



## Walkable Urban Streets Act Washington Area Bicyclist Association

November 14, 2023

Chair Dernoga and Council Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) supports the Walkable Urban Streets Act, Council Bill 69-2023 and its companion resolutions CR 67-2023 and CR 68-2023. We commend the many councilmembers who have co-sponsored this important legislation.

WABA's mission is to empower people to ride bikes, build connections, and transform places. For decades, WABA has worked to transform the capital region by improving the conditions for people who bike, walk, and take transit. We believe that biking and walking can and should be an equitable, safe, low-cost, time-saving, and sustainable way to navigate our communities for all residents, especially when complemented by robust transit options. We support projects and legislation such as the bills before you today that boost mobility and roadway safety for bicyclists, walkers, transit users, and everyone who needs to travel anywhere in Prince George's County and throughout the region.

As we prepare to recognize World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims this Sunday, November 19th – a day dedicated to remembering all people killed and seriously injured on our streets and to advocating for evidence-based actions to prevent and eventually stop all further traffic deaths and injuries, we must soberly grapple with the fact that our region and the county are failing commitments to residents, with traffic violence increasing rather than decreasing - particularly for people on foot and bike.

When we presented September, 84 people had been killed in traffic-related incidents. Now, just two months later, Prince George's County has experienced a total of 111 traffic fatalities in 2023, including 29 pedestrian and 3 bicyclist deaths – 27 more people killed (as reported by the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration Highway Safety Office statistics, Zero Deaths Maryland Crash Data Dashboard:

<https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/crashdashboard/>).

These deaths have occurred despite Prince George's County's, and the State of Maryland's, commitment to eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries under Vision Zero commitments. We must do better going forward.

The Walkable Urban Streets Act bill and resolutions are instances of the right actions. Enacting them will be an important step toward fulfilling the county's commitment.

The Act will update the county's Urban Street Design Standards, sensibly and in keeping with recognized effective design elements and responsive to local conditions. The key provisions – lower speed limits, narrower travel lanes and reduction in number based on current traffic

volumes, buffered or separated sidewalks and bike lanes, tighter turns to force drivers to slow or stop at intersections – the most dangerous part of our road network) – coupled with a requirement to adhere to standards, will reduce deaths and serious injuries for pedestrians, bicyclists, and all roadway users.

The Act will bring additional benefits. Safer, slower streets will mean walkable, vibrant downtowns and local centers, which will in turn boost community vibrancy and local economic opportunity.

WABA urges you to enact bill CB 69-2023 and resolutions CR 67-2023 and CR 68-2023. Thank you for considering our testimony. We look forward to working with you all to boost safe, walkable, bikeable roads throughout Prince George's County.

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