

CSG MD HB375 Bikes on Sidewalks testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Cort

Position: FAV

Testimony on HB 375
Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements
House Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 4, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition for Smarter Growth supports **HB 375 “Bikes on Sidewalks”**. Our organization advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements will resolve an oversight in Maryland law by allowing bikes on sidewalks except for local ordinance prohibitions. Currently, riding on sidewalks is prohibited in Maryland unless allowed by the local jurisdiction – and only three counties allow it. HB 375 would require people on bikes to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and people using mobility devices on sidewalks and in crosswalks.

HB 375 would ensure Marylanders can more safely and legally use sidewalks when needed. Unfortunately, despite recent advances in designing streets to accommodate all users, many stretches of roadway in the state are still unsafe for riding a bike. Marylanders on bikes need to use available sidewalks at times due to high-speed car traffic or lack of safe accommodations for cyclists.

In areas where the Coalition for Smarter Growth works, **many suburban arterials encourage high motor vehicle speeds and still lack facilities for residents and workers to travel safely by bicycle in the roadway – but may have a sidewalk that can provide a safe alternative.** A stretch of sidewalk in such a spot, may provide a critical safe link for someone on a bike to reach a destination – ideally a stop-gap measure until future on-street bike accommodations and overall safer design speeds can be implemented. In particular, Prince George’s County does not have a local ordinance in place that allows people on bikes to use sidewalks when appropriate. HB 375 would clear up Maryland law.

We ask for a **favorable report for HB 375** by the committee. Thank you.

HB 375 Testimony Del. D. Jones.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Jones

Position: FAV

DANA JONES
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Health and Social Services

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Anne Arundel County Delegation

President, Women Legislators of Maryland



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee**

**In Support of HB 375
Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements
February 6th 2024, 1:00 pm**

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I come before you today to introduce HB 375, which would help create safer and more consistent transit policies. Last year, this bill passed this Committee unanimously and the House Chamber by a vote of 134-2.

Current Maryland law forbids bicycles on sidewalks as the default statewide. However, localities can and have overridden this law for safety and other reasons. Unfortunately, this has inadvertently created inconsistency throughout Maryland for cyclists. In many areas of our state, roads will switch between state, county, and city roads a number of times leading to confusion for those commuting by bike. If this law was consistent throughout the state, not only would those commuting by bike be safer, but it would also help avoid confusion on which laws to follow when traveling across jurisdictions. All of this, of course, is compounded by the safety issues for bicyclists sharing our major roads with vehicles. This bill advances Maryland's Zero Deaths goals by aligning Maryland code with safe and equitable biking.

HB 375 would amend state law to read that, unless disallowed by local ordinance, a person may ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area - with the caveat that riders shall proceed in a safe manner, yielding to pedestrians.

As many of you may know, localities throughout the state have already enacted similar local bills allowing cyclists on sidewalks: including Montgomery, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties, as well as the Capital City of Annapolis and numerous other localities around the State.

Implementing this more consistent policy around bicycle usage will add to safety for bikers, help to reduce traffic violence to cyclists, create safe routes to school for our kids & address transportation disparities. It can help ensure that Marylanders have access to a safer, more sustainable, and affordable transportation method.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this simple, consistent bill for Marylanders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones

BikeAAASupportBikesonSidewalksHB375.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



Support HB375

Safe Biking on Sidewalks

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 www.bikeaaa.org

House Environment & Transportation Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

January 29, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 30, president of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (“BikeAAA”), Chair of the Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission, and former Member of the 2017 Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force. On behalf of BikeAAA and its more than 1,000 members, we support HB375.

Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children, from riding bicycles (which includes similar devices like ebikes and scooters) on sidewalks unless the local jurisdiction expressly permits it by ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties have long had such ordinances and in 2021 the City of Annapolis clarified their permitting ordinance and Anne Arundel County unanimously passed one with bipartisan sponsorship. Montgomery and Howard Counties have not experienced pedestrian complaints or issues with bicyclists on sidewalks.

Many people rely on bicycles for transportation, especially in our lower income communities and yet most places lack a connected network of paved trails and bike lanes for them to safely complete their trips to work, school, transit, shopping and other destinations. Some bus and rail transit users rely on bikes for the “last mile” at either end including carrying their bikes on bus-front racks, light rail or MARC trains. Many recreational riders prefer to bike from home to a park, trail, library or other destination rather than putting the bike on a rack on the back of the car. There are many children who bike to school. All of them ride on sidewalks where there is no safe alternative. Any police officer will tell you that no one of any age is going to be ticketed for biking safely on a sidewalk. At the same time, biking safely on a sidewalk should not be a reason for a law enforcement action. The current situation is that people ride on sidewalks for safety and yet Maryland law prohibits it. The bill includes a requirement for bike riders to yield to pedestrians, so unsafe riding would still be a violation. HB375 advances Maryland’s Vision Zero goals by aligning Maryland code with safe and equitable biking. It will align our law with the current safe public practice and law enforcement policy. It would also permit local jurisdictions to prohibit bikes on sidewalks in areas where it is deemed unsafe.

Please support HB375 to make Maryland mobility safe for all people, especially our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Jon Korin
President, Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (443-685-4103)

Bike MD HB 375 - Bikes on Sidewalks.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



HB 375 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

Environment & Transportation Committee

February 4, 2025

Josh Feldmark

joshua@bikemd.org

Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100-mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non-vehicle transportation users.

As you have probably noticed, I begin all of our written testimony with the above paragraph. I do so, one because it was the intro our friend Kim Lamphier wrote for all her testimony on behalf of Bike Maryland and also to continually make clear that we are here to represent the interests of ALL cyclists.

This is most relevant to HB 375 because this is an issue most likely to impact kids on bikes, individuals who use their bike as transportation, and occasional recreational cyclists. This bill simply flips a default in state law. Currently state law says that bikes are prohibited on sidewalks unless the local governing authority expressly allows it in law. This bill flips that so that bikes are allowed on sidewalks unless the local governing authority expressly prohibits it in law.

There are many locations in every jurisdiction in Maryland where sidewalks represent the safest and most efficient place for cyclists. Currently, in jurisdictions other than Howard, Frederick, and Montgomery County and the city of Annapolis, a child riding her bike to school on sidewalks is breaking the law. This is easily fixed, costs no money, and will make everyone safer.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 375 and urges a favorable report.

HB375_MDSierra_FAV_2-6 -25.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsey Mendelson

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD
20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 375, Bicycles - Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 6, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 375. This bill authorizes a person to ride a bicycle or related equipment on a sidewalk unless prohibited by local ordinance, while also yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian or a person riding on an electric personal assistive mobility device.

Allowing cyclists to ride on sidewalks would enhance safety for both cyclists and motorists by creating separation between the two modes of transportation. Ideally, cyclists would be able to ride in a protected, separated bike lane. While we are excited to see Maryland's growing miles of bike lanes, there are still significantly fewer bike lane miles than sidewalk miles. In places where cyclists may feel endangered by riding on the street, the option to ride on the sidewalk provides them with a certain degree of separation and thus safety.

Given that nearly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland are produced by vehicles on our roads, promoting alternative modes of transportation is a key strategy in combatting climate change. Bicycling is an especially promising mode of transportation because it has the potential to replace many car trips. Over half of all trips made in the U.S. in 2021 were under three miles, an easy biking distance for most. In addition, nearly half of Americans reported wishing to be able to ride their bikes more often, with the main barrier stated being concerns over their safety.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 375.

David M. Jenkins
Transportation Committee
avnscsm@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

HB0375 - OATM - LOS - Bicycles Play Vehicles Unicy

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 375 – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 375 as an opportunity to improve comfort and convenience for those vulnerable roadway users riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles.

Alternatives to automobiles such as bicycles, play vehicles, and unicycles offer a less expensive, climate-friendly option for transportation. HB 375 authorizes, unless prohibited by local ordinance, people riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles on a sidewalk or sidewalk areas as the default legal standard, thereby expanding access to operate on sidewalks. Laws that increase comfort and convenience for people using these modes, particularly less experienced and younger riders, promote their usage and serve as a tangible sign of support for sustainable modes of transportation.

Safety is MDOT's top priority, and any change to the rules of the road must maintain safety for all users. This is particularly true for pedestrians, the most vulnerable roadways users. The bill explicitly requires people riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles to yield to a pedestrian or a person riding on an electric personal assistive mobility device, thereby requiring faster modes to yield the right of way to pedestrians. The bill also allows localities to prohibit use of the sidewalk by local ordinance, giving localities the freedom to create exceptions based on local needs.¹

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 375 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe McAndrew
Assistant Secretary,
Planning and Project Development
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1006

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

¹ Specifically, localities may want to consider how level 3 electric bikes, which have more of the characteristics of a moped or scooter, should operate within a shared setting.

2025 HB0375 Testimony For with Amendment 2025-02-0

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: FWA

Testimony For HB0375 with Amendment

Honorable Delegates

Please enter a favorable report with amendment for HB0375.

These vehicles should have a warning device, such as a bell or horn that should be sounded as the riders approach pedestrians from the rear. It is difficult to hear vehicles that are rapidly approaching from behind.

Please enter a favorable report with amendment for HB0375.

Alan Lang
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February 6, 2025

Written Testimony for HB 375_ Bicycles, Play Vehi

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HB 375: Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements** - Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee:

This bill reads “...Authorizing a person to ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area unless prohibited by local ordinance; and requiring a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area or in or through a crosswalk to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian or a person using an electric personal assistive mobility device...”

“...a person has the rights and is subject to the restrictions applicable to **pedestrians** under this title while the person is lawfully operating a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle: On a sidewalk or sidewalk area; or In or through a crosswalk. At an intersection, a person operating a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle **is subject to all traffic control signals**, as provided in §§ 21–202 and 21–203 of this title. A PERSON OPERATING A BICYCLE, PLAY VEHICLE, OR UNICYCLE ON A SIDEWALK OR SIDEWALK AREA OR IN OR THROUGH A CROSSWALK SHALL YIELD THE RIGHT–OF–WAY TO A PEDESTRIAN OR A PERSON RIDING ON AN ELECTRIC PERSONAL ASSISTIVE MOBILITY DEVICE...”

This bill would pose an immediate danger to all motorists and bicycle operators in Maryland. I understand that the bill is worded that the bicycled operator must “yield the right of way to a pedestrian or a person riding an electric personal assistive mobility device...”, but let’s truly think about this for a minute. Bicycles have wheels and are moving vehicles. The same motor vehicle laws should apply to bicycle operators as they do to motor vehicles, not pedestrians, since they are both moving vehicles. So **bicycles should STOP** at all traffic control signals, just like any other motor vehicle has to do. Why should bicycles not stop at a traffic control signal? **Are** bicycle operators, lots of them being **minor children, going to have to take a motor vehicle driving course** that they have to pass so that they know these NEW traffic laws to which they must abide? There is no mention of that in this bill. And I can certainly see instances where bicycle operators, some being **minor children, are not going to remember to “yield the right of way** to any “...pedestrian or a person riding an electric personal assistive mobility device...” . This will pose an immediate danger to motor vehicle drivers and to bicycle operators!!

I'm afraid that this bill will put our motor vehicle drivers and bicycle operators, especially our minor children, at a much greater risk and immediate dangers of motor vehicle accidents involving bicycles. I do not see a good outcome if this bill is passed into law.

Please **VOTE NO** on this bill and show all our motor vehicle drivers and bicycle operators that you care about their safety first and foremost.

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother of 3 and Maryland resident