

# Walk Audit

Below are summaries for each of the segments covered in the walk audit. The summaries capture the general impressions of the walking environment from members of the stakeholder group. Likewise, the list of potential improvements reflects ideas from members of the stakeholder group and are not meant to be comprehensive.

## Northern Segment 1

### 1A: Route 7 to Merry Oaks Lane – Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 10:30 AM

**Summary:** Sidewalks are typically four-feet wide which are below current VDOT standards (five-foot minimum is VDOT standard). The east side has an asphalt trail for part of the way, but the quality is uneven in several locations due to tree roots. Pedestrian scale lighting is lacking. Some shade is provided from large trees planted along the edges of certain developments, but there are no street trees.

There are several missing or faded crosswalks along the corridor. Crossing Gallows Branch Road is difficult due to the right on red from northbound Gallows Road.

Bicyclists are vulnerable to northbound traffic along the curve of Gallows Road between Gallows Branch Road and Madrillon Road. Two bicyclists were observed using the sidewalk, not the bike lane.

Vehicles appear to travel faster than the posted speed limit and the corridor is noisy. About a dozen people were observed walking, biking, or jogging.

#### Potential improvements:

- Install buffer along bike lanes
- Reconstruct island and ramps on southeast quadrant at Route 7 to ADA standards and install yield to pedestrian signs at southeast and southwest quadrants
- Install a buffer between the sidewalk and roadway on west side south of Route 7
- Ensure that leading pedestrian interval (LPI) is installed at Boone Blvd intersection
- Modify sweeping right-in at 1900 Gallows building to discourage higher speeds
- Reconstruct island at southeast quadrant of Aline Ave to ADA standards and add crosswalk at south leg
- Replace or remove guardrail north of Gallows Branch. Supports should be on opposite side of the trail to reduce injury risk for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Add signalized crosswalk on the north leg of Gallows Branch

### **1B: Merry Oaks Lane to Idylwood Road – Monday, April 17th, 2023, at 1:00 PM**

**Summary:** There are a lot of active commercial driveways on the west side and there is a very narrow buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway. Utility poles and overgrown vegetation obstruct the sidewalk at several locations, especially on the west side. Several faded crosswalks and curb ramps that are not ADA-compliant along the corridor. Some curb ramps were steep and narrow, or in disrepair which made it difficult to navigate with a stroller. Bus stops were lacking amenities; there was nowhere to sit and no trash cans.

The east side has wider, paved asphalt pathways which are generally in good repair, though cracking was noted in several locations. The condition of the curb ramps and crossings are generally better than on the west side.

Very light traffic at this time of day, but it was very noisy when cars drove by. One bicyclist was observed on the sidewalk. Two were observed using the bike lanes.

#### **Potential improvements:**

- Consider a defined left turn lane(s) with a landscaped median between Tyson Oaks Circle and Wolftrap Road into the strip mall to the west of Gallows Road
- Upgrade sidewalk ramps to meet ADA standards
- Construct pedestrian refuge in northwest quadrant of Merry Oaks Drive and add signalized crosswalks on the west and north legs
- In general, add crosswalks where they are missing at signalized intersections
- Cut back foliage that encroaches on the sidewalk, especially on the west side
- Consider installing a landscaped median with turn lanes on Gallows Road

### **1C: Idylwood Road to I-66 – Monday, April 17th, 2023, at 2:00 PM**

**Summary:** There is a wide asphalt path and buffer between Idylwood Road and the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail, though it's lacking pedestrian-scale lighting and street trees. The center turn lane may not be necessary as access points along either side of Gallows Road are limited along this segment.

Free flow right turn onto Idylwood Road can be dangerous for pedestrians crossing and throughput bicycles.

The W&OD Trail crossing is wide, and users sometimes have long delays before they are allowed to cross. South of the W&OD Trail, the sidewalk is narrow, and the landscape panel is only two feet wide. There are uncontrolled, marked crosswalks at Bright Meadows Lane and at Revatom Court near Dunn Loring Park, but the number of lanes and posted speed limit make the crossings very uncomfortable. The park itself is not clearly signed.

There are poor sight lines at Stenwood Elementary School that make it difficult for vehicles entering and exiting the school. There are no crosswalks over Gallows Road near the school and there is no "school zone". Drivers unfamiliar with the area may not realize there is a school here. There is also no comfortable pedestrian or bicycle connection to and across the I-66 bridge, though this is mostly due to construction and will be improved.

**Potential improvements:**

- Widen the island on the southeast quadrant of Idylwood Road upgrade the curb ramps to meet ADA standards
- Add signalized crosswalks at Bright Meadows Lane and Revatom Court. Consider installing pedestrian refuge islands
- Improve the W&OD Trail crossing by installing a pedestrian refuge island and flashing beacons/signage to improve driver awareness
- Install a traffic signal, roundabout, or other intersection control at Stenwood Elementary School

## Middle Segment 2

### 2A: I-66 to Lee Highway – Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 10:00 AM

**Summary:** The walk along the west side of Gallows Road between Lauren Elizabeth Lane and Prosperity Avenue was pleasant and shaded. Sidewalk conditions along the west side of Gallows Road south of Lauren Elizabeth Lane, and most of the east side of Gallows Road are poor, and the buffer strip is narrow.

Many of the busiest intersections in this segment lack high-visibility markings. There is a skew at the intersection of Lauren Elizabeth Lane making the crossing longer for pedestrians.

Bicycle lane does not continue south of Lauren Elizabeth Lane. Most transit stops lack amenities, such as trash bins, seating, and shade covers.

More pedestrians (9) observed along this segment than any other segment.

**Potential improvements:**

- Outside northbound lane that begins at Heatherton Lane should not continue through the Prosperity Avenue intersection. Eliminating this lane could allow a bulb-out in the northeast quadrant
- Narrow the northbound right turn lane onto Bellforest Drive to provide wider sidewalk and/or buffer
- Add a signalized crosswalk across the north leg of Prescott Drive
- Realign the west leg of Providence Forest Drive and add a north leg signalized crosswalk
- Widen the sidewalks and landscape buffers, especially along the east side
- Improve crosswalks with high-visibility markings

## **2B: Lee Highway to Arlington Boulevard – Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 11:00 AM**

**Summary:** The sidewalk on the east side of Gallows Road is in poor condition. There is a wide asphalt path on the west side of Gallows Road, but the buffer between the roadway and the path is very narrow.

The intersection at Lee Highway and Gallows Road is very wide and lacks high-visibility crosswalks. Gallows Road is very wide along this segment; some intersections are 9 to 10 lanes across. Several intersections are missing crosswalks on one or more legs, several of which are adjacent to retail centers.

Several transit stops are missing benches and other amenities.

### **Potential improvements:**

- Install signalized pedestrian crossings near the Fairfax Plaza and Yorktown Plaza retail centers.
- Install signalized pedestrian crossing across south leg of Gatehouse Road
- Widen the landscape buffer to increase separation between pedestrians and vehicles
- Upgrade curb ramps at Yorktown Plaza entrance and Shell gas station along northbound lanes
- Consider shifting crosswalk across Arlington Boulevard westbound ramp to northbound Gallows Road upstream so it is more visible to on-coming traffic
- Relocate push buttons in northeast, southeast, and southwest quadrants of Arlington Boulevard

## **2C: Arlington Boulevard to I-495 – Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 8:30 AM**

**Summary:** The sidewalk is not continuous along the west side of Gallows Road between Willow Oaks Corporate Drive and Townsend Street.

Gallows Road is very wide in this segment, so there is room for an improved active transportation facility.

The walk along the west side of Gallows Road adjacent to Inova Fairfax Medical Campus is pleasant, although noisy due to traffic.

The mid-block transit stop between Willow Oaks Corporate Drive and Peterson Discovery Drive discourages crossing at a controlled location.

### **Potential improvements:**

- Add crosswalks to the Woodburn Road intersection
- Relocate south leg crosswalk of Woodburn Road to the Gallows Road intersection
- Relocate the transit stop near Willow Oaks Drive and Peterson Discovery Drive to a location that is adjacent to a controlled pedestrian crossing
- Construct sidewalk along the north side of Luttrell Road to connect to the I-495 bridge sidewalk
- Construct sidewalk on the west side of Gallows Road between Willow Oaks Corp. Drive and Townsend Street
- Install buffer for the sidewalk along northbound and southbound Gallows Road between Willow Oaks and Arlington Boulevard

## Gallows Road Multimodal Study: Walk and Bike Audits

- Increase the size of the concrete islands in the northwest and southwest quadrants of Willow Oaks Drive
- Install signalized crosswalk across the north leg of Anderson Drive
- Install signalized crosswalk across the south leg of Innovation Park Drive

### Southern Segment 3

#### **3A: I-495 to Friendship Church – Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 3:45 PM**

**Summary:** There is no sidewalk immediately to the east of the I-495 interchange on the north side of Gallows Road. Sidewalks on both sides are narrow and there is overgrowth present along several stretches. The buffer between the sidewalk and street is narrow.

There is no crosswalk across Gallows Road at Hemlock Drive.

A rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) is present at the intersection of Gallows Road, Aston Street, and Libeau Lane, but vehicles approach it at high speed and driver non-compliance is a concern. School pick-up traffic spills into northbound Woodburn Road and Gallows Road.

The right-of-way is narrow and there are no parking lanes or bicycle lanes along this segment of Gallows Road.

Streetlights are present, but there is not pedestrian-scale lighting.

#### **Potential improvements:**

- Consider installing reversible lanes along this segment to reduce travel lanes from four to three, and utilize the space gained for bicycle facilities
- Fill in the sidewalk gap on the north side of Gallows Road immediately to the east of the I-495 interchange
- Install a pedestrian refuge island and crosswalk at Hemlock Drive
- Install advanced warning signage indicating to drivers that they are approaching the pedestrian crossing near Woodburn Elementary School

#### **3B: Annandale Road to Columbia Pike – Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 8:30 AM**

#### **Summary:**

Sidewalk is missing on the south side of Gallows Road from Thornton Street to Columbia Pike. There is only one crosswalk between Annadale Road and Columbia Pike at Arnheim Street.

Curb ramps are angled into the roadway and are not up to VDOT standard and ADA Compliance.

The current posted speed limit of 35 MPH feels too high. The current alignment of Columbia Pike and Gallows Road facilitates higher speeds for westbound vehicles making a right turn.

A utility pole impedes the sidewalk at Justine Drive.

## Gallows Road Multimodal Study: Walk and Bike Audits

### **Potential improvements:**

- Consider a speed study to determine if speed can be reduced from 35mph
- Install sidewalk along south side of Gallows Road south of Thornton Street
- Realign intersection of Gallows Road and Columbia Pike
- Relocate utility pole in sidewalk at Justine Drive
- Consider repurposing right-of-way from bicycle lanes for a shared use path on the south side of Gallows Road

# Bike Audit

A bike ride along the corridor was conducted on Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup> from approximately 9 AM to 12:30 PM. Participants included members from the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) and members of the stakeholder group. The group met in the parking lot at the INOVA ICPH campus and began by exploring the area for the future proposed connection over I-495 behind the campus. The trails were pleasant and well-paved for bicycle travel.

After peering across the beltway to Fairview Park, the cyclists took Peterson Discovery Drive to southbound Gallows Road. While not an official bike lane, there is space on the shoulder to ride along the roadway, and the sidewalk from Blue Road to Woodburn Road next to the Hospital provides a less stressful off-street option. It is approaching Woodburn Road, however, when bicyclists should pay great attention to the traffic coming from the I-495 ramp and the turning traffic from Gallows Road. The crossing is south of the intersection near Luttrell Road, which presents site line concerns.

Travelling toward the I-495 interchange, the cyclists used Luttrell Road and the sidewalk on the ramp approaching the outer loop. Site lines again became a concern while crossing over to the bridge, as the crosswalk is located about 100' feet down the ramp. Cyclists had to crane their necks to make sure there were no vehicles approaching the crosswalk at high speeds.

South of the interchange, the sidewalk is very narrow. Cyclists that are not comfortable riding on the roadway will have to contend with uneven sidewalk, overgrowth, and other debris. The curb ramps are also not ADA compliant and are often positioned in a way that directs the cyclist into Gallows Road rather than along it. The group had to stop for any pedestrians as there was not enough space to pass without moving off the sidewalk.

The cyclists continued toward Annandale Road and turned left at the split toward Gallows Road. This segment down to Columbia Pike was much more comfortable since there are bike lanes present with a painted buffer. However, there were concerns about the potential for dooring as the parking lane is immediately adjacent to the bike lane.

The group rode down Columbia Pike, opting for the travel lane instead of the sidewalk (there are no dedicated bicycle facilities on this section of Columbia Pike), then turned right down Maple Place to use the buffered bike lane and connect with northbound Annandale Road. Traffic was light, thus utilizing the travel lane proved to be less stressful and more expedient than using the sidewalk.

The I-495 interchange proved to be a greater concern heading northbound as there is no sidewalk approaching the bridge. There is a painted buffer between the right turn lane approaching the inner loop ramp and the outside through lane, which continues to a larger painted shoulder on the overpass. Some members of the group travelled along the buffer area, while others dismounted and walked their bikes along the goat path to cross the ramp. Drivers attempting to turn right onto the inner loop seemed unsure of how to navigate around the cyclists who opted to use the road.

Continuing north to Route 50, cyclists can ride along the narrow sidewalk, otherwise they must share the roadway with faster moving traffic (Gallows Road is 10 lanes wide at certain points along this segment). Unlike southbound Gallows Road at this location, there is no shoulder present.

## Gallows Road Multimodal Study: Walk and Bike Audits

In approaching the Route 50 interchange, the group decided it would be best to use the off-street asphalt trail and the sidewalk along the overpass. As mentioned in the walk audit, this is another area where crossing could be improved for active transportation users.

A detour was taken at Gatehouse Road to view the area for the second future potential crossing of I-495, then the ride continued up Telestar Court, turned left at Porter Road, and right on Gallows Road to continue toward Tysons. There are no dedicated bicycle facilities until north of Cottage Street, past the I-66 overpass. There are bike lanes travelling southbound from the I-66 overpass, which transition, albeit poorly, with an asphalt path south of Lauren Elizabeth Lane to Lee Highway.

The bike lanes north of Cottage Street continue to about Madrillon Road, or about a ½ mile from the Gallows Road and Leesburg Pike intersection. The bike lanes do not have a buffer and fast-moving traffic came very close to several riders. There was also some debris in the bike lane, which necessitated diversions into the adjacent northbound travel lane. North of the W&OD Trail there is an asphalt trail that continues to Aline Avenue, or about a ¼ mile from the Gallows Road and Leesburg Pike intersection. Several members of the group decided to use this less-stressful route to continue to the Tysons area.

The group disbanded at the intersection of Gallows Road and Leesburg Pike. Those returning southbound down Gallows Road mostly kept to the asphalt trail on the east side of the roadway, since the west side only has a narrow sidewalk until south of Idylwood Road. Bicyclists wanting to continue southbound cross at Idylwood Road where the asphalt trail begins, or at the W&OD Trail; the asphalt trail does not continue along the east side south of the W&OD.

Navigating across the I-66 overpass presented the only other challenge as ongoing construction required cyclists to use the roadway until approaching the Dunn Loring Metrorail Station. The rest of the ride back to the ICPH parking lot was fairly comfortable as there is an asphalt trail along the west side of Gallows Road from Lauren Elizabeth Lane to Willow Oaks Corporate Drive.



## Gallows Road Multimodal Study: Walk and Bike Audits

Following the bike audit FABB provided the recommendations, below.

FABB recommends that designated bicycle lanes with some form of vertical separation from vehicles be installed for the entire length of the Gallows Rd study corridor. If that is not feasible, alternatively we recommend

- Add a shared use path on both sides of Gallows Rd from the Virginia DMV Office to Route 7
- Widen and add vertical separation to the existing bike lanes on both sides of Gallows Rd from the DMV Office to I-66
- Convert the sidewalk on the east side of Gallows Rd between I-66 and Route 50 to a VDOT compliant shared use path
- Enhance the existing shared use path with directional signage and safer road crossings on the west side of Gallows between I-66 and Route 50. Of particular concern is the SUP from I-66 to Lauren Elizabeth Ln where cyclists share the sometimes narrow concrete sidewalk with many pedestrians, street furniture, sidewalk dining areas, and trees. The narrow sidewalk between Prosperity and Halstead Sq should never have been allowed when the Courtyard and adjacent development was approved.
- Add a shared use path from Gallows Rd along Gatehouse Rd to the Fairfax County Public School headquarters to a crossing over I-495 connecting to Fairview Park North. See 2017 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan - Merrifield Suburban Center, page 105
- Add a protected bike lane to Gallows Rd on the west side of Gallows from Route 50 to south side of I-495, 2017 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan - Merrifield Suburban Center, page 32
- Adding a shared use path from Gallows Rd to the INOVA trail network leading to a shared use path crossing over I-495
- Adding protected bike lanes on the east side of Gallows Rd between Route 50 and the South side of I-495 until the INOVA plans and their proffers are implemented, 2017 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan - Merrifield Suburban Center, page 105
- Adding protected bike lanes on both sides of Gallows Rd from I-495 to Columbia Pike, 2017 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan - Merrifield Suburban Center, page 52. These could be implemented by converting the existing 4 travel lanes to 3 reversible lanes and one lane devoted to a two-way cycle track.
- Investigate the use of a signed parallel bike route from 495 south to the Annandale/Gallows Rd intersection.
- Implement a road diet on Annandale Road from Little River Turnpike to Gallows Road to allow for projected bike lanes.
- Crossing intersections are a particular hazard for bicyclists. Curb radii need to be narrowed and slip lanes reduced or signalized. Each major intersection should be studied to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. The most dangerous intersections are the following:
  - Route 7
  - Idylwood Rd
  - I-66
  - Route 29
  - Route 50
  - Woodburn Rd - Complicated by the Luttrell Rd intersection, the incomplete sidewalk along Gallows, and the poor location of the crosswalk
  - I-495