



February 17, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and its more than 7,000 members across the Washington metropolitan area to express our full support for the Arlington County Department of Environmental Services (DES) grant application to complete the Arlington Memorial Trail through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program.

For fifty years, WABA has worked to transform the capital region by improving the conditions for people who bike. Our work to advocate for dedicated bike infrastructure, pass laws that promote safe roadway behavior, and provide education programming for all road-users has resulted in a drastically different cultural and political approach to biking for transportation. Biking can and should be an equitable, safe, low-cost, time-saving, and sustainable way to navigate our region for all residents and visitors.

We see and treat multi-use trails as the strongest thread connecting people, regardless of their mode, to their built and natural environments. Trails are often the first and safest option people choose to gain access to the outdoors and commune with friends and family. Good trails are more than a transportation corridor, they're a hub for community. That is the reason we, along with partners like Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the National Parks Service, founded the Capital Trails Coalition, a collaboration of over 70 public and private organizations, agencies, and volunteer advocates, across six jurisdictions, working to complete a 990-mile interconnected network of multi-use trails in the national capital region.

The Arlington Memorial Trail is one of the 40 top priority Capital Trails Coalition projects selected from more than 180 trail segments due to its significance in filling a critical gap in the regional bicycle/pedestrian network. Its importance is also highlighted in the National Capital Trail Network, the

visionary 1,400-mile trail network recently adopted by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The trail will provide a needed connection between the fast-growing Arlington neighborhoods and business districts of Pentagon City and Crystal City in the south and Rosslyn in the north, as well as between Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. It offers a low-stress, off-road, people-friendly transportation alternative through one of the region's most notorious and difficult-to-traverse tangles of federal facilities and major highways.

In addition to being a transportation link on its own, the Arlington Memorial Trail will also increase access to transit, providing a connection directly to and between the Arlington Cemetery and Pentagon Metro stations and expanding the multimodal reach of the nearby Rosslyn and Crystal City Metro stations. Investing in our transit and active transportation networks are absolutely critical to encouraging the kind of mode shift called for by both Arlington County and the current administration per their stated commitments to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and transportation-related carbon emissions.

This short but pivotal connection between Washington, DC, the Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon Memorial, the future Pentagon 9/11 Memorial Visitor Center, and the surrounding growing communities will improve multimodal options and safety for the rapidly increasing number of trail users - both local residents and visiting tourists - in this region. The project, when finished, can be showcased as a model project of how filling critical gaps in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can have exponentially beneficial network effects and how all levels of government can work together to create vibrant and connected communities and public spaces.

We therefore urge you to select Arlington County DES's application for a 2023 RAISE grant to support this critical project.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Lowery

Jeremiah Lowery
Advocacy Director, Washington Area Bicyclist Association