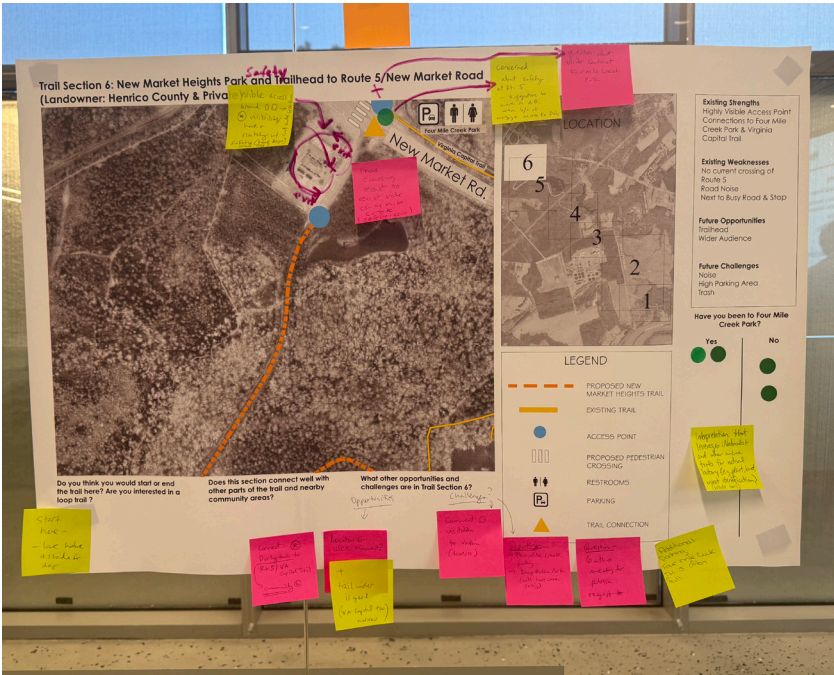
Connect visitation to Varina (Tourist)

Parking...Four Mile Creek Parking, Deep Bottom Park
(Will have more parking)

Recommendations for Segment 6: New Market Heights Park and Trailhead to
Route 5/New Market Road

Ensure safe crossing at Route 5 by installing pedestrian safety infrastructure.

Design and install a high-visibility pedestrian and bicycle crossing at Route 5 with flashing beacons or pedestrian-activated signals, median refuge islands or raised crosswalks, and advance warning signage for drivers. If the concerns of traffic flow at the Dairy Queen entrance remain in the future, evaluate an alternative crossing location. Examine the National Park Service’s Active Transportation Guidebook for further ideas on the Route 5 crossing. This connection is vital to connecting New Market Heights Trail to the Virginia Capital Trail. If this is not possible, explore the recommendation below.



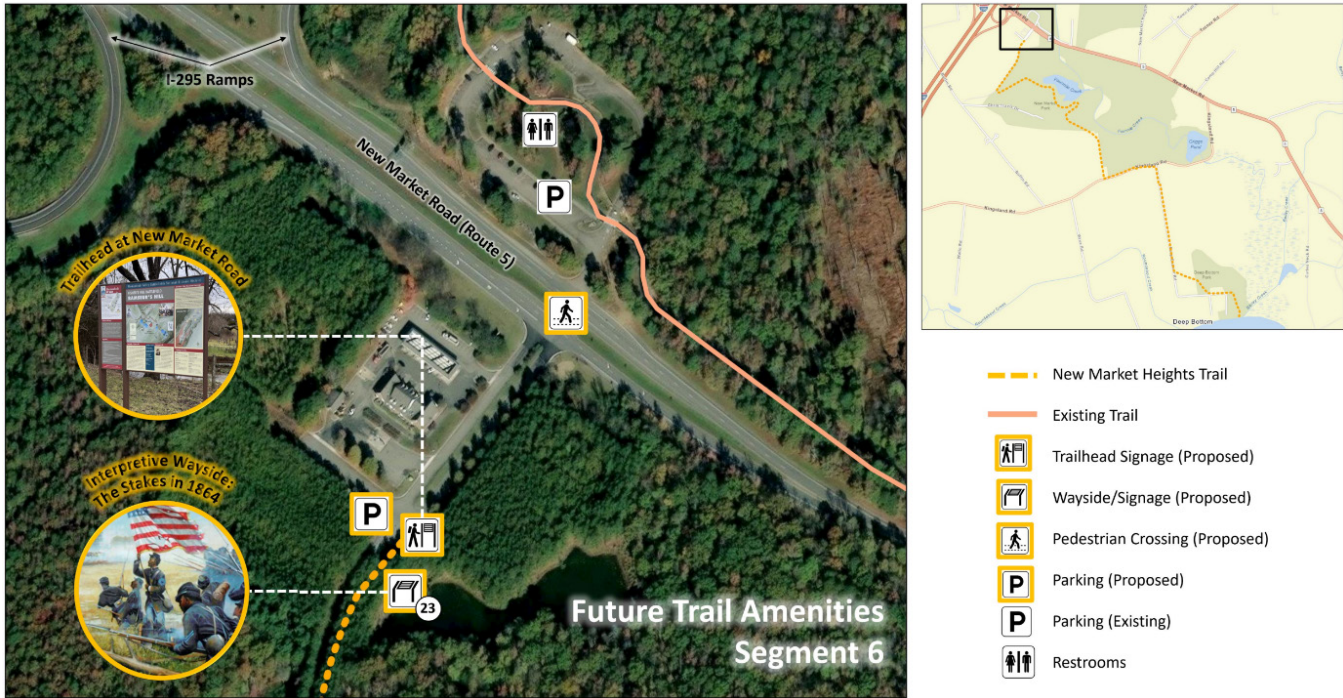
Question – 6 month meeting for
public request?

Additional Parking...Four Mile Creek
TH [trail head] is often full

Interpretation that leverages
iNaturalist and other online tools
for native history (e.g., plant, bird,
insect identification) whole trail.

Investigate the opportunity for a new trailhead, amenities, and a potential memorial on the southern side of Route 5.

Explore the creation of a New Market Heights Trail trailhead on the southern side of Route 5 and include a memorial for the U.S. Colored Troops given its visibility and symbolic importance as a trail gateway. A trailhead may include: accessible parking, tourist bus pull-ins, bike racks, restrooms, shaded seating areas, water and recycling bins, and interpretive signage. Landscaping buffers could be used to reduce the road noise and improve the aesthetic experience near Route 5. This may need to be tackled in a phased approach, with an interpretive kiosk and orientation signage on the other side of Route 5 at Four Mile Creek Park.



The map above shows a concept design for segment 6 of the New Market Heights Trail with recommendations for interpretive wayside and trailhead installation along this route. This route runs along the utility route until it reaches the northern terminus behind the Dairy Queen. There could be an interpretive wayside installed at the northern terminus of the trail to discuss the historical significance of the Battle of New Market Heights. This wayside will be accompanied by a trailhead and a proposed parking lot. There is also a proposed pedestrian crossing across Route 5 which would connect the New Market Heights Trail to the Virginia Capital Trail.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Following completion of the draft New Market Heights Trail Concept Plan, Henrico County and its project partners initiated a final review and refinement process to ensure the plan accurately reflects the collective vision, priorities, and feedback received throughout the planning effort. The draft plan was presented to the Conserved Varina Partners and other project stakeholders for review and comment. Their feedback guided revisions that strengthened the plan’s alignment with County goals, environmental stewardship principles, and community expectations.

Once revisions are completed, the final New Market Heights Trail Concept Plan will be presented to the Henrico County Board of Supervisors. Adoption of the plan will signify the County’s commitment to advancing the project from concept to implementation and will provide a guiding framework for future design, funding, and construction activities.

While the review and adoption process is underway, Henrico County will continue to actively pursue funding opportunities for the trail’s implementation. The County will seek support from local, state, and federal programs, as well as potential partnerships with nonprofit organizations and private entities. These efforts will focus on securing resources necessary to advance engineering design, permitting, and construction.

Additionally, Henrico County’s Department of Public Works will continue to advance the preliminary engineering designs for the New Market Heights Trail. The County anticipates preliminary designs to be completed in the first quarter of 2026. The next stages of design will continue throughout 2026 and plans may be advanced for specific phases as funding for construction becomes available.

The County’s goal is to begin construction on the first phases of the New Market Heights Trail in 2026. Early implementation efforts will focus on sections within County-owned properties along segments that present minimal complexities for construction. These shorter sections will be the foundation for future phases of the trail. Continued coordination among project partners, stakeholders, and the public will remain central to ensure the New Market Heights Trail becomes a meaningful, safe, and celebrated community asset.

Appendices

A. Implementation70

B. Historic Preservation.....72

C. National Park Service Legislative Boundary.....73

D. Environmental Stewardship and The Chesapeake Bay.....74

E. Grants.....75

F. Logo Development78

G. Additional Photo Inventory.....79

H. Links and Additional Resources.....82

Appendix A: Implementation

New Market Heights Trail – Construction Phasing Plan
The New Market Heights Trail will be implemented through a multi-phase construction approach that aligns project readiness, **permitting complexity, funding availability, and land ownership considerations**. Phasing allows Henrico County to advance early trail segments where conditions are favorable, while strategically positioning later segments for external grant funding and more extensive engineering and environmental review.

Phase 1 – New Market Park
Purpose: Early implementation and system connectivity
Property Ownership: Henrico County
Funding: Local funding
Permitting/Engineering Complexity: Low
Status: Near-term implementation

Phase 1 will focus on constructing trail segments within New Market Park on County-owned property that require minimal permitting and engineering. The County currently has an active wetland mitigation project underway on this parcel, which includes the construction of unimproved trail alignments throughout the property.

This phase will construct paved and/or gravel trail connections that link the proposed Segment 2 alignment of the New Market Heights Trail to the unimproved trails being delivered through the wetland mitigation project. This approach leverages ongoing County investment, minimizes environmental impacts, and provides early public access to functional trail connections while advancing the overall trail network.

Phase 2 – New Market Park to Kingsland Road
Purpose: Network expansion with external funding support
Property Ownership: American Battlefield Trust
Funding: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – US DOT / VDOT (pending)
Grant Award Decision: Expected Q2 2026
Permitting/Engineering Complexity: Moderate to High

Phase 2 will extend the trail from the New Market Park property eastward to Kingsland Road, traversing land currently owned by the American Battlefield Trust. This segment is anticipated to require more extensive coordination, engineering analysis, and permitting due to environmental considerations and third-party property ownership.

Henrico County has applied for Transportation Alternatives Program funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Transportation to support construction of this segment. Advancement of Phase 2 is contingent upon grant award, with funding decisions expected in the second quarter of 2026.

Phase 3 – Kingsland Road to Deep Bottom Park

Purpose: Major corridor completion and regional connectivity
Property Ownership: Henrico County and Capital Region Land Conservancy
Funding: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – pending
Permitting/Engineering Complexity: High

Phase 3 will construct the trail segment extending from Kingsland Road to Deep Bottom Park, crossing both County-owned land and property owned by the Capital Region Land Conservancy. This phase is expected to involve the most significant engineering, environmental permitting, and inter-agency coordination of the project due to terrain, environmental features, and land ownership transitions.

Henrico County has also applied for Transportation Alternatives Program funding to support this phase. Final design and construction will proceed subject to funding availability and completion of required permitting and environmental approvals.

Phase 4 – Deep Bottom Park (Bond-Funded Segment)

Purpose: Final segment completion within park system
Property Ownership: Henrico County
Funding: 2022 Bond Referendum
Engineering Start: 2026
Construction Funding Available: FY 2029

Phase 4 will complete the remaining trail segment within Deep Bottom Park. This work is fully funded through Henrico County’s 2022 bond referendum. Engineering for this segment is anticipated to begin in 2026, with construction funding programmed and available in Fiscal Year 2029.

This final phase will complete the New Market Heights Trail corridor and provide a continuous, high-quality shared-use path connecting New Market Park, surrounding conservation lands, and Deep Bottom Park.

Appendix B: Historic Preservation

Previous resource investigations have occurred in areas that will integrate the proposed New Market Heights Trail. In 2023, a Phase I cultural resources investigation conducted at New Market Park provided a preliminary assessment of resources that would be impacted by the development of a mitigation bank. This report identified several resources as eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Apart from ±40 acres disturbed by 20th-century gravel mining and Henrico County water treatment infrastructure, portions of historic battlefields that overlap with the New Market Park property are generally well preserved and appear to retain much of their rural and historic character and integrity as a cultural landscape. In concurrence with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), it was recommended that further development of portions of the battlefields within the mitigation bank project area may constitute a direct adverse effect on historic resources and that mitigation of these adverse effects may be required.

The protection of any cultural resources that might exist within or near the trail project areas is a central concern for all involved with the design, development, and construction of the trail. The County of Henrico, NPS, and project partners should consider previous resource investigations and recommendations from historic preservation specialists when developing and finalizing the design of the New Market Heights Trail.

Typically, NEPA and Section 106 reviews are handled by the federal agency whose land or funding is involved in the project. Non-federal partners, such as counties or non-profit organizations, would not be expected to perform that work themselves, but they do need to consult with the affected federal agencies early in the planning stages to ensure that any need for environmental review is addressed. Partners also should be aware that environmental reviews can increase project costs and lengthen project timelines. These factors must be taken into consideration when scheduling and developing the project construction budget.

Even if the project is not a federal undertaking, the NPS encourages partners to ensure that the selected trail route and subsequent project areas have been professionally surveyed for archeological and historical remains; that any identified properties are protected during construction; and that the concerns of Native American tribes are appropriately solicited and addressed, particularly regarding cultural and natural resources.

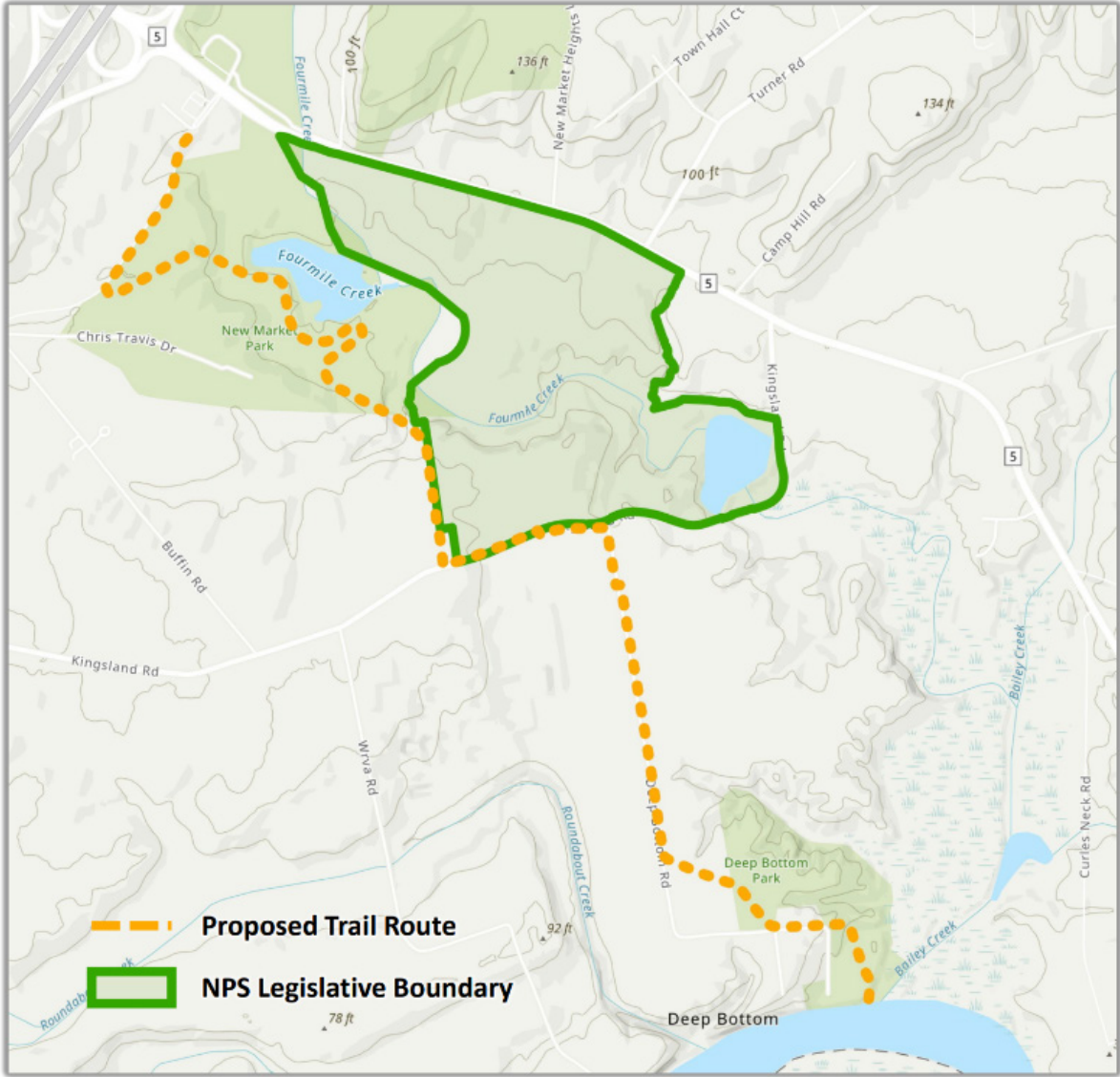
Individual states often have their own cultural and environmental compliance requirements, outside of NEPA and Section 106. Project proponents should consult early with the state’s historic preservation division, historical societies, or other equivalent offices to ensure compliance with state laws. In Virginia, projects needing technical assistance or requiring consultation and review with the state historic preservation office (SHPO) should coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR): <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/>.

Historic and cultural resource work that has been completed for this project include:

- Summary of Historic Resources Along Trail Route
- Full Findings from Phase I Cultural Resource Survey
- Ongoing Cultural Resource Assessments and Protections
- Previous Damage and Disturbances from Wetland Mitigation Pond
- Earthwork Protection Strategy

Appendix C: National Park Service Legislative Boundary

There are elements of the trail within the Congressionally designated, expanded boundary of Richmond National Battlefield Park. Richmond National Battlefield Park, a unit of the National Park Service (NPS), was established in 1936 through Congressional legislation. The Richmond National Battlefield Park Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 2373-2376) added the New Market Heights Battlefield, along with many other Civil War sites, to the park’s authorized boundary and amended the park’s maximum boundary in and around the City of Richmond to 7,307 acres. Additionally, the 2000 legislation specified that the park establish a monument or memorial to honor the Medal of Honor recipients from the United States Colored Troops who fought in the Battle of New Market Heights. As of 2025, the park has grown extensively from the 764 acres that existed in 1996, when the last General Management Plan was approved, to over 4,500 acres spread over three counties. The NPS does not currently own any of the land in the New Market Heights Battlefield. The park preserves, protects, interprets, and commemorates Richmond Civil War battlefield landscapes, struggles for the capital of the Confederacy associated with the 1862 Seven Days’ Battles, the 1864 Overland Campaign, and the 1864–65 Richmond and Petersburg Campaigns, including the American military, social, and political history as exemplified by the New Market Heights Battlefield.

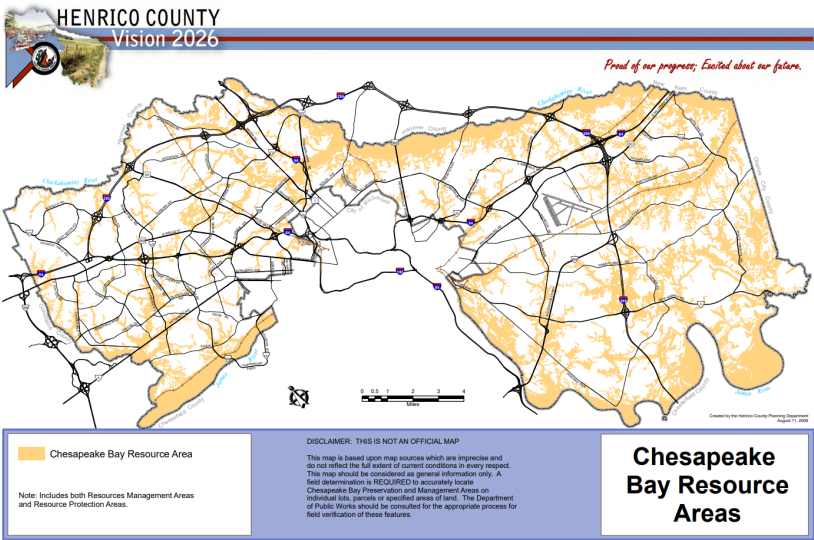


Appendix D: Environmental Stewardship and The Chesapeake Bay

One of the main trailheads of the New Market Heights Trail sits directly on the James River. The trail is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Henrico County is dedicated to having the trail be sustainable, while protecting valuable ecological resources. The trail design will incorporate best practices in stormwater management, habitat conservation, and climate resilience.

Efforts to halt the degradation of the Chesapeake Bay, one of the most ecologically and economically important estuaries in the United States, started as early as 1973. Following the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, Senator Charles “Mac” Mathias undertook a five-day boat trip on the Chesapeake on which he observed declining oyster, crab, and fish harvests. His advocacy led to a congressionally mandated EPA study on the Chesapeake Bay, from 1976 to 1982, which identified excess nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment from agricultural and urban runoff as the primary causes of the degradation of sea fauna populations in the bay. The findings in this report led to the establishment of the Chesapeake Bay Program as the main body tasked with restoring the bay. Following this report, the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement, a simple one-page pledge, was signed by the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the EPA, and the Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission. This agreement was centered around the recognized need for cooperation to begin reducing pollution and degradation of the Bay. A follow-up agreement by these parties in 1987 established specific numeric pollution reduction goals, aimed at reducing nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the bay. The Virginia Chesapeake Preservation Act, which was passed in 1987, expanded on these early efforts by setting more defined goals and objectives. The purpose of this law was to regulate the development of lands considered to be important to the protection of water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Henrico County’s Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program was developed out of this legislation and is reviewed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for compliance with the Act. The County’s program focuses primarily on the management of lands known as Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas. With proper management, these lands offer significant economic benefits for the Commonwealth of Virginia by maintaining water quality and preventing pollution. The County of Henrico is committed to protecting the quality of the Bay and its tributaries for its citizens, present and future. (Wetlands and Watersheds - Henrico County, Virginia)



Appendix E: Grants

The development of the New Market Heights Trail presents a variety of grant opportunities from state, local, private foundations, and federal sources. Grants and financial resources fluctuate annually, so it is important to assess their availability and timelines prior to planning for and developing applications. The following outdoor recreation grants represent just a few of the grant programs that have typically been available year after year:

Virginia Outdoors Plan

Section 4 of the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan includes the following three resource pages:

Section 4.1 - Federal and State Grants: Looking for a grant program? Learn more about the Land and Conservation Fund and other grant programs that support the topics covered in the Virginia Outdoors Plan. [\(Link: Section 4.1 - Federal and State Grants | Virginia Outdoors Plan\)](#)

Section 4.2 - Grant Planning for Success: An overview of common grant purposes and best practices to improve eligibility. [\(Link: Section 4.2 - Grant Planning for Success | Virginia Outdoors Plan\)](#)

Section 4.3 - Navigating Federal and State Requirements: An assistance tool for LWCF applications. [\(Link: Section 4.3 - Navigating Federal and State Requirements | Virginia Outdoors Plan\)](#)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 established a federal reimbursement program for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is administered in Virginia by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS). The program represents a federal, state, and local partnership. A key feature of the program is that all LWCF-assisted areas must be maintained and opened, in perpetuity, as public outdoor recreation areas. This requirement ensures their use for future generations.

The LWCF is a 50-50% matching reimbursement program. The grant recipient must be able to fund 100% of the project while seeking periodic reimbursements.

[\(Link: Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program\)](#)

Trail Access Grants Program

The Trail Access Grants Program is a 100% reimbursement program for trail projects that increase access to trail opportunities for people with disabilities. Funding for the program comes from Virginia taxpayer donations of all or portions of their income tax returns to the Open Space Conservation and Recreation Fund. Future grant rounds are pending accumulation of contributions to the fund. At current accumulation rates, the next grant round is not anticipated until 2027 or later.

[\(Link: Trail Access Grants Program\)](#)

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

Established in 2021, this Department of Transportation grant program is a 100% funding program intended to improve or create facilities that provide access, are adjacent to, or located within Federal lands with a specific focus on supplementing state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities. This program is intended to focus on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. The grant application window opens every 3 years, with the next open window likely being in fiscal year 2029.

[\(Link: Virginia Federal Lands Access Program\)](#)

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – Virginia Department of Transportation

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed in 2021, this federal reimbursement program helps local communities and sponsors fund community-based projects that expand non-motorized travel and improve the cultural, historical and environmental aspects of alternative transportation infrastructure. This can include trails, conversion of railroads for trail, construction of turnout and viewing areas, environmental mitigation activities, and more. It is a federal 80-20 matching reimbursement program administered by VDOT on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration.

Funding may be awarded to local governments, a regional transportation authority, a transit agency, a natural resource, a public land agency, a school district, a tribal government, a metropolitan planning organization, or any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails.

The program currently accepts applications for transportation alternative projects in odd-year grant rounds (2023, 2025, etc.). Beginning in the FY27-28 cycle, all projects submitted for TAP funding are required to be included in the applicant’s Capital Improvement Program.

[\(Link: Transportation Alternatives Program | Virginia Department of Transportation\)](#)

Virginia Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal 80-20 matching reimbursement program for building and rehabilitating trails and trail-related facilities. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration and funded through 2026 by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The program mandates allocations be split among non-motorized, diversified and motorized trail categories.

Funding may be awarded to city, county, town, tribal or other government entities. Registered nonprofit organizations partnered with a government body are also eligible. The Recreational Trails Program and Virginia Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee steer project selections after a competitive call for applications. The program currently accepts applications for new trail construction in even-year grant rounds (2022, 2024, etc.). Existing trail maintenance and amenity project applications are accepted every grant round but are most competitive in odd-year grant rounds.

[\(Link: Virginia Recreational Trails Program\)](#)

American Battlefield Protection Program Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants

The National Park Service (NPS) American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) awards matching Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants (BLAG) to assist with the preservation of eligible Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield lands through acquisition of fee-simple or less-than-fee (easement) interests.

To support the preservation of battlefield lands in Virginia, DCR serves as a pass-through entity to nonprofit organizations who are not eligible to apply for BLAG funding directly. The Division of Planning and Recreation Resources administers this program within DCR.

(Link: American Battlefield Protection Program Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants)

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

State agencies, local governments, other public bodies, state and federally-recognized Indian Tribes and nonprofit land trusts are eligible to receive matching grants from the foundation to purchase land or conservation easements.

The Virginia Land Conservation Fund receives funding from the state’s annual budget. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation provides staff and administrative support. An interagency taskforce reviews and recommends grant applications to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. Grant awards are based on applications for 50% or less of total project costs (state agencies may receive 100%) pursuant to specific criteria defined in each category.

(Link: Virginia Land Conservation Foundation)

National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Grants and Technical Support

Federally mandated by the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998, the NPS Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network provides technical assistance, financial assistance, and grant opportunities intended to aid partners in conserving, restoring, interpreting, and providing access to cultural, natural, and recreational resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

This program offers technical assistance to conserve special places, improve and connect trails and access points, provide interpretation and education, restore sites, support communities, and strengthen connections among partner places. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Grant Program offers competitive grant opportunities on a yearly basis to support the goals outlined in its federal mandate.

Timelines and information on grant opportunities and applications for technical assistance have not been published this year. They typically operate on a yearly basis.

(Link: Chesapeake Gateways Grants & Assistance - Chesapeake Bay Watershed (U.S. National Park Service))

Appendix F: Logo Development

With input from partners and using best practices from the National Scenic Trails and National Water Trails as examples, NPS-RTCA developed these recommendations:

Core Design Principles

Simplicity and Scalability: The logo should be legible at small sizes (e.g., trail markers) and adaptable for large formats (e.g., interpretive panels).

Symbolism: Reflect the trail’s historical significance, natural beauty, and partnerships.

Color Palette: Use a limited, accessible palette.

Earth tones (e.g., greens, browns) for ecology

Blue for the James River and water trails

Gold or bronze to honor the USCT and historical valor

Typography: Use sans-serif fonts for readability and ADA compliance.

Visual Elements to Consider (individually and/or in combination with one another)

Heritage and History

Inspiration: National Park Service badges and historic military insignia

Native grasses and an oak tree

Winding trail or river flowing through trees

Silhouette of a USCT soldier

Silhouettes of native wildlife (e.g., heron, deer)

Medal iconography (e.g., Medal of Honor star or badge shape)

Rising sun or horizon line

Crossed rifles

Waterways and Movement Style

Inspiration: Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and water trail logos

Shield or badge shape

Canoe or kayak on the James River

Natural landscape

Inspiration: Scenic trail logos like the Appalachian Trail or Ice Age Trail

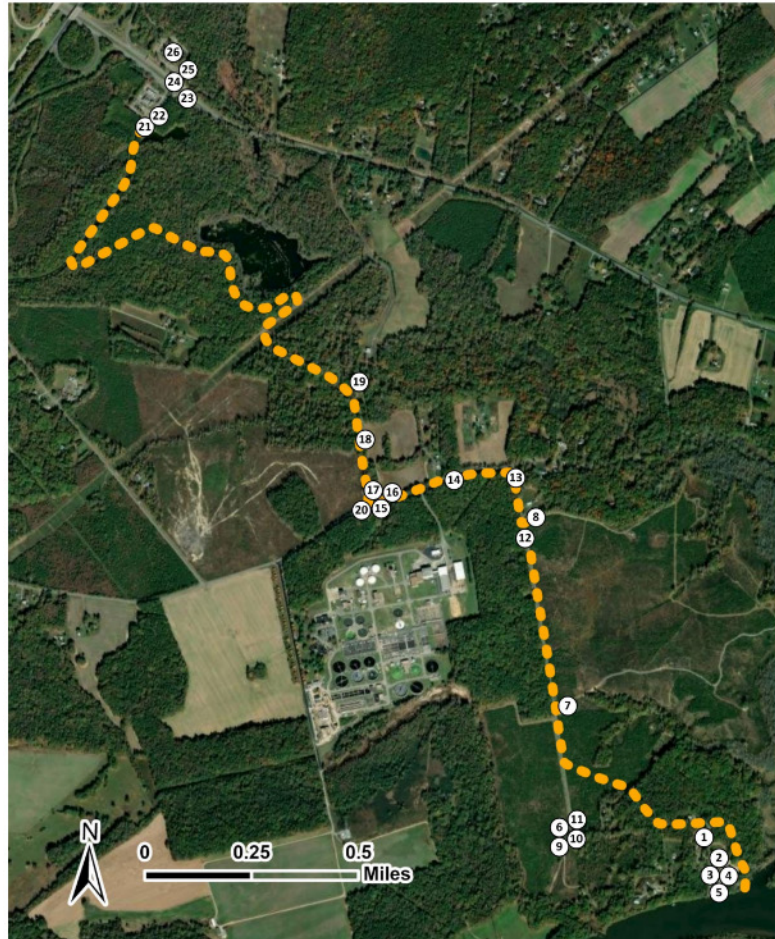
Water ripple patterns

Overlay of trail route or compass rose

James River (e.g., stylized waterline or pontoon bridge)

Appendix G: Additional Photo Inventory

The New Market Heights Trail extends over three miles from Deep Bottom Park along the James River to New Market Road (Route 5). The proposed trail alignment will run near or intersect with existing trails managed by Henrico county and their partners. The trail will also run adjacent to portions of Deep Bottom Road and Kingsland Road; crosswalks will be necessary to facilitate safe travel across Deep Bottom Road, Kingland Road, and New Market Road. The following photo inventory provides a visual overview of existing amenities and features along the proposed trail route. See New Market Heights Trail Photo Inventory Map (below) for corresponding photo locations.





18 American Battlefield Trust low-profile wayside looking across open field (facing east), locate don parcel accessible from Kingsland Road.



19 American Battlefield Trust low-profile waysides overlooking Four Mile Creek (facing northeast).



20 Access point onto shared driveway for proposed trail route, west of American Battlefield Trust parcel (facing east; Google Maps).



21 Proposed trailhead location at Dairy Queen/Exxon and New Market Road (facing south; Google Maps).



22 Viewshed of Dairy Queen/Exxon facilities and parking area at Trailhead south of New Market Road (facing northwest; Google Maps).



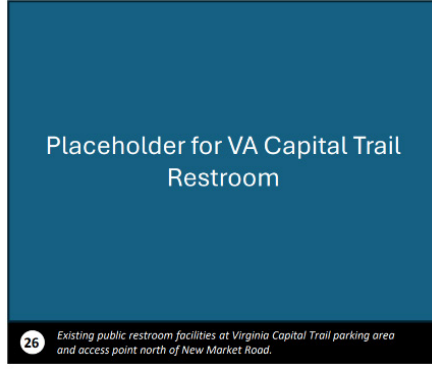
23 Proposed crosswalk intersection at New Market Road (facing northwest), leading to Virginia Capital Trail parking area on right (Google Maps).



24 Access point to Virginia Capital Trail parking area (facing north) along north side of New Market Road (Google Maps).



25 Crosswalk along Virginia Capital Trail at parking area along north side of New Market Road (facing north; Google Maps).



26 Existing public restroom facilities at Virginia Capital Trail parking area and access point north of New Market Road.

Additional Image Examples of Best Practices





Appendix H: Links and Additional Resources

[National Park Service, Wayside Exhibits, a Guide to Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits](#)

[National Park Service, National Trails Office, Family of Signs](#)

[Richmond National Battlefield Park, United States Colored Troops Medal of Honor Recipients](#)

[Henrico Recreation and Parks, 2024 Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan](#)

[National Park Service, Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Historic Trails and Gateways](#)

[National Park Service, Active Transportation Guidebook](#)

[East Coast Greenway Alliance, Design Guide](#)

[Henrico County, An Introduction to the New Market Heights Trail Plan](#)

[American Trails; Wayfinding Signs: Who, What, When, Where, and Why](#)

[West Michigan Trails, Wayfinding Sign and Concepts and Implementation Guide](#)

[American Trails, Public Lands: Preserving and Protecting Night Skies](#)

[Texas Department of Transportation, Temperature and Precipitation Impacts to Pavements on Expansive Soils](#)

[U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Trails as Resilient Infrastructure](#)

[American Trails, Why Trails Matter: Resilience to Wildfire](#)

[Birdability, Access Considerations for Birding Locations](#)

[Chesapeake Bay Program, Federal Leadership in Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order](#)

[National Park Service, Camp Nelson, National Monument, Kentucky](#)

[National Park Service, Fort Monroe, National Monument, Virginia](#)