



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
MARYLAND

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From: Ronza Othman, President
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To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to give a favorable report to HB1504 - Highways - Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways - Construction and Reconstruction. This bill would require the State Highway Administration to prioritize funding for the construction and reconstruction of sidewalks and bicycle pathways to sidewalks and bicycle pathways that are, or are adjacent to highways that are, subject to a complete streets policy or another similar Vision Zero program; require a local government to request certain funding from the Department of Transportation; and authorize certain State funding for the construction or reconstruction of sidewalks or bicycle pathways.

Too many highways and other roadways that have significant pedestrian traffic in Maryland do not have sidewalks. This is a hazard to blind and low-vision pedestrians in particular, since walking in the roadway puts us in much greater danger of being in or veering into the path of traffic. Furthermore, navigating the shoulder of a highway can in and of itself be a traffic violation subjecting blind pedestrians to potential citation or claims of negligence if we are, through no fault of our own, not on a clearly marked path for pedestrian traffic.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB1504. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.