



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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February 22, 2011

The Honorable Rushern L. Baker III
County Executive
Prince Georges County
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-3050

Dear Mr. Baker:

Your recent inauguration has raised hopes from Laurel to Eagle Harbor that opportunity is knocking and that this time, Prince George's County is going to answer. You have often spoken about the need for transit-oriented redevelopment and the importance of creating attractive neighborhoods. We urge you to dedicate the county government to making neighborhoods walkable and bikeable, which is one of the most cost-effective steps you could take toward achieving your revitalization goals.

Walking and bicycling offer a simple, affordable, and sustainable solution for a range of county concerns, including traffic congestion, community safety, obesity, air quality, and access to employment. During the last decade, concerns about the environment and congestion have led to urban revitalizations that emphasize walking and biking over reliance on automobile. The redeveloped neighborhoods of the District, Arlington, Alexandria, and Montgomery County all are thriving with increased numbers of people walking and bicycling. High property values tend to be associated with walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.

Most people in Prince George's County live within a reasonable walking or biking distance to stores, schools, parks, friends, and churches. But many people do not feel comfortable walking or biking along our roads. So people drive, wait for a bus, or in some cases fail to make a needed trip at all. While other jurisdictions in the region have made significant progress in making cycling and walking safer and easier, Prince George's has not. The other jurisdictions each have full-time staff in their transportation departments explicitly tasked with improving cycling and walking; but Prince George's does not. In fact, our Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) sometimes *discourages* cycling on official bike routes identified in the County Master plan. County police do not enforce laws requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

You have an opportunity to set a new course. We urge you to create a full-time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator position within the county government, direct DPW&T to make bicycling and walking a priority using professional best practices, and develop a bicycle-pedestrian plan with specific milestones to be implemented in the next 4 to 8 years.

Prince Georges County is poised for substantial growth and development and has the opportunity to put in place policies and facilities that could have positive ramifications for generations. Disconnected pieces of a potentially robust cycling network exist in the County, and functionally connecting those pieces would do much for the transportation network, public safety, and the perception that the county lags behind the other major jurisdictions in the national capital area in issues relating to smart growth, non-motorized transportation, and economic development. Despite our current economic climate, these measures can be taken with a minimal investment. They would showcase Prince George's as a vibrant, vital place to live and work and invest in!

With your vision, leadership, and support, Prince George's County can have a great bicycling network within the next several years. We would like to meet with you and your staff during the next month, as you continue to set your priorities for making this county greater. A modest investment in bicycling and walking infrastructure would go a long way toward furthering your goals to improve our communities, economy, our air quality, and public health.

Sincerely,



Barbara Klieforth, President (Cottage City resident)



James G. Titus, Director (Glenn Dale resident)

Shane Farthing, Executive Director

cc: Eric Olson, Council Member, District 3
| Andrea Harrison, Council Member, District 5