



Prince George's County Planning Board Public Forum
FY 2025 Budget

October 4, 2023

Chair Shapiro and Planning Board Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is a nonprofit organization active in Prince George's County and throughout the Washington region. We envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

WABA offers brief comments on the FY 2025 budget, but we will start by commending Prince George's Parks' stepped up efforts at trail maintenance: resurfacing and repairs, bridges, wayfinding signage and pavement markings, and other elements needed to maintain a first-class trail system for bicycling, walking, and rolling in Prince George's parks, whether for recreation or as a green, healthy way of getting around the county. Your investment is paying off.

Please continue fully funding trail construction and maintenance – for both paved and natural-surface trails – and improvements that enhance safety, in particular where trails and roads intersect.

We are concerned, however, that Prince George's Parks does not have a formal trails program and that trail planning, design, engineering, and management functions are significantly understaffed. This gap can't be filled solely by hiring consultants. The parks system needs trails staff who understand on-the-ground conditions, regulatory requirements, and approval processes. Specific needs include traffic engineers to look at trail-road intersections and landscape architects with trail-design experience. And the parks system needs project managers skilled at implementing complex capital projects.

Consider the Central Avenue Connector Trail (CACT) as an example. The trail – funded in part by a \$25 million federal RAISE grant announced this last summer – will begin west of the Capitol Heights Metro Station, running through a combination of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) right-of-way, neighborhood streets, and existing and planned trail segments, before ending at the Largo Town Center Metro Station. CACT construction will be a complex project, with transit, housing and economic development, and safety considerations. There are and will be other projects like it across Prince George's County.

Please ensure funding for trail construction and maintenance and for the staff needed to realize our vision of a first-class trail network spanning Prince George's County.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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