

RESOLUTION
of the
ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD

**COMPLETION OF THE CAPITAL TRAILS COALITION PRIORITY PROJECTS BY
2025 AND FULL NETWORK BY 2030**

WHEREAS, the Capital Trails Network is a connected system of multi-use trails (largely off-road) located in the jurisdictions that compromise the Metropolitan Washington region, including Washington, DC, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church, Fairfax City, and Prince George’s, Montgomery, Fairfax, and Arlington Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Trails Coalition seeks to create a world-class network of 881 miles of multi-use trails that are equitably distributed throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan region (of which 479 miles are already complete); and

WHEREAS, the regional trails network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and active transportation for people of all ages and abilities to their daily destinations around the region; and

WHEREAS, when the trails network is complete, nearly 4 million people will live within a 2-mile walk or ride of the network, giving them access to jobs, businesses, transit, and recreational opportunities, while also reducing the region’s greenhouse gas emissions by bolstering its sustainable transportation network. Completing the 40 priority trail projects (91 miles of trail) will bring access to an additional 231,000 residents in underserved areas that have historically lacked safe access to trails and open space (61% of which are Black and 14% of which are Hispanic); and

WHEREAS, regional local governments have already made significant progress towards planning, designing and constructing the (40) priority projects with 21 miles of trail currently in construction and \$100M already allocated to planned projects. This regional commitment will help ensure the adequate resources to complete the remaining miles by 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Trail Coalition projects are also County priorities that will be a focus when requesting federal and state funding streams; and

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) have both recently adopted the National Capital Trail Network, which includes the 40 priority trail projects identified by the Capital Trails Coalition, as a regional priority. The network is already being used to prioritize funding from federal, state and local grant programs

including the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Transportation-Land Use Connections (TLC) Program; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Trails Coalition Network forms the crossroads of multiple regional and national long-distance trails, including the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, the Grand History Trail, the September 11th National Memorial Trail, the American Discovery Trail, the C&O Canal Towpath, the Great American Rail-Trail, and the East Coast Greenway, which collectively span 33 states and tens of thousands of miles; and

WHEREAS, the results of a recent “Voices of the Region” survey conducted by MWCOG, which asked over 2,400 Washington Region residents about their travel before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, show that residents’ travel patterns have changed as a result of the pandemic and that they would like to continue to walk (53%) and bike (26%) more and drive less post-pandemic. Additionally, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has found that 65% of over 800 participants surveyed in the Washington Region consider trails and open space to be important to them; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of investing in greenspace. According to the 2020 [Menino Survey of Mayors](#), three out of four mayors expect residents to spend more time visiting parks and greenspace than they did before the pandemic, and roughly two-thirds expect residents will spend more time biking or walking. In the same survey, 38% of Mayors expect parks/recreation to see dramatic financial cuts in their community; and

WHEREAS, completing the trail network would make the Washington Metropolitan Area a model for other regions across the nation. As working remotely becomes the new normal for more people following the COVID-19 pandemic, our area will be competing with other regions to attract top talent. A robust regional trail network will make our region more competitive for attracting and retaining new residents and businesses, and we know the network will generate \$1.02B in economic impact each year; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Arlington County hereby endorses the concept of the region completing the 40 priority projects of Capital Trails Coalition Network by 2025, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Governor of the State of Virginia, and the Virginia State Department of Transportation.

Adopted the 18th day of September, 2021.