



WABA
WASHINGTON AREA
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

FY21 Capital Budget and amendments to FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program - February 6, 2020 Hearing

Council President Katz and members of the Council, my name is Peter Gray and I am here representing the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, its 1,500 members in Montgomery County and the thousands of WABA supporters who live, work, and travel here.

We are pleased to note that funding for many street safety initiatives remain in place in the proposed CIP. Over the next few years, pedestrian and bicycle projects in the various BiPPA's will make improvements to Wheaton, Grosvenor, Glenmont, and the Purple Line corridor.

We celebrate the work the Council has done over the past several years to get the Purple Line built and the Capital Crescent Trail extended to Silver Spring. As new bridges rise over Colesville Road and Connecticut Avenue, we can actually watch a more multimodal and accessible future taking shape. The Council was wise to invest in new public transit and trail options to travel between Bethesda and points east in the County and Prince George's County. Now, many of the decisions the Council faces for this budget will determine whether those investments made in the Purple Line and the Trail will succeed fully or not.

Therefore, WABA urges the Council to fund the following priorities:

1. **Fund the construction of the Capital Crescent Trail Tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue for completion in FY 2023.** When the trail opens, Wisconsin Ave will be the only at-grade crossing of a state highway for the county's most-used trail. No amount of engineering or design, education or enforcement can eliminate the risk of three thousand walkers, bicyclists and kids crossing Wisconsin's six lanes and 40 thousand daily cars and trucks. Value engineer to cut costs if you must, but this tunnel is not optional for this regional transportation and public health treasure.
2. **Reverse the proposed delays to the Metropolitan Branch Trail from the Silver Spring Transit Center to Takoma Park and to the Fenton Street protected bike lanes.** By avoiding further delay of these projects, the Council can maximize the connections between the Silver Spring CBD, the

surrounding neighborhoods, the Purple Line and the Trail by the time Purple Line opens.

3. **Fund a delivery pipeline for the Tier One master planned bikeways.** In 2018, the Council unanimously adopted a new vision for making bicycling a mainstream way to get around in Montgomery. The plan calls for hundreds of miles of new bikeways, prioritized to increase bicycling as quickly as possible. The first tier, which builds networks in the urban areas and low-stress connections to them, needs a funding mechanism for urgent design and construction. At a minimum, all Tier One projects should be designed and more than half constructed by the end of the FY21-26 CIP. We ask the council to fund this delivery pipeline.
4. **Restore funds for the Parks department** that were removed by the County Executive in his proposed CIP budget, especially all funding for trails in our parks.
5. **Update the design for the dual bikeways proposed in the Seven Locks and Bradley Boulevard bike/ped projects.** These expensive yet very useful projects were designed many years ago and their designs do not meet the standards set out in the Bicycle Master Plan. Before going further, the designs should get an update. Similarly, the Goldsboro and Falls Road projects provide useful connections in the County and we must make sure they meet the standards set out in the Bicycle Master Plan.

All of these funding priorities, plus a concrete inclusion of funding for transit, will bring the County closer to reaching its commitment to Vision Zero. It is imperative that the County move concretely to achieve the goal of zero serious traffic injuries and deaths. It is equally important that the County make significant strides towards reducing our collective reliance on single passenger car travel by giving us all realistic and safe alternatives to getting in cars.

Thank you.