



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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Testimony of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in Support of the Fairfax County Bike Master Plan

October 28, 2014

Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA). My name is Greg Billing and I am the Advocacy Coordinator for the WABA. We are a non-profit advocacy and education organization representing 680 members and over 12,000 supporters in Fairfax County along with our more than 5,000 regional members and 60,000 supporters. It is with great pleasure that I am here today to testify in support of successful passage of the Fairfax Bike Master plan.

Fairfax County is a great place to ride a bike, but there is much progress to be made. The Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail is a nationally recognized rail trail used by thousands of bicyclists, walkers and runners daily. The Cross County Trail is a unique unpaved trail for mountain biking and horseback riding that connects many Fairfax County neighborhoods weaving 40 miles from Great Falls to the Occoquan River. County bicyclists enjoy hundreds of miles of existing trails and bikeways.

The County is falling quickly behind neighboring jurisdictions. Over the last ten years, Arlington, Alexandria and the District of Columbia have invested resources in on-street bike infrastructure. Bike lanes and protected bike lanes provide safe places for people to ride bikes for fitness, recreation and transportation. Neighboring communities have begun to see significant growth in bicycling after investing in a network of on-street bike lanes and trails, alongside education, outreach and bikesharing programs. Biking is up 450% in DC over the past 8 years and up 200% in Arlington and Alexandria. Fairfax County has not applied for a League of American Bicyclists Bike-Friendly Award, a national recognition that been awarded to other Virginia cities and counties such Richmond, Roanoke, Williamsburg, Alexandria, and Arlington.

Biking will be important to solving traffic issues and creating communities people want to live in. More than 40% of all trips nationally are less than 2 miles. Often trips to the grocery store, coffee shop, library, or nearby Metro station are short and could easily be biked. Without safe, direct, efficient and comfortable bike facilities, people will not ride. Mitigating the growing traffic issues of the County will need to rely on increasing bicycling and walking, focusing on short trips in major activity centers such as Tyson.

The Fairfax County Bike Master Plan is the missing piece of the puzzle and the roadmap to increasing biking. The master plan lays out an ambitious network of new trails, on-street bike lanes and the most important facility: the protected bike lane. Research shows building

protected bike lanes encourages as much as 60% of people to ride bikes for transportation. Most people will not ride bikes on roads with fast moving or heavy traffic. Separation from motor vehicles is key. Currently, Fairfax County has no on-street protected bike lanes. The master plan recognizes the need to build connected networks of facilities that take people from where they are to where they want to go.

The time is now to make Fairfax County to begun a bike-friendly community. We ask the Board to support the passage of the Bike Master Plan and begin the journey of creating a more bikable and livable community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Greg Billing
Advocacy Coordinator
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