



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

HB 285 Support with Recommendation

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 6, 2018

HB 285 - Department of Transportation – Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Public Schools – Study

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The City of Takoma Park strongly supports the adoption of House Bill 285 requiring the Department of Transportation (DOT) to study pedestrian and bicycle access to schools across the State. We further advocate for an expansion of the legislation to include language specifically requiring the study to include recommendations for both capital and educational solutions addressing identified safety concerns.

The City of Takoma Park has long been an advocate for providing safe options for students and parents walking and biking to local schools. With the establishment of its successful and highly regarded Safe Routes to School program in 2007, the City has found that improved sidewalks, bike paths and bike routes, while effective in reducing physical safety hazards in a focused geographical area, do little to address the overall safety of students and to increase driver's general awareness of pedestrians or bicyclists. We have learned that the most effective and cost efficient solutions to increasing safety and promoting walking and biking have been the educational programs we offer. The impact these educational efforts on walking and biking habits cannot be overstated. We have seen a significant increase in the number of parents reporting that their children's schools encouraged their students to walk or bike to school. Today, nearly half of all local students walk to school as compared to less than a third in 2008.

For these reasons, the City of Takoma Park strongly supports HB 285 and urges a favorable vote.