

HB656_PGCEX_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Angela Alsobrooks

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 656 - Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

SPONSOR: Delegate Charkoudian

HEARING DATE: February 17, 2022

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 656 - Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022**, which requires the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to recommend and implement context-driven design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety consistent with the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration proven safety countermeasures and the SHA's context-driven guide and associated strategies.

HB 656 also contains favorable language to require any new construction or improvement project projected to take more than 12 months to complete to implement all possible incremental, near-term safety improvements immediately and maintain each projects priority ranking. The bill also mandates a funding stream, via the Governor's annual budget, for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2028, with a 10% minimum increase each year beginning in Fiscal Year 2025.

The Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation strongly recommends support of **HB 656**, specifically, due to its stated goal to ensure all engineering and safety improvements are consistent with Maryland's Vision Zero program. Vision Zero strategy focuses on the High Injury Network (HIN) and eliminating all roadway related deaths by dates adopted via legislative resolutions. The requirements of **HB 656** dovetail with the Vision Zero Prince George's program mission and goals. The requirement that all types of construction and improvement projects undertaken by SHA contain industry standard context-driven design elements will add another tool in Vision Zero Maryland and Vision Zero Prince George's programs to continue to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on roadways.

Vision Zero strategy focuses on the High Injury Network (HIN). Since, its creation Vision Zero Prince George's has successfully worked with MDOT SHA's Office of Traffic Safety to identify the top 20 roadway corridors within the County with greatest frequency and severity of

pedestrian and bicycle crashes. By identifying these corridors efforts may be focused on the areas with the highest need of improvements.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS HB 656** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

2-17-22 656 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act o

Uploaded by: Barbara Ditzler

Position: FAV



HB 656 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, LWVMD President

Date: February 17, 2022

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) agrees that HB 656 should be made law and another tool our state uses to make all of us safer. Maryland should help promote mobility safety and a good way to do this is by monitoring and rectifying problems for pedestrians and bicyclists.

One remedy doesn't fit every situation. By evaluating each unique project, then designing the best way to make pedestrians and bicyclists safer, we may actually save taxpayer dollars. Having a set procedure and guidelines that are used when a project is first proposed without redesigning and redoing a project is wise spending. Using funds wisely in support of Vision Zero and safety guidelines with the government benefits everyone.

By evaluating all roads for safety first, a pattern can be more easily followed and modified for each situation to help provide a safe environment. Both individuals and agencies are well intentioned in promoting safety, but may not have knowledge of or reviewed all the situations that make a specific location unique.

If we are to advocate for all travel modes, they must be safe. LWVMD's positions encourage individuals to conserve natural resources and reduce energy consumption, so the use of bicycles and modes of travel that involve pedestrians should be safe. No one wants fatalities to occur. Guidelines that are transparent and readily available for everyone to see can help make us all safer while traveling, regardless of the destination or recreational use.

HB 656 provides a way to examine gaps in existing infrastructure and helps to make it safer for users whether it is a shared-use path, sidewalk, bike lane, or road. The public deserves a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and LWVMD supports and urges your affirmative vote for this bill.

HB0656_FAV_City of Rockville_(SAFE) Roads Act of 2

Uploaded by: Bridget Donnell Newton

Position: FAV



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022
February 17, 2022
SUPPORT

The Mayor and Council of Rockville thank Chairman Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to share the City’s comments on HB 656. We are thankful to Delegate Charkoudian for sponsoring this important legislation.

In July 2020, the Mayor and Council approved its Vision Zero Action Plan as a comprehensive approach to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries from traffic crashes. The Rockville Vision Zero Action Plan is consistent with the State’s Vision Zero subtitle and follows the same implementation philosophy. The City supports HB 656 and its goals to assess the infrastructure and operational practices that limit our collective ability to reach Vision Zero.

The City continues to proactively track crash locations and coordinates with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to identify state-maintained roadways and intersections in need of further assessment. Rockville has identified a High Injury Network of the roadways which have the most crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. All six segments are located along State-maintained roadways, with 52 fatalities and serious crashes. Rockville wrote MDOT over two months ago to express our serious concerns and request safety improvements. Unfortunately, we have still not received a response.

While regular collaboration between our transportation agencies is strong when identifying problematic safety locations, current processes and capacity at the State level often extends the timeline for implementation of safety improvements beyond acceptable levels, including a 90-day timeframe for responding to requests. Moreover, the recommended safety improvements often fall short of the needs of vulnerable people walking or bicycling in favor of maintaining the motor vehicle level of service or justification thresholds that predate the State’s Vision Zero policy. The requirements for comprehensive safety evaluations, consistent with the Vision Zero Program established under Title 8, Subtitle 10 of the Transportation Article; an increased and mandated budget for vulnerable roadway user improvements; and staffing assessment will help expedite proactive and innovative safety improvements along state roadways that are desperately needed.

We ask that you incorporate the following amendments into the bill:

1. Include implementation of temporary safety measures along with incremental, near-term improvements for projects taking more than 12 months to complete.
2. Expand safety recommendations to include improvements designed to reduce unsafe and illegal driving behaviors.

In closing, HB 656 is urgently needed and will further advance the State’s Vision Zero traffic safety efforts, making a safer transportation network for people walking, bicycling, driving, and using transit. We urge the Committee to provide HB 656 with a favorable report and forward the bill to the House floor for a vote.

Safe Roads and Vision Zero Bills via Little Deeds.

Uploaded by: Greg Cantori

Position: FAV



HB0656/SB 0880

HB 0254/SB 0874

Bill Title: The SAFE Roads Act and the Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022

Submitted by: Greg Cantori, President and CEO, Little Deeds, LLC

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Delegates,

I'm Greg Cantori, we own a handyman company to benefit those with disabilities and aging in place. We also own a home with our daughter at 4403 Faroe Place, Rockville MD 20853 just a few blocks from very dangerous Viers Mill Road.

There have been an alarming number of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities along Viers Mill Road and nearby 355.

The SAFE Roads Act (HB 0656/SB 0880) and the Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022 (HB 0254/SB 0874) could begin the process of making both of these state highways safer for non-drivers.

We and our children deserve to be able to walk to work, shopping, and school safely. Bus riders should be able to get to their stops safely. I'd like to be able to safely ride a bike to a metro station. Yet, traffic incidents on state-controlled roads continue.

In Montgomery County on one weekend alone, three pedestrians were killed by vehicles within hours of each other. Inexcusably, we continue to have pedestrian injuries and deaths at the SAME intersections, even when we've been asking for safety measures for years. This is a serious equity issue, as victims are more likely to take the bus and are disproportionately lower-income and people of color.

410-450-4466

greg@littledeeds.com

www.littledeeds.com

8293 Shilling Road, Pasadena MD 21122





We can save lives with simple policies and budgetary fixtures. We need action from the General Assembly to make that happen.

Please pass the SAFE Roads Act (HB 0656/SB 0880) and the Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022 (HB 0254/SB 0874).

Thank you

Greg Cantori

President and CEO

410-450-4466

greg@littledeeds.com

www.littledeeds.com

8293 Shilling Road, Pasadena MD 21122



Mayor Day HB 656 FAV Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jacob Day

Position: FAV



City of
Salisbury
Jacob R. Day, Mayor

17 February 2022

Committees: Environment and Transportation & Appropriations

Testimony on: HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation and Appropriations Committees,

As you consider the merits of **HB 656**, I ask that you **support** this vital legislation and vote to give **HB 656** a **Favorable** Committee report.

The City of Salisbury supports HB 656, which will improve roadway safety and help to prevent pedestrian and biker fatalities. This bill is important because it prioritizes public safety and makes critical investments in improving the safety of roadways throughout Maryland.

HB 656 will:

- Require the State Highway Administration to conduct an analysis of intersections and corridors with a high rate of pedestrian and bike injuries
- Increase spending levels to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Encourage the implementation of Context Driven Design Elements and FHA Proven Safety Countermeasures.


In Salisbury, we continue to prioritize the safety of our residents, and we have taken numerous steps to make our city walkable and increasingly more bike-friendly. Whether constructing bike lanes that allow cyclists and pedestrians to traverse through the core of our city to the heart of Downtown Salisbury, to implementing traffic calming patterns in residential areas, Salisbury is proud to serve as a leader amongst Vision Zero cities as we proactively work to make our streets a safer place to drive, bike, and walk.

Taking meaningful action, we created a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) in 2014 to advise elected leaders and staff and to help shape our Vision Zero Action Plan as we work to realize our mission of ending traffic fatalities and serious injury by 2030. The work of Salisbury's BPAC led to the creation of our Vision Zero Taskforce in 2019 as we demonstrated our commitment to adopting Vision Zero best practices in our traffic and engineering policies.

If enacted, the SAFE Roads Act of 2022 will prioritize the safety of Marylanders across our state. Roadway fatalities are wholly preventable, yet we must actively work to ensure that our roads remain safe for all modes of transportation, whether via a vehicle, on a bicycle, or by foot. As we work to embrace safer roads, our work prioritizing public safety will also yield dividends in the fight against climate change. As we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels for transportation, safer roads will encourage Marylanders to reduce their carbon footprint by walking or biking.

I ask for your **support** of this vital public safety and transportation legislation.

Respectfully,



Jacob R. Day
Mayor

Takoma Park 2022 - HB 656 FAV - SAFE Roads.pdf

Uploaded by: Jamal Fox

Position: FAV



**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK,
MARYLAND**

**HB 656
Support**

**Environment and Transportation Committee
February 17th, 2022
HB 656: SAFE Roads Act**

**Testimony of Mayor Kate Stewart
City Council of the City of Takoma Park
KateS@takomaparkmd.gov**

The City of Takoma Park supports the goals and intent of House Bill 656, and urges favorable consideration.

A great deal needs to be done to shift how we look at pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The SAFE Roads Act would provide one way to begin to shift the car-focused paradigm that now dictates how we approach our communities to one that promotes biking and walking.

We should be doing all we can to prevent roadway fatalities, and this bill will put in place procedures that are long overdue to provide the data and funding to increase roadway safety. The City of Takoma Park strongly endorses this bill as a municipality with many State Highway Administration roadways, and first-hand experience with how long it can take to have assessments and engineering countermeasures proposed and then actually implemented. We also have experience going through the long design process only to be told a project is not funded and no changes, even incremental improvements, will be made to make the roadways safer.

We thank the individual SHA traffic engineers we have worked with in the City. Unfortunately, many of the barriers to addressing roadway safety are built into how SHA is structured and conducts its work. The SAFE Roads Act begins to address some of the current dysfunction.

In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports the goals and intent of this bill, and encourages a favorable vote.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB0656.pdf

Uploaded by: Joel Beller

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JOEL N. BELLER
Acting Director of Government Affairs

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

MIA R. GOGEL
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 656**

TITLE: **Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Charkoudian**

COMMITTEE: **Environment and Transportation**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 17, 2022**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022. This legislation requires the Department of Transportation to recommend and implement Context Driven and Proven Safety Countermeasures design elements for new construction projects.

It is vitally important to keep roadways safe for all those using them. Last session, Baltimore County prioritized legislation imposing stricter penalties on violations that result in the injury or death of vulnerable road users. As many make the decision to switch to more active, environmentally friendly modes of transportation, it is critical that the design and construction of public roads accommodate vehicle alternatives. The Federal Highway Administration’s Proven Safety Countermeasures initiative was designed to reduce roadway fatalities by outlining national best practices for the design and construction of roadways factoring in speed management, roadway departure, intersection design, and accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The State Highway Administration’s Context Driven guide provides a foundation for road construction which promotes safe multi-modal access to roads across the State.

House Bill 656 would further Baltimore County’s efforts to provide safer roads for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout Maryland. The implementation of Context Driven design elements and Proven Safety Countermeasures in the planning and construction of State roadways would create a safer and more equitable standard for all future construction projects. By encouraging alternative modes of transportation, this legislation would promote the use of environmentally friendly transit alternatives.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 656. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety - ENT Submis

Uploaded by: John Seng

Position: FAV



HB0656
"Safe Access for All (SAFE)
Roads Act of 2022"
PLEASE SUPPORT

MARYLAND COALITION FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

SUPPORTS HB0656

February 15, 2022

To:

Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates Committee on Environment and Transportation

FROM:

John J. Seng, Director

Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety

JohnJSeng@gmail.com

(202) 468-7682

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/marylandcoalitionhighwaysafety>

My name is John Seng, volunteer director and founder of the *Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety*.

Our 175-member organization unequivocally supports the enactment of HB0656, the "Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022."

Our founding organizations include the *American Automobile Association (AAA) Mid-Atlantic*, the *Greater Olney Civic Association*, *The Route 210 Traffic Safety Committee* in Prince George's County and a group of Maryland home owner associations.

The Problem

As we've communicated to you and members of the ENT Committee previously, we are increasingly fed up with excessive, dangerous speeding; as well as reckless, aggressive and distracted driving on Maryland roadways.

Too many people die on Maryland roads. Whether pedestrian, bicyclist or motorist, no one should have to die while driving on, pedaling on or crossing our roadways, merely to travel from Point A to Point B.

One roadway death in your family, my family or anyone's family and friends is too much. But Maryland's track record comes not even close, with nearly 3 lives lost every 2 days in 2020.

"Maryland has averaged more than 500 traffic fatalities annually over the past five years, and despite reduced traffic volumes during the past six months due to the COVID-19 emergency, fatalities on our roadways have increased compared to 2019." (source: Chrissy Nizer, Administrator, MD MVA)

- **Maryland suffered 568 road deaths in 2020, compared to 535 in 2019, over fewer miles driven.** 2020 fatalities increased 6%, crashes increased 9% compared to 2019. (Maryland Highway Safety Office)

Towards A Solution

People shouldn't have to die or experience harm while using our roads. But if we fail to learn from the tragedies we experience, we fail to respect the unwilling, however, ultimate sacrifices of those lives lost.

HB0656 will take big steps in the right direction by mandating that the MDOT State Highway Administration study and understand much more about high pedestrian and bike injury corridors and intersections and develop improvements to reduce roadway violence; as well as invest more dollars in putting pedestrian and bicycling safety first, for the near-term as well as longer-term benefits.

Asking the right questions, conducting the best data analysis and acting upon these insights will play a crucial role in stemming the overall national increase in road violence on the local level in Maryland.

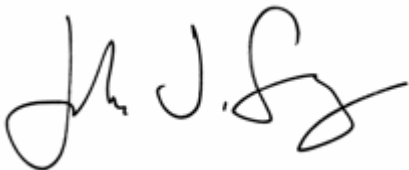
Maryland Lawmakers Can Create A Maryland Road Safety Legacy!

Is it possible that the Maryland General Assembly could yet still boldly take a preeminent, leadership role during this 2022 session by sending the message both in-State and to the rest of our nation that when we use Maryland roads, lawmakers put 100% into ensuring that safety comes first?

Taking Positive Steps

We thank you and the Committee for your review of our position, and urge you to submit a favorable recommendation and support for HB0656.

Sincerely,



John J. Seng
Director

cc: *Coalition* membership

BikeAAASupportHB656SafeRoads-20220214.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



Support HB656 ***Safe Roads for All***

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

February 14, 2022

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 656

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 its more than 1,000 members, we support HB656. Fatalities and injuries continue to rise from crashes involving vulnerable road users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, people with disabilities and first responders. Maryland must assure that its adoption of Vision Zero is not just a slogan but that we are taking concrete actions to reduce the number of crashes and the severity of injury when they happen. Maryland’s commitment to Complete Streets and Vision Zero call for adjustments to road design that provide accommodations and safety safer for all users, especially our most vulnerable who are not in motor vehicles. A disproportionate number of crashes resulting in death and injury occur on state roadways and Maryland SHA must lead in reversing this deadly trend. A shift in mode from single occupancy vehicles to walking, biking and other forms of micromobility is the best way to relieve congestion, protect our environment, improve health, strengthen our economy and provide equitable travel options. This legislation assures implementation of Maryland’s adoption of Vision Zero in 2019 and Complete Streets in 2018.

Please support HB656 to make Maryland’s roads safe for all users, especially our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

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

HB656_MDSierraClub_fav - 17Feb2022.pdf

Uploaded by: Josh Tulkin

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB 656 – “Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022”
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 17, 2022

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports HB 656, which would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to improve pedestrian and bicycle rider safety in the state. The State Highway Administration (SHA) would be required to conduct an analysis of the corridors and intersections across the state where pedestrian and bike rider injuries and fatalities occur, and then recommend engineering and safety improvements that would eliminate those accidents. SHA also would develop a budget and timeline for implementing each engineering and safety improvement.

The bill specifies annual spending levels for budget areas involving pedestrian and bicycle safety for fiscal years 2024 through 2028, and those amounts would be increased by 10 percent annually for fiscal years 2025 through 2028. Finally, when a new construction or improvement project would take more than 12 months to complete, near-term improvements must be made to enhance safety in the interim.

We live in a car-centric culture where transportation planning, roads and vehicle laws are focused on getting cars and trucks to their destinations as swiftly as possible. And with more and heavier SUVs on the road than ever before, this has resulted in high rates of injury and death for pedestrians and bicyclists. The correlation between speed and crash severity is well documented. Combining excessive speed with poor roadway and intersection designs can yield horrifying results. According to the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration’s Highway Safety Office, there were 542 traffic fatalities in our state last year, including 132 pedestrian and bicycle deaths.

Not everyone is able to drive, for reasons including age, health, and finances. The state transportation system needs to promote equity by assuring that everyone has a safe way to get to their job, education, and housing. We need roadway design that prioritizes safety for drivers, bike riders and pedestrians.

Transportation is now the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Tailpipe emissions are also a major source of health-damaging air pollution. There is a growing need to get individuals out of their cars, to take transit, ride bikes and scooters, and walk more. These modes significantly reduce air pollution and can increase physical health.

In summary, the high number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities that continue to occur on our roadways is unacceptable and indicates new measures must be undertaken to dramatically lessen and ideally eliminate all traffic deaths. HB 656 would help make that happen. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

Brian Ditzler
Chapter Transportation Chair
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Tina Slater
Chapter Transportation Committee
Slater.Tina@gmail.com

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

Bike MD 2022 HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) R

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 17, 2022

Josh Feldmark

joshua@bikemd.org

Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non-vehicle transportation users.

Two weeks ago I testified to this committee in favor of HB 254, the Vision Zero Implementation Act sponsored by Delegate Palakovich Carr. In that testimony I borrowed the words from the testimony of Kim Lamphier when she testified in front of you on your original passage of Vision Zero in 2019.

Let me quickly repeat Kim’s words: The concept of vision zero is to shift our first priority from getting motor vehicles to their destination as fast as possible to making sure everyone gets to their destination safely. Vision Zero recognizes that all traffic fatalities are preventable even though human decision making will always be fallible. It relies on infrastructure, engineering, and policies to prevent fatalities. Vision Zero examines factors that are essential for safe mobility—including roadway design, speeds, enforcement, user behavior, technology, and policies.

I mention all of this because this bill represents an equally important next step in the implementation of Vision Zero. To put it succinctly, this legislation is just good policy. It is what should be happening anyway, what things would look like if Maryland was truly committed to the safety of all its road users and to improving access to all. Specifically:

- Requiring context driven design elements for bicycles and pedestrians in all projects. Context driven design is precisely as it sounds, and is critical that the context of individual locations is studied so that the design elements will in fact, increase access and improve safety
- Incentivize near-term incremental improvements so that the most dangerous intersections may see improvements before large scale capital improvements can be made.
- A comprehensive analysis of state highways to discover commonalities among dangerous intersections and stretches of road as well as the improvements that can fix these problems
- Basic funding floors for the budget centers critical to improving safety for everyone. Frankly, this piece should not be necessary but years of neglecting these budget centers has put Maryland “behind the curve” on building and maintaining safe roads.
- Finally, transparency on the staffing commitment to the above goals.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 656 and urges a favorable report.

MD_SAFERoadsAct_Support_Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken McLeod

Position: FAV



We're leading the movement to build a Bicycle-Friendly America for Everyone

1612 K STREET NW, SUITE 1102, WASHINGTON, DC 20006

| phone 202-822-1333 | fax 202-822-1334 |

WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG

February 15, 2022

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing in support of the Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022, which has a hearing this Thursday, February 17th. The League of American Bicyclists (League) is a national non-profit dedicated to building a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. In Maryland, the League has recognized 7 Bicycle Friendly Communities, 27 Bicycle Friendly Businesses, and 3 Bicycle Friendly Universities.

Since 2008, the League has regularly ranked states based on the actions of their legislature, Governor, and state agencies. Maryland has typically been ranked in the upper half of states, breaking the top 10 four times. [1] Maryland has typically outperformed its federal data on rates of biking to work and bicycle safety through acting to address those issues. Our last report card recognized numerous actions showing Maryland's attempts to improve bicycling in the state. [2]

With the SAFE Roads Act of 2022, Maryland's legislature has another opportunity to provide a leading example and address the state's long-standing bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. The SAFE Roads Act will require the Maryland State Highway Administration to:

- Conduct an analysis of high pedestrian and bike injury corridors/ intersections and identify engineering improvements to address identified threats;
- Provide minimum annual funding levels in budget areas involving pedestrian and bicycle safety;
- Review outstanding and upcoming preservation and maintenance projects for opportunities to implement Context Driven Design Elements and FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures;
- Implement near-term, incremental improvements to enhance safety as interim improvements where long-term safety improvements will take more than 12 months to complete.

The SAFE Roads Act provides an opportunity for legislators to capitalize on recent federal law and federal guidance to improve safety in a manner that is cost-effective and leverages federally-required Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments found in Sec. 11111 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is consistent with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy and will serve as an example of what state legislatures can do to ensure safety is a priority. The League enthusiastically supports it and urges *favorable consideration* of House Bill 656 by the Committee.

Please contact me at ken@bikeleague.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ken McLeod
Policy Director

[1] <https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/2019%20BFS%20historical%20ranking.pdf>

[2] https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS%20Report%20Card_2019_Maryland.pdf

HB656_FAV_Charkoudian.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Public Utilities

Workers' Compensation

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 656 –SAFE ACCESS FOR ALL (SAFE) ROADS ACT OF 2022
TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

In 2020, although there were fewer cars on the road due to Covid-19 restrictions, pedestrian and cyclist deaths were at an all-time high. Last year alone, 130 Marylanders lost their lives while attempting to cross our streets. There were an additional 3,022 pedestrian-involved crashes which caused bodily injury or property damage.¹

Roadway fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. Furthermore, the safety of our streets is a paramount issue in addressing climate change. There is no way to move towards greater public use of alternative modes of transportation and decrease reliance on fossil fuel powered private vehicles without using policy measures to make our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Maryland's numbered highways are maintained by the State Highway Administration (SHA). Almost every incorporated city, town, and village, and most unincorporated places in the state are served by these state highways. This legislation would require the SHA:

- to conduct an analysis of high pedestrian and bike injury corridors and intersections on this broad network of roadways – focusing on potential engineering improvements- and publish the results by July 2023
- to increase annual spending levels in budget areas involving pedestrian and bicycle safety
- to review outstanding projects for opportunities to implement Context Driven Design Elements and FHA Proven Safety Countermeasures
- to implement near-term, incremental safety improvements when engineering projects will take more than 12 months to complete

SHA expects that the IIJA will increase the capital budget by over 20%². This will provide more than enough funds to ensure that the funds required in the bill can be dedicated for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements.

During the 2019 Session, the General Assembly committed to a Vision Zero Goal of zero vehicle-related deaths by 2030. We are not on track. The measures in this legislation will allow us to make progress toward that goal.

This bill is a priority for the Transit Caucus, please see the attached priorities letter.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 656.

¹ <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-bicyclist-safety/>

² https://mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/CTP_2022/CTP_FY2022_2027_Web.pdf (pg, 18- Federal Aid Assumptions section)



MARYLAND TRANSIT CAUCUS

marylandtransitcaucus.org • @CaucusTransit
transitcaucus@gmail.com

Officers

Co-Chair: Senator Malcolm Augustine
Co-Chair: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
Vice Chair: Senator Pam Beidle
Vice Chair: Delegate Sheila Ruth
Secretary: Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr
At-Large Member: Delegate Marc Korman

2022 Legislative Session

The Transit Caucus is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that supports a robust, equitable, modern, and effective transit network that serves all Marylanders. To that end, the Caucus has several areas of focus for this legislative Session. We are dedicated to increasing equity in the transit system by encouraging a focus on equity throughout all transit planning. Every Marylander should have fair access to the benefits of transit regardless of race, income, disability, or zip code. We also believe that 2022 is a critical year to pass transit legislation to put Maryland in the strongest position possible to maximize federal infrastructure funds. These themes play a role in the legislation we have decided to prioritize.

Priority Bills

This Session we are prioritizing the following bills, with a focus on improving the rail system and ensuring pedestrian and bicyclist safety in our state.

Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act (SB516/HB710)

Incentivizes transit oriented development through the expansion of the More Jobs for Marylanders program and dedicates significant funds to the development of transit in the annual budget.

Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act (SB514/HB778)

Requires the Maryland Transit Administration to make short-term investments in rail infrastructure throughout the state and establish longer-term goals to enhance rail lines and service.

Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022 (HB656/SB880)

Requires the State Highway Administration to review high pedestrian and bike injury corridors/intersections and implement timely engineering improvements with increased spending and to design future projects for even greater safety.

Members

Delegate Gabriel Acevero
Delegate Carl Anderton
Delegate Heather Bagnall
Delegate Sandy Bartlett
Delegate Lisa Belcastro
Delegate Regina Boyce
Delegate Tony Bridges
Delegate Al Carr
Senator Paul Corderman
Delegate Brian Crosby
Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield
Delegate Debra Davis
Delegate Eric Ebersole
Senator Arthur Ellis
Senator Brian Feldman
Delegate Jessica Feldmark
Delegate Wanika Fisher
Delegate Linda Foley
Delegate Catherine Forbes
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo
Delegate Jim Gilchrist
Delegate Michele Guyton
Senator Guy Guzzone
Delegate Anne Healey
Senator Shelly Hettelman
Delegate Terri Hill
Delegate Kevin Hornberger
Delegate Faye Martin Howell
Delegate Carl Jackson
Senator Michael Jackson
Delegate Dana Jones
Senator Cheryl Kagan
Delegate Anne Kaiser
Delegate Ariana Kelly
Delegate Ken Kerr
Delegate Trent Kittleman
Delegate Carol Krimm
Senator Susan Lee
Delegate Mary Lehman
Delegate Jazz Lewis
Delegate Robbyn Lewis
Delegate Brooke Lierman
Delegate Mary Ann Lisanti
Delegate Lesley Lopez
Delegate Sara Love
Delegate Eric Luedtke
Senator Cory McCray
Delegate Maggie McIntosh
Delegate Mike McKay
Delegate David Moon
Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Delegate Susie Proctor
Delegate Lily Qi
Senator Jim Rosapepe
Delegate Kirill Reznik
Delegate Emily Shetty
Delegate Stephanie Smith
Delegate Jared Solomon
Delegate Dana Stein
Delegate Vaughn Stewart
Delegate Jen Terrasa
Delegate Brenda Thiam
Delegate Kris Valderrama
Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith
Delegate Jay Walker
Delegate Alonzo Washington
Senator Mary Washington
Delegate Courtney Watson
Delegate Melissa Wells
Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins
Delegate Nicole Williams
Delegate Karen Lewis Young
Senator Ronald Young
Delegate Pat Young
Senator Craig Zucker

Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022 (HB254/SB874)

Requires the State Highway Administration to conduct an infrastructure review of each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality that occurs on State roads and to publish said review.

Endorsements

The following bills have received an endorsement from the Transit Caucus.

Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act Revisions (HB10/SB61)

Vehicle Laws - Dedicated Bus Lanes - Prohibition and Monitoring Systems (HB53)

State Highways – Designated Shoulder Areas – Establishment and Use by Transit Buses (HB64)

Baltimore City – Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Programs – Funding (HB73)

Railroad Companies - Condemnation Authority - Application (HB120)

Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts (HB137/SB87)

Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses (HB141/SB23)

Vehicle Laws - Plug-In Electric Drive Vehicles - Reserved Parking Spaces (HB157/SB146)

Criminal Law - Assault of a Public Transportation Service Provider - Penalties (SB 208)

Vehicle Laws - School Bus Safety - Occupant Capacity (HB283)

Transportation of Persons with Disabilities - Transportation Network Companies – Employee Requirements (SB625)

Transportation of Disabled Persons - Transportation Network Companies - Employee Requirements (HB726)

Primary and Secondary Schools – Bus Driver Wages – Study (HB753/SB421)

Transportation - Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service - County Funding (HB1019/SB838)

Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Riding on Sidewalks (HB1153)

Maryland Rail Investment Act (HB1324)

HB656_FAV_Martin

Uploaded by: Lorraine Martin

Position: FAV



February 15, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve and Vice Chair Stein,

The National Safety Council encourages you to support HB0656, the SAFE Roads Act of 2021. This legislation, if passed, will improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in Maryland.

NSC is America's leading nonprofit safety advocate and has been for over 100 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace, roadway and impairment. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. Our more than 15,000 member companies represent employees at more than 50,000 U.S. worksites. NSC is proud to lead the national Road to Zero Coalition with the goal of eliminating roadway fatalities by 2050.

In 2021, early estimates show there were 547 motor vehicle-related deaths in Maryland, a 3% increase from 2019.¹ Nationwide, NSC estimates continue to show a significant increase in motor vehicle-related fatalities through November 2021.² These data reinforce the need to improve the safety of our roads for all road users.

This is especially true for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users. In 2019, 6,205 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the U.S.³ Pedestrians are 1.5 times more likely than occupants of passenger vehicles to be killed in a car crash. From 2009 to 2019, the number of pedestrian fatalities increased by 51%.⁴ Nine out of 10 pedestrians would *survive* being struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 mph, while 9 out of 10 pedestrians would be *killed* at 40 mph.

Eliminating roadway fatalities requires massive, near-term gains in highway safety, and we must use every tool at our disposal to prevent crashes. HB0656 will help achieve this by providing dedicated funding to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety infrastructure, requiring

¹ <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/overview/preliminary-estimates/data-details/>

³ https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pedestrian_safety/index.html

⁴ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/road-users/pedestrians/data-details/>

vulnerable road user countermeasures in both new and maintenance construction projects, and collecting better data around high risk road areas in order to implement measures to prevent future fatalities. NSC stands ready to support your public safety efforts. If you have any questions please contact Tara Leystra, NSC State Government Affairs Manager, at 202-445-3121 or tara.leystra@nsc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorraine Martin".

Lorraine Martin
President and CEO

CC: House Environment and Transportation Committee

HB656 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Miriam Schoenbaum

Position: FAV

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 17, 2022

HB 656: Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

On behalf of the Montgomery County transit and safe streets advocacy group Action Committee for Transit, I ask the committee for a **FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION** for this bill.

This bill would require the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to make their roads less dangerous for pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders, and other vulnerable road users, and would provide the funding for them to do so. SHA should support it.

Since 2019, I have worked with a group to review dangerous infrastructure conditions and ask SHA to make meaningful changes to prevent further injuries and deaths. Unfortunately, in most cases, SHA says no. And even when they say yes, they still don't make the changes. Why? Because

- Pedestrian/bicyclist projects have a low priority;
- Near-term improvements for pedestrians/bicyclists don't happen, pending long-term projects; and
- Projects omit needed pedestrian design elements, which must then be retrofitted.

Meanwhile, every day, people must continue using the dangerous roads that SHA is not fixing.

Here are some examples of SHA practices.

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLIST PROJECTS HAVE A LOW PRIORITY



Where: Layhill Road (Maryland 182) at the Glenmont Metro drive/Glenmont shopping center, Glenmont

Request date: October 2019

Request: A crossing that is safe for pedestrians.

Reason for request: Pedestrian Alberto Duque struck and killed on January 26, 2019.

SHA response: A HAWK signal will be installed.

Current status: No change; "We are anticipating important update information to be forthcoming regarding our statewide signal construction program."

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLIST PROJECTS HAVE A LOW PRIORITY



Where: Midcounty Highway (Maryland 124) at Pier Point Place, Montgomery Village

Request date: February 2020

Request: A crossing that is safe for pedestrians.

Reason for request: Pedestrian Adonias Gomez struck and killed on February 12, 2020.

SHA response: A traffic signal will be installed.

Current status: No change; “still under review by our Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS).”

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLIST PROJECTS HAVE A LOW PRIORITY



Where: Clopper Road (Maryland 117) at Mateny Road, Germantown

Request date: October 2019

Request: An intersection that is safe and convenient for pedestrians to cross a.t

Reason for request: Several pedestrians hit while crossing with the walk signal.

SHA response: Some marked crosswalks and pedestrian signals will be added.

Current status: No change; “still under review by our Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS).”

NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS DON'T HAPPEN, PENDING LONG-TERM PROJECTS



Where: University Boulevard East (Maryland 193) and Seek Lane, Long Branch

Request date: November 2019

Request: A crossing that is safe for pedestrians.

Reason for request: Pedestrian Julio Vargas Valerio struck and killed on October 13, 2019.

SHA response: A traffic signal will be installed, as part of Purple Line construction.

Current status: No change.

NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS DON'T HAPPEN, PENDING LONG-TERM PROJECTS



Where: Frederick Ave (Maryland 355) between Montgomery Avenue and Dalamar Street, Gaithersburg

Request date: June 2021

Request: A crossing that is safe for bus riders going to and from 7-Eleven and Megamart.

Reason for request: Half a mile between crossings; longstanding issue for the City of Gaithersburg.

SHA response: When Megamart builds their new store, they will pay for a traffic signal at Dalamar Street.

Current status: No change.

NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS DON'T HAPPEN, PENDING LONG-TERM PROJECTS



Where: Rockville Pike (Maryland 355) and Halpine Road, City of Rockville, near Twinbrook Metro

Request date: July 2020

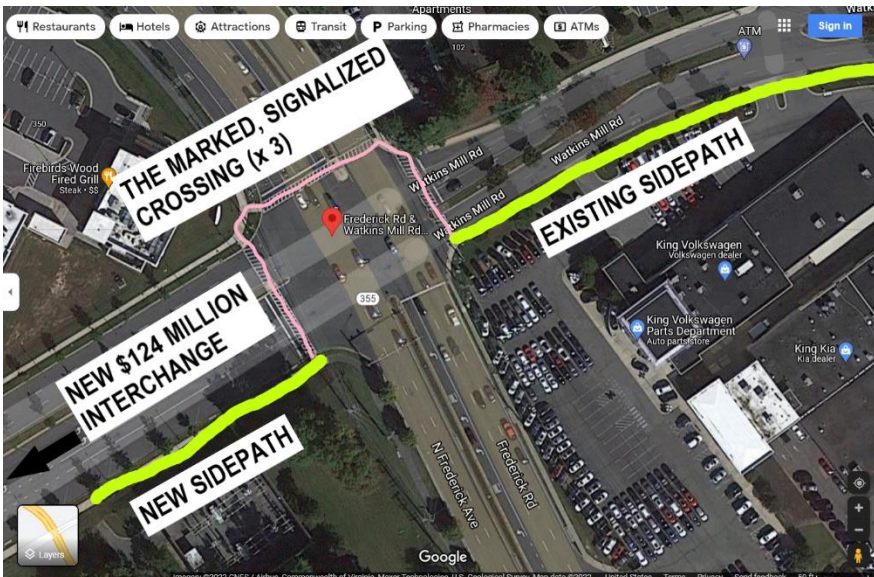
Request: Protecting pedestrians from turning drivers

Reason for request: Multiple pedestrians hit by turning drivers while crossing with the walk signal

SHA response: The Twinbrook Quarter developer will pay for a new traffic signal and other changes.

Current status: No change.

PROJECT DESIGN DOES NOT INCLUDE NEEDED PEDESTRIAN ELEMENTS



Where: Frederick Ave (Maryland 355) and Watkins Mill Road, Gaithersburg/Montgomery Village

Request date: June 2020

Request: A safe, direct crossing across 355 on the side with the sidepaths.

Reason for request: Should have been in the design of the \$124 million Watkins Mill Road interchange.

SHA response: "it was determined that pedestrians cross at the signalized crosswalks and are not crossing along the unmarked and unsignalized side."

Current status: No change.

PROJECT DESIGN DOES NOT INCLUDE NEEDED PEDESTRIAN ELEMENTS



Where: Frederick Road (Maryland 355) and West Old Baltimore Road, Clarksburg

Request date: January 2021

Request: Pedestrian signals where the new Frederick Road sidepath crosses the newly-rebuilt intersection with West Old Baltimore Road.

Reason for request: Should have been in the designs of the sidepath and the intersection projects, especially as a school walk route.

SHA response: “Our initial findings are still undergoing review at the MDOT SHA Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS).”

Current status: No change.

HB656_FAV_Schoenbaum_requested

Uploaded by: Miriam Schoenbaum

Position: FAV

On behalf of the Action Committee for Transit, I ask for a FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION for this bill.

This bill would require SHA to make their roads less dangerous for pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders, and other vulnerable road users. And it would provide the funding for this. They should support it.

For years, we have asked SHA to make meaningful changes to prevent pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and deaths. Unfortunately, in most cases, SHA says no. And even when they say yes, they still don't make the changes. Meanwhile, every day, people are using the dangerous roads SHA is responsible for.

In my written testimony, I've included some examples of requests where they said yes but still haven't done anything, or they said yes but not now, or they should have included it in their project from the get-go but didn't.

So I will just use the rest of my time to list some of the actual reasons SHA has provided for why they won't, can't, or shouldn't make a road crossing safe for pedestrians.

- Because it's dangerous to cross there.
- Because not enough people cross there.
- Because then more people would cross there.
- Because then people would think it's safe to cross there.
- Because people can cross somewhere else.
- Because nobody has been hit there yet.
- Because nobody has been killed there yet.
- Because typically drivers don't hit people there.
- Because it already is safe, if drivers are law-abiding.
- Because it's too complicated.
- Because drivers would have to wait too long.
- Because the speed limit is too high.
- Because engineering standards don't allow them to.
- Because they have to do another study.
- Because they're waiting for a different plan.

This has to stop. It's SHA's job to provide roads that are safe for EVERYONE. We need the SAFE Roads Act of 2022.

HB656_FAV_Black People Ride Bikes.pdf

Uploaded by: Neiunna Reed-Jones

Position: FAV



HB 656- Support
Dr. Neiunna Reed-Jones
Black People Ride Bikes
blackpeopleridebikes@gmail.com
734-883-1409

HB 656 Support
Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act

Environment and Transportation Committee
February 17th, 2022

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Hello, My Name is Dr. Neiunna L. Reed-Jones, the Co-Founder of Black People Ride Bikes, Inc, a Bikemore Board of Directors Member and Vice President of Carroll Park. I am also an avid Black Woman Baltimore Cyclist within the Black Community.

Black People Ride Bikes, Inc. (BPRB) is a Baltimore-based non-profit cycling advocacy organization established in 2019. BPRB was founded by me and Shaka Pitts to introduce people of the black diaspora to the many benefits of cycling. Our mission is to bring cycling awareness to the black diaspora by building a community of black cyclists with a focus on exploration, health, and advocacy. We want to celebrate black cyclists within a white-dominated sport or lifestyle. As an organization, we work to introduce black cyclists in every age bracket, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, or experience level. We work to introduce black cyclists to safe cycling practices such as group riding, overall bike safety, riding within a city environment, riding in rural areas and as a form of sustainable transportation. We also work very closely with City Government, local parks and other cycling/pedestrian advocacy groups such as Bikemore and Rails to Trails Conservancy. BPRB works diligently to advocate for safe cycling infrastructure throughout Baltimore focusing on traditionally black communities that are typically ignored when cycling and/or pedestrian infrastructure decisions is made.

I am in support HB 656 because as I have personally observed in Baltimore, traditionally black communities and communities effected historically by racial discrimination practices such a red lining throughout the country go over-looked and underserved when pedestrian safety infrastructure plans are developed. Black communities have a very high rate of traffic fatalities and pedestrian injury, however, overall, the State of Maryland should make pedestrian safety is paramount everywhere, this will be displayed by numerous crosswalks, increased bike lanes, speed limit signage and improved traffic calming measures. This is equity issue, it's a race issue and a class issue. Unless Maryland is deliberate about building safe pedestrian environments equitably it will not happen in black communities. HB656 will make pedestrian safety equitable for all within the State of Maryland.

I urge a favorable report of HB 656.

HB0656-FAV-DTMG-2-117-22.pdf

Uploaded by: Olivia Bartlett

Position: FAV



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB0656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0656 because it will improve safety for pedestrians and bikers and prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.

Roadway fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. However, the number of traffic-related pedestrian deaths in Maryland is growing every year. Although there were fewer cars on the road in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, pedestrian and cyclist deaths continued to climb. Last year alone, 130 Marylanders lost their lives while attempting to cross our streets and there were an additional 3,022 pedestrian-involved crashes which caused injury or property damage.

Improving the safety of our streets is also important for addressing climate change. Encouraging greater use of alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, rather than cars requires our streets to be safer for pedestrians and bikers.

HB0656 aims to reduce the number of serious injuries caused by bike- and pedestrian-involved crashes, make progress towards Maryland's goal of zero vehicle-related deaths by 2030, and promote alternative modes of transportation, primarily biking and walking.

To achieve this goal, HB0565 requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to conduct an analysis of corridors and intersections with high rates of pedestrian and bike injury and publish the results by July 2023. The analysis will focus on engineering improvements, the budget and timeline for making the improvements, and context-driven design elements and FHA-proven safety measures to improve pedestrian and biker safety. SHA will also increase annual spending levels in budget areas involving pedestrian and bicycle safety and review outstanding and upcoming preservation and maintenance projects for opportunities to implement.

Too often, SHA studies result in good plans for improving safety, but the plans can't be implemented for an extended period of time. Importantly, HB0656 will therefore require the SHA to implement near-term

incremental improvements which enhance safety in the interim when new safe infrastructure and engineering improvements will take more than 12 months to complete,

DTMG strongly supports these common-sense measures to improve safety for residents across Maryland and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0656.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
oliviabartlett@verizon.net
240-751-5599

MD 656 - Safe Access For All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2

Uploaded by: Peter Gray

Position: FAV



Environment and Transportation Committee
Kumar Barve, Chair
Dana Stein, Vice-Chair

Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 656 - Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

February 17, 2022

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Peter Gray and I represent the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. I am speaking on behalf of the 2000 WABA members and several thousands of other supporters who live in Maryland.

In 2019, the General Assembly unanimously voted to commit Maryland to achieve Vision Zero – that’s zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries – by 2030. Yet, three years later, it is not clear that MDOT SHA has made any significant changes in funding, focus or policy to actually achieve it. HB 656 is a critical, concrete step towards achieving Vision Zero.

WABA supports the passage of HB 656 and its mandate that MDOT apply context-driven design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety on the development of all construction, improvement and maintenance plans. WABA applauds the bill provision that requires MDOT SHA to conduct an analysis of all crash locations where there have been fatalities and serious injuries to people walking and biking and which will also recommend engineering and safety improvements at those locations. The bill further mandates that MDOT SHA develop a budget estimate and timeline for each safety and engineering improvement and then implement those improvements.

Crucially, HB 656 also mandates minimum spending levels in several categories of spending, with the spending levels increasing each successive fiscal year because making streets safe requires continuous funding, not just continuous promises.

As I noted in my testimony in support of the Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022, HB 254, in my role as a WABA board member and as co-chair of the Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets, I have helped organize and attended numerous memorials for people killed while walking or biking on State Highways. From those tragic memorials it is clear to me that the conditions of most State Highways are not safe for people walking and biking.

In addition, the most recent traffic fatalities on State Highways in my County have occurred at locations where other vulnerable road users have died in the past few years. In one case, two members of the same family were killed while crossing the same street, mere blocks from one another. It is clear that MDOT SHA has not comprehensively examined the sites where crash fatalities are happening. Nor has the State agency charged with maintaining a safe environment for all road users done anything to make those roads safer, even when multiple pedestrians and bicyclists have died in the exact same spots.

Therefore it is imperative that the Committee issue a favorable report on HB 656. We desperately need thorough studies of crash sites, development of recommendations of changes to our roads which will eliminate future fatalities and serious injuries, and the mandatory minimum spending levels on such improvements to crash sites be put into law. We need the passage of HB 656 to force MDOT SHA to make the changes necessary to avoid future pedestrian and bicyclist deaths on our State Highways.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 656.

HB656_INFO_Walton

Uploaded by: Leah Walton

Position: INFO



Statement of

Leah Walton
Safety Advocate
National Transportation Safety Board

To the

Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

– On –

House Bill 656
Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

–

Annapolis, MD • February 17, 2022



An Independent Federal Agency

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) appreciates this opportunity to provide you with information regarding its special investigation reports on pedestrian and bicycle safety, and especially our call for better data and infrastructure design to ensure safer roads.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation - railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and crashes it investigates and makes safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety, such as our work on pedestrian and bicycle safety. The recommendations that arise from our investigations and safety studies are the NTSB's most important tool for saving lives and preventing injury.

In 2018, the NTSB released a [Special Investigation Report: Pedestrian Safety](#). This report followed our 2016 public forum addressing pedestrian safety. At that event, experts from around the country discussed the data we need to better understand the risks, technology that could prevent vehicles from hitting people, and highway designs that offer safer roads or paths for pedestrians. Following that initial public meeting, we conducted more than a dozen investigations into pedestrian deaths in order to gain insight into how we can prevent these deaths from happening.

In 2019, the NTSB released a [Safety Research Report: Bicyclist Safety on US Roadways: Crash Risks and Countermeasures](#). This report called for a multi-faceted approach to combat the rise in bicyclist fatalities caused by motor vehicles, including improving roadway infrastructure so that vehicles are separated from bicyclists, such as with separated bike lanes, would likely reduce the number of the most serious crashes. At intersections, where more than 65 percent of collisions occur, treatments that clearly denote right-of-way using color, signage, medians, signals and pavement markings would likely reduce the number of crashes in those environments.

More recently, in 2021, the NTSB added "[Protect Vulnerable Road Users Through a Safe System Approach](#)" to its Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements. A Safe System addresses all aspects of traffic safety: road users, vehicles, speeds, roads, and postcrash care. Better safety investments - road treatments, vehicle design, collision avoidance systems, strong traffic safety laws, and robust education efforts - can mitigate injury risks for all road users. Proven, effective countermeasures are being underused to protect pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable road users.

Traditional street systems, which are designed for motor vehicle traffic, may not serve pedestrians and bicyclists well, for several highway engineering reasons:

they may lack street design elements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, curb extensions, and speed bumps; they encourage high speeds; they have complex intersections with multiple turn lanes; long waits at some crossings; arterial roads through urban environments have wide, multiple lanes that are difficult to cross; urban thoroughfares can separate neighborhoods from shopping, work, and entertainment.

Plans developed on the state and local levels to safely incorporate vulnerable road users into the transportation network can focus resources to yield the greatest possible reduction in the number of users who are severely or fatally injured by motor vehicles. However, implementation of countermeasures is often hindered by the lack of agency commitment or the lack of policies that actually designate the necessary funding for them. Addressing the safety design changes needed for will take substantially more resources.

I hope this information will be valuable to the Committee as it considers HB 656.

HB656_INFO_Westervelt

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 17, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 656 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 656 requires the MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) to make recommendations and implement context-driven design elements, implement all possible incremental improvements when a project is projected to take more than 12 months to complete, conduct analyses at specific locations and studies that identify road characteristics, ensure improvements are consistent with Vision Zero, and report staffing and vacancy information, as well as complete a comprehensive report on the analyses and studies conducted. The bill would also mandate appropriations of the various MDOT SHA System Preservation fund categories.

Many of the requirements outlined in House Bill 656 are already being conducted by the MDOT SHA. For example, all recommendations and implemented improvements are guided by context-driven design elements. Similarly, the MDOT SHA currently performs infrastructure reviews, and the timing of these are largely dependent on when MDOT SHA receives notice from law enforcement that a fatality has occurred on the State’s network. Maryland’s Vision Zero Program is a State-wide initiative that includes State, county, and municipal level transportation agencies. Vision Zero consists of six elements including infrastructure, distracted driving, impaired driving, occupant protection, pedestrians, and aggressive driving. When the MDOT SHA makes recommendations and implements improvements, all elements of Vision Zero are considered.

In order to achieve the required funding levels outlined in House Bill 656 for the five minor system preservation categories, the MDOT SHA would require \$294.5 million in additional funding for FY 2024-2027 and \$245 million dollars for FY 2028. House Bill 656 does not propose a new funding or revenue source; therefore, funds would need to be shifted from previously programmed projects. The MDOT currently budgets funds on a six-year timeframe and outlines total funds and projects in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The CTP is established after extensive consultation with Maryland’s citizens, local jurisdictions and the local and State delegations, and those projects that preserve transportation system investments, enhance transportation services, and expand transportation opportunities throughout the State are added to the CTP.

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Page Two

A strength of the CTP is the flexibility to move funds in order meet certain demands and the MDOT requires this flexibility without the restrictions of mandated appropriations. This flexibility allows for the ability to program system preservation projects based on a data driven approach to keep our State-wide infrastructure in a state of good repair based on the greatest needs. While the system preservation needs of MDOT SHA are important, they must be considered in the context of MDOT's need to maintain critical infrastructure across Maryland's entire transportation system, including transit, port, and airport facilities.

Additionally, in light of the recently passed federal surface transportation reauthorization known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), more State dollars will need to be used as a match to access this influx of federal funds. While the MDOT is awaiting federal rulemaking and a congressional appropriations authorization to be able to access these new funds, every effort should be made to provide flexibility for the MDOT to have State funds available to use as leverage to receive this funding increase.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 656.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stafford
State Legislative Manager
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm
Director, Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090