



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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**Testimony of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association for
Bill 33-13, Streets and Roads - Urban Road Standards and Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

To the Members of the Montgomery County Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Bill 33-13, Urban Road Standards and Pedestrian Safety Improvements. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association represents over 1,000 members in Montgomery County. Thank you to the Councilmember Berliner and Reimer for their leadership in making the streets and roads in Montgomery Council safer for all road users, especially the most vulnerable bicyclists and pedestrians

Montgomery County has taken many steps forward to support bicycling in the county, including building new trails, paths and on-street bike lanes and launching the highly anticipated Capital Bikeshare system. We applaud these efforts to encourage residents to use a bicycle for transportation and consider a change in the Montgomery County Code to support safer streets the next step in creating livable communities. Major elements of Bill 33-13, including narrowing travel lanes, lowering speed limits, and reducing curb radii to slow vehicles through intersection will be a great step in safer streets. We support these elements but have concerns about other proposed changes to the County Code and the potential unintended consequences for county bicyclists.

Bill 33-13 includes a provision to require curb extensions at the end of every parking lane. Curb extensions are an excellent intervention for slowing car traffic and creating safer crossings for pedestrians. However, many bicyclists ride in open parking lanes when traffic is heavy. Curb extensions could create conflicts at intersections where bicyclists would have to merge back into car traffic. The bill should consider bike-friendly designs that does not preclude bicyclist from using existing roads. Similarly, requiring pedestrian refuges at every intersection could create conflicts with existing and proposed bicycle lanes. The bill should direct county agencies to construct pedestrian refuges that accommodate standard on-street bike lanes and protected bike lanes.

Within the existing Montgomery County Road Code are four templates for the allocation of street space in business districts. This bill should amend these templates to include bike lanes as a standard feature on these streets. Bill 33-13 proposes narrower travel lanes which will create extra space. County staff should be advised through this bill to allocate this new space for standard on-street bike lanes or protected bike lanes. The current Road Code allows for inadequately narrow bike lanes when adjacent to parking lanes. This bill should amend the current Road Code to ensure bikes lanes are at least the standard width (5 feet) when next to parking. Narrow bike lanes put

bicyclists in harm's way of drivers who open car doors into the bicyclist's path; sufficiently wide bike lanes can significantly reduce the likelihood of such crashes.

With the changes outlined in this testimony, WABA supports Bill 33-13 and thanks the councilmembers Berliner and Reimer for leading the effort to create safer streets for all Montgomery County residents. Safer streets will encourage more county residents to choose alternative modes of transportation including transit, walking, and bicycling.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Billing". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "B".

Greg Billing
Advocacy Coordinator
Washington Area Bicyclist Association