



October 4, 2022

Good evening Chairman Shapiro and members of the Planning Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Kalli Krumpos and I am here on behalf of the Capital Trails Coalition.

The Capital Trails Coalition is made up of more than 70 member organizations, including agencies, businesses, and community groups across Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia.

Our goal is to create an equitable, connected, and low-stress network of nearly 1,000 miles of multi-use trails that will transform public life by providing access to open spaces and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

I want to start off by thanking the M-NCPPC for the great work you are doing. For example, we are thrilled to see progress on trail development - including the start of construction on the WB&A Trail bridge connecting Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties and construction on the Rhode Island Trolley Trail - in addition to progress implementing a comprehensive wayfinding sign plan for the Anacostia River Trail, which is transformational in allowing people to navigate the trail system safely.

As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the number of people who ventured to our regional trails for walking, running, and cycling. For example, between April through September 2020, there was an 81% increase in trail users on the Anacostia River Trail compared to the same time in 2019. In March 2020, trails nationwide saw, on average, a 79% increase in use.

Similarly, the Prince George's County Trails Master Plan found that the vast majority of Prince George's County residents (79%) think it is very important to add, expand, and improve trails, increasing the quality of life for county residents. If you have been out on the Anacostia Tributary Trails or the Henson Creek Trail, you'll know that this trend has not slowed.

These usage rates and community surveys tell us that it is an opportune time to invest more funding into trails as they are not only recreational assets, but are also critical transportation assets. People will only continue to select trails as a means of transportation if we build out the network and connect these trails to the places people work, shop, and play.

We call for prioritized funding for connecting and completing trails already in the County's plans - especially the Oxon Run Trail, Prince George's County Connector, and Suitland Parkway Trail, among others.

Trails are not simply a nice to have amenity, but are **critical** pieces of sustainable transportation infrastructure and are vital to our mental and physical health. A high-quality, well connected trail network is important because research has shown that the benefits to the community extend far beyond individual users.

The Capital Trails Coalitions' report - "The Economic, Health, and Environmental Benefits of Completing the Capital Trails Network", shows that, when the county completes the more than 200 miles of multi-use trails in the Capital Trails Network (which are already included in county plans),

the county will see \$190 million dollars in total economic impacts per year, as well as \$435 million dollars in savings per year resulting from economic, health, and environmental benefits - including from new jobs created, increased property values, health savings, a range of environmental outcomes and many more benefits.

We look forward to supporting and working with you to move forward these important trail projects - including through the implementation of your Master Trails Plan and the Formula 2040 Plan - as well as new opportunities such as the connection along Greenbelt Road that Mr. Lemiuu recommended.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kalli Krumpos

Trails Coalition Manager

Washington Area Bicyclist Association