



## WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

2599 ONTARIO RD NW | WASHINGTON, DC 20009 | (202) 518-0524 | WABA.ORG

May 15, 2017

Members of the Montgomery County Council,

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and our 1,115 members and 13,000 supporters in Montgomery County, I write to urge you to restore funding for Montgomery County Parks in the County's FY18 budget.

Montgomery County has a strong history of investing in parks and natural resources, and rightly so. The County's parks are among the biggest contributors to Montgomery County's exemplary quality of life. Regionally, residents consistently rank park trails as their top priority for recreation in parks. As the County increasingly begins to look to park trails as a transportation resource, now is the wrong time to divert funding away from these amenities.

County Executive Ike Leggett's budget recommends a \$4.3 million (4.5%) decrease from the Planning Board's proposed budget, which effectively eliminates all program enhancements and will result in a reduction of services across many very important programs. The Parks department needs at least \$1.7 million of its funding request restored to continue to provide quality services for community residents, including crucial park trail maintenance and trail planning.

Montgomery Parks is a member of the Capital Trails Coalition, a collaboration of public and private organizations, agencies, and citizen volunteers working to advance completion of an interconnected network of multi-use trails for metropolitan Washington, DC. The Coalition and our regional network are garnering national attention as a model for the development of trail networks across the country. Cutting funding now for trail operations and maintenance would be a major blow to this effort, and a terrible missed opportunity.

Montgomery Parks has been recognized six times as the best park system in the United States. I urge you to uphold this proud tradition by supporting Montgomery Parks during the budget reconciliation process and restoring the funding for these vital and vibrant amenities.

Sincerely,

Tamara Evans  
Advocacy Director