



POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: SB 158 Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

Position: Informational

Date: February 18, 2026

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Dear Chair Brian Feldman,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“M-NCPPC” or the “Commission”) has not voted on this bill. However, staff have provided an informational statement.

What this Bill Does. This bill requires a county board of education each year to prepare and post to the county's website a report that identifies pathways that public school students who are ineligible for transportation services may use to travel to school using only safe alternative routes under certain circumstances. This bill would also require the governing body of a county each year to review a certain report and construct any sidewalks and crosswalks necessary to create safe alternative routes for public school students under certain circumstances.

This bill creates a clear, recurring obligation for counties to ensure safe walking routes for students who do not receive bus transportation. It would also identify walking and bicycling routes to school within each MCPS school catchment area and ensure all students within the area can safely walk and cycle to school. The bill will significantly influence capital planning, school access strategies, and Vision Zero implementation. This legislation would implement *Pedestrian Master Plan* key action P-5e in Montgomery County.

Effective date of July 1, 2026. We recommend that the sponsor consider implementation be pushed a year out to allow Counties and school districts time to have the necessary coordination discussions. For Prince George's County, in larger communities with many schools, it will take some time to determine the gaps in the network and design and fund the required improvements as sidewalks and crosswalks must be designed to be ADA compliant which requires engineering. Funding of improvements may also be an issue so if the sponsor is not supportive of delaying the bill effective date, then maybe a phased-out schedule approach for implementation should be considered.

Coordination of School Districts. If passed this bill may require additional coordination with School District, and other County Departments to complete a network analysis/mapping to determine gaps for each school in providing safe routes.