



**TESTIMONY OF THE WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION (WABA) AT
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM FORUM**

May 18, 2017

Good evening. My name is Katie Harris, I am the Trails Coalition Coordinator at the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of our 6,000 members in the region and our 16,000 supporters in Maryland.

Paved trails are incredibly important to Montgomery County. In multiple Montgomery County plans, biking and walking paths are listed as the most-desired facilities or greatest facility shortages, and hiking and biking on trails is the most frequent recreation activity reported. Paved trails also increase the quality of life for the county's residents, create places for citizens and visitors to enjoy the outdoors, and provide active transportation options to those who want to get around by bike or on foot.

Montgomery County is also part of an initiative called the Capital Trails Coalition, a collaboration of public and private organizations, agencies, and citizen volunteers working to advance completion of an interconnected network of multi-use trails for metropolitan Washington, DC.



The Coalition convenes and coordinates among the public and private stakeholders who are critical to accomplishing the vision of an interconnected network.

The vision of the Capital Trails Coalition is to create a world-class network of multi-use trails that are equitably distributed throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan region. The regional trails network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

It is imperative that jurisdictions throughout the footprint of the Capital Trails Coalition fund the design, construction, renovation and maintenance of their hard surface trails at an adequate level.

WABA asks that funding levels for Hard Surface Trails- both Renovation and Design & Construction be restored to levels equivalent to what was allocated in FY17 and FY18. Reduced funding for FY19 through FY22 will not help Montgomery County, and the region as a whole, advance trail development and complete our regional vision of a world-class, interconnected trail network.



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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There is a growing consensus throughout this region that a paved, multi-use trail network is a regional priority. This vision of a network that is accessible to people of all ages and abilities cannot be done without the leadership from the jurisdictions.

For many residents, the trails encapsulate why they live in Montgomery County. They are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, are safe, are connected, and are taken care of. Sufficient funding means thoughtful trail design and regular maintenance, which in turn ensures that the trails remain some of Montgomery County's greatest assets.

Thank you.

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