



Prince George's County, FY 25 Operating Budget and FY25-FY30 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

April 29, 2024

Council Chair Ivey, Vice Chair Harrison, and Council Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is an advocacy organization with over 21,000 supporters regionally. We envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

We appreciate the attention and resources that the County has put into an array of pedestrian and bicycle improvements including design funding for Dept. of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) top 15 Bicycle Network Plan projects. Regarding County capital investments:

- Please sustain and expand bikeways planning, design, and construction funding including build-out of the Capital Trails Network in Prince George's County.
- Please also allocate capital funds to retrofit road-safety improvements per the new design standards you directed last year, via the Walkable Urban Streets Act.

Other investments will advance active transportation in Prince George's County – walking, biking, and other non-motor vehicle modes – in conjunction with strong transit support. Our vision is green mobility for Prince George's residents, visitors, businesses, and employees. We ask you to:

- 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.
- Add DPW&T resources to pursue federal and state grant funding.
- Fund Bikeshare expansion with a focus on geographic equity to expand access to central and southern areas of the County.
- 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.

And Prince George's County must sustain a strong Vision Zero focus. DPW&T staff are reworking the county's Vision Zero plan, in keeping with the County's commitment "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." 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.

One of our points is “Add DPW&T resources to pursue federal and state grant funding.” DPW&T senior staff have lamented that the department is under-resourced, which means that the County is unable to leverage funding that could be applied toward safe streets and pedestrian and bicyclist facilities.

Prince George’s County has been successful in securing federal grants to support this important work. The County led a 2023 \$25 million RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability) award that will fund regional trail projects including the Central Avenue Connector Trail, a component of the Blue Line Corridor economic development platform. Prince George's County was awarded \$21 million dollars in Safe Streets and Roadways for all (SS4A) grant funding last year and won \$4.6 million in Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) pedestrian-safety project funding. Please work with the Administration including the Dept. of Public Works and Transportation to aggressively pursue opportunities to secure federal and state funds for projects that will make Prince George’s streets safer and encourage walking and bicycling.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you on this important work.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of WABA and our Prince George’s County members.

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