



Prince George's County Budget Listening Session

January 29, 2024

County Executive Alsobrooks,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) envisions a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. We and our members are active in Prince George's County, working with the County Council, county agencies, and Prince George's County's wonderful municipalities on safe streets and active transportation options. We've worked to build strong relationships with M-NCPPC, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, and State Highway Administration and Maryland Transit Administration officials responsible for state roads and Purple Line construction.

We appreciate the attention and resources that the county has put into a diversity of projects and initiatives. The Blue Line Corridor and Central Avenue Connector Trail, the Walkable Urban Streets Act, Bike Share expansion, and the Ager Road Green-Complete Street Project (albeit not everything one could hope for): let's maintain the pace of project development and strive to do even better.

County Executive Alsobrooks, you launched Vision Zero Prince George's "to make our streets safe for everyone by 2040... eliminat[ing] all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all including people who walk, bike, drive, and use transit." However, Prince George's experienced 129 road deaths in 2023 including 39 pedestrians and three bicyclists. We've seen too many tragedies like the deaths of 5-year-old Sky Sosa and 10-year-old Shalom Mbah, killed in November walking to school in Riverdale Park. Prince George's experienced 113 road deaths in 2019, 111 in 2020, 130 in 2021, 122 in 2022, and, again, 129 last year. We are sadly making no progress.

Our FY25 suggestion has three points. On the capital-budget side, please maintain project spending and maximize the county's investment in sidewalks, pedestrian-crossing improvements, separated bike lanes, and trails, to expand the county's bike network and encourage walking and bicycling and also to boost transit utilization and ease traffic congestion. On the operational side, at modest cost, please:

- Add DPW&T design and engineering staff focused on pedestrian-safety improvements, safe roadways, and bicycling infrastructure, to accelerate project development and construction, tapping federal and state transportation funding.
- Create a Prince George's County e-bike purchase subsidy program, heavily income-qualified, to boost uptake of this ultra-green mobility solution. Washington DC's program, implemented in 2023, provides an excellent local example of what you can do without breaking the bank.

We will continue to work with you and your administration and the council to make Prince George's streets safer. For now, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of WABA and our Prince George's County members.

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