



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

June 16, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

FROM: Alex Hirtle 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CR-062-2021 Capital Trails Coalition

CR-062-2021 (*proposed by: Council Members Glaros, Anderson-Walker, Davis, Franklin, Ivey, Streeter, Taveras and Hawkins, Harrison, Dernoga and Turner*)

Assigned to Committee of the Whole (COW)

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE CAPITAL TRAILS COALITION for the purpose of providing information about the Capital Trails Coalition and the Capital Trails Network; providing for the healthy lifestyle that hiking and biking can advance; providing for the high number of users when the Capital Trails Network is completed; providing for the receipt of Federal and State funds; providing that the Capital Trail Network has been designated a regional priority; providing that the Capital Trail Network provides a crossroads with multiple regional and national trails; providing for the increase use of hike and bike rails during COVID-19; providing for the investment in greenspace; providing that the County will be a model for other jurisdictions; providing for a significant economic impact; endorsing the region completing the 40 priority projects of the Capital Trails Coalition Network by 2025; and requesting the County Executive and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as well as the State of Maryland and the Federal Government, to assist in prioritizing Prince George's County Capital Trails Network projects for funding.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: None likely.

Revenues: None likely.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially positive.

Legislative Summary:

CR-062-2021, sponsored by Council Members Glaros, Anderson-Walker, Davis, Franklin, Ivey, Streeter, Taveras and Hawkins, Harrison, Dernoga and Turner, was introduced on June 8th, 2021 and was referred to the Council of the Whole (COW). The Resolution requests that the County Executive, M-NCPPC and the Planning Commission, the State of Maryland, and the federal government to assist in prioritizing the Prince George's County Capital Trails Network projects for funding, and endorses the region completing the 40 priority projects of the Capital Trails Coalition Network by 2025.

Current Law/Background:

The Capital Trails Coalition (CTC) is a collaboration of public and private organizations, agencies, and citizen volunteers working to advance completion of an interconnected network of multi-use trails for the metropolitan Washington DC region. The Coalition convenes and coordinates among public and private stakeholders to accomplish the vision of an interconnected network. CTC seeks to create a trails network that is accessible to all ages and abilities, healthy and safe, equitably distributed across all jurisdictions, reliable for transportation, and accessible to open space, including recreational areas, nature, and greenspace.¹

The Capital Trails Network is a connected system of multi-use trails located in jurisdictions of the metropolitan Washington DC region including the District of Columbia; the City of Alexandria; the City of Falls Church; Fairfax City; and Prince George's, Montgomery, Fairfax, and Arlington Counties. The Network consists of 881 miles of multi-use trails, and an additional 242 miles are planned for Prince George's County.² When the Trails Network is complete, nearly four million people, including over 540,180 working age adults in Prince George's County will live within a two mile walk or ride of the Network, giving access to jobs, businesses, transit, recreation opportunities, while reducing the region's Greenhouse gas emissions.³

¹ <https://www.capitaltrailscoalition.org/about/>

² The Capital Trails Network Report, CTC, page 7.

³ The Capital Trails Network Report, CTC.

The 40 Priority Trail Projects is a list of trail projects that are stated priorities through the CTC and the jurisdictions. The list includes thirteen projects in Prince George's County and includes projects such as the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail, the Central Avenue Trail Connection, the Little Paint Branch Trail, the Suitland Parkway Trail, and the Piscataway Creek Trail. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) and the National Capital Regional Transportation Planning Board both recently endorsed the Capital Trails Network.⁴

Resource Personnel:

Aimee E. Olivo, Chief of Staff for Council Member Glaros.

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

The 40 Priority Trails Projects noted above are County and municipality (City/Town) priorities within our jurisdiction for environmental, health, economic, social, and transportation reasons.⁵ The benefits and cost savings to the region run over \$3 billion annually, including \$190 million annually in our county, with a \$1.09 billion trail expansion investment. Many of the projects designated in Prince George's County connect trails that currently exist but are not fully continuous, providing for a practical transportation purpose, which may be useful when applying for grants or other new funds that support alternative transportation projects. Given the funding that has been anticipated with possible passage of federal legislation focused on infrastructure spending, these priority projects would be the focus when requesting federal and State funding streams.

As noted in the Resolution, with the 40 Priority Trails Projects, 21 miles are currently under construction and \$100 million have already been allocated to the planned projects. This regional commitment will help ensure adequate resources to complete the remaining miles by 2025, and will provide access to an additional 231,000 residents in underserved areas that historically lacked safe accessible trails and open space.⁶ This would be an important equity factor both in Prince George's County, and the Washington metropolitan region.

Another important factor in this Resolution is that there has been a renewed interest and use of multi-use trails since the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic. A recent survey entitled "Voices of the Region" by MWCOC which asked over 2,400 Washington region residents about travel before-during-after the Pandemic showed that they would like to continue to walk (53%), bike

⁴ <https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/washington-council-of-governments-formally-endorses-national-capital-trail-network-another-major-step-forward-for-regional-trails-walking-and-biking>;
<https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2020/08/26/check-out-the-national-capital-trail-network>

⁵ The Capital Trails Network Report, CTC, page 9.

⁶ The Capital Trails Network Report, CTC, page 3.

(26%), and drive less.⁷ By making these trail projects a priority, residents in the County can have an expanded infrastructure to enjoy and utilize these trails.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CR-062-2021 will have a potentially positive fiscal impact on the County through increased access to transportation and its associated component of economic development.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CR-062-2021 could have a positive indirect impact by increasing the health and quality of life for County residents, and associated environmental benefits including reduced Greenhouse gasses and possible reduction in non-point source pollution from less oil and debris on County roads due to decreased vehicle use.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

N/A.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

This Resolution goes into effect on the date of its adoption.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach me via phone or email.

⁷ <https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2021/03/09/what-did-the-voices-of-the-region-survey-tell-us-about-travel-during-covid-19-and-beyond-tpb-visualize-2045/#:~:text=The%20Voices%20of%20the%20Region%20Survey%20was%20a,residents%20would%20like%20to%20see%20in%20the%20future>