



**WABA**  
WASHINGTON AREA  
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

August 13, 2020

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**Washington Council of Governments' Formally Endorses National Capital Trail Network: Another Major Step Forward for Regional Trails, Walking and Biking**

*Endorsement Significant for Capital Trails Coalition's Vision to Improve Regional Connectivity By 2045*

**WASHINGTON**—The Capital Trails Coalition, and its founding members the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), are celebrating a major step forward in the vision to connect the region by trails—creating equitable, accessible spaces for walking and biking across D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

On August 12, 2020, The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Board of Directors unanimously endorsed the National Capital Trail Network—a concept for a 1,400-mile, continuous network of off-street trails. COG is an independent, nonprofit association, with a membership of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments; the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures; and U.S. Congress. COG staff, in partnership with area officials, are “working to advance the 'Region Forward Vision,' which maps out ambitious goals and targets for a more prosperous, accessible, livable and sustainable future.”

“Today’s unanimous vote by the Council of Government’s Board of Directors to endorse our ambitious vision for a regional trail network underlines the broad public support for safe, accessible and equitable trails connecting diverse communities across the Washington Metropolitan region,” said Greg Billing, Executive Director at the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

The National Capital Trail Network expands upon the Capital Trails Coalition’s vision to increase multiuse trail connectivity across the region. The Transportation Planning Board formally adopted the network late last month, which enables specified trail projects to be prioritized for funding from the federal Transportation Alternatives Program and the Transportation Land-Use Connections Program.

The National Capital Trail Network details 1,400 miles of connected off-street trails—of which 645 miles already exist—that would significantly increase the number of people who have access to trails in the region.

“By formally adopting the National Capital Trail Network, the D.C. region is now poised to accelerate the development of trails throughout, delivering equitable access to safe places to walk and bike for millions of people who live, work and visit here,” said Liz Thorstensen, chair of the Capital Trails Coalition, and vice president of trail development at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Securing support for the 1,400-mile network was a priority for the Capital Trails Coalition, which is working to advance completion of an interconnected network of multiuse trails serving D.C., Maryland and Virginia, and is part of RTC’s TrailNation™ portfolio, regional trail-network-building projects being implemented across the country.

The Capital Trails Coalition envisions a seamless regional trail network that connects the District of Columbia; City of Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax counties in Virginia; and Prince George’s and Montgomery counties in Maryland. A full map can be found on the Capital Trails Coalition’s website [capitaltrailscoalition.org](http://capitaltrailscoalition.org).

Learn more about RTC’s TrailNation program at [railstotrails.org/trailnation](http://railstotrails.org/trailnation).

*The Capital Trails Coalition is a collaboration of public and private organizations, agencies and citizen volunteers working to advance completion of an interconnected network of multiuse trails for metropolitan Washington, D.C. The Coalition convenes and coordinates public and private stakeholders who are critical to accomplishing the vision of an interconnected network. Learn more about the Capital Trail Coalition at [capitaltrailscoalition.org](http://capitaltrailscoalition.org). For more information on the Capital Trails Coalition, contact Stephanie Piperno at [stephanie.piperno@waba.org](mailto:stephanie.piperno@waba.org).*

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at [railstotrails.org](http://railstotrails.org) and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*