



Disability Services Beacon

Information and Resources from the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board

Pedestrian Guide for Everyone

When people think of transportation in Northern Virginia, they think first of roadways clogged with cars. But did you know that one in ten households in the United States do not own even one car? One third of the population is either too young or too old to drive, and many people with disabilities must rely on public transportation, their feet, or the wheels on their wheelchairs or scooters to get around. Getting around safely is often difficult: each year over 5,400 pedestrians die and over 82,000 pedestrians sustain injuries in traffic accidents in the United States. Approximately 16% of all traffic accident fatalities involve pedestrians.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assures equal rights for pedestrians with disabilities and has specific requirements for pedestrian facilities. But the ADA benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities. For example, ensuring a wheelchair user's access with ramps and curb cuts also helps a mother pushing a baby stroller or a senior citizen wheeling a grocery cart from store to car. This pedestrian guide is aimed at increasing everyone's safety and enjoyment as they walk in Fairfax County, especially those pedestrians with disabilities.

Yield to Pedestrians Signs

Because of the large number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities, Fairfax County now has a Pedestrian Program Manager in its Department of Transportation (FCDOT). The Pedestrian Program Manager and staff work on safety and mobility issues affecting pedestrians. As a result of this emphasis, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors successfully had Virginia law changed to allow Fairfax County to place signs at designated intersections providing for an increased fine for failing to yield to pedestrians. The "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalks \$100-\$500 Violation Fine"

signs are administered by FCDOT and are currently installed at many intersections in the county. Residents can request these signs at crosswalks by contacting FCDOT at 703-324-1100, TTY 703-324-1102, or by sending an e-mail to PedestrianPrograms@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Accessible Traffic Signals

In late 2000, a resident with a visual impairment requested that an accessible—that is audible—traffic signal be installed at the corner of Route 7 and Jefferson Avenue in Falls Church. Representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Transportation Research Council, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired formed a committee to provide overall guidance and advice on installing accessible traffic signals throughout Fairfax County. A pilot program was developed and an accessible pedestrian signal (APS) was installed at the intersection of Vaden Drive and Virginia Center Boulevard/County Creek Road in Fairfax County. Subsequently, APS units were installed at four additional intersections. The pilot program successfully concluded with the development of an overall procedure for the installation of accessible pedestrian signals.

Fairfax County residents can request the installation of an accessible pedestrian signal by submitting a form to the Northern Virginia District Office of the Virginia Department of Transportation. The form can be obtained by calling the office at 703-383-8368, TTY 711, or sending an e-mail to NOVAinfo@vdot.virginia.gov.

continued on page 2

**Fairfax Area
Disability Services Board**

At-Large: Kim Callahan
At-Large: Tom Choman
At-Large: Robert Rudney, Secretary
At-Large: Leslie Braunstein
Braddock District: Pam Barrett
City of Fairfax: Woody Witt
City of Falls Church: Anne Rohall
Dranesville District: Lisa Fagan
Hunter Mill District: Michele Hymer Blitz
Lee District: Vacant
Mason District: Bruce Harris, Chair
Mount Vernon District: David Norcross
Providence District: Penelope Everline
Springfield District: Vacant
Sully District: Ann Pimley, Vice-Chair

continued from page 1

Request a Trail or Sidewalk

Residents, homeowners associations, or civic associations can request Fairfax County build walkways. The requests are prioritized according to safety and need. The request should include: the name, phone number, and address of the applicant; the justification for the request; the street location of the requested walkway; nearby public facilities; and the location of the nearest walkway. After a cost analysis, the request is forwarded to the appropriate Trails and Sidewalks Committee member for funding consideration (see “Trails and Accessible Routes” for more information). Requests should be submitted in writing to the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Planning and Design Division, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035-0052, or by e-mail to PedestrianPrograms@fairfaxcounty.gov. More information is available by calling 703-324-5800, TTY 711, or on the Web at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nmtc/projects.html.

Repairs to Curb Cuts or Sidewalks

Sidewalks alongside public roads constructed prior to 1981 are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Sidewalks alongside public roads constructed subsequent to 1981 may be maintained by VDOT or the Fairfax County Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. Sidewalks along private roads, like those in many homeowner and civic association properties, are the responsibility of the property owner. Trails (asphalt, stone dust, wood chips, etc) fall under many different jurisdictions depending on their location. The Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division helps residents determine who’s responsible for a particular stretch of road or sidewalk. They can be reached by calling: 703-934-2800, TTY 711, or by using their online form at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/utilities/walkrpt_frm.htm. The Northern Virginia office of VDOT can be reached at 703-383-8368, TTY 711, or sending an e-mail to NOVAinfo@vdot.virginia.gov.

Pot Holes/Snow Removal

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintains the thousands of miles of interstate, primary and secondary roads, and streets in Fairfax County. Maintenance includes the repair of pot holes and snow removal. To request pot hole or other repairs, call 703-383-8368, TTY 711. Be prepared to give the exact location by street name and nearest intersection. Public streets and roadways can typically be identified by a route number sign—a small rectangular sign with black numbers on a white background—posted at intersections. Snow removal is done on a priority basis; high volume roads and emergency routes are cleared first, then secondary roads and subdivisions. More information on how VDOT prioritizes snow removal is available at www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/resources/NoVa-Snow-Brochure.pdf or by calling VDOT at 703-383-8368, TTY 711. Neither VDOT nor Fairfax County clears snow and ice from sidewalks and trails. That is the responsibility of the homeowner, business proprietor, or landlord.

continued on page 3

FA-DSB Employer of the Year Honored



Pictured from left to right: Pat Berry, Baker Botts; Bruce Harris, Fairfax Area Disability Services Board; Walter Smith, Baker Botts; Chairman Gerry Connolly, Fairfax Board of Supervisors; and Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District, Fairfax Board of Supervisors

The Fairfax Area Disability Services Board presented its 2006 “Employer of the Year” award on October 13 to the law firm of Baker Botts LLP. The event was part of Fairfax County’s observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, joined Bruce Harris, Chairman of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, to present the award. Supervisors Cathy Hudgins (Hunter Mill District) and Penny Gross (Mason District) were also in attendance.

The Disability Forum at Booz Allen (a previous “Employer of the Year” recipient) hosted the event and providing the continental breakfast. Baker Botts has hired three Fairfax County Public School students with disabilities through the “Options for Life” program of FCPS Career Transition Services. During the past two years each of the three students has worked in the law library of the firm’s Washington office. In addition, Kathryn Giordano, the director of administration of the firm’s Washington office, has initiated an outreach program through the Washington chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators to encourage other local law firms to hire individuals with disabilities. As a result of this outreach effort, at least three other individuals with disabilities have been employed at Washington area law firms.

Walt Smith, the managing partner of Baker Botts traveled from the firm’s Houston office to accept the award on the firm’s behalf. Mr. Smith has encouraged the hiring of people with disabilities throughout the firm. Over the last three years, Baker Botts has hired 11 employees with disabilities to work at offices in Austin, Dallas, Houston, London, New York, and Washington, D.C.

continued from page 2

Trails and Accessible Routes

Fairfax County prides itself on having livable communities. The county formed the Trails and Sidewalks Committee to ensure that residents can easily and safely travel between and through major commercial, residential, and natural areas using non-motorized transportation. The committee consists of representation from the nine magisterial districts, Fairfax County Park Authority, and a variety of citizens’ groups. More information about the committee is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nmtc.

The committee also produces the Fairfax Countywide Trails Plan Map. The trails map, is available only on the web at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nmtc/maps.html. The map is also a first effort, and users are encouraged to contact the Trails and Sidewalks Committee to inform them of errors. The Fairfax County Trail Coordinator can be reached at 703-324-1272.

The Next DSB Meeting is

on the second Monday
of the month, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Government Center
12000 Gov. Ctr. Parkway
Fairfax

Meetings are open to the public; public comment, no more than 3 minutes in length, is welcome during the public comment period. For information or to request accommodations, please call 703-324-5421, TTY 703-449-1186, or send an e-mail to disabilityservices@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Get Weekly Disability News

Disability Services E-News is a listserv that keeps subscribers informed about resources and issues that affect people with physical and sensory disabilities.

The listserv sends out one brief e-mail each week. The listserv is the primary vehicle for publicly announcing meetings and activities of the Disability Services Board and will in the future tell you how to get online issues of the *Disability Services Beacon*.

To subscribe, simply go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists/. Fill in your e-mail address, click on the box before “Disability services and news,” (listed under Human Services) and then click subscribe. You will be sent an e-mail asking you to respond in order to finish subscribing. You must respond to this e-mail and write “ok” in the body to complete the subscription.

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services, and activities. This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 703-324-5421 or TTY 703-449-1186, or send an email to disabilityservices@fairfaxcounty.gov. Allow 7 working days for preparation of the material.

Fairfax Area Disability Services Board
12011 Government Center Parkway
Suite 708
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-1104