



6 February 2023

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for SB 0095
Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks–Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools – Funding

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Education Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of AIA Maryland and the nearly 2,000 Architects we represent, we fully support sustainable and safer strategies in the built environment as we collectively work to improve public safety and welfare. AIA Maryland sees SB 0095 as a proactive step to ensuring the safety & mobility of all street users—whether walking, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation.

Schools are a vital part of livable, attractive communities. Integral to this is how safely our students and families get to and from School. Although streets are often prioritized for vehicular mobility, they are also considered public spaces. They are extensions of our homes, where we meet our neighbors, and for many a daily route to access public resources. As such streets should prioritize the public needs of all users. Recognizing that there is a need to not only improve road crossings but also provide reliable reporting, shows a State that is in touch with its taxpayers concerns and their technological sensibilities to readily available information. This way families can make best decisions based on how their children get to and from schools. Every resident and especially students of this State deserve to have safe, comfortable, and convenient travel across our transportation network.

Adoption of transportation philosophies like the Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets, calls for constructing streets that are optimal for all road users regardless of age, ability, income, race, ethnicity, or chosen mode of travel. Safer routes to school give families and students options. They relieve the burden on families having to navigate employment schedules versus school times and save on monthly fuel costs. The ability to walk to and from school also has impactful health and wellness benefits by off-setting demographics with more sedentary lifestyles and safety factors reduce anxiety.

SB 0095 may also positively impact future equitable urban transportation and development. With a history of reporting data more consideration may be taken to site placement, walkable paths, storm water management, shade trees and shelter. Integration of safer alternative routes to school with other policies for smart transit-oriented development, have the potential to make not only safer but more attractive & robust school districts for current and future generations.

For these reasons, AIA Maryland supports the intent of SB 0095, and respectfully ask your committee to vote in favor of establishing The Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks, Safe and Alternative Routes to Public Schools Program, to provide a non-lapsing fund. To be used to advance the purposes and goals of the Bill that will improve the design, construction, and safety of our streets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Cartwright".

Jonathan Cartwright, AIA Assoc.
Director, AIA Maryland