



Support HB1153 ***Bikes 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

March 1, 2022

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 1153

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 33, 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 it’s more than 1,000 members, we support HB1153.

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 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 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. This bill 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.

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

Sincerely,

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