

Support for HB 1504 - Highways - Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways - Construction and Reconstruction

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

I'm Ron Weiss, a Fort Washington resident and member of the MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1504.

HB 1504 is a practical way to make Maryland's transportation funding better match Maryland's safety commitments. When a state highway corridor is already recognized as a Complete Streets, Vision Zero, or multimodal safety priority, sidewalks and bicycle facilities should not be treated as optional extras. HB 1504 helps move those improvements higher on the list where they belong. HB 1504 would require the State Highway Administration to prioritize requests for sidewalk and bicycle pathway funding on roads that are already part of these safety-oriented programs.

MD 210 in Prince George's County shows why this bill is needed.

MD 210 is a major state highway used every day by commuters, transit riders, students, workers, and residents. But in too many places, people who are walking or biking still face disconnected facilities, dangerous gaps, and only intermittent paint-protected bicycle space instead of continuous, protected infrastructure. That leaves vulnerable road users exposed on a corridor where safety should already be a top priority.

The State's own MD 210 Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Project confirms the need. SHA has described it as a multi-phase effort aligned with Maryland's Vision Zero and Complete Streets goals, but the work is still advancing in limited phases rather than as a fully funded corridor-wide buildout. Current regional transportation programming reflects funding for only a limited phase, not complete corridor design and construction.

That is the problem HB 1504 begins to address.

Communities along MD 210 should not have to wait through years of study, phased design, and piecemeal implementation before they get basic safety infrastructure. Families do not travel in phases. Students, bus riders, pedestrians, and cyclists need connected sidewalks and safe bike facilities now. Prioritizing these projects earlier in the funding process can help close the gap between planning and real-world safety improvements.

For Prince George's County, this bill would strengthen the case for long-overdue investments on corridors like MD 210, where incomplete pedestrian and bicycle connections continue to put residents at risk. It would help ensure that when the State has already identified a corridor as a safety priority, funding decisions reflect that priority.

HB 1504 is an important step toward safer state highways and more complete transportation networks.

I respectfully request a favorable report.

Ron Weiss

Fort Washington, Maryland

MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee Founding Member