

Alternative Transportation Study Public Meeting
Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge
alternatives

Description of Alternatives

The City of Virginia Beach received a Paul S. Sarbanes "Transit in Parks Program" grant from the Federal Transit Administration (100% federal funding) to study transportation alternatives for reaching Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge without having to use personal motor vehicles. The primary goal of the study was to improve access to the Refuge using alternative transportation modes in ways that enhance the environment and the visitor experience, for the benefit of all visitors. A list and description of each alternative is provided below:

The Back Bay Refuge Trail has four segments:

- 1.7 miles of 10' asphalt path following the unbuilt Nimmo Parkway right-of-way from Albuquerque Drive to where it crosses Sandbridge Road. This segment includes a 150-foot bridge over Ashville Bridge Creek and 800 feet of raised boardwalk over wetlands. This would be built only if Nimmo Parkway is not built.
- 0.8 miles of 10' asphalt path along the south side of Sandbridge Road to Sandpiper Road. The City is currently studying this segment of Sandbridge Road for reconstruction and includes bike lanes and a shared use path. This segment of trail includes 500 feet of raised boardwalk over wetlands.
- Bike lanes originally built on Sandpiper Road in the late 1980s would be restored from Sandbridge Road to Little Island Park.
- Additionally, 230 feet of 10' asphalt path and a 100-foot bike-ped boardwalk would connect the two sections of Atwoodtown Road in Lago Mar, to create an on-road connection to BBNWR's future Visitor Contact Station and to the City's 25/50 bike routes.



The Sigma Trail would be a 10' shared-use path in two segments:

- 0.5 miles along the north side of Sandbridge Road from BBNWR's current offices near the future Visitor Contact Station at Lotus Drive to a crossing at Colechester Road.
- 1.9 miles along the south side of Sandbridge Road to where the Back Bay Refuge Trail crosses Sandbridge Road.
- From there, the Sigma Trail follows the Back Bay Refuge Trail to reach the Refuge.

Shuttle Service would use buses with trailers for canoes and bikes to bring visitors to the Refuge's existing Visitor Contact Station from the site of the future Visitor Contact Station and from the Virginia Aquarium. This service probably would run daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day, operating privately under a concession agreement. Unless subsidized in some way, the costs per rider would be at least \$12 and perhaps much more.



Water Access for canoes and kayaks would be improved at eight existing boat launch sites on both sides of Back Bay. Five of the sites would include a universal access slide. Site ownership varies between City, state and federal agencies, so no single entity can do all the work, but cooperation could create a larger system or water trail. A coherent wayfinding system would help people find the launches, both from land and from the water.

Water Taxi service would run passenger pontoon boats from Mill Landing to Barbour Hill and to the Refuge Visitor Contact Station and back. The schedule would vary: daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day; around weekends in the months immediately before and after; and idle from November to March. It would be privately operated, with round-trip tickets costing over \$25. Operators may choose to run on a reservation-basis as well.



The grant program requires a **No Construction** alternative. Programs for education, enforcement and encouragement could have impacts and benefits at much lower costs.

For more information
on the study, visit:
www.VBgov.com/BackBayGrant

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