



FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program Public Hearing
Montgomery County Planning Board

September 7, 2023

Chair Harris and Planning Board Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) offers brief comments on the FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program.

WABA is a nonprofit organization with over 700 Montgomery County members. We envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

One of eight areas staff recommends focusing on is "Continue improving safety along our parkways and trail network through traffic calming and Vision Zero strategies." We support this recommendation and see a particular need to focus on safety improvements where parkways and trails intersect, or a parkway or trail intersects a non-park road.

We are excited to see the plans for Lyttonsville Park, including many amenities that will be a draw for people walking, running, and biking on the Capital Crescent Trail. These plans should ensure that the park amenities maintain the comfort and safety of all users on the Capital Crescent Trail, as well as park visitors.

Another staff recommendation is a focus on "Improving community access and enjoyment of Parks through increased rehabilitation of our hard surface trail network." Staff notes that that "Parks owns and maintains a 68-mile hard-surface trail system that is one of the most highly valued parks assets, as demonstrated through surveys and trail usage data." WABA supports this recommendation and also calls for funding maintenance of natural-surface trails and expansion of the trails network with both hard- and natural-surface trails.

Regarding safety and trails network maintenance and expansion, WABA would like to see special attention to East County and to closing the gaps in the Intercounty Connector Trail, an important east-west cycling route.

Finally, Parks staff advocates roads transfer from MCDOT's budget back into Parks and an increase in annual funding, "Parks staff... believes this transfer will benefit both agencies and allow Parks to provide this service at less overall cost to the taxpayers." WABA endorses this transfer. We understand that the lack of Parks' control of this funding has been a factor making it harder to implement permanent road diets, open parkways, and create bike/ped accommodations on Park roads, because powers outside Parks have used control to block or slow these projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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