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September 13, 2019

Howard County Council,

On behalf of the Association of Community Services of Howard County (ACS), a network representing over 160 Howard County organizations and individuals servicing more than 100,000 Howard County families and residents, we are writing to express our support in implementing a strong, comprehensive, world-class complete streets law.

We recognize the historical \$2.2 million investment the County has made in biking, which is a great step forward – however, for years prior the county has lagged in making transportation healthier, sustainable, and equitable. As a result, it remains too difficult to get around Howard County without a car, and there is a strong need for better sidewalks, bus stops and safer intersections, in addition to bike infrastructure. In WalkHoward, the county's draft pedestrian plan, residents identified 1,312 areas that need sidewalks. Implementing a complete streets law would help solve these problems. Comparative to our neighboring counties, we are falling short on making our community accessible for all residents.

At ACS, we work together to improve the lives of Howard County residents, with the vision that Howard County will be a community where all residents have access to the resources they need to thrive. A complete streets law will greatly improve the health, economic opportunity, and overall wellbeing of communities of color, low-income populations, older adults, and individuals with disabilities, which would also help us reach our vision as a network.

This resolution is a great launching point to make streets in Howard County safer and more accessible, but it can be made stronger. While CR 120-2019 is a good launching point to get us closer to streets for all, ACS recommends that the County Council work to improve upon on the work already done by passing an ordinance that codifies the resolution with some key improvements that include added performance measures, better transparency, more equitable engagement, and more efficient and accountable implementation.

ACS is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. ACS is a designated charitable organization recognized in the State of Maryland.



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We urge you to enact a strong, comprehensive complete streets law to ensure accountability and help us see all the benefits of complete streets well into the future. Complete streets will increase the access and connections residents have to services and will improve the collaborative efforts for all the organizations working to improve Howard County as well. We want Howard County to be a leader in walking and biking and join its neighboring communities in redesigning its streets with all people, of all ages and abilities, in mind.

Sincerely,

Joan Driessen
Executive Director



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