

HB0519 – Bikes on Sidewalks

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 14, 2023

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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.

Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children, from riding bicycles (which includes similar devices like scooters) on sidewalks unless the local jurisdiction expressly permits it by ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties have long had such ordinances. In 2021, the City of Annapolis clarified their permitting ordinance and Anne Arundel County unanimously passed one with bipartisan sponsorship. Montgomery and Howard Counties have not experienced pedestrian complaints or issues with bicyclists on sidewalks.

In Frederick, many people rely on bicycles for transportation, especially in our lower income communities and yet most places lack a connected network of paved trails and bike lanes for them to safely complete their trips to work, school, transit, shopping and other destinations. Some bus and rail transit users rely on bikes for the “last mile” at either end including carrying their bikes on bus-front racks or MARC trains. Many recreational riders prefer to bike from home to a park, library or other destination rather than toting their bikes on their cars. There are children who bike to school and virtually all of them ride on sidewalks where there is no safe alternative.

Riding a bike safely on a sidewalk should not be a reason for a law enforcement action. Any police officer will tell you that no one of any age is going to be ticketed for biking safely on a sidewalk. The current situation is that people ride on sidewalks for safety and yet Maryland law prohibits it. This bill advances Maryland’s Vision Zero goals by aligning Maryland code with safe and equitable biking. It will align our law with the current safe public practice and law enforcement policy. It would also permit local jurisdictions to prohibit bikes on sidewalks where it is deemed unsafe.

Please support HB519 to make Maryland mobility safe for all users, especially our most vulnerable.

We request that the committee support the passage of HB519.