



P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824

January 14, 2005

Secretary Robert Flanagan
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Flanagan:

We are writing to ask that the State Highway Administration reconsider its recent decision to delete the pedestrian/bicycle trail from the ICC project.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to completing and preserving the Capital Crescent Trail and to educating the public about the benefits of trails to a healthy environment and lifestyle. We have over 1600 contributing members.

The Capital Crescent Trail is one of the most heavily used trails in the State of Maryland. It is very successful because it follows a continuous, direct right-of-way through numerous neighborhoods and parklands, and has few interferences with motor vehicle traffic at roadway and driveway crossings. The ICC pedestrian/biker trail, as originally proposed to follow alongside the ICC for its entire length, also would have these characteristics, and would also be popular and heavily used.

A pedestrian/bike path parallel to the ICC would encourage alternative modes of transportation, and contribute to well-being for residents throughout the region. Its length and grade-separated design would allow nearly 18 miles of uninterrupted bicycle travel. It would provide a critical east-west link between neighborhoods and parklands for non-motor vehicle traffic in an area with a current lack of good connecting routes. One of the strongest benefits of the Capital Crescent Trail has been to provide access between adjacent neighborhoods and parks for cyclists and pedestrians of all ages. The additional cost to the ICC project for the bike path is well worth the investment given its many strong benefits.

We believe the State Highway Administration is failing to adequately consider the long-term benefits of providing transportation alternatives to motor vehicles. A safe east-west bike/pedestrian path along the ICC corridor will improve the quality of life for many residents as they pursue a healthier lifestyle. The Capital Crescent Trail stands in testimony to how much benefit a good trail can bring to a region, and we should not lose this unique opportunity to have a good regional trail because of a short sighted decision to build the ICC as cheaply as possible.

We hope that the Maryland State Highway Administration takes into account the many

benefits of constructing this path and reconsiders its deletion.

Sincerely,

Ernie Brooks
Chair

cc.:
State Highway Administration
Doug Duncan, Montgomery County Executive
Montgomery County Council
Chair, M-NCPPC