



February 11, 2025

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association

Favorable HB 628 Highways - Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways - Construction and Reconstruction

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Honorable Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association offers our strong support HB 628 Highways - Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways - Construction and Reconstruction.

We want to see projects launched and completed in a timely fashion, so we can keep making progress to achieve our shared vision of a more walkable, bikeable and accessible for all of our residents. Prioritizing communities with Complete Streets Plans will do just that.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored and amplified the importance of investing in public health infrastructure. Many of us are now relying on safe and accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, paths and crosswalks now more than ever for physical activity, a mental reprieve from isolation and for essential workers to get to their jobs.

We now have an opportunity to recommit ourselves to our public health by ensuring everyone in Maryland has access to physical activity, which helps fight chronic disease. Doing so will ensure residents of all ages can maintain good health and access to essential services. Especially with ridership of public transportation down, we must ensure that our streets, sidewalks, paths and crosswalks are safe and accessible for everyone.

We urge a favorable report on this important piece of legislation.