

Regional leaders gathered for the Capital Trails Coalition Symposium

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<http://www.tpbne.ws/more-news/regional-leaders-gathered-for-the-capital-trails-coalition-symposium/>

Editor's note: The following is a guest post from the Capital Trails Coalition. The TPB is a partner organization to the Coalition through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The Coalition held a symposium last month. TPB staff participated on two panels and attended the symposium.

The coalition's work helps further the TPB's two initiatives focused on biking and walking: to complete the National Capital Trail and to make it easier for people to access transit on foot or by bike.

Last month, leaders in the active transportation field in the National Capital Region gathered at Trinity Washington University for the Capital Trails Symposium, the annual gathering of the Capital Trails Coalition.



A graphic depiction of the opening plenary at the Capital Trails Symposium. An artist created these recordings for many sessions. (Capital Trails Coalition)

The Capital Trails Coalition seeks to create a world-class network of multi-use trails that are equitably distributed throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan region. The

regional trails network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

Currently, there are 436 miles of existing trail. But we need to do more! To realize the vision of a complete paved trail network, the region needed a diverse coalition of dedicated governmental agencies, advocates, non-profit organizations, decision-makers, and private stakeholders. The overall goal for this coalition is to collaborate, plan, and advocate for an interconnected network of multi-use trails that will transform public life in this region. Attendees at the 2018 Trails Symposium tackled big topics in trail development, including meaningful public engagement, state funding for trails, e-assist bikes and trails, the relationship between trails and transit, and equitable development.

The Coalition was joined by former DC mayor Anthony Williams, currently the CEO of Federal City Council. During Mayor Williams' fireside chat, he talked about the push from his administration that resulted in the Anacostia River Trail, and the importance of collaboration between the private and public sector on transformative infrastructure initiatives.



Former Mayor Anthony Williams speaking at the symposium. (Capital Trails Coalition)

The Capital Trails Coalition also launched the interactive trail map of all current and planned trails in the Washington region. The Coalition is charting the course for a truly visionary network. We've compiled a comprehensive mapping effort to highlight what each jurisdiction within the Coalition has in their plans. This is our vision for a regional network. You can see the map here: <http://capitaltrailscoalition.org/map/>

On recommendation from the TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, the TPB is considering adopting the Capital Trails Network as the starting framework for a regional trails plan.

The Coalition has done thorough groundwork of data collection and quality control over the past three years. This network includes and highlights the priorities of the member jurisdictions, as well. TPB leaders and board members have voiced support for the vision and want to get to the implementation stage!

Trails shouldn't stop at the county or city line. These are critical pieces of transportation infrastructure, and the planning of them should reflect that importance!

Find more information at capitaltrailscoalition.org.

Katie Harris is the Trails Coalition Coordinator at the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA). She manages the Capital Trails Coalition and serves on the DC Recreational Trails Advisory Committee.