



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Rushern L. Baker, III
County Executive

June 1, 2011

Ms. Melissa Daston
President
West Laurel Civic Association
P.O. Box 387
Laurel, Maryland 20725

Dear Ms. Daston:

Thank you very much for the letter on behalf of the West Laurel Civic Association regarding walkable neighborhoods, safe streets and strong inter-community connectivity. As noted in your letter, I am a very strong advocate for transit-oriented development and creating the kind of neighborhoods that bring communities together in environments with better access and mobility for all Prince Georgians.

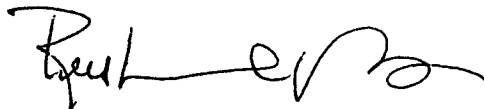
I believe strongly that creating a greater, greener Prince George's County is key to our future. Consequently, I announced in my FY12 proposed budget a plan for a "Green Streets" initiative that will include as part of these improvements, sidewalk and bicycle amenities and roads that enhance sustainability and create better neighborhood connectivity. As we make the transition to a more sustainable County, I will work with County agencies, specifically, the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), to promote this initiative. As resources have permitted, DPW&T allowed for accommodations of bicycle facilities where rights-of-way have been available when resurfacing roadways. In addition, DPW&T, in coordination with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), the School Board and the Police Department, recently received \$897,800 in Safe Routes to Schools funding that will be used for sidewalk and related infrastructure improvements in three school communities. The installation will be followed by programs at the recipient schools to encourage children to walk. This is in addition to DPW&T's aggressive County-wide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk retrofit program.

As you are aware, I share your goals for looking to the transit-oriented redevelopment model for creating a more vibrant, sustainable model for the County that also emphasizes strong pedestrian and bicycle connections. This is a central theme of my model for growing the County. However, we know that these changes will not come overnight, but working together, I am confident that we will make sustainable changes in moving our County forward.

I appreciate your suggestions regarding the adoption of complete streets guidelines for the County, as well as developing a bicycle-pedestrian plan. I have been working with the Director of DPW&T, Haitham Hijazi, regarding where a Green Streets concept can be implemented. As listed in the "Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010" compiled by the National Complete Streets Coalition, Prince George's County is one of only three counties in the nation recognized to have a complete streets policy as we have in the M-NCPPC Master Plan of Transportation. While your concern about staffing is well taken, it is important to note that the County and M-NCPPC work in unison to achieve the envisioned goals. The Supervisor of the Transportation Section of County-wide Planning, Mr. Eric Foster, also is Co-chair of the Bicycle Trails Advisory Group (BTAG) along with Mr. Fred Shaffer, who serves as the M-NCPPC Trails Coordinator, and Senior Planner, Daniel Janousek, both of whom are dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian issues. In addition, Victor Weissberg, the DPW&T's Director's Special Assistant, serves on the BTAG, and is a liaison with the bicycle and pedestrian community to address their concerns. Together, the two agencies' representatives identify workable solutions on how to best fulfill walkable and bikable communities. Please be assured that I am concerned and dedicated to advancing pedestrian and bicycle safety issues and will continue to do so.

I look forward to working with you and other communities who share like goals about advancing the agenda of creating stronger communities through better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and building a more sustainable environment.

Sincerely,



Rushern L. Baker, III
County Executive

cc: The Honorable Ingrid Turner, Chair, Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Mary Lehman, Council Member, Prince George's County Council
P. Michael Errico, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Carla A. Reid, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Haitham A Hijazi, Director, DPW&T
Fern Piret, Director of Planning, M-NCPPC