



January 30, 2024

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

FAVORABLE - SB0077 Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Bikemore is writing on behalf of our more than 5,000 engaged constituents and the hundreds of thousands of Baltimoreans who walk, bike, and take transit in support of SB0077.

Baltimore City bans biking or scooting on sidewalks, with a narrow exception for e-bikes and scooters using sidewalks on arterials with higher speed limits where no bicycle infrastructure exists. Historically, we've been told by city legislators that the city is following Maryland's default laws in not changing this practice, and if Maryland law were to change course, we could revisit these changes locally.

Scooter and bicycles are heavily used in Baltimore City as a form of transportation in our lower income communities. A majority of all of our scooter operators' low-income access plan users in the country are located in Baltimore City alone. Yet most places in our city where these users are riding lack a connected network of all-ages and abilities bike lanes and trails for safe riding. We are advocating for safer and more infrastructure, but in the meantime the reality is many of these users are forced to ride on sidewalks to remain safe.

In March 2023, leading mobility justice researcher Charles T. Brown of Equitable Cities released a report entitled [*Arrested Mobility: Barriers to Walking, Biking, and E-Scooter Use in Black Communities in the United States*](#), identifying structurally racist policies and laws that, while intended to promote safety, can result in disparate, racist, and discriminatory policing or fears of that policing that can depress ridership. Sidewalk riding bans were highlighted as one of these policies in need of revision or repeal.

SB0077 is a strong step toward addressing these concerns. It still allows local jurisdictions to legislate for their communities, but provides a guiding default of permissiveness. It contains provisions requiring yielding to pedestrians to maintain safety and reiterate pedestrians have priority on sidewalks over any other user. It will help us advocate for transportation equity and justice in Baltimore City.

We encourage a favorable report on SB0077.

Sincerely,

Jed Weeks
Executive Director