



March 3, 2023

Testimony for Department of Transportation Oversight Hearing from the Capital Trails Coalition

Chair Allen and members of the committee:

My name is Kalli Krumpas and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Capital Trails Coalition, a collaboration of over 70 public and private organizations, agencies, and community groups across six jurisdictions, working to complete a 990-mile interconnected network of multi-use trails in the national capital region. Our founding partners include the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and the National Park Service.

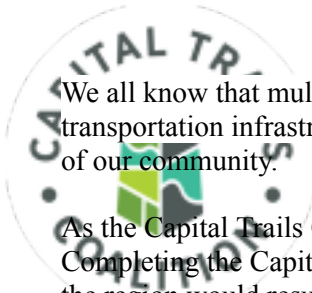
The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) plays a key role in designing and implementing the multi-use trails throughout the District. We celebrate progress made on a number of DC's multi-use trails made during the last year, but emphasize the importance of continuing to build out the Capital Trail Network, as described in Strategy #22 in the MoveDC Plan.

In addition to focusing on building additional high-quality, multi-use trails, we ask DDOT to define and identify critical gaps in the trail network and develop a method to measure the extent to which a project improves connectivity in order to better prioritize projects. The development of our trail network should be measured not just by the total additional miles of trails, but also by the number of critical gaps eliminated so that more residents are served and to address inequitable access to trails.

We also call on DDOT to work with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to assign roles and responsibilities related to the proper cleaning and maintenance of existing facilities and most specifically pedestrian facilities on bridges.

While the District agencies have acknowledged that sidewalks, shared-use paths, and trails require snow maintenance and have made funding available for the purchase of specialized snow removal equipment, they have not created a similar plan and budget for ongoing, year-round maintenance. Currently, there is no clear entity responsible for cleaning and clearing sidewalks and shared-use paths across bridges. The facilities on bridges for people walking, bicycling, and rolling – especially those that do not have a complete barrier from road facilities – often accumulate litter and detritus like broken glass that makes the routes dangerous, uncomfortable, and unattractive.

Despite known maintenance best practices, the regular sweeping and cleaning of sidewalks and shared-use paths over bridges has not been designated to a specific department and therefore does not happen. Without a dedicated agency to address this concern, residents' requests or complaints are left unaddressed; in fact, residents do not have a place to even request this type of service in 311. Residents are unable to associate a specific bridge maintenance issue to a physical address or to a proper category.



We all know that multi-use trails are a popular amenity, but they are also critical pieces of sustainable transportation infrastructure that are vital to our mental and physical health and to support the economics of our community.

As the Capital Trails Coalitions' report entitled "The Economic, Health, and Environmental Benefits of Completing the Capital Trails Network" found, completing the entire network of multi-use trails across the region would result in more than one \$1 billion in total economic impact every year, serving 3.9 million residents.

When the District completes the remaining miles of multi-use trails in the Capital Trails Network - all projects that have been vetted, approved, and included in our capital plans - the District can expect to see more than \$162 million dollars in total economic impacts per year, and more than \$463 million dollars in savings per year. These impacts come from new jobs created, increased property values, savings from improved health, and a range of environmental outcomes that a world-class trail network brings.

Completing the trail segments in the Capital Trail Network will allow residents to travel by bicycle, foot, and other non-motorized means, easily and safely. Overall, this multi-jurisdictional endeavor will sustainably knit together neighborhoods and connect them to multiple public rail and bus transit lines, employment centers, schools, colleges and universities, grocery stores and retail centers, health care facilities, and recreational opportunities.

We feel strongly that the adoption of the measures discussed herein, namely the assignment of primary maintenance responsibility for the sidewalks and shared-use paths over every District bridge, by the Council and Mayor would meaningfully contribute to the District's Vision Zero program and MoveDC goals and generally make our city a better and safer place to walk, bike, and roll. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Kalli Krumpas*  
*Trails Coalition Manager*