

# **BikeMarylandetal-FAV-HB177BicycleSafetyStart202602**

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



## **HB177 – Bicycle Safety Start**

### **House Environment & Transportation Committee**

**February 5, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

Roadway safety is a paramount transportation concern, especially for vulnerable road users. HB177, or the Bicycle Safety Start would make Maryland’s roadways safer for bicyclists. Bike Maryland is a statewide biking advocacy organization with over 200 paying members and thousands of other advocate contacts. The coalition of local advocacy groups below from across Maryland support this bill.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. 54.5% of bicyclist injuries occur at intersections, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Bicyclists are at risk of being rear-ended when stationary, ‘right hooked’ by turning vehicles, or sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. Allowing people on bikes to proceed through an intersection when the pedestrian walk signal is illuminated will reduce these threats by improving the visibility of people on bikes for drivers and reducing conflicts between vulnerable road users and vehicles.

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs), the crosswalk lights that allow pedestrians to establish a presence in the crosswalk before drivers of vehicles are given a green indication, are considered a proven safety countermeasure. FHWA reports that LPIs can lead to a 13% reduction in pedestrian vehicle crashes at intersections. Like pedestrians, bicyclists are vulnerable road users who will benefit from an early start across intersections. We are encouraged by findings from a pilot program in New York City. In the pilot initiative, the NYC Department of Transportation evaluated potential impacts of allowing bicyclists to use the pedestrian signal. They conducted a study of crashes at intersections in the study compared to a set of control sites and they found a reduction in crashes at the study sites compared to an annual average before the safety treatment. They also found that the number of crashes in crosswalks in both the control and study groups was both similar and low, with all of the pedestrian injuries related to drivers. None of the pedestrian/bike crashes in the study and control groups were related to the LPI.

In Maryland, road laws designed for motor vehicles apply to bicyclists even though bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Allowing a bicyclist to be more visible through intersections improves their safety and avoids delaying other traffic. Bicycling becomes safer, less stressful, and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

Bike Maryland and the coalition below urge a favorable HB177 committee report and House floor vote.

**Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC)**

**Baltimoreans for People Oriented Places**

**Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA)**

**Bike Harford**

**Bike Maryland**

**Bikemore**

**Bike HoCo**

**Frederick Bicycle Coalition**

**Maryland Eastern Shore Trail Network**

**Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)**

# **Delegate Palakovich Carr Testimony - HB 177 - Bic**

Uploaded by: Julie Palakovich Carr

Position: FAV

JULIE PALAKOVICH CARR  
Legislative District 17  
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee  
Chair, Revenues Subcommittee

Chair, Montgomery County  
House Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 202  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3037  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3037  
Julie.PalakovichCarr@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 177  
Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Crosswalks**

This bill aims to enhance roadway safety for bicyclists, in keeping with our State's official goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. An identical version of the bill passed the House unanimously in 2025.

Intersections are especially dangerous for cyclists; one in three crashes in Maryland involving a bicyclist happen at an intersection.<sup>1</sup> This bill would allow all cyclists, whether they are riding on the road, in a bike lane, or on a sidewalk to proceed through an intersection when the parallel pedestrian signal changes to "walk." This head start to begin crossing the street before vehicular traffic will enhance safety for everyone.

Current state law allows bicyclists who are riding on a *sidewalk* to proceed through an intersection when a pedestrian signal changes to "walk," even when the traffic light is still red. A bicyclist who is riding in a *bike lane or on the road*, however, cannot proceed under current state law until they have a green light, regardless of the pedestrian signal. In essence, bicyclists operating on our roadways are treated the same as vehicles despite bicyclists having more in common with pedestrians than automobiles.

This legislation would only apply at intersections that have a leading pedestrian interval for the crosswalk. Leading pedestrian intervals generally give pedestrians a walk signal to begin crossing the street before the traffic signal turns green and cars start moving. This advanced signaling has proven to save lives by increasing visibility of pedestrians, reducing conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, increasing the likelihood of motorists yielding to pedestrians, and enhancing safety for pedestrians with slower mobility.<sup>2</sup> HB 177 would provide these same safety benefits to bicyclists.

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<sup>1</sup> MDOT: [Annual Bicycle Crash Data Report](#). July 8, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Highway Administration: [Proven Safety Measures: Leading Pedestrian Intervals; Safety Effectiveness of Leading Pedestrian Intervals Evaluated by a Before-After Study with Comparison Groups; San Francisco PedSafe Phase II Final Implementation Report And Executive Summary](#); and [Safety Evaluation of Protected Left-Turn Phasing and Leading Pedestrian Intervals on Pedestrian Safety](#)

A 2024 public opinion poll commissioned by Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety found that more than half of the public is “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” about being on the roads when walking or biking.<sup>3</sup> This level of public concern shows the need for enhanced safety measures.

The state of California, the District of Columbia, and New York City have adopted this practice of allowing bicyclists to proceed with pedestrians. New York City cites the policy as an effective tool in the city’s Vision Zero strategy.<sup>4</sup> The city’s Department of Transportation reported that the number of bicyclists killed or severely injured decreased by 37 percent after adding a head start for bicyclists.<sup>5</sup>

This simple change will improve safety for bicyclists in Maryland.

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<sup>3</sup> Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety: [2024 CARAVAN Survey](#)

<sup>4</sup> Fox: [NYC council approves 'head start' for cyclists at intersections.](#)

<sup>5</sup> New York Department of Transportation: [Left Turn Pedestrian & Bicyclist Crash Study](#)

**HB0177\_MDSierraClub\_fav\_5Feb2026.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsey Mendelson

Position: FAV



# SIERRA CLUB

## MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB 177, Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Crosswalks**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: February 5, 2026**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 177. This bill would align cyclist and pedestrian rights by permitting cyclists to proceed similarly to pedestrians when a "WALK" signal is displayed, promoting safer and more predictable traffic flow.

This change would enhance traffic safety and efficiency, particularly at intersections, by reducing conflicts with motor vehicles turning on red.

In areas with heavy pedestrian and cyclist traffic, such as urban centers and school zones, allowing bicycles to follow pedestrian signals helps integrate different modes of transportation effectively. Such policies support active transportation by making cycling and other non-motorized options safer and more convenient. Encouraging the use of bicycles and similar modes of travel can reduce traffic congestion and auto emissions.

Given that nearly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland are produced by vehicles, 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 people. In addition, nearly half of Americans reported wishing to be able to ride their bikes more often, with the main barrier being concerns over their safety.

Establishing clear rules for crosswalk usage ensures uniform enforcement and compliance by cyclists and those using similar equipment. It helps law enforcement and transportation agencies provide better guidance and education to road users. This supports Zero Deaths Maryland, Vision Zero Pedestrian and Safety efforts, which recognizes that pedestrians and bicyclists are some of the most vulnerable road users.

For these reasons, we urge you to give a favorable report on HB 177.

Jane Lyons-Raeder  
Chair, Transportation Committee  
janelyons@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

# **MGA 2026 Testimony Bill HB0177 (Vehicle Laws - Bic**

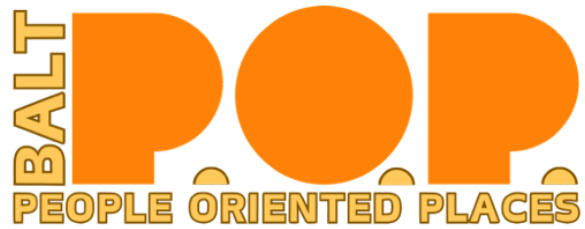
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Position: FAV

Bill: HB0177

Bill Title: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles,  
and Unicycles - Crosswalks

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group that advocates for transportation options which contribute to the liveability, productivity, and overall appeal of our communities comprising the Baltimore region, we support HB0177.

A large number of our group's members consider bicycling a significant or primary mode of transportation. A similarly large number also bike in Baltimore City. As such, we understand the situation this bill will formally legalize state-wide.

In Baltimore City, the crossing of a street by bicyclists is controlled by pedestrian signal indications (walk/don't walk signals), but only where signed by an R9-5 sign (see right). It's been this way ever since the construction of the Maryland Avenue cycle track approximately 9 years ago. The proper/complete implementation in these situations calls for a separate bicycle traffic signal module to be installed. But, doing so is costly, hence the use of the low-cost R9-5 sign.

The need for the R9-5 sign is a bit of a clumsy work-around to spot-legalize behavior that should be made legal everywhere. Why? Cyclists are slower to accelerate from a stop than vehicles and are least stable at low speeds. Allowing cyclists and other micro-mobility users to start riding on a pedestrian indicator improves visibility for drivers, may allow cyclists to clear an intersection faster, and reduces opportunities for conflict with drivers. These safety considerations are important because despite the Vision Zero efforts of the past several years, our roadways have actually gotten less safe for everyone.

Specific to the Baltimore region, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), on an annual basis, tracks five



R9-5  
Bicycles Use Ped Signal

Sign image from the Manual of Traffic Signs - <http://www.trafficdesign.com/>  
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*Existing law requires installation of an R9-5 sign at all intersections to achieve this effect.*

*(Image from the Maryland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2011 ed.)*

performance/safety measures to carry out the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Safety Improvement Program. The last of those five measures is "Number of Non-motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries". The numbers for this measure are abysmal.

The 2024 number for this measure was **398**, which is a **37% increase** over the 2005–2009 baseline number of **290**. The BRTB's proposed target for this measure is **306 by 2030** [1], an **increase** from last year's 2030 target of 294 [2]. In terms of VRU deaths and serious injuries, BRTB's target will make active transportation users less safe than we were 20 years ago. That's not progress – that's standing still.

We need to take steps to make our roadways safer for all VRUs. Allowing bicyclists to cross through intersections at the direction of walk/don't walk signals (that were originally installed with only pedestrians in mind) is a very simple, cost-effective measure that stands to make traveling by bicycle significantly safer and more convenient.

The fiscal note finds no impact to state expenditures and a potential for minor reductions in local expenditures. "Montgomery County advises that the bill eliminates its need to install special signage for bicyclists regarding leading pedestrian intervals (LPs) at various intersections throughout the county, at a cost of \$2,000 to \$5,000 per intersection." [3]

HB0177 is a great opportunity to improve road safety for vulnerable road users while simplifying traffic control requirements and reducing expenses to local jurisdictions.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0177**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

[1] Baltimore Metropolitan Council proposed Resolution #26-18: "Adopting Highway Safety Targets for the Baltimore Region"

<https://baltometro.org/wp-content/uploads/BRTBRes26-18-1.pdf>

[2] Baltimore Metropolitan Council Resolution #25-19: "Adopting Highway Safety Targets for the Baltimore Region"

[https://baltometro.org/wp-content/uploads/files/bmc\\_documents/committee/resolutions/brtb/BRTBRes25-19.pdf](https://baltometro.org/wp-content/uploads/files/bmc_documents/committee/resolutions/brtb/BRTBRes25-19.pdf)

[3] Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly, "2025 Regular Session - Fiscal and Policy Note for House Bill 422"

[https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/fnotes/bil\\_0002/hb0422.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/fnotes/bil_0002/hb0422.pdf)

# **HB0177 - TSO - LOS - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Aruna Miller  
Lieutenant Governor  
Kathryn Thomson  
Acting Secretary

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February 5, 2026

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

***RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 177 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Crosswalks***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 177 as an important step toward making bicycling safer throughout the State of Maryland.

HB 177 amends the Transportation Article to permit a person operating a bicycle, play vehicle or unicycle facing a red signal to enter an intersection to cross the highway in the direction of a pedestrian control “walk” signal. The bill requires that said person yield the right-of-way to any vehicle or pedestrian lawfully using the intersection before entering the intersection in the manner identified above.

Across Maryland, the State Highway Administration and local jurisdictions are increasingly making use of strategies such as Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) in order to improve safety for vulnerable users, giving pedestrians an extra three to seven seconds to enter the intersection before any vehicles. The Federal Highway Administration has found that LPIs reduce pedestrian crashes by as much as 13 percent at intersections where they are deployed.

This legislation clarifies that bicycles, play vehicles, and unicycles may make use of such safety treatments. In doing so, this legislation allows such road users to gain momentum and physical separation from motor vehicles, thereby increasing their visibility to drivers. This separation reduces conflicts at intersections and improves safety for drivers and bicyclists alike.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 177 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe McAndrew  
Assistant Secretary  
for Planning and Project Development  
Maryland Department of Transportation

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

**HB 177 - MoCo - MCDOT\_Morningstar\_FAV (GA 26).pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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**HB 177**

**DATE: February 5, 2026**

**SPONSOR: Delegates Palakovich Carr, Lehman, and Ruth**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)**

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### **Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Crosswalks**

House Bill 177 would allow cycles and other “play vehicles” to enter an intersection using a pedestrian signal when the pedestrian signal displays “walk,” while also requiring that the cyclist yield to pedestrians and any other vehicle lawfully using the intersection.

The legislation would offer major benefits for cyclists, who are vulnerable roadway users that face significant risks of severe injury and/or death if involved in collisions with motor vehicles. Among them, the bill would give cyclists a “head start” and critical visibility to motor vehicle drivers for intersections where there is a leading pedestrian interval (LPI). Leading pedestrian intervals provide a “walk” signal a few seconds before the regular signal turns green, allowing pedestrians (and via this bill, cyclists) to establish themselves safely and visibly in the intersection and decrease conflicts with motor vehicles. As part of our local Vision Zero initiatives, Montgomery County has installed LPIs at over 200 intersections in the past few years. This bill would therefore increase safety significantly for cyclists in the County upon enactment. It would do so with no added costs, no safety impacts on pedestrians, and no added delays to intersection operations.

Under Maryland law, cycles are considered vehicles but can be considered pedestrians when riding on the sidewalk. However, when cyclists are in the roadway, they are governed by the vehicular signal indications rather than the pedestrian indications. Notably, if a cyclist enters the intersection from the right-most lane or shoulder, traveling straight, at the same time that a motorized vehicle turns right, the cyclist faces a risk that the motor vehicle does not see the cyclist and an accident occurs. Since cyclists have a longer acceleration time than cars, cyclists are in the risk zone of right-turning vehicles for a longer period of time. With the opportunity for a head start from a pedestrian signal that has a leading pedestrian interval, that cyclist is visible to vehicles and their risk of collision lessens.

Under current law, cyclists can only use the pedestrian signal if directed by a traffic sign “Bikes use ped signal,” which has two disadvantages. First, local agencies face considerable

costs to install these signs wherever an LPI is present. Second, pedestrian signals prohibit pedestrians (and if signed, cyclists) from entering the intersection when a flashing “Don’t Walk” appears. While this makes sense for pedestrians, who have a longer crossing time, it is an impractical restriction for cyclists who should not be directed to stop in a traffic lane or shoulder while motorists are proceeding on the green. House Bill 177 would remove the signage requirement and allow for safer and more predictable bicycle operations at intersections with LPIs.

House Bill 177 does not make pedestrians or motor vehicle drivers less safe, nor does it affect efficiency of intersection operations (it would not add congestion for drivers). Instead, it simply confers benefits to cyclists in a manner that already exists for pedestrians. Cyclists are still responsible for following traffic signals and control signs, as well as yielding to other vehicles and pedestrians. This law has been enacted in other states and jurisdictions, resulting in reduction in crashes for cyclists at affected intersections.

For these reasons the Montgomery County Department of Transportation supports this legislation and requests a favorable report from the Committee.