



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Washington
and Old
Dominion
Railroad
Regional Park
(W&OD)**

Virginia



Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) Virginia

The Washington and Old Dominion Trail (W&OD), one of suburban Washington, D.C.'s most popular rail-trails, is a fantastic link



The Washington and Old Dominion Trail (W&OD), one of suburban Washington, D.C.'s most popular rail-trails, is a fantastic link between the state's rural and historical past and the nation's capital. The trail serves as an important spine in the developing 800-mile [Capital Trails Coalition](#) network, a Rails-to-Trails Conservancy [TrailNation](#) project connecting the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. Along with the [Four Mile Run Trail](#), the [Mount Vernon Trail](#), and the [Custis Trail](#), the W&OD Trail contributes to the [Arlington Loop](#). The W&OD was inducted into the national [Rail-Trail Hall of Fame](#) in 2008.

The W&OD Railroad was built in 1859, shortly before the Civil War, and went into disuse in 1968. NOVA Parks opened the first few miles of paved trail in Falls Church in 1974 through an agreement with Virginia Electric and

Power Company, which owned the right-of way, and in 1977 began purchasing the land. The trail was completed in 1988. Today, NOVA Parks maintains the trail with the help of volunteers from Friends of the W&OD.

A crushed-stone trail parallels the paved W&OD for 32 miles and is favored by mountain bikers, equestrians, and joggers. Horses are restricted to this gravel trail, though you'll rarely see one east of Vienna. The trail is exceptionally well marked, with mileposts every 0.5 mile and interpretive signs telling the story of the people and places along the rail line.

The trail's eastern terminus is in the unincorporated community of Shirlington in Arlington, which makes for a nice starting or ending point. From here, the W&OD Trail is urban for a few miles before exchanging the trappings of the city for leafier suburbs. From east to west, the trail gains elevation, albeit gradually. Bluemont Park is one of many picnic areas and parks within the trail's first 10 miles. You'll find water, restrooms, and an old caboose here, as well as a link to the [Bluemont Junction Trail](#), constructed on a former railroad spur.

At 5 miles, the trail provides access to Washington's Metro system on the Orange and Silver Lines via the East Falls Church Station. As you make your way beyond the I-495 Beltway, use caution at all road crossings, especially during rush hour. The path continues through the communities of Vienna—with an old caboose and train depot—and Reston. Both towns offer plenty of shops and restaurants. The suburban neighborhoods surrounding the trail become more wooded, too. For a worth-while side trip between Vienna and Reston, head onto the mile-long [Meadowlark Connector Trail](#), which leads to the beautiful Meadowlark Botanical Gardens.

The town of Herndon features another caboose and a trailside train depot used as a visitor center. As the trail continues, it passes through Sterling and Ashburn, which features a year-



Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) Virginia

States: Virginia

Counties: Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun

Length: 45 miles

Trail end points: Four Mile Run Dr & Shirlington Rd (Arlington) to N 21st St/VA 690 (Purcellville)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback Riding, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

There are numerous other access points and parking areas along the entire route; refer to the map for more details.

To begin at the southern end of the W&OD Trail, take Interstate 395 to the Shirlington Exit; bear right to head north and drive to the second stoplight. Turn left here on South Four Mile Run Drive. The W&OD Trail will be on the right, paralleling the road. You can park along the side of the road, but it is not advisable to leave your car overnight here. In fact, you're better off parking in one of the parking garages just across the road in downtown Shirlington.

To begin at the northern end in Purcellville, take State Route 7 west. Exit at SR 287 and turn left. Follow SR 287 until SR 7 Business and take a right. Turn right again on 21st Street. The Purcellville Train Depot is 0.25 mile away on the right. Parking is across the street but there are time limits during certain days of the week. Unlimited parking time is permitted at a small lot 1 block east along the trail off Hatcher Avenue.

For more information, visit [Friends of the W&OD](#).

