

HB1153 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Riding on Sidewalks

House Environment & Transportation Committee

March 3, 2022

Tom Rinker, President
Frederick Bicycle Coalition
president@bikefrederick.org

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

I am resident of Frederick County resident and President of Frederick Bicycle Coalition. [Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad coalition of recreational, commuter, mountain and adaptive cyclers. Our mission is to work with government, organizations, and individuals to promote greater access for bicyclists and others in the Frederick County area. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children, from riding bicycles (which includes similar devices like scooters) on sidewalks unless the local jurisdiction expressly permits it by ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties have long had such ordinances. Frederick County does not permit bicyclists to ride on sidewalks. However, the City of Frederick updated their ordinances in 2012 to allow non-motorized vehicles to ride on city property including sidewalks and paved pathways except in certain areas like the Historic District.

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 bike riders rely on bus and rail transit system for the “last mile” to carry their bikes on bus-front racks or MARC trains. Many riders find it more convenient to bike from home or work to a park, trail, library or other destinations than driving in their cars.

There are many children who bike to school. Many of them ride on sidewalks where there is no safe alternative. Many police officers will tell you that they don't ticket riders for biking on a sidewalk. Biking on a sidewalk for safety reasons should not be a reason for law enforcement action. The current situation is that people ride on sidewalks for safety and yet Maryland law prohibits it. This bill advances Maryland's Vision Zero goals by aligning Maryland code with safe and equitable biking.

Please support HB1153 to make Maryland mobility safe for all users, especially our most vulnerable population.

We request that the committee support the passage of HB1153.