



Walkable Urban Streets Act Washington Area Bicyclist Association

September 14, 2023

Chair Olson and members of the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee,

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.

WABA's mission is to empower people to ride bikes, build connections, and transform places. 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 DMV.

Prince George's County has experienced 84 traffic fatalities this year, 2023, through yesterday, September 13, including 21 pedestrian and 3 bicyclist deaths. (MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration Highway Safety Office statistics, [https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/crashdashboard/.](https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/crashdashboard/))

These deaths have occurred despite Prince George's County's, and the State of Maryland's, commitment to Vision Zero, "a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries." The guiding principle for Prince George's County – quoting the Vision Zero Prince George's Web site – is that "tragic roadway crashes are preventable with the right actions and commitment."

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 (which force vehicles to slow or stop at intersections, the most dangerous part of our road network) – coupled with an inescapable requirement to adhere to standards, will reduce deaths and serious injuries for pedestrians, bicyclists, and all roadway users.

We concur with advocacy that the bill should be amended to carefully review and limit the situations in which the agencies – DPW&T and DPIE – can deviate from the updated standards.

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.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges Favorable action on bill CB 69-2023 and resolutions CR 67-2023 and CR 68-2023. Thank you for considering our testimony.

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