



Department of Planning and Zoning

Technical Bulletin

**Subject: Policy on the consideration of paved materials
to construct trails in lieu of stone dust or
natural surfaces**

Date: 05/15/2017

No.: 17-05

Summary: Experience has shown that stone dust and natural surface trails in the county may not be durable or practical; therefore, asphalt or concrete materials may be used in lieu of these materials. Requests to construct a substitute trail will be considered on the construction plan in lieu of submitting a formal waiver and associated fee.

Effective Date: Immediately.

Background: The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors, guides decisions about the built and natural environment for the benefit of existing and future generations. The first volume of the Comprehensive Plan is the Policy Plan. The transportation section of that volume provides an objective to increase non-motorized travel, i.e. equestrian, biking and walking, by providing a cost-effective network of trails. The Comprehensive Plan's Countywide Trails Plan Map depicts the paved (asphalt or concrete) or stone dust and natural surface trail network in on-road and off-road locations. The Area Plans provide specific site recommendations for trails.

Experience has shown that stone dust and natural surface trails in the county may not be durable or practical nor provide reasonable accommodation for elderly and disabled citizens. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation no longer construct or maintain stone dust or natural surfaces given maintenance costs and upkeep requirements of these facilities. Therefore, in certain locations, hard surface materials may be preferred to create trails in lieu of these soft materials.

Policy Interpretation: The Comprehensive Plan Trails Plan Map provides flexibility in the selection of surface materials and this applies to situations where installation of stone dust or a natural surface cannot be appropriately maintained. Specifically, a note on the Countywide Trails Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 28, 2014 states:

"...Trail types are determined by County staff based on degree and type of expected use, recommendation of the appropriate Countywide Non-motorized Transportation Committee member, safety, and maintenance costs."

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To facilitate the review of trail submissions, Land Development Services (LDS) has determined that requests to construct a paved trail as an acceptable substitute for a stone dust or natural surface trail will be considered on the construction plan in lieu of submitting a formal waiver and associated fee. However, waiver requests to modify or eliminate trails entirely, submitted under § 8-0101.6 of the Public Facilities Manual, will continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will require submission of a formal waiver request to LDS.

If you have any questions about the Fairfax County Trails Plan, please contact the FCDOT at: **703-877-5600, TTY 711**. For specific plan review questions, please contact the Site Development and Inspections Division of LDS at **703-324-1720, TTY 711**.

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