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WASHINGTON AREA
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

September 23, 2021

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks,

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, and its 6,000+ members in the Washington region, I would like to express our appreciation for former Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), Terry Bellamy.

While Director Bellamy has laid some good groundwork, the next DPWT Director still has their work cut out for them in order to make county roadways safe, accessible, and comfortable for all users (not just drivers). In 2020, 111 people died in traffic crashes in Prince George's County. This accounts for more than a third of all traffic deaths in the greater Washington area. Furthermore, the number of pedestrian fatalities has grown every year since 2015, reaching 30 pedestrian fatalities in 2019 alone. These tragedies are a result of decades of infrastructure investment that prioritized moving as many cars as quickly as possible and far too little attention to creating walkable, bikeable, and transit-rich community connections.

Therefore, as you search for your next DPWT Director, we would like to highlight a set of priorities that the next Director should focus on to ensure that Prince George's County takes leaps, not steps, towards a safe, connected, and equitable multimodal transportation system.

The priorities we would like to highlight are as follows:

- **A strong commitment to Vision Zero's safe systems approach.** The department has largely focused its efforts on educational campaigns in order to meet its goal of zero traffic deaths by 2040. Unfortunately, education and outreach campaigns are not making measurable progress in reducing traffic fatalities. These methods focus on changing individual behaviors rather than creating road systems that encourage safe choices and minimize injuries when human error inevitably occurs. The new DPWT Director must ensure equitable investments in new complete streets infrastructure on all County roads, refocus on engineering streets that reduce speed and limit opportunities for severe traffic crashes, consistently implement [DPWT's Urban Street Design Standards](#), and implement bold policies to ensure the County starts making significant progress towards meeting its Vision Zero goals.
- **Embracing off-street trails as critical to transportation in the region and making a strong commitment to stronger partnerships with M-NCPPC and other stakeholders to complete and maintain the Capital Trails Network.** Throughout the pandemic, there has been a boom in the number of residents who are using our off-street trails to bike, walk, and roll for recreation and general transportation. Trails have

provided an opportunity for residents to have a safe, socially distant way to move across the County and into neighboring jurisdictions. Last summer, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOCG) adopted the National Capital Trail Network by unanimous vote. The support from MWCOCG, as well as past resident surveys, underlines the broad public support for more safe, accessible and equitable trails connecting diverse communities across Prince George's County. Therefore, the next Director must move swiftly to ensure the Department has the resources and funds to complete its part of the trail network. This includes the:

- Oxon Run Trail (behind Eastover Shopping Center)
- Prince George's Connector Trail
- Central Avenue Connector Trail

Each of these trail projects include DPWT right-of-way and require cooperation and coordination with MDOT State Highway Administration as well as M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation in order to move forward. Trails cannot just be the responsibility of the Parks department.

- **More inclusive and transparent public engagement.** It is of the utmost importance that DPWT continues to find ways to ensure that all projects and plans are data-driven and include a community engagement process that is transparent and inclusive. We will also implore the new DPWT Director to continue to find new ways to engage residents in communities with the highest rates of traffic crashes and fatalities, to ensure that Vision Zero projects are being effectively communicated and implemented. For example, community engagement was severely lacking during the recent development of the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan.
- **Commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through less driving in Prince George's County.** The next Director must make a dedicated commitment to building a robust, multimodal transportation system as outlined in the Vision Zero Action Plan. That commitment must include pushing for resources to create an interconnected, protected bike lane network, and it must also include equitable investments in public transit and safe infrastructure for walking. This will require collaboration with MDOT SHA to make sure that the arterial roads, which are predominantly owned by SHA, also have the infrastructure needed for safe biking and walking.

The new Director will be entering at a time where bold and transformative leadership is necessary to ensure that we have safe and equitable infrastructure development in Prince George's County. The new Director will need to establish the metrics and push for the budgetary funding that will be needed to develop a county-wide connected and protected bike lane network, ensure that a multimodal transportation system is equitably distributed, and establish strong coordination with relevant stakeholders to complete the trails network.

We hope that you will ensure that the new DPWT Director embraces these aforementioned priorities. We look forward to working with you, the County Council, and the new Director to ensure that we collectively rise to the challenge.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Lowery

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Advocacy Director

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association

On behalf of the following organizations:

Katie Harris, Director of Advocacy, Adventure Cycling Association

Laurie Lemieux, Co-owner, Proteus Bicycles

Meagan Baco, Executive Director, Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.

Denaro Gardner, President, Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club

Alex Baca, Policy Manager, Greater Greater Washington

Daniel Paschall, Mid-Atlantic Manager, East Coast Greenway Alliance

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Joshua Feldmark, Executive Director, Bike Maryland

Laurie Williams, DMV Leader, Black Women Bike

CC:

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