

Barney Rush, *Mayor*
Cecily Baskir, *Vice Mayor*
Wicca Davidson, *Secretary*
Kirk Renaud, *Treasurer*
Joel Rubin, *Intergovernmental
and Public Liaison*

January 29, 2020

Montgomery County Council
Montgomery County Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Town Council, I hereby request that you fully fund construction of the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) Tunnel in the County's FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). We understand that, in a time of challenging budget constraints, the choices before you are complicated and require careful planning. It is with this in mind that we respectfully share our concerns about the lack of funding for CCT Tunnel construction. First, there is a long history of commitments made by the County in support of the tunnel project. Second, the CCT Tunnel is a matter of urgent pedestrian and cyclist safety. Third, not constructing the CCT Tunnel will harm the County's transportation network as a whole.

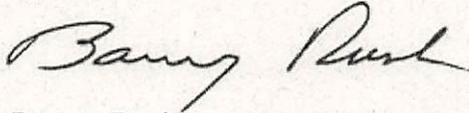
The CCT Tunnel project is an important component of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, which was approved by the last County Council. This last Council wisely supported the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue because it will materially enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists who visit and traverse the densely populated and most rapidly expanding urban area in Montgomery County.

As Bethesda expands, safe transit corridors are vital. And as bikers, commuters rushing to the Metro, parents with strollers, senior citizens, and other pedestrians compete for space with increased auto traffic on a very limited transit path, the risk of accidents undoubtedly will rise. At a time when pedestrian safety is a top concern for Montgomery County residents, we believe that the County Council should heed the wisdom of past Councils and not take that risk.

The County itself estimates that there are more than a million annual users of the Capital Crescent Trail. Without the tunnel, cyclists and walkers will be forced onto a congested State highway. The intersection of Bethesda Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, and Willow Lane will become a major chokepoint for traffic, increasing congestion -- with all of its harmful environmental impacts -- on these and adjacent arteries.

In sum, we urge you to consider the negative public safety and long-term development impacts of not constructing the CCT Tunnel. Now is the time to prevent such a dangerous outcome and to honor past commitments to the residents of our wonderful County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barney Rush". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Barney Rush
Mayor