TOWN OF HERNDON, VIRGINIA
TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

APRIL 8, 2025

Resolution- in support of protecting the natural environment along the W&OD Trail.

The Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail is one of the most popular parks in Virginia with nearly 3 million annual users. Within the Town of Herndon, the trail is an integral part of the town's character, providing a scenic, shaded, and accessible corridor that enhances public health and fosters a sense of community. The 45-mile long, 100-foot wide park is owned and operated by NOVA Parks, with Dominion Energy transmissions lines on 33 of the 45 miles.

Dominion Energy recently removed nearly all trees along a four-mile section of the W&OD Trail in the Vienna and Dunn Loring area as part of vegetation management under its power transmission lines. Dominion expressed their intent to apply this same practice—removing nearly all vegetation taller than 10 feet—along 33 miles of the trail corridor, from Shirlington to west of Leesburg. Dominion has stated that no vegetation, including trees that have a potential to grow over 10 feet, will be allowed on these 33 miles of the W&OD Trail. In addition, it appears that Dominion has no established policy for preserving trees and vegetation that would not pose a hazard to its transmission lines along the trail. While Dominion Energy has temporarily paused its work on the remaining 29 miles of the W&OD Trail, it is imperative that steps are taken to address this type of work that may be occurring in the future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Herndon, Virginia that:

1. The Town of Herndon, Virginia, requests the following:

   a. That Dominion Energy end its plans for large-scale tree removal along the 33-mile section of the W&OD Trail located beneath its transmission lines.

   b. That Dominion Energy adopt a formal and written policy of the long-standing practice of selective pruning - removing only those trees that pose a direct and immediate threat to transmission lines.

   c. As part of this formal policy, Dominion Energy adopt vegetation management standards that allow for a greater diversity of native trees and shrubs, including species that enhance the trail experience and provide

critical environmental benefits while maintaining appropriate clearance for transmission safety.

d. That, where tree cutting is necessary to ensure the reliability of the electrical grid, Dominion Energy replant those areas with a mix of native species designed to support pollinators and wildlife, and manage those and other areas of the park for invasive species until the newly planted vegetation and related habitat is fully established.

e. That, in instances where tree removal is necessary to maintain the reliability of the electrical grid, Dominion Energy submit a site plan detailing the project's impact on the Town of Herndon, to include the scope of work, defined clearing and grading limits, an inventory of affected trees, and a list of proposed tree species for replanting.

2. The Town Clerk is directed to forward a copy of this resolution to NOVA Parks and Dominion Energy to formally communicate the Town of Herndon’s position and its commitment to the responsible stewardship of the W&OD Trail and its natural environment.