



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 263 – State Highway Administration – Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways –
Maintenance and Repair
SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Good afternoon, Chairman Barnes, Vice-Chairman Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. My name is Monique Ashton, and I am the Mayor of the City of Rockville. I thank you for this opportunity.

The City of Rockville Mayor and Council unanimously support HB 263 with an amendment. The legislation aligns with Rockville’s Vision Zero and Pedestrian Master Plan initiatives. HB 263 requires the State Highway Administration to maintain and repair sidewalks on State-owned roads. Since walking and rolling are the most efficient, affordable, and equitable forms of transportation, we must do everything possible to properly maintain this critical public infrastructure.

In concert with Montgomery County, Rockville requests an amendment to remove the provision that requires local governments to be responsible for the removal of snow and ice from State-owned sidewalks. It is our understanding that Delegate Qi has requested an amendment to remove the language, which was the result of a bill drafting error.

Rockville’s Department of Public Works is able to repair and maintain sidewalks on city-owned streets as part of its ongoing roadway maintenance program. However, the City does not have the funding or capacity to also maintain and repair sidewalks on State-owned streets. The State Highway Administration needs to prioritize sidewalk maintenance along MD 355, MD 586, and MD 28 in Rockville, as the sidewalks do not meet the needs of our pedestrians. The provision of safe and accessible sidewalks should not be secondary to road maintenance.

HB 263 is an important step forward for Vision Zero and pedestrian safety in Maryland. We support the State Highway Administration providing the same level of attention and care to its sidewalks as it currently does for its roadways. This will lead to a more equitable, sustainable, fiscally resilient, and safer transportation system in Rockville. We urge the Committee to provide HB 263 with a favorable report.