

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 406

(Senator Lawlah, *et al.*)

Budget and Taxation

Pedestrians and Bicycle Riders with Disabilities

This bill creates an eight-member Advisory Committee on Pedestrians and Bicycle Riders with Disabilities to provide guidance and information on safety and access concerns of disabled pedestrians and bicycle riders, options for addressing those concerns, funding for related programs, and any other related issues. The Executive Branch, as directed by the Governor, will provide staff for the committee.

The bill alters State policy to provide that special safety and access concerns of pedestrians and bicycle riders with disabilities be considered in the development or improvement of State transportation facilities. It also requires the Director of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access in the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to propose long-term strategies to ensure compliance with safety standards (e.g., accessible signaling devices) for pedestrians and bicycle riders with disabilities in the statewide 20-year Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill could be implemented with existing resources. However, compliance with safety standards may require significant Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures in the future.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: State transportation policy requires that access by pedestrians and bicycle riders be considered in all phases of transportation planning. MDOT must work to ensure that transportation options for pedestrians and bicycle riders will not be negatively affected by transportation projects and that restrictions on bicycle access to mass transit and other restrictions will be removed. The statewide 20-year Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan requires the Director of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to propose long-term strategies for improving the State's highways to ensure compliance with the most advanced safety standards for pedestrians and bicycle riders -- safety standards for persons with disabilities are not specifically mentioned.

Background: Chapter 670 of 2000 directed MDOT to develop a comprehensive approach to bicycle transportation planning, including the creation of a master plan. MDOT plans to complete the next phase of the plan (facilities inventory) during 2001 and will try to complete the master plan in 2002. The department currently solicits input from the Maryland Bicycle Advisory Committee and other groups in developing the master plan. In addition to the plan, MDOT is working on other bicycle and pedestrian-related initiatives, including the Access 2000 Initiative, which supports improvements such as access into transit rail stations throughout the State.

State Expenditures: The State Highway Administration (SHA) advises that improving safety standards as required under the bill will likely increase TTF expenditures. SHA advises that it has already begun to install accessible traffic signals at selected intersections. If the standards to be developed under the bill require signals at numerous additional intersections, TTF expenditures would increase substantially. The preliminary estimate to install such a signal at one intersection is \$15,000. However, these expenditures can be made over time.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A substantially similar bill was introduced in 2001 as SB 421 -- it passed the Senate and was given an unfavorable report by the Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

Cross File: HB 1175 (Delegate DeCarlo) – Commerce and Government Matters.

Information Source(s): Department of Transportation, Department of Aging, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2002
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