

**SB 0095 AIAMD Ltr of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sandi Worthman

Position: FAV

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,



Jonathan Cartwright, AIA Assoc.  
Director, AIA Maryland

# **Strong Towns Baltimore Testimony - SB0095 Safe Alt**

Uploaded by: Henry Cook

Position: FWA

Bill: Senate Bill 0095

Bill Title: Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

Position: **Favorable with Amendments**



Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

Strong Towns Baltimore is a volunteer group seeking to strengthen our community via reforms that result in more productive, connected, walkable, sustainable, lovable places. As a result, we can not help but be favorably disposed to legislation that improves safety and pedestrian access for our communities' families and schools. Safe pedestrian networks connecting our homes to neighborhood destinations are a critical link in establishing community and should be an expectation for all Marylanders, but we agree that priority should be placed first on children who are not provided transportation to their public school. This is especially important as pedestrian fatalities make up the majority of school-transportation-related fatalities in the United States [1].

In addition to protecting children and their families commuting to and from school, safe pedestrian or bike routes help our children establish habits of healthy, active transportation. Furthermore, all Maryland residents benefit from additional safe pedestrian infrastructure as pedestrians account for over 20% of all roadway fatalities in our state [2].

However, we feel that this bill requires amendments on several points:

1. While the bill calls for a report on Safe Alternative Routes and does a good job defining safe routes, it addresses only their existence, not the extent to which they are usable. **We recommend including standards for accessibility and state of repair to the definition of Safe Alternative Routes.** Sidewalks with high curbs or asphalt paths marred by root heave are a barrier to disabled students and caregivers.
2. While we applaud the requirement to provide safe pedestrian infrastructure, it is easy to be in favor of something when disconnected from cost. **We recommend that this bill be coupled with funding mechanisms, including stable and sufficient funds for the maintenance of existing and newly-built Safe Alternative Routes to schools.** We must apply sustainable planning to our local capital budgets as well as our transportation needs.
3. Providing Safe Alternative Routes is a safety intervention, but like all safety interventions, the Safe Alternative Routes must not be inconvenient to use. **We recommend that the definition of a Safe Alternative Route include a limit on**

**deviations from the shortest route to schools.** If the direct route is 0.5 miles with a 200 yard gap along a busy arterial road while the Safe Alternative Route is 1.0 miles, has the intent of this bill been met? Many factors weigh into pedestrian decisions: safety of route, schedule constraints, weight of load, and weather conditions are just some of the factors. Imagine a middle school student who has overslept carrying a full backpack on a chilly winter morning, which route will they choose? Can school-age children accurately weigh the risk of a shorter route against a safer route?

4. Finally, while safety must be a high priority and safe routes to school should be implemented or improved as soon as possible, **we believe the specified single year to achieve compliance should be modified to a phased-in approach.** Quality sidewalks and paths can not be wished into existence overnight; they require community input, design, quality construction and jurisdictional oversight. In the bill's current form, some or all of these concerns would have to be compromised and we would end up with poorer pedestrian infrastructure than under a measured implementation schedule.

While we have highlighted several concerns and changes we recommend to this bill, we thank Senator Ellis for prioritizing this issue and the safety of our most vulnerable pedestrians. We encourage the committee to carefully consider this bill and improvements suggested through this hearing.

Thanks you for your consideration of our testimony,  
Henry Cook  
Timonium, Maryland  
Member, Strong Towns Baltimore (<https://strongtownsbaltimore.com/>)

Co-signed,  
Michael Scepaniak, Cockeysville  
Joshua Spokes, Baltimore City  
Tristan Stefanović, Baltimore City  
Josh Poland, Baltimore City  
Shaun Lehmann, Ellicott City  
James Pizzurro, Towson  
John Locke, Catonsville  
Troy Gharibani,, Timonium

References:

- [1] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Center for Statistics and Analysis "Traffic Safety Stats - School-Transportation-Related Crashes - 2011-2020 Data" DOT HS 813327, Figure 1, June 2022, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813327>
- [2] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Center for Statistics and Analysis "Traffic Safety Stats - Pedestrians - 2020 Data" DOT HS 813310, Table 7, May 2022, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/Publication/813310>

# **SB 95.Sidewalks and Crosswalks Safe Routes.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF

**BILL:** Senate Bill 95  
**TITLE:** Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks -  
Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools  
**DATE:** February 8, 2023  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, opposes Senate Bill 95 to require each local school board to annually prepare a report on safe alternative routes to public schools and impose a mandate on local governments to construct sidewalks in accordance with the report.

MABE places a high priority on student safety, especially in the daily transportation to and from school of nearly 900,000 students each school day. The arrival and departure of many of these students is within proximity of schools in which bus serves are not provided. For these students, local school systems have adopted policies and procedures to ensure that safe routes to and from school are available.

Generally, getting students to and from school safely is a partnership between the home and the school. Each local school system provides parents with educational information and resources on pedestrian and bus safety in addition to the training and resources provided to students. Parents are primarily responsible for identifying the appropriate walk route from home to school or the bus stop, with school systems providing information and recommendations to assist them in identifying an appropriate walking route for their children.

MABE appreciates the intended benefit of this legislation in enhancing the opportunity for local governments to access available state and federal funding to construct sidewalks and crosswalks in order to improve the quality and safety of routes to and from school. However, this bill would impose an immediate and substantial burden on each local school system to identify such routes and the needed improvements as defined in the bill, while calling on local governments to fund the construction of sidewalks and crosswalks on county roads and develop plans to address school routes involving state roads and other roads not under the local government's control. In these ways, the bill would impose an immediate burden of additional liability for local school systems without a reasonable assurance that the identified needs would be addressed in a timely manner through costly infrastructure projects by our state and local funding authorities.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 95.

# **SB095 Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Cro**

Uploaded by: Mara Babb

Position: UNF





## **SB095 Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools**

*Friday, February 3, 2023*

EDUCATION, HEALTH, & ENVIRONMENT

### **OPPOSE**

Our names are Mara Babb, Subhashi Pradhan, Noor Chaudhry, and Julien Halleman, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive board members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in opposition to SB095 Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools. If passed, this bill will require county boards of education to report on areas in which students are ineligible for transportation services and safe alternative routes to school. SB095 will also require each county to construct sidewalks and crosswalks to allow safe alternative routes to school for students who are ineligible for transportation.

This bill poses multiple challenges to county boards of education. It forces county boards of education to work with the governing body of a county, private owners of roads, and contractors to create alternative routes to schools including crosswalks and sidewalks. This is an inordinately burdensome process that would cost counties unnecessary time, money, and effort. This bill has a very limited perspective on each county's unique financial situations. It is extremely unrealistic to require counties to gather and report information every year on alternative routes to school while simultaneously working to create new sidewalks and pathways, propose and implement a budget, manage transportation, and implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The roadwork alone would make it extremely difficult for students who require transportation to go to and from school.

This bill does not appreciate the expense of the time and labor required for constructing sidewalks for every school in the county. Construction on sidewalks and crosswalks around schools would worsen an already bad traffic problem in Anne Arundel County. There is no money allocated to general renovations or sidewalks and crosswalks in the 2023 Anne Arundel County budget. Without a clear budget for the proposed construction, building sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths in an expanded area around the schools would be an intense and costly initiative for counties. Furthermore, there is no enforcement mechanism outlined in the bill for counties taking too long to construct alternative routes and people that refuse to provide easements on their private roads.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Supports...* Adequate funding for different student programs within Anne Arundel County Public schools. (Plank 8, Clause B)
- *CRASC Supports...* The right to consistent and punctual county-provided transportation to and from school, including extracurricular activities, for students who require transportation. (Plank 7, Clause E)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB095.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mara Babb, Secretary of Legislation, [babbmara@gmail.com](mailto:babbmara@gmail.com)

Noor Chaudhry, Legislative Liaison, [noorschaudhry@gmail.com](mailto:noorschaudhry@gmail.com)

Julien Halleman, Legislative Liaison, [julienh123@icloud.com](mailto:julienh123@icloud.com)

Subhashi Pradhan, Legislative Liaison, [subhashi\\_pradhan@hotmail.com](mailto:subhashi_pradhan@hotmail.com)

**SB0095-EEE\_MACo\_OPP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael Sanderson

Position: UNF



## Senate Bill 95

### *Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: February 8, 2023

From: Brianna January and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 95. While well-intentioned, this bill would place a costly mandate on county governments to carry out new state policy to create sidewalks and crosswalks as alternative routes for all public school students. **MACo does not raise policy objections with the bill's goal of utilizing safe routes for students – county concerns are merely practical and cost-driven.**

As a rule, MACo resists state policies that result in costly or burdensome local implementation. SB 95 would implement a costly, logistically difficult mandate for counties to adhere to. The 2020 fiscal note for that year's version of this bill highlighted several counties in which this proposal would be extremely costly to execute: Baltimore County "anticipates substantial construction costs for sidewalks and crosswalks under the bill," Montgomery County, "expects significant additional costs under the bill," to the tune of almost \$90 million in the 2020 estimate, and Frederick County would anticipate "purchasing additional buses and hiring additional bus drivers under the bill."

Additionally, the route to school is not subject to the jurisdiction of the county (as a municipal or State-owned roadway), this bill unfairly requires counties to develop a plan with the controller of the road and re-direct county resources to construct sidewalks and crosswalks on roads not owned by the county. Furthermore, the one-size-fits-all mandate of SB 95 simply does not fit the transportation and geographic realities of Maryland counties. Counties – and schools – face diverse geographic challenges, transportation laws (like rights-of-way), and community characteristics that would make it difficult, if not impossible, to apply SB 95 to all 24 jurisdictions.

Under state law, counties would have no choice but to fund the significant costs associated with SB 95 – competing for limited local funds against education, school construction, public safety, and other essential public services.

Counties agree with the merit of SB 95 and that the information it seeks to collect is important in understanding the needs of Maryland students, but this legislation goes too far in mandating county resources of an unknown amount, all while neglecting the logistical capacities of counties to implement it. For this reason, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 95 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

# **SB0095 - SHA - Construction of Sidewalks and Cross**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Aruna Miller  
Lieutenant Governor  
Paul J. Wiedefeld  
Acting Secretary

February 8, 2023

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

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 95 – Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks – Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools***

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 95 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 95 would require county governments to identify areas around each public school in their jurisdiction where students are ineligible for transportation services, as well as locate existing safe routes to school where those students can travel between their homes and assigned school. Based on that report, the county would then be required to construct any sidewalk and crosswalks that is identified as a need. If construction for a sidewalk or crosswalk would impact a road outside of the county’s jurisdiction, the owner of that roadway must collaborate with the county on the county’s plan for construction.

The MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) looks forward to continuing the partnerships with local partners to ensure the development of safe routes to school for students. As part of the existing business processes, SHA works closely with counties and local jurisdictions to identify needs and potential improvements along SHA roadways.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on Senate Bill 95.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Baldwin  
Acting Deputy Director  
Office of Policy and Legislative Services  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm  
Director  
Office of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
410-841-1090