

2.02.23 HB 70 Safe Access for All (SAFE) (SB16) Ro

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Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE**

HB 70 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, LWVMD President

Date: February 2, 2023

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) agrees that HB 70 should be made law to create another tool our state uses to make all of us safer. LWVMD's positions encourage individuals to conserve natural resources and reduce energy consumption. In addition, we support incentives which promote use of mass transit and other alternative modes of travel. If the use of bicycles and modes of travel that involve pedestrians aren't safe, that is hardly an incentive. 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. 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.

SB 16 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.

LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB 70.

HB70_MDSierraClub_fav 2Feb2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Brian Ditzler

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB70 – “Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023”
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 2, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports HB70, which would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to recommend and implement context-driven design elements to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety when developing any construction or improvement project. When a new construction or improvement project would take more than 12 months to complete, all possible near-term safety improvements must be made.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) would also be required to submit to the General Assembly before October 1, 2023, a report with information about employees who work on pedestrian and bicycle safety that includes turnover rates and the number of open staff positions. The report also should provide the number of signalized crosswalks that have been approved for construction and the timeline for completion. The bill also would require SHA to submit to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2023, a full analysis of state highways that pass through suburban activity centers or traditional town centers, and a timeline for installing safe pedestrian signalized crossings on all state highways where there is significant transit dependency and a population density along the highway exceeding 10,000 people per mile.

We live in a car-centric culture where transportation planning, road design and vehicle laws are focused on getting cars and trucks to their destinations as swiftly as possible. 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, road design 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 544 traffic fatalities in our state in 2022, including 139 pedestrian and bicycle deaths.

Not everyone is able to drive, for reasons including age, health, and finances. Roadway design must be updated to prioritize safety for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as drivers. The state transportation system needs to ensure that everyone has a safe way to get to their job, education, and housing. One important measure to take is installation of more crosswalks on state highways in high population areas.

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. HB70 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

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.

Takoma Park 2023 - HB 70 FAV - SAFE Roads - House.

Uploaded by: City Councilmember Jason Small

Position: FAV



**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK,
MARYLAND**

**HB 70
Support**

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 2, 2023

HB 70: SAFE Roads Act of 2023

City Council of the City of Takoma Park

The City of Takoma Park supports the goals and intent of House Bill 70, 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 shift the car-focused paradigm that now dictates how we approach our communities to one that promotes biking, walking, and most importantly, residents' lives.

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 (SHA) 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.

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Uploaded by: Franz Schneiderman

Position: FAV



Testimony to the House Environment and Transportation Committee
HB 70 -- Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023 --
Position: Favorable

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Environment and Transportation Committee

Feb. 2, 2023

Honorable Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a non-profit group that works to foster safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland drivers and car buyers.

We support **HB 70** because it will improve safety for all Maryland road users – and especially of the highly vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists who account for more than 20% of the fatalities on Maryland's roads.

The measures the bill mandates will help address the dramatic spike in road deaths we've seen on U.S. roads in recent years. In 2020, overall U.S. road deaths increased 7.2% to more than 38,000 – and 6,721 pedestrians were among those killed (up 4.8% from the previous year).¹ For 2021, the news was even worse – with traffic fatalities rising another 10.5% and almost 43,000 Americans dying on U.S. roads. NHTSA estimates that 7,342 pedestrians were among those killed in 2021, up 5% from the year before to a 40-year high.²

Sadly, those figures only intensify trends that have been clear for many years. While roads in other wealthy nations have gotten much safer in recent decades (traffic fatalities in the E.U. fell a remarkable 36% between 2010 and 2018, for instance³), fatalities have been trending upward on U.S. roads for several decades. For pedestrians, total fatalities rose about 45% between 2010 (4,302 deaths) and 2019 (6,237 deaths).⁴ From 2010 to 2021, the number of cyclists dying each year soared 58%, with an estimated 8,353 cyclists losing their lives over that period.⁵

Road deaths in Maryland haven't shown quite so dramatic a spike. But between 125 and 138 pedestrians died in our state each year 2019-2021.⁶ Preliminary data for 2022 show that 544 people died on Maryland roads last year, with 128 pedestrians and 11 cyclists among those killed.⁷

1 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-27/usdot-s-buttigieg-announces-new-traffic-safety-strategy>

3. <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/traffic-pedestrian-deaths-soar-2021/623913/>

4. <https://cleantechnica.com/2021/12/11/eu-road-deaths-dropped-by-36-while-us-road-deaths-increased-by-10/>

4 <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

6. <https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/us-cycling-fatalities-hit-multi-decade-high-but-there-may-be-hope-in-safety-in-numbers-effect>

6 <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/#>

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



We know a great deal about who is likely to be killed in these crashes and where they happen. Across the county, people walking in lower-income neighborhoods are more likely to be killed, with those in the lowest-income neighborhoods almost twice as likely to die as those in middle-income Census tracts.⁸ Death rates are also unusually high among older Americans, African-Americans, and Native Americans.⁹

Data from the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA) show that 73% of pedestrian deaths happen on principal, minor or interstate arterials – that is, high-speed, high-capacity roads in urbanized areas where crosswalks are often a long distance apart.¹⁰ More than two-thirds of pedestrian deaths happen on roads without protected space for people on foot or in wheelchairs.¹¹

While many factors help make our roads dangerous, safety advocates know that such data carries an important lesson: that the core of the problem is that we have too many dangerous, high-speed roads in urban and suburban spaces that offer too little protection for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. To improve safety, we need to act with urgency to redesign our streetscapes (esp. in town centers and high-density areas) in ways we know can provide greater protection.

HB 70 takes several important steps to make that happen. It mandates, among other measures, that MDOT and the State Highway Administration implement context-appropriate design changes as they undertake construction and maintenance projects; it requires SHA to act this year to examine the safety of state highways in town centers and offer a plan to install safe pedestrian crossings; it also requires SHA to report promptly on the impact of its open positions on safety efforts and on the number of new signalized crossings approved.

These and other measures the bill mandates promise to make a real difference in the safety of some of our most vulnerable residents and road users. And while some drivers may complain about those changes, re-engineering dangerous intersections and corridors with an eye to protecting their most vulnerable users will in the end tend to lower speeds and alter road designs in ways that will make drivers significantly safer as well.

We support HB 70 and ask you to give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

8 <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

9 Ibid.

10.. <https://ggwash.org/view/85217/why-pedestrian-deaths-in-the-us-hit-a-record-high-in-2021>

11. Ibid.

Bike MD 2023 HB 70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Ro

Uploaded by: Jarryd Hawkins

Position: FAV



HB 70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 2, 2023

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.

Last year 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. Imagine what things would look like if Maryland was truly committed to the safety of all its road users and to improving access to all by:

- 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.
- Finally, transparency on the staffing commitment to the above goals.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 70 and urges a favorable report.

BikeAAASupportHB70SafeRoads-2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



Support HB70 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 1, 2023

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 70

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 30, 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 HB70 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

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB0070.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Greenberg

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 70**

TITLE: **Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Charkoudian**

COMMITTEE: **Appropriations**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 2, 2023**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023. 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 70 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 HB 70. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB70_Feb2_House_Daphnis_SAFE_RoadsforAll.pdf

Uploaded by: Kristy Daphnis

Position: FAV



(HB0070), Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

WRITTEN TESTIMONY - February 2, 2023

Testimony Delivered by:

**Kristy Daphnis, Montgomery County Resident
Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets Co-Founder &
Executive Steering Committee Member**

Bill Position: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, in support of HB 70/SB 16. SB16 is a bill that will require the Department of Transportation to recommend and implement certain design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety when developing certain projects; will require the State Highway Administration to submit certain reports including pedestrian and bicycle safety data, analyses, and plans to the General Assembly by certain dates; and other requirements generally relating to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

While the State of Maryland and several jurisdictions have committed to Vision Zero, we have not made significant progress toward implementation in a manner that prevents deaths. In certain instances, there are intersections and corridors where pedestrians and cyclists are killed, again and again, yet the infrastructure has not changed, and meaningful discussion and action around how to make the roadway safe for all are stalled or non-existent.

A few implementation features of SB16 include design elements along State Highways, including counter measures that have been proven at the Federal level.

1. Short-term interventions to improve safety, even if the ideal solution will take many years.
2. Addressing State-agency workforce issues, by helping to ensure the SHA can recruit and hire professionals necessary to carry out the work.
3. Reporting on existing conditions, especially in dense residential and urban areas and related to signals and crosswalks – and, further, requiring a safe crossing every 1/5 mile in areas and corridors that are heavily dependent on transit.

I began to get involved in pedestrian and traffic safety issues after my child's care provider, Etsegenet Hurissa, was killed while she was crossing Georgia Avenue on the way home from her evening nursing class. She was crossing (legally) at an unmarked crosswalk near a bus stop, and was struck by a speeding driver. To get to a signalized crosswalk, she would have needed to walk a full mile out of her way – as the nearest signal was 0.5 miles away. While I am grateful that there was a signal installed nearby, and the speed limit was reduced – installation of that signal took nearly 6 years of advocacy, and an additional pedestrian death. Had there been a signals and safe crosswalks at 1/5 mile intervals before her death Etsegenet may still be alive today.

Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets is group that aims to support victims of traffic violence and victims' families, and to provides a venue for advocacy for safer local, state and federal traffic laws and infrastructure. As a Leader of Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets, I work with my colleagues and victim's families to plan and carry out memorials for traffic crash victims across Montgomery County, of which we have planned dozens over the past 3 years. We see this situation time and time again - areas where there are no safe crossings, along transit dependent corridors dotted with bus stops, businesses, and highly dense residential areas. In some cases, we have returned to the same intersections or corridors 3, 4, 5, even 6 times. Passage and implementation of this Bill would lead to a more fulsome analysis and implementation of the State-issued Context Driven Design Guide, as well as a thoughtful process for installing safe crossings and other interventions.

I urge you to support HB70, to help improve roadway safety and to reduce gridlock and congestion across the State of Maryland. If passed and implemented, this Bill will certainly save lives.

HB0070_FAV_NTSB.pdf

Uploaded by: Leah Walton

Position: FAV



Statement of

National Transportation Safety Board

To the

Committee on Environment and Transportation
Maryland House

— *On* —

House Bill 70

Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

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Annapolis, MD • February 2, 2023



An Independent Federal Agency

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) appreciates this opportunity to provide you with information regarding its special investigation report on pedestrian safety, and especially our call for the increased use of pedestrian safety action plans.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation – railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents it investigates and makes safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety, such as our work on pedestrian 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 to gain insight into how we can prevent these deaths from happening.

This study led NTSB to make 11 safety recommendations addressing a variety of countermeasures. Among these, we addressed the importance for state and local transportation planners to develop municipal pedestrian safety action plans that develop a network of safety improvements. Transportation planners and engineers in local jurisdictions are asking what steps they should take to better design streets and walking networks for pedestrian use. Although there is no recommendation addressed specifically to state and local governments, we did urge the Federal Highway Administration to “. . . promote municipal pedestrian safety action plans that develop a network of safety improvements.” ([NTSB safety recommendation H-18-47](#))

Local pedestrian safety action plans seek to safely incorporate pedestrians into the transportation network. Plans developed by municipalities can focus resources to yield the greatest possible reduction in the number of pedestrians who are severely or fatally injured by motor vehicles. The objectives of a pedestrian safety action plan are to establish a risk assessment framework, identify data requirements for selecting and evaluating actions, and prioritize countermeasures for increasing safety.

A plan for developing pedestrian safety action plans, prepared for the Federal Highway Administration and NHTSA by the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina, calls for analyzing safety data, seeking public input, and coordinating the planning process. It also recommends engaging with citizen groups, local public agencies, affected private sector interests, and the media, as well as coordinating with other local plans.

In its study, NTSB reviewed pedestrian safety action plans developed by a number of states and municipalities and found cities have developed pedestrian safety plans that have proven effective. To cite one prominent example, in New York City, more than 50 percent of the people killed in traffic crashes from 2005 to 2009 were pedestrians. During 2010–2011, the city developed

a pedestrian safety action plan, which it updated in 2014. At NTSB's 2016 public forum, representatives of the New York City Department of Transportation described their work in data analysis, planning, and community outreach aimed at reengineering the urban environment for pedestrian safety. In the city's 2018 Vision Zero report, the mayor noted that where major engineering changes had been made since 2005, fatalities had decreased by 34 percent—twice the rate of improvement at other locations in the city.

NTSB's study led to several important conclusions:

- Effective street designs for pedestrian safety are highly context-dependent and should be managed by local interests; however, states and cities would benefit from resources, tools, and funding support to develop and implement effective plans.
- The design guidance needed to develop effective pedestrian safety action plans is readily available to local transportation planners.
- Addressing the pedestrian safety design changes needed for many of our urban environments will take substantially more resources.

I hope this information will be valuable to the Committee as it considers HB 70.

Testimony.HB70_Delegate Lorig Charkoudian.docx (1)

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 70- SAFE ACCESS FOR ALL (SAFE) ROADS ACT OF 2023

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

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

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 following table captures the data for pedestrians and bicyclists involved in accidents in Maryland since 2019.

	Pedestrian Deaths	Pedestrian Injuries	Bicyclist Deaths	Bicyclist Injuries
2019	124	2,750	10	686
2020	130	2,000	16	580
2021	125	2,185	6	583

Title: Maryland Pedestrian and Bicyclist Fatality and Personal Injury Crash Data 2019-2021¹

Maryland's numbered highways are maintained by the State Highway Administration (SHA). Many incorporated cities, towns, and villages, and most unincorporated places in the state are served by these state highways. This legislation would require the SHA to:

- Analyze and plan for implementing context-driven safe pedestrian crossings in SHA-defined "Suburban Activity Centers" and "Traditional Town Centers"
- Develop a plan to place pedestrian crossings every 1/5th mile in transit-dependent areas with a population density above 10,000 people per mile
- When implementing new safety infrastructure and engineering improvements that will take more than 12 months to complete, implement near-term, incremental improvements that enhance safety in the interim, and
- Submit a report to the General Assembly on staffing as it relates to delays in implementing pedestrian safety improvements, including information on how many signalized crosswalks have been approved for construction and the timeframe for their completion.

Roadway fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike in Maryland. In order to prevent injury and death, we must create environments that are designed with safety as the first priority. This legislation supports the SHA to build the necessary infrastructure to keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 70.

¹ data retrieved from <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

HB0070 Bill Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY
MADELIN MARTINEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)
DATE: January 17th, 2023
RE: HB0070 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

The MLLC supports HB0070 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0070.

Regarding the Latino community, low-income neighborhoods, Communities of Color, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, older adults, and people with limited English proficiency are among those that have been traditionally underserved, mis-served, or left out of decision-making and planning processes such as the development of safe active transportation facilities.¹ Latino communities are more transit-dependent than white communities, as disparities in access and investment are both contemporary and historical. For example, many U.S. cities were intentionally divided along race and class lines— with residential and transportation development patterns rooted in segregation, discriminatory laws, and housing policies intended to disadvantage and exclude People of Color.² Infrastructure such as railroads and highways reinforced this segregation.³ As a result, neighborhoods on the “wrong side of the tracks”— mostly low-income, Black neighborhoods and other neighborhoods predominated by People of Color— experienced exclusion, disinvestment, physical barriers, and even destruction.⁴ Regarding safety, in 2021, 131 Marylanders lost their lives while attempting to cross our streets.⁵ There were an additional 3,151 pedestrian and bicyclist-involved crashes that caused injury or property damage.⁶ Regarding climate change, there is no way to move towards greater public use of alternative modes of transportation and decreasing reliance on fossil fuel-powered private vehicles without making our streets safer for pedestrians.

This bill aims to solve these issues by reducing the number of serious injuries caused by bike and pedestrian-involved crashes, advancing towards Maryland’s goal of zero vehicle-related deaths by 2030, addressing equity issues in State Highway Administration projects in some of the most diverse/underserved communities, and promoting alternative modes of transportation (primarily biking and walking). It requires the State Highway Administration to conduct an analysis on the findings of

¹ *Equitable and Inclusive Trails*. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. (n.d.). Retrieved January 17, 2023, from <http://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/basics/equitable-and-inclusive-trails/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Maryland Department of Transportation. (2023). *Maryland Crash and Traffic Fatalities Data*. Zero Deaths Maryland & Vision Zero - Maryland Highway Safety Office. Retrieved January 17, 2023, from <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>.

⁶ Ibid.

and implementations of context-driven design elements for pedestrian and bike safety including, but not limited to, fully signalized sidewalks, pedestrian hybrid beacons, and any other signal types. Overall, roadway fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. Moreover, if people feel safe walking, biking, and taking other modes of public transit, they will be less likely to rely on their private vehicles powered by fossil fuels.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB0070.

HB0070_FAV_City of Rockville_Safe Access for All (

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: FAV



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023
SUPPORT

The Mayor and Council of Rockville thank Chair Barve, members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, Chair Barnes, and members of the House Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to share the City's comments on HB 70. 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 70 and its goals to assess the infrastructure and operational practices that limit our collective ability to reach Vision Zero.

The City tracks crash locations and coordinates with the State Highway Administration (MDOT 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. Five segments are located along State-maintained roadways in the City of Rockville, with 37 fatalities and serious injury crashes. Rockville wrote MDOT SHA last year to express our serious concerns and request safety improvements. Unfortunately, there is little to no progress on this request.

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; a mandate to improve facilities for vulnerable roadway users; and staffing assessment will help expedite proactive and innovative safety improvements along state roadways that are desperately needed.

We support the provisions that require if a new construction or improvement project is projected to take more than twelve months to complete, MDOT must implement, all possible, near-term, safety improvements immediately while maintaining each project's priority ranking. Further, the requirement that SHA must submit a report to the General Assembly with a full analysis and plan for all State highways located in suburban activity centers that includes an installation plan and timeline necessary to establish safe pedestrian crossings on State highways has the potential to significantly improve pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety in our community.

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

1. Expand recommendations to include improvements to reduce unsafe and illegal driving behaviors.
2. Permit a reduction in intersection level-of-service if necessary to implement safety improvements.

In closing, HB 70 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 Committees to provide HB 70 with a favorable report.

City of College Park_HB0070

Uploaded by: Patrick Wojahn

Position: FAV



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

7401 BALTIMORE AVENUE SUITE 201 COLLEGE PARK MD 20740 | COLLEGEPAKMD.GOV

MAYOR

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February 3, 2023

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

Re: **HB0070 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023**

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The College Park City Council voted unanimously during our meeting on January 31, 2023 to support HB0070. This legislation would require the Department of Transportation to recommend and implement certain design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety when developing any construction, improvement project, or similar, and requiring the State Highway Administration to submit reports on pedestrian and bicycle safety data to the General Assembly. The City of College Park has been a strong supporter of safer roads for cyclists and pedestrians—too many are killed or injured and we must make roads safe for all.

Thank you for your consideration of the City's position.

Sincerely,

Patrick Wojahn
Mayor

cc: 21st District Delegation

Written Testimony for HB 70 (SAFE Roads Act).pdf

Uploaded by: Patrick Wojahn

Position: FAV



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www.railstotrails.org

Testimony in Support of HB 70, the Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

By Patrick Wojahn, Director of Government Relations, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Before the House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 2, 2023, 1:00 pm

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is the nation's leading organization dedicated to connected trail networks and building healthy places for healthy people. With over 12,000 members and supporters across the State of Maryland, RTC advocates for development of trail and active transportation networks around the State including the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network and the Capital Trails Coalition Network.

RTC submits this testimony *in support of HB 70*, which would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to recommend and implement certain design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety when developing certain projects, require the State Highway Administration to submit reports including pedestrian and bicycle safety data, analyses, and plans to the General Assembly, and other requirements.

While the State of Maryland has adopted the concept of Vision Zero, the state continues to fail to take critical steps toward achieving the goal of zero fatalities and injuries, particularly relating to vulnerable road users including pedestrians, bicyclists and people with disabilities. Better reporting and increased access to data relating to crashes and resulting injuries and fatalities will help enable all interested stakeholders to better understand the steps that need to be taken to reach this goal.

Incorporating and investing in best practices for design elements to increase the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists will help ensure that the number of transportation-related casualties for vulnerable users will decrease. As the nation's leading advocate for separated pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure such as trails, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy recognizes that the best way to ensure bicyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities reach their destination is to provide dedicated infrastructure away from automobiles such as trails. We encourage the General Assembly and MDOT, and the State Highway Administration in particular, to include investment in trail networks as a strategy toward ensuring safety for all vulnerable users.

Trails and active transportation networks can be a tool to provide greater access for all Marylanders to job or educational opportunities in a way that is safe and more affordable. The Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program, which invested over \$100 million from the federal

budget to develop networks of non-motorized transportation infrastructure in four communities (Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, Marin County, California, Columbia, Missouri, and Minneapolis, Minnesota) demonstrated the potential impacts.¹ As a result of this investment, even with significant increases in the number of people walking and biking, bicycle and pedestrian crashes held steady or decreased in all the communities involved in the pilot.² The 2017 National Household Travel Survey found that 53% of all trips taken are within 3 miles or less, and 28% of all trips taken are within 1 mile or less.³ Many more people will take these trips by walking and biking if they have safe and accessible ways to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. If you have questions, please contact Patrick Wojahn, Director of Government Relations, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, at 240-988-7763

¹ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/ntpp/

² Id.

³ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2017 National Household Travel Survey Tables, March 2018, <https://nhts.ornl.gov/download.shtm>

Environment and Transportation Committee - HB 70

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 70 - Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

January 31, 2023

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 1500 plus 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, four years later, it is not clear that MDOT has made any significant changes in funding, focus or policy to actually achieve it. HB 70 is a critical, concrete step towards achieving Vision Zero.

WABA supports the passage of HB 70 and its mandate that MDOT apply context-driven design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety on the development of all construction, post construction, improvement, preservation and maintenance plans. WABA applauds the bill provision that requires MDOT SHA to issue this year reports that will provide the public with useful information about MDOT SHA staffing issues relating to implementation of bicycle/pedestrian projects. Most importantly, this bill mandates that MDOT SHA issue a report with a full analysis of all state highways in suburban activity centers and traditional town centers including an installation plan and timeline to establish safe crossings of all of those state highways!

In my role as co-chair of the Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets, I have helped organize and attend 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 enough 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 70. We desperately need development of recommendations of changes to our roads which will eliminate future fatalities and serious injuries be put into law. We need the passage of HB 70 to mandate MDOT SHA 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 70.

HB70_fav_AARP.pdf

Uploaded by: PRISCILLA KANIA

Position: FAV



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HB70 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Support
February 2, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Priscilla Kania, AARP Maryland volunteer lead advocate and resident of Anne Arundel County. On behalf of our 850,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of **HB70 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023**. We thank Charkoudian for introducing HB70.

HB70 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in developing any construction or improvement project, or postconstruction project, preservation, or maintenance, to recommend and implement specified design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety. If a new project is projected to take more than 12 months to complete, MDOT must implement all possible incremental near-term safety improvements immediately, as specified. The bill also establishes reporting requirements for the State Highway Administration (SHA) that relate to pedestrian and bicycle safety. The bill takes effect June 1, 2023.

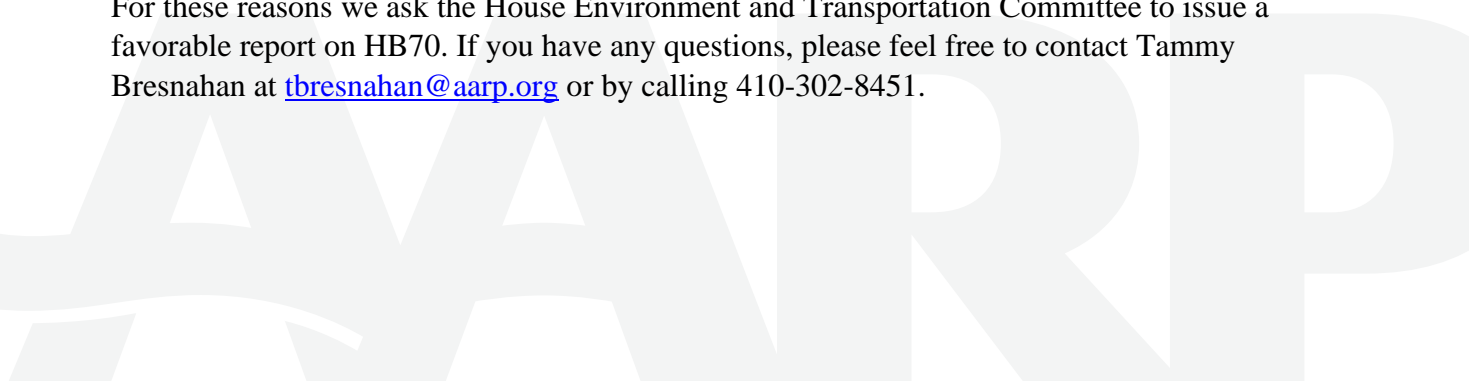
Everyone should feel safe crossing a street. But the streets can be dangerous, especially for older Americans. The number of pedestrians killed by vehicles rose 35 percent in the past decade — and the death rate is almost twice as high for people over 75 as for the general population.

Making streets safe has been an important issue for AARP. This issue is of critical importance to AARP's members. When older Marylanders don't feel safe crossing the street, they are less engaged.

AARP has included pedestrian safety as one of the measures of quality of life on our livability index, and we invite you to check out how well your city does, at [AARP Livability Index](#). You'll also be able to see how your area stacks up on housing, environment, health, convenience and opportunity.

Safe streets and roads are important for all of us. Many of us walk, and we drive cars, but we also use walkers, canes or even push a stroller. Drivers should share the roads, and roads should be safe for all. Help us make America's streets safer for all.

For these reasons we ask the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a favorable report on HB70. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.



SAFE Roads Act of 2023 HB70.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Reece Peak

Position: FAV



City of
Salisbury
John "Jack" R. Heath, Mayor

January 31, 2023

Committees: Environment and Transportation & Appropriations

Testimony on: HB70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation and Appropriations Committees,

As you consider the merits of **HB70**, I ask that you **support** this vital legislation and vote to give **HB70** a **Favorable** Committee Report.

The City of Salisbury supports HB70, which will improve roadway safety and help to prevent pedestrian, biker and vehicular fatalities. This bill is important because it prioritizes public safety and makes critical investments in improving the safety of roadways throughout Maryland.

In Salisbury, we continue to prioritize the safety of our residents, and we have taken numerous steps to make our city more walkable and increasingly more bike-friendly. Whether constructing bike lanes that allow cyclers and pedestrians to traverse through 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. Most recently we engaged in MOVE SBY, Salisbury's first ever mobility masterplan, focusing on solving mobility challenges through micro-mobility, transit, and pedestrian and cycling solutions.

If enacted, the SAFE Roads Act of 2023 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,

Julia Glanz
City Administrator

Office of the Mayor
125 N. Division St., #304 Salisbury, MD 21801
410-548-3100 (fax) 410-548-3102
www.salisbury.md

HB70_IndivisibleHoCoMD_FAV_RuthAuerbach.pdf

Uploaded by: Ruth Auerbach

Position: FAV



HB70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

Testimony before Environment and Transportation Committee

February 2, 2023

Position: Favorable

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee Members,

My name is Ruth Auerbach, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today to support HB70, to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are grateful for the leadership of Delegate Charkoudian in sponsoring this bill.

Indivisible Howard County strongly supports all the programs to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and the requirement for reports on relevant issues in the bill. However, this testimony will focus on the program to install crosswalks around Suburban Activity Centers and its impact. In Howard County, we have many Suburban Activity Centers, and many are located in the vicinity of state highways. Unfortunately, getting to and from these areas on foot can be difficult.

One of the benefits of the state installing such crosswalks that we have already observed in Howard County, is that the county will simultaneously improve the surrounding pedestrian and bike infrastructure to make the entire area more walkable and bikeable. For example, the recent installation of a crosswalk at the intersection of MD-175 and Dobbin Road, has not only made this busy intersection much safer for pedestrians, it has been followed by Howard County installing a mixed-use path along Dobbin Road, where no sidewalk previously existed. Phase 1 of the project has already been completed, and we are awaiting Phases 2 and 3. Personally, I have occasionally biked a very indirect route, completely avoiding the intersection, to get to shops and restaurants on the other side. I look forward to biking on this new infrastructure when it is completed, and the trip is faster and safer.

Many more areas in Howard County and around the state could be made safe and accessible for pedestrians by the crosswalk installation program described in this legislation. The members of Indivisible Howard County enthusiastically support walkable and bikeable communities.

This legislation will promote safety, health, and the environment. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.**

Ruth Auerbach
Columbia, MD 21046

HB 70 - MoCo_Morningstar_FAV (GA 23).pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

HB 70

DATE: February 2, 2023

SPONSOR: Delegate Charkoudian

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation and Appropriations

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

House Bill 70 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to recommend and implement specific pedestrian and bicycle safety elements when developing any construction or improvement project. If a new project will take more than a year to complete, MDOT must immediately advance all possible near-term safety improvements. Additionally, the bill includes a reporting requirement for the State Highway Administration that relates to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Montgomery County is one of the first county governments in the country to adopt Vision Zero to eliminate serious and fatal injuries from our roadways by 2030. We are encouraged that the U.S. Department of Transportation pivoted last year from focusing on the actions of individual drivers to advancing roadway engineering design strategies to address roadway safety. This Safe System Approach builds on the goals of both preventing crashes and minimizing the harm caused to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists alike when crashes do occur, and it should ultimately lead to safer roadways.

House Bill 70 will advance the State's commitment to address roadway safety. The bill aligns with Montgomery County's Vision Zero goals, and as such, the County urges that the Committee adopt a favorable report.

HB0070 SAFE Road Act of 2023 Support - Frederick B

Uploaded by: Shayne Boucher

Position: FAV

HB0070 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

House Environment & Transportation Committee

January 31, 2023

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

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

I am an avid cyclist, a mobile bike service owner, Frederick County resident and President of Frederick Bicycle Coalition. [Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad coalition of recreational, commuter, mountain and adaptive cyclists. Our mission is to work with government, organizations, and individuals to promote increased and safe access for bicyclists and others in the Frederick County. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023 (HB 70) will provide the necessary resources for SHA to fix dangerous state roads for our vulnerable road users. The bill would act on the following measures:

- Increase annual budget spending levels on already identified safety and access gaps for our pedestrians and bicyclists
- Apply Context Driven Design Elements and FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures in current and future transportation infrastructure preservation and maintenance projects
- Implement near-term, interim improvements that enhance safety in new transportation infrastructure and engineering projects taking 12 months or more to complete

Vulnerable road user fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. As stated by MDOT SHA's Zero Deaths policy, every crash is preventable and every life counts. In Maryland, the number of traffic-related pedestrian deaths is growing higher year over year. About 135 pedestrians and bicyclists are killed every year in the State of Maryland.

The status quo is not acceptable since there has been a 46% increase in pedestrian and bicyclists fatalities since 2012. MDOT, MHSO, and SHA are failing to meet NHTSA and FHWA HSIP pedestrian and bicyclist emphasis area fatality reduction targets. Preservation of state roads cannot be the budget priority at the risk of not improving roadway conditions that are dangerous to vulnerable road users and the root cause of traffic fatalities.

We request that the committee support the passage of HB 70.

HB0070_FAV_ERNST.pdf

Uploaded by: Timothy Ernst

Position: FAV

Timothy P. Ernst
10616 Dunkirk Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20902
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HB 70 SUPPORT
Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023
Environment & Transportation Committee, Appropriations Committee
February 2, 2023

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, Members of Environment & Transportation Committee and Members of Appropriations Committee: I'm here to testify in support of HB 70, SAFE Roads Act of 2023.

My name is Timothy Ernst. My family and I have lived in Silver Spring, MD for over 20 years. We live several blocks from Georgia Avenue – statistically, the most dangerous state highway in Maryland if you are a pedestrian.

While doing research, I discovered many deaths of my fellow community members along Georgia Avenue corridor. Here are just a few of those incidents:

On August 11, 2018, 49-year-old Ramon Sanches was hit and killed by a car while attempting to cross Georgia Avenue at Viers Mill Road.

Nine days later, on August 20, 2018, 56-year-old Alberto Hilario was killed by an automobile while trying to cross Georgia Avenue near Glenallan Avenue.

And four days after that, on August 24, 2018, 41-year-old Mauricio Corerra was hit by a car and killed at Georgia Avenue and Reddie Drive near Wheaton Metro Station.

On April 28, 2021, Claire Weissmeyer Grossman was killed by a woman driving a Toyota Camry on Georgia Avenue near Rippling Brook Drive. Mrs. Grossman, age 65, had just gotten off a bus from work. Her family told a local reporter that Mrs. Grossman did not own a car. She relied on public transit to get around Montgomery County.

Five years earlier, in October 2016, Mrs. Grossman's husband Robert Grossman was killed by an automobile while crossing Georgia Avenue near Regina Drive – about 1,000 feet away from the spot his wife was killed.

In April 2022, Eric F. Grosse, Jr. died after being hit by a Subaru Forester on Tuckerman Lane and Kings Riding Way in North Bethesda. Age 74, Rick was my cousin and my friend. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He was a professor at Montgomery College and volunteered in his County Council member's office.

Three years earlier, in 2019, a pedestrian named Jennifer DiMauro, age 31, was killed at the same intersection in North Bethesda.

I recently participated in a "community walk" on the sidewalk along Georgia Avenue with my County Councilmember (Evan Glass) and Delegate Vaughn Stewart (District 19) who is a member of the Transportation Committee.

We watched senior citizens trying to cross six lanes of traffic on Georgia Avenue to get to the bus stop on the other side. In most cases, there was not a crosswalk or a traffic signal anywhere in sight. Many families in the Aspen Hill neighborhood use public transit, bicycles and sidewalks to get to and from their jobs and grocery stores every day. Many cannot afford private vehicles.

I invite every member of this committee to sponsor a community walk with pedestrians and bicyclists in your community. I recommend that you try crossing a six-lane state highway in your community as a pedestrian or bicyclist.

Maryland SHA must invest time and money to re-design state roads like Georgia Avenue to give pedestrians a fighting chance at survival.

I personally invite Paul Wiedefeld, Maryland's new transportation secretary, to visit Georgia Avenue and walk one mile on our sidewalks. Then tell me how safe it feels to be a pedestrian in Maryland.

I strongly urge a favorable report on HB70.

STB MD Assembly 2023 Testimony Bill HB0070 (Safe A

Uploaded by: Michael Scepaniak

Position: FWA

Strong Towns Baltimore (STB) is supportive of Delegate Charkoudian's bill HB0070 (Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023). Decisive steps need to be taken to make Maryland's state-owned roads safer for non-motorists. Consider the following numbers. In Baltimore County, 12% of the roads are state-owned. Despite this low percentage, between 2015 and 2019, 79% of pedestrian fatalities occurred on those state-owned roads. [1]

With our general support made clear, we see several ways in which the bill should be strengthened. As such, STB's stand on the bill is **favorable with amendments**.

In section 2–103.1, the bill calls for MDOT to recommend and implement context–driven design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety consistent with the U.S. DOT FHWA proven safety countermeasures [2] and MDOT's context-driven guide [3] and associated strategies. While we recognize the usefulness of these resources, they are inadequate.

The **NACTO Global Street Design Guide** [4] is a much richer, authoritative, and impartial source of safety guidelines for non-motorists, especially in the the contexts that MDOT terms "Urban Core", "Urban Center", "Traditional Town Center", and "Suburban Activity Center". In making this recommendation, we'll note that both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. are NACTO member cities.

In section 2–609.A.3, the bill calls for the SHA to create a report that includes the number of new signalized crosswalks that have been approved for construction. We would like to see this report expanded to also **include the number that were denied** and the reasons why.

In section 2–609.B.3, the bill calls for the SHA to create a report that provides a plan for establishing safe pedestrian crossings on certain state highways that are within or adjacent to census tracts with significant transit dependency and a population density along the highway that exceeds 10,000 people per mile. This seems like an unreasonably high bar to us.

Instead of requiring **both** conditions, we would prefer to see **either** condition serving as a qualifier - significant transit dependency **or** a minimum population density.

The Baltimore region's transit system is relatively under-developed and immature. As such, the only communities in the Baltimore region that would likely qualify as being significantly transit dependent are located in Baltimore City. However, MDOT SHA does not have any responsibility for maintaining any roads within the city.

We would like to see the 10,000 people per mile threshold lowered, as this high bar will prevent all but a very small area of the state from benefiting from the safety improvements offered by this bill.

While Silver Spring has a population density of 10,277 people per mile, College Park (for example) only clocks in at 6,191. In the Baltimore region, the population densities of many communities dominated by state-owned roads fall far short of the bill's current 10,000 threshold,

with Towson at 4,207, Owings Mills at 3,742, Perry Hall at 4,239, Catonsville at 3,201, Parkville at 7,424, and Timonium at 1,828. [5] Given these numbers, we believe **3,000 people per mile** is a much more appropriate threshold.

With the integration of the above-listed changes, the bill will stand to benefit a large number of pedestrians across the state in a meaningful way. We urge the committee to strongly consider integration of our suggestions and vote in support of this bill. Thank you for your time and attention.

[Strong Towns Baltimore](#)

Michael Scepaniak, Co-president

David House, Co-president

James Pizzurro

Joshua Spokes

Kim Dulay

John Locke

Shaun Lehmann

Omar Hamza

Alisa Williams

Henry Cook

Tristan Stefanović

Sarah Story

[1] "Baltimore County Strategic Highway Safety Plan". October 8, 2020

<https://zerodeathsmd.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SHSPBC.052621.pdf>

[2] U.S. DOT FHWA. "Proven Safety Countermeasures". As of January 27, 2023

<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

[3] MDOT SHA. "Context Driven Guide". As of January 27, 2023

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3476e680584c49e48303fe6d52ceeda9>

[4] National Association of City Transportation Officials. "Global Street Design Guide". As of January 27, 2023 <https://nacto.org/publication/global-street-design-guide/>

[5] U.S. Census Bureau. "QuickFacts". As of January 27, 2023

https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/collegeparkcitymaryland,silverspringcdpmaryland,perryhallcdpmaryland,owingsmillscdpmaryland,towsoncdpmaryland,catonsvillecdpmaryland/PST_045222

HB0070SafeAccessAll-Unfav.pdf

Uploaded by: Nelda Fink

Position: UNF

Unfavorable – HB0070 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

Nelda Fink

MD District 32

I am a bicycle rider, and walker. But I do not agree with spending state taxpayers money to **study** what the state cannot provide – safety. Safety is a state of mind and only the individual can create that state of mind by taking actions that provide for their own safety. I feel perfectly safe riding on roads without bike paths and walking alongside roads that don't even have a shoulder. I don't agree with additional spending of the People's taxes for what is actually an illusion.

I oppose this bill.

I urge the Senate members to vote **unfavorably** on this bill.

Nelda Fink

HB0070 - SHA - SAFE Act - LOI_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 2, 2023

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

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 70 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 70 but offers the following information and amendments for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 70 requires the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) to recommend and implement pedestrian and bicycle safety design elements in all projects, implement incremental improvements when a project is projected to take more than 12 months to complete, report human resource data related to pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects, as well as analyze, plan for, and report on pedestrian crossing projects located on certain state highways.

The MDOT would like to note for the Committee that SHA Administrator Tim Smith has engaged in conversations with the bill sponsor about areas of concern in the bill, as drafted, as well as common goals; specific amendment language has been offered to the sponsors for their consideration.

MDOT SHA’s proposed amendments would establish the continuation of an existing process that evaluates pedestrian and bicycle improvements through the context driven lens on improvements projects in our capital program. Regarding the suggested changes to both sections with reporting requirements, the proposed amendments would allow SHA the ability to quantify available information and provide the members of the General Assembly with human resource statistics that will clearly identify the resources dedicated to pedestrian and bike improvements across the state; as well as proposing an appropriate time frame to conduct analysis and develop a plan before producing a report.

The MDOT looks forward to continuing its partnership with the bill sponsor in the hope of reaching a consensus on bill language.

The MDOT SHA suggests that section (C-1) (1) be amended to:

(C-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT, IN DEVELOPING IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THE CAPITAL PROGRAM, SHALL RECOMMEND AND IMPLEMENT CONTEXT-DRIVEN

DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY CONSISTENT WITH:

The MDOT SHA suggests that the following sections under 2-609 (A) be amended to:

(1) THE NUMBER OF STAFF POSITIONS THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION HAS DEDICATED TO IMPLEMENTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS BY TITLE AND DEPARTMENT;

(2) INFORMATION ABOUT EMPLOYEES DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY HIGHWAY SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- (I) WAGE, BENEFIT, AND COMPENSATION LEVELS;*
- (II) TITLE AND DEPARTMENT*

Finally, MDOT SHA suggests that the following sections under 2-609 (B) be amended to:

(B) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2024, THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, A REPORT WITH A FULL ANALYSIS OF AND PLAN FOR ALL STATE HIGHWAYS LOCATED IN SUBURBAN ACTIVITY CENTERS OR TRADITIONAL TOWN CENTERS, AS DEFINED BY THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION'S CONTEXT ZONES GUIDE, THAT:

(1) INCLUDES AN INSTALLATION PLAN AND TIMELINE REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH SAFE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ON THESE STATE HIGHWAYS;

(2) USES ALL SIGNAL TYPES IN THE PLANNING OF ROAD CROSSINGS, INCLUDING FULL SIGNALS, PEDESTRIAN HYBRID BEACONS, AND ANY OTHER SIGNALS; AND

(3) EVALUATES THE PLACING OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS IN INTERVALS BEST DETERMINED BY A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH THAT CONSIDERS CONTEXT DRIVEN DESIGN CONCEPTS AND TRAFFIC CONDITIONS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE CENSUS TRACTS WITH SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT DEPENDENCY AND A POPULATION DENSITY ALONG THE HIGHWAY THAT EXCEEDS 10,000 PEOPLE PER MILE.

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Page Three

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 70.

Respectfully submitted,

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