



P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824

May 3, 2007

Royce Hanson, Chairman Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission
Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
Kevin Brandt, Superintendent Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park
Marilyn Praisner, Chairperson Montgomery County Council

Dear Messrs Hanson, Leggett, Brandt and Ms. Praisner

I write to highlight for you the issue of safety on the Capital Crescent Trail and several initiatives we at the Coalition for the Trail are pursuing, including the need to widen the paved portion of the Trail.

The Capital Crescent Trail is by far the most popular trail in the Washington Area and many users are from distant states and consider the Trail an important part of their Washington visits. However, popularity has come at a price; the Coalition has become increasingly aware that as the number of users on the Trail has increased (see the latest traffic count done by CCCT volunteers at www.cctrail.org) to over one million uses per year, the number of conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists has also appeared to be on the rise. Anecdotally, severe individual episodes evidence the need for measures that will enhance the safe use of the Trail. Number one among these is the need to widen the paved Trail between Bethesda and Georgetown, particularly in the area between downtown Bethesda and Massachusetts avenue, where use of the Trail is at its highest levels. Widening the Trail, making the paved portion at least 16 feet wide, will allow a greater separation between pedestrians and wheeled users such as bicyclists and roller bladders. While widening the Trail could be costly, there are few topological obstacles to overcome, thus making this doable over a short period of time.

But other measures are needed as well. The Coalition has recently spent over \$1300 to devise, publish and distribute a two page brochure on safety. The brochure (draft copy attached) includes proposed rules of trail use for all users. The brochure, plus items on our web page, and increasing safety-related signage along the Trail, will help educate users of all types in ways that they can enhance the safe use of the Trail. The Coalition also is reaching out to neighborhood-based organizations along the Trail and to the Washington Area Bicycle Association to join in our educational campaign to increase safe use of the trail.

In addition to widening the Trail and the educational campaign on safety, the Coalition is investigating physical means of slowing bicyclists at the intersections of the Trail and Dorset Avenue and with Little Falls Road to reduce the incidence of bicyclist-car conflicts.

The Coalition also advocates a greater Park Police presence on the Trail. Such an increased police presence would serve to encourage safer behavior on the part of all Trail users.

Finally, the Coalition is recruiting volunteers to be trained by the County Park Police and the National Park Service to act as patrols who would be able to monitor the Trail for unsafe behavior and to contact the County or National Park Police in case of egregious incidents occurring.

On behalf of the Coalition Board, I will contact your offices soon to set up meetings in order to follow up on the contents of this letter. We hope that the Planning Board, County Executive and Council, and the National Park Service will both support and supplement our efforts to enhance safety on the Trail. We also hope that the County and the National Park Service will both widen the trail and provide funds for other safety enhancements along the Trail.

Sincerely,

Peter Gray, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail Board Chairperson

cc Members of the M-NCPPC Board
 Members of the Montgomery County Council
 Mary Bradford, Director, Montgomery Department of Parks
 John Carter, Planning Board, Chief of Community Based Planning Division
 Lisa Rother, Planning Implementation - Office of the County Executive