



March 8, 2023

The Honorable Don Beyer
United States Representative for Virginia's 8th District
1119 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Beyer,

I am writing on behalf of the Capital Trails Coalition to express our full support for Arlington County's request for design funding for the Arlington Boulevard Trail via this year's Congressionally Directed Spending program.

The Capital Trails Coalition (the "Coalition") is a collaboration of over 70 public and private organizations, agencies, and volunteer advocates across six jurisdictions who are working together to complete a 990-mile network of interconnected, multi-use trails in the national capital region. Our founding partners include the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and the National Parks Service.

The Arlington Boulevard Trail is one of the 40 top priority Capital Trails Coalition projects selected from more than 180 trail segments due to its significance in filling a critical gap in the regional bicycle and pedestrian network. Its importance is also highlighted in the National Capital Trail Network, the visionary 1,400-mile trail network recently adopted by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Arlington Boulevard (Route 50) is a multi-lane street running east/west through Arlington and Fairfax Counties as a main transportation corridor. Currently, Arlington Boulevard prioritizes cars and suffers from significant gaps in pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly facilities. Peppered throughout the planned trail route are disconnected stretches of service road that are bicycle/pedestrian friendly, but the numerous gaps make Arlington Boulevard an unreliable route for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A rehabilitated and complete Arlington Boulevard Trail would greatly expand walkability and access to the numerous neighborhoods, schools, and businesses that line the corridor and reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated carbon emissions.

A comprehensive County study identified the segment of the Arlington Boulevard Trail between South George Mason Drive and South Glebe Road, adjacent to the National Guard Bureau and National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC), as one of the most critical, unsafe, and constrained areas of the trail. The existing facility is a narrow 5' sidewalk, lacking a buffer between trail users and vehicles traveling at speed on Route 50. Proximity to high-speed vehicles results in frequent obstruction by roadway debris and makes for an uninviting facility, not to mention, poses a higher risk to people walking, biking, and rolling on the trail.



The County is looking to prioritize improvements and recently released draft design concepts for this area that propose an improved, protected trail adjacent to the NFATC complex. The recommendations include improved crossings and the installation of a wider 10' multi-use, 'all ages and abilities' trail that meets the County's standards for width, buffer, and physical separation from the roadway. In total, the proposed design would greatly improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and access and will help kickstart the reimagining of Arlington Boulevard writ large as a welcoming, people-centered corridor.

We have been encouraged by Arlington County's overall design and community engagement process, and we commend the County for prioritizing segments in most need of safety improvements over easier-to-build projects.

The Capital Trails Coalition is excited to support this transformational project and we urge you to consider Arlington County's request for Congressionally Directed Spending for design funding to advance this pivotal project.

Sincerely,

Kalli Krumpas

*Trails Coalition Manager
Capital Trails Coalition*