

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 177 (Delegate Palakovich Carr, *et al.*)
Environment and Transportation

Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Crosswalks

This bill authorizes a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle at an intersection, if facing a red signal, to enter the intersection to cross the highway in the direction of a pedestrian control “walk” signal displayed for the portion of the highway on which the bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle is traveling, unless otherwise directed by a traffic control device. (Under current law, a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle is subject to all traffic control signals at an intersection.) Before entering an intersection in these circumstances, a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle or pedestrian lawfully using the intersection.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures may decrease in certain counties, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Definitions

For purposes of the Maryland Vehicle Law, “bicycle” means a vehicle that (1) is designed to be operated by human power; (2) has two or three wheels, with one being more than

14 inches in diameter; and (3) has a drive mechanism other than pedals directly attached to a drive wheel. In general, the term includes an electric bicycle, a moped, and an electric low-speed scooter.

“Play vehicle” means a vehicle that has two or more wheels, is propelled only by human power, and is not a bicycle or a wheelchair. A “unicycle” is not defined for purposes of the vehicle law.

A “traffic control device” is defined as any sign, signal, marking, or device that is not inconsistent with the Maryland vehicle law and is placed by authority of an authorized public body or official to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.

Maryland Vehicle Law – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles

The Maryland Vehicle Law specifies that every person operating a bicycle in a public bicycle area has all the rights granted to and is subject to all the duties required of the driver of a vehicle, except for rules of the road that by their very nature cannot apply or as otherwise provided in Title 21, Subtitle 12 of the Transportation Article. At an intersection, a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle is subject to all traffic control signals, as specified.

Additionally, a person who is lawfully riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area or in or through a crosswalk generally has the same rights and restrictions applicable to pedestrians under the vehicle law. In such circumstances, a person riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle must yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian or an individual riding on an electric personal assistive mobility device.

Local Expenditures: Expenditures may decrease in certain, more densely populated jurisdictions where the bill’s changes reduce the need to install special signage for bicyclists at signalized intersections. The magnitude of this decrease varies by jurisdiction, as discussed below.

In response to similar legislation introduced in 2025, the Maryland Association of Counties advised that there would be a negligible impact on county governments. Harford County and the City of Frederick each advise that the bill is not anticipated to affect their finances or operations.

Montgomery County advises that the bill eliminates its need to install special signage for bicyclists regarding leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) at various intersections throughout the county, at a cost of \$2,000 to \$5,000 per intersection. An LPI gives pedestrians the opportunity to enter the crosswalk at an intersection three to seven seconds before vehicles are given a green indication and allowed to proceed. The Montgomery County Department

of Transportation (MCDOT) advises that the use of LPIs raises awareness among drivers about the presence of pedestrians and improves overall pedestrian safety.

Under current law, bicyclists are generally not permitted to use LPIs. MCDOT advises that bicyclists can use LPIs if they are riding on a sidewalk; however, bicyclists riding on a highway (including in a bike lane) may only use LPIs if MCDOT installs signage at a given intersection stating that bicyclists may use the pedestrian walk signal. According to MCDOT, the total cost associated with LPIs is \$2,000 to \$5,000 per intersection. MCDOT advises that the bill eliminates the need for this signage because bicyclists would automatically be permitted to use LPIs under State law. To date, MCDOT has installed LPIs at 205 intersections in the county; approximately 197 of these intersections still require signage. Accordingly, the bill could generate savings of \$394,000 to \$985,000 for Montgomery County.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 422 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: SB 155 (Senator Waldstreicher) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Harford and Montgomery counties; City of Frederick; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 19, 2026
sj/aad

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