



February 8, 2022

RE: Montgomery County FY2023 CIP Budget

Dear President Albornoz, Vice President Glass, and Members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Capital Improvement Program budget for fiscal year 2023. I am writing on behalf of the Capital Trails Coalition to support the county's investment in multi-use trails.

The Coalition is made up of over 70 member organizations, agencies, and businesses across Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia. Our goal is to create an equitable, connected, and low-stress trail network that will transform public life by providing access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

The CTC is asking the Council to restore the funding requested by MNCPPC's Montgomery Parks Department. We were extremely disappointed to see County Executive Elrich cut \$19M from the parks department's budget. If this cut materializes, funding for rehabilitation of existing infrastructure will be cut by almost \$5M. A portion of this cut funding would be spent on repaving trails that are in dire need of improvements like the Rock Creek Park, Sligo Creek, and Capital Crescent Trails. While we commend the County Executive's focus on investing to combat climate change, we cannot afford to underfund our parks department which maintains and builds key active transportation facilities, like multi-use trails. If you do not invest in these improvements now, these problems will cascade in future years and cost the County even more.

Furthermore, we are very excited about the plans included in the budget to conduct a study to repave the Capital Crescent Trail! The CCT is one of the most heavily used trails in the country for commuting, and advocates have been asking for it to be repaved for many years.

Lastly, we are strong supporters of the Capital Crescent Trail Tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue. This tunnel will provide a critical, separated crossing for vulnerable trail users like children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. We ask that you continue to keep the \$43M commitment from the County in the CIP budget for FY 2026-2028. We understand that this requires finding a \$12.4M investment from the State or Federal Government. We ask that staff work diligently to drum up support for these funds between now and the next CIP cycle.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Piperno

Stephanie Piperno

Trails Coalition Manager

Washington Area Bicyclist Association