



**AIA**  
Maryland

*Promoting Maryland Architecture Since 1965*

21 January 2020

The Honorable Paul Pinsky  
Chair of the Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for SB 065  
Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks – Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

Dear Chariman Pinsky and members of the EHEA Committee:

We are writing to voice AIA Maryland's support of Senate Bill 65. AIA Maryland represents over 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment.

While we prefer the title of this bill to simply be Safe Routes to Public Schools, this bill that requires counties to prepare and post Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools aligns with our goals of providing welcome and equitable access to public learning environments. One of the defining attributes of a successful public school is a supportive community environment and this bill helps to promote walkable paths, active community engagement and safer streets to access schools. A vehicle or a bus should not be considered the primary means of accessing community schools and this bill helps to ensure that those who can walk or bicycle, may have a safe passage.

This bill promotes the consideration that buildings can have a positive impact on health and wellness. Thoughtful placement of buildings and walkable paths provide a greater percentage of the population with the ability to arrive at school of their own means and it can have the added benefit of reducing transportation costs. While most of the projects this impacts may be existing schools, it may reinforce good community planning as a consideration for site selection in any new school construction. Research shows that active living discourages sedentary lifestyles. Starting activity at an early age builds habits that are more likely to continue into adulthood.

*The American Institute of Architects*

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AIA Maryland cares deeply about the quality of Maryland's built environment, particularly space that houses our future generations. It's important that we plan well and support equitable and safe access to all public schools. We therefore respectfully ask your committee to vote in favor of SB 065 to provide safe routes in all Maryland Counties to public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Parts", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Chris Parts, AIA  
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

cc:

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair

Jack Bailey

Mary Beth Carozza

Arthur Ellis

Jason Gallion

Kate Fry Hester

Clarence Lam

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