



*ACS supports Howard County nonprofits in the achievement of their missions
because strong nonprofits improve the quality of life for all*

**Howard County Council Public Hearing: Proposed FY 2021 Operating Budget
March 12, 2020**

Testimony

As Executive Director of the Association of Community Services (ACS), I am honored to offer testimony on behalf of our over 160 nonprofit member organizations and community advocates who work diligently on behalf of vulnerable populations in our community. ACS is a member of the Streets for All Coalition because it is an ever-growing necessity for Howard County's infrastructure to be developed with pedestrians in mind. As the FY 2021 budget continues to be crafted, we ask you to approach the County's budget priorities through eyes of nonprofits that are both your partners and see directly the impact of budget decisions on fellow residents.

We enthusiastically support the County's Office of Transportation's funding proposal of \$2.75 million to build the active transportation infrastructure that is needed for all of us to be more physically active. This funding is essential because our neighbors and people being served by nonprofits who do not own a vehicle must rely on sidewalks and bike lanes to access public transportation, buy groceries, get to and from medical appointments, access community services, and more. However, the lack of transportation infrastructure oriented towards pedestrians means that the availability of safe and well-maintained sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, paths, and bus stops is inconsistent and flat out unavailable in certain areas.

The cumulative effect of lack of more holistic transportation infrastructure disproportionately affects communities of color, families with low incomes, older adults, and people with disabilities. New pedestrian projects in communities such as Guilford, Elkridge, Jessup, and Savage will provide tangible changes that people can see and use and help create healthier communities where everyone can thrive -no matter who they are, where they live, or where they are trying to go.

Now is the time to invest in active transportation infrastructure that focuses on making travel more safe and boosts the availability of safe physical activity in the County. Once again, ACS urges you to support the \$2.75 million funding proposal put forth by the Office of Transportation.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Driessen

Joan Driessen, Executive Director