

# **DJ HB 519 - Bikes on sidewalks (Senate Version).pd**

Uploaded by: Dana Jones

Position: FAV

**DANA JONES**  
*Legislative District 30A*  
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
Executive, and Legislative Review

Secretary, Women's Caucus

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel  
County Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 161  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3211 · 301-858-3211  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3211  
Dana.Jones@house.state.md.us

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones**  
**Before the Judicial Proceeding Committee**

**In Support of HB 519**  
**Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements**  
**March 29th, 1:00 pm**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I come before you today to introduce HB519, which would help create safer and more consistent transit policies.

Current Maryland law forbids bicycles on sidewalks as the default statewide. However, localities can and have overridden this law for safety and other reasons. Unfortunately, this has inadvertently created inconsistency throughout Maryland for cyclists. In many areas of our state, roads will switch between state, county, and city roads a number of times leading to confusion for those commuting by bike. If this law was consistent throughout the state, not only would those commuting by bike be safer, but it would also help avoid confusion on which laws to follow when traveling across jurisdictions. All of this, of course, is compounded by the safety issues for bicyclists sharing our major roads with vehicles.

This bill would amend state law to say that, unless disallowed by local ordinance, a person may ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area - with the caveat that riders shall proceed in a safe manner, yielding to pedestrians.

As many of you may know, localities throughout the state have already enacted similar local bills including Montgomery, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties, as well as the Capital City of Annapolis.

Implementing this more consistent policy around bicycle usage will add to safety for bikers, help to reduce traffic violence to cyclists, create safe routes to school for our kids & address transportation disparities. It can help ensure that Marylanders have access to a safer, more sustainable, and affordable transportation method.

This bill received unanimous support in Committee, and passed the House floor by a vote of 135-2.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this simple, consistent bill for Marylanders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones

# **BikeAAASupportHB519BikesonSidewalks-JPR2023.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



# *Support HB519*

## *Bikes on Sidewalks*

*Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County*  
*P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012*    [www.bikeaaa.org](http://www.bikeaaa.org)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

March 28, 2023

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 519

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 HB519.

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

Many people rely on bicycles for transportation, especially in our lower income communities and yet most places lack a connected network of paved trails and bike lanes for them to safely complete their trips to work, school, transit, shopping and other destinations. Some bus and rail transit users rely on bikes for the “last mile” at either end including carrying their bikes on bus-front racks, light rail or MARC trains. Many recreational riders prefer to bike from home to a park, trail, library or other destination rather than putting the bike on a rack on the back of the car. There are many children who bike to school. All of them ride on sidewalks where there is no safe alternative. Any police officer will tell you that no one of any age is going to be ticketed for biking safely on a sidewalk. At the same time, biking safely on a sidewalk should not be a reason for a law enforcement action. The current situation is that people ride on sidewalks for safety and yet Maryland law prohibits it. The bill includes a requirement for bike riders to yield to pedestrians, so unsafe riding would still be a violation. HB519 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 in areas where it is deemed unsafe.

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

Sincerely,

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

BikeAAA is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) promoting safe cycling for transportation & recreation

# **Bike MD 2023 HB 519 – Riding on Sidewalks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



## HB 519 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Riding on Sidewalks

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 29, 2023

Josh Feldmark

[joshua@bikemd.org](mailto: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.

As you have probably noticed, I begin all of our written testimony with the above paragraph. I do so, one because it was the intro our friend Kim Lamphier wrote for all her testimony on behalf of Bike Maryland and also to continually make clear that we are here to represent the interests of ALL cyclists.

This is most relevant to HB 519 because this is an issue most likely to impact kids on bikes, individuals who use their bike as transportation, and occasional recreational cyclists. This bill simply flips a default in state law. Currently state law says that bikes are prohibited on sidewalks unless the local governing authority expressly allows it in law. This bill flips that so that bikes are allowed on sidewalks unless the local governing authority expressly prohibits it in law.

There are many locations in every jurisdiction in Maryland where sidewalks represent the safest and most efficient place for cyclists. Currently, in jurisdictions other than Howard, Frederick, and Montgomery County and the city of Annapolis, a child riding her bike to school on sidewalks is breaking the law. This is easily fixed, costs no money, and will make everyone safer.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 519 and urges a favorable report.

# **Annapolis Transportation Board Recommendations-STA**

Uploaded by: Kurt Riegel

Position: FAV



## Recommendations by the Annapolis Transportation Board Regarding Maryland State Code

### Title 21 - Vehicle Laws - Rules of the Road Subtitle 11 Miscellaneous Rules, § 21-1103. **Driving on sidewalk**

#### Present Code

*a) Except as provided in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, a person may not drive any vehicle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area unless it is a permanent or authorized temporary driveway.*

*b) 1) For the purposes of this subsection, "bicycle" does not include "moped", as defined in § 11-134.1 of this article.*

*2) Where allowed by local ordinance, a person may ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area.*

*3) In a place where a person may ride a bicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area, a person may also ride a bicycle from the curb or edge of the roadway in or through a crosswalk to the opposite curb or edge of the roadway.*

*c) Unless prohibited by local ordinance, an individual with a disability may use a special vehicle other than a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas.*

*d) An individual may use a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas in accordance with § 21-501.1 of this title.*

The problem with the present code is that it sets the default backwards, declaring the riding of bicycles on sidewalks to be illegal throughout the state of Maryland unless each and every jurisdiction takes the difficult and expensive step of specifically allowing it by local ordinance. Sidewalks paralleling many streets are relatively safe to ride on and are often rarely used by pedestrians. It is nonsensical to prohibit the use of an already underutilized resource established at significant public expense, and thereby worsening hazards that bicyclists must face.

Maryland is different, and worse, than most other states. Out of 51 (states and DC), only four are like Maryland in prohibiting bicycles on sidewalks by default. One, Alabama, has an absolute prohibition on bicycles on sidewalks without exception. Maryland is in a shameful minority on this issue, discouraging the use of bicycles where they are safe and mandating unsafe riding by default.

This approach is a remnant of the rush toward automobile-centric transportation that began in the 1950s, proceeding to extremes during the 1960-1980 period. There is growing need and public sentiment for encouraging a diversity of transportation modes, especially including bicycles, for the many benefits they provide. For example, a person choosing transportation by bicycle takes a car off the road, relieving traffic congestion and freeing up parking space, while also providing health benefits and convenience to the bicyclist.

Just one example shows how wrong this policy can be. Rowe Blvd/ Bestgate Road (State Road 70) is a principal connector between downtown Annapolis downtown and Westfield Mall/ Parole Annapolis Towne Centre. Heavy auto and truck traffic move at high speeds on narrow lanes, with no provision for bicycles. Bestgate Road features schools, parks, playgrounds, senior care centers, medical offices, and residences. State law presently obliges children and seniors to ride bicycles in dangerous high-speed traffic rather than on the virtually empty and safe sidewalk paralleling the road.



## Recommended Changes to the State Code

We recommend a change in the default setting in the state law for bicycles on sidewalks, as below:

- a) *Except as provided in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, a person may not drive any vehicle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area unless it is a permanent or authorized temporary driveway.*
- b) 1) *For the purposes of this subsection, “bicycle” does not include “moped”, as defined in § 11-134.1 of this article.*
- 2) ~~*Where allowed*~~ ***Unless disallowed*** *by local ordinance, a person may ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area. **Riders shall proceed in a safe manner, yielding to pedestrians.***
- 3) *In a place where a person may ride a bicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area, a person may also ride a bicycle from the curb or edge of the roadway in or through a crosswalk to the opposite curb or edge of the roadway.*
- c) *Unless prohibited by local ordinance, an individual with a disability may use a special vehicle other than a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas.*
- d) *An individual may use a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas in accordance with § 21-501.1 of this title.*

# **Bicycle.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kurt Riegel

Position: FAV



# **Annapolis Transportation Board**

# **Bicycles on Sidewalks**

Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, State of Maryland

Where do we stand?

What should we do?



# Goal

- **Diverse and resilient transportation system that serves everyone**
- **Bicycles are just one (important) component**
- **Good and safe infrastructure is difficult & expensive, so let's address a bite-size chunk**
- **Some infrastructure already exists - sidewalks**
- **Not ideal but here, paid for, and underutilized**



# Bicycles on Sidewalks

- **Maryland State law forbids bicycles on sidewalks as the default setting statewide**
- **Localities can override**
- **Some do, some don't**
- **Localities' rules often confusing/contradictory**
- **Riders have no good way of knowing whether a trip traversing several localities is legal**



# Present Local Situation

- **Maryland State law forbids bicycles on all sidewalks, state/county/city, by default**
- **AACounty same, except “where permitted”**
- **Annapolis is blurry, forbidding “negligent riding” so we mostly don’t know one way or the other**



# Why Change?

- **Many roads are unsafe, or safe only for highly skilled “spandex” riders**
- **Vulnerable populations (children, elderly, inexperienced) are mandated by law to ride on unsafe roads built for & used by cars**
- **Hardly any safe infrastructure & yet we forbid using safe infrastructure that already exists and is underutilized**

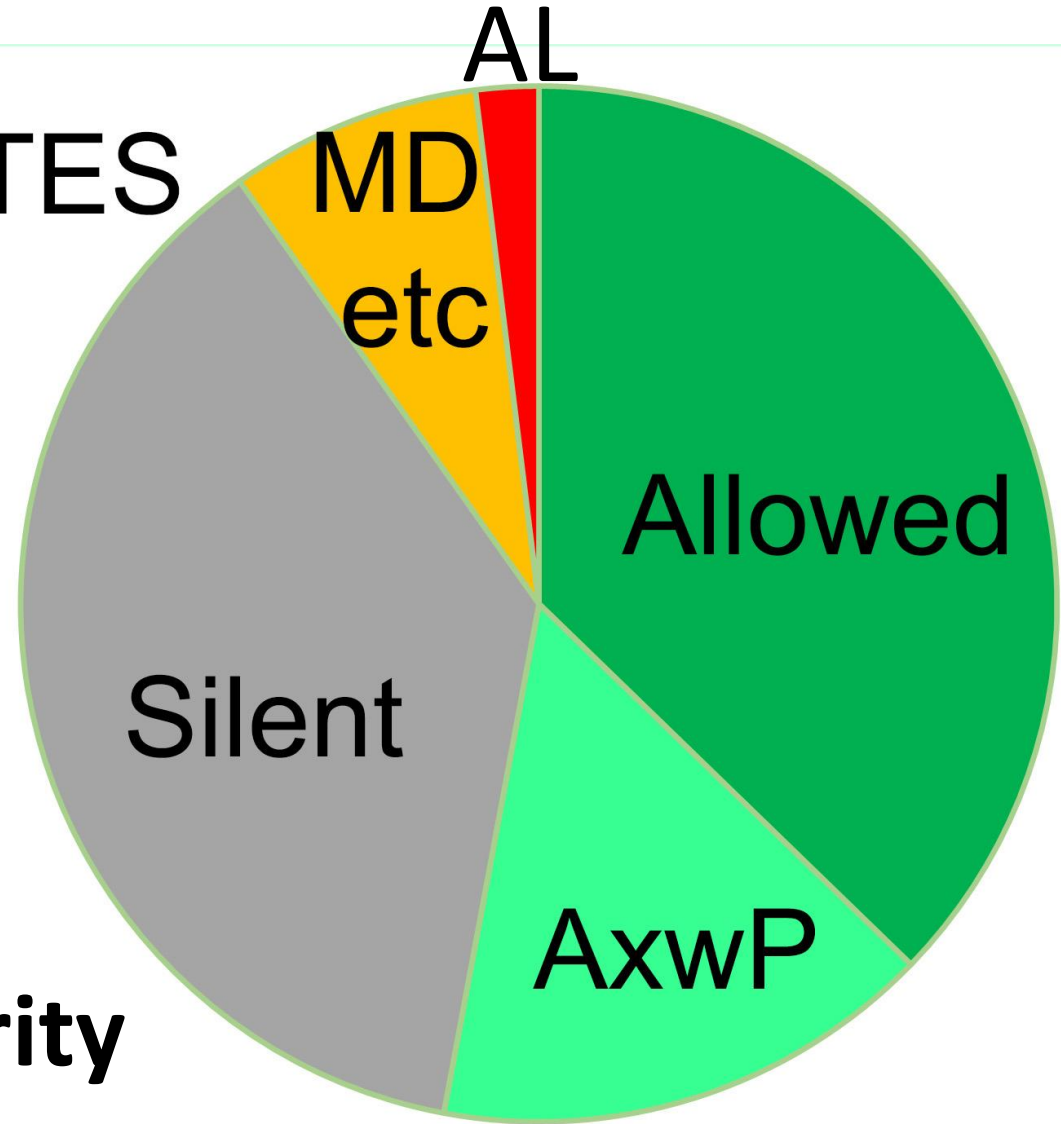




# STATES

- Allowed:** CO, CT, DC, FL, ID, IL, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, OH, OR, RI, SD, UT, WA, WI, WY
- Allowed except where Prohibited (AxwP):** AK, DE, HI, KY, ME, MA, PA, VA
- Silent:** CA, AZ, AR, IN, IA, KS, LA, MS, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VT, WV

Prohibited unless allowed: **MD**, GA, NH, ND  
Prohibited: **AL**



**Maryland is in the Minority**  
**We are not “normal”**

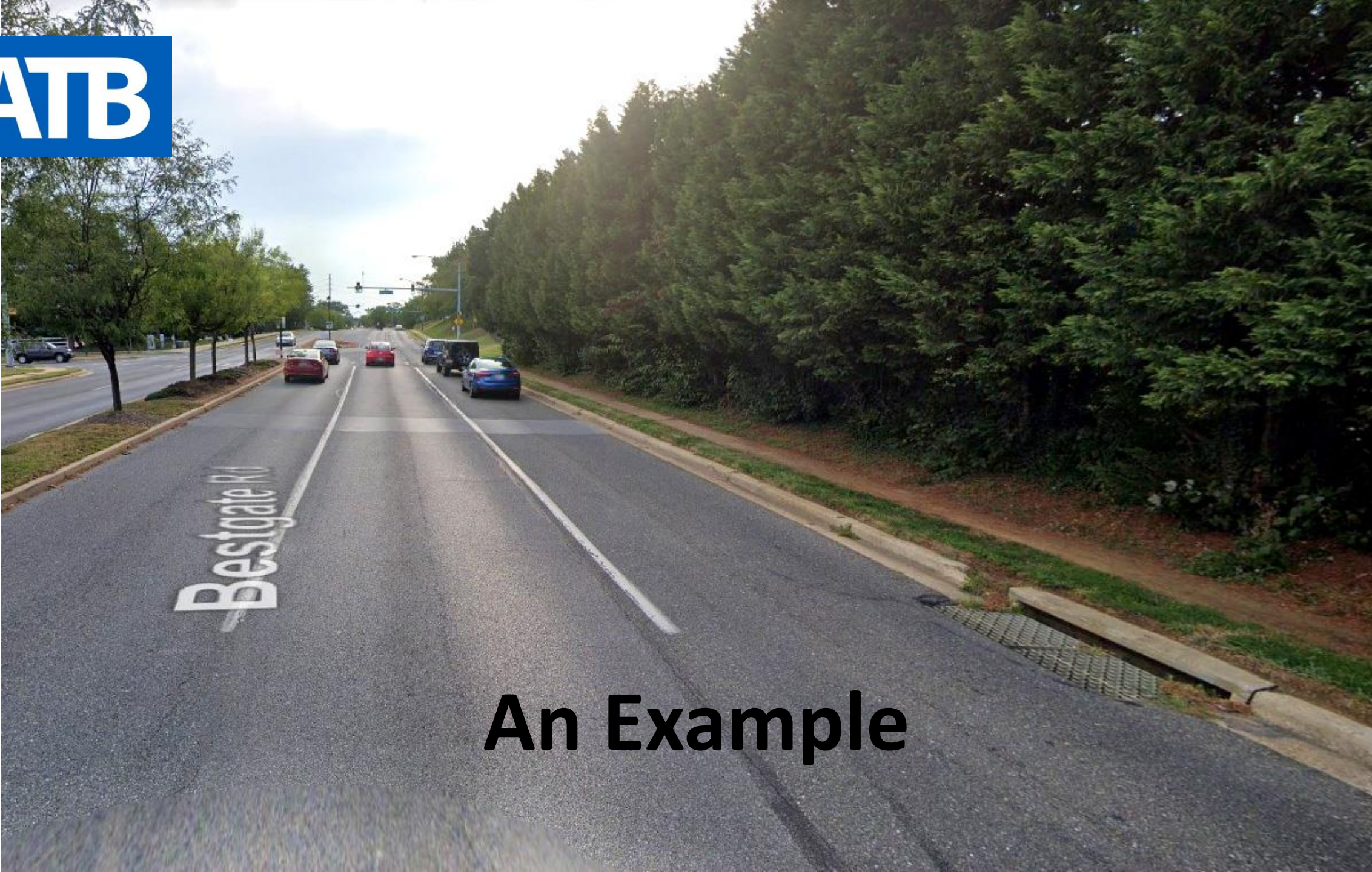


# Anne Arundel County

- **Rule mostly mirrors the State law**
- **Would be fixed if/when State law is changed**
- **Meanwhile, AA County & Annapolis should harmonize each other's rules to be more supportive & tolerant of bicycles on sidewalks**



**ATB**



**An Example**



# City of Annapolis

- Existing rule is blurry and should be clarified
- O-31-20 introduced, clarifies bikes are allowed
- Areas prohibitable by Director of Public Works
- No explicit obligation to consult public and stakeholders for input/advice
- ATB has recommended clarifying this





# Let's Solve These Problems

- **Reverse State of MD default**
- **Don't force people onto roads that are unsafe, or safe only for "spandex" riders**
- **Protect vulnerable populations (children, elderly, inexperienced) from exposure to cars**
- **Lacking safe bicycle infrastructure, allow using safe infrastructure that already exists**



# Board Recommendations

1. City work to reverse default statewide sidewalk ban
2. Council resolution encouraging our legislative delegation/  
Transportation Caucus to action (Sarah Elfreth, Dana Jones)
3. Coordinate & harmonize AACo & City rules for sidewalks
4. Pass ordinance O-31-20 with ATB suggestions, for city's  
interim bicycle/sidewalk rule pending reform of state law
5. Develop clear city/county standards/administrative  
procedures for signs & designating prohibited areas, with  
public input from relevant boards & commissions and others
6. Stress need for major new bicycle infrastructure

end

**hb0519F.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kurt Riegel

Position: FAV



# HOUSE BILL 519

R5

3lr2140

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By: **Delegates D. Jones and Bagnall**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2023

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing a person to ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a  
4 sidewalk or sidewalk area unless prohibited by local ordinance; requiring a person  
5 riding a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area or in or  
6 through a crosswalk to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian or a person riding on  
7 an electric personal assistive mobility device; and generally relating to riding  
8 bicycles, play vehicles, and unicycles.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
10 Article – Transportation  
11 Section 21–1103(a)  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
15 Article – Transportation  
16 Section 21–1103(b) and 21–1202(b)  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Transportation**

22 21–1103.

23 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, a person may  
24 not drive any vehicle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area unless it is a permanent or authorized  
25 temporary driveway.

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) (1) For the purposes of this subsection, “bicycle” does not include “moped”,  
2 as defined in § 11–134.1 of this article.

3 (2) [Where allowed] **UNLESS PROHIBITED** by local ordinance, a person  
4 may ride a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area.

5 (3) In a place where a person may ride a bicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk  
6 area, a person may also ride a bicycle from the curb or edge of the roadway in or through a  
7 crosswalk to the opposite curb or edge of the roadway.

8 21–1202.

9 (b) (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) [and], (3), **AND (4)** of this subsection, a  
10 person has the rights and is subject to the restrictions applicable to pedestrians under this  
11 title while the person is lawfully operating a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle:

12 (i) On a sidewalk or sidewalk area; or

13 (ii) In or through a crosswalk.

14 (2) At an intersection, a person operating a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle  
15 is subject to all traffic control signals, as provided in §§ 21–202 and 21–203 of this title.

16 **(3) A PERSON OPERATING A BICYCLE, PLAY VEHICLE, OR UNICYCLE**  
17 **ON A SIDEWALK OR SIDEWALK AREA OR IN OR THROUGH A CROSSWALK SHALL YIELD**  
18 **THE RIGHT-OF-WAY TO A PEDESTRIAN OR A PERSON RIDING ON AN ELECTRIC**  
19 **PERSONAL ASSISTIVE MOBILITY DEVICE.**

20 **[(3)] (4)** Section 21–506 of this title does not apply to a person operating  
21 a bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
23 October 1, 2023.

# **R-2-21 Resolution to State.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kurt Riegel

Position: FAV

1 **..Title**

2 **Non-motorized Wheeled Vehicles on Sidewalks** - For the purpose of encouraging the Maryland  
3 General Assembly to amend State law to allow non-motorized wheeled vehicles on sidewalks by  
4 default; providing amendment language; and generally relating to non-motorized wheeled vehicles  
5 on sidewalks.

6 **..Body**

7 **CITY COUNCIL OF THE**  
8 **City of Annapolis**

9  
10 **Resolution 2-21**

11 **Introduced by: Alderwoman Tierney**

12 **Co-sponsored by: Alderwoman Pindell Charles, Alderman Schandelmeier**

13 **A RESOLUTION** concerning

14  
15 **Non-motorized Wheeled Vehicles on Sidewalks**

16  
17 **FOR** the purpose of encouraging the Maryland General Assembly to amend State law to allow  
18 non-motorized wheeled vehicles on sidewalks by default; providing amendment language;  
19 and generally relating to non-motorized wheeled vehicles on sidewalks.

20  
21 **WHEREAS,** Annapolis requires a more diverse and resilient transportation system to support its  
22 citizens and commerce; and

23 **WHEREAS,** alternative transportation modes contribute increasingly to the diversity and  
24 resilience of the overall transportation system; and

25 **WHEREAS,** non-motorized wheeled vehicles, such as bicycles, are growing in their importance  
26 among alternative modes of transportation; and

27 **WHEREAS,** safety concerns represent the primary factor inhibiting people who want to use non-  
28 motorized vehicles for transportation; and

29 **WHEREAS,** the development of new infrastructure, such as individualized road lanes and paths  
30 for non-motorized vehicles, or pedestrian only paths are hindered by lack of funding  
31 and time constraints; and

32 **WHEREAS,** infrastructure in the form of sidewalks currently exist but are underutilized due to  
33 a defect in State law that exacerbates personal safety concerns among cyclists; and

34 **WHEREAS,** child, elderly, and inexperienced cyclists are presently mandated by State law to  
35 use roads and streets designed for high-speed automotive traffic when safer and  
36 underutilized sidewalks are available; and

37 **WHEREAS,** state, county, and municipal laws are confusing, inconsistent, and either discourage  
38 or prohibit the safe use of existing infrastructure by non-motorized wheeled  
39 vehicles; and

40 **WHEREAS,** Maryland stands in a small minority of 4 out of 50 states and the District of  
41 Columbia in prohibiting non-motorized wheeled vehicles on sidewalks; and

42 **WHEREAS,** on January 11, 2021, the Annapolis City Council adopted Ordinance 31-20, to serve  
43 as an interim measure pending reform of State law.  
44  
45  
46

1 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

2  
3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the Maryland General  
4 Assembly is encouraged to modify the Maryland Annotated Code, Transportation Article, Section  
5 21-1103(b)(2) to allow by default non-motorized vehicles on sidewalks throughout the State of  
6 Maryland, and suggests the following amendments:

7  
8 “Maryland State Code, Transportation, Title 21 - Vehicle Laws -- Rules of the Road Subtitle 11 -  
9 Miscellaneous Rules, § 21-1103. Driving on sidewalk.

- 10  
11 a) Except as provided in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, a person may not drive any  
12 vehicle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area unless it is a permanent or authorized temporary  
13 driveway.
- 14 b)
- 15 1) For the purposes of this subsection, “bicycle” does not include “moped”, as defined in  
16 § 11-134.1 of this article.
  - 17 2) ~~Where allowed~~ **UNLESS PROHIBITED** by local ordinance, a person may ride a  
18 bicycle, play vehicle, or unicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area. **RIDERS SHALL**  
19 **PROCEED IN A SAFE MANNER, YIELDING TO PEDESTRIANS.**
  - 20 3) In a place where a person may ride a bicycle on a sidewalk or sidewalk area, a  
21 person may also ride a bicycle from the curb or edge of the roadway in or through a  
22 crosswalk to the opposite curb or edge of the roadway.
- 23 c) Unless prohibited by local ordinance, an individual with a disability may use a special  
24 vehicle other than a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas.
- 25 d) An individual may use a wheelchair on sidewalks or sidewalk areas in accordance with §  
26 21-501.1 of this title.”
- 27

28 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that members  
29 of our delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, especially those members on the Maryland  
30 Transportation Caucus, are encouraged to advocate for these amendments to the Maryland State  
31 Code.

32  
33 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the City  
34 of Annapolis will continue to work with Anne Arundel County in an effort to unify State, County,  
35 and City laws relating to non-motorized wheeled vehicles.

36  
37 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the City  
38 of Annapolis commits to work with Anne Arundel County to develop clear assessment  
39 requirements, safety standards, and administrative procedures under any State reformed law  
40 relating to sidewalks and non-motorized wheeled vehicles.

41  
42 **AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the City  
43 Clerk shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker  
44 of the House of Delegates, and the Maryland Municipal League.

45  
46 **EXPLANATION**

47 UPPERCASE indicates matter added.

1

~~Strikethrough~~ indicates matter stricken.

**Written testimony in support of House Bill 519.pd**

Uploaded by: Kurt Riegel

Position: FAV

**Written testimony in support of House Bill 519 (*An Act concerning Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements*)**

I write to support this legislation, for benefits that it provides including:

- To increase safety for bicyclists in Maryland
- To encourage bicycling, a nonpolluting and healthful transportation mode
- As a step toward diversified and resilient transportation which includes many modes
- For equity, opening bicycling as a safe transportation mode for low income persons
- To harmonize Maryland's bicycling on sidewalks rules to match those of most other states
- To relieve automotive congestion by diverting some travelers away from cars to bicycles.

Kurt Riegel, PhD  
Chairman, Annapolis Transportation Board  
2023-02-14 February 14

Attachments:

Resolution by the Annapolis City Council recommending to the Maryland State Legislature the reform that HB0519 comprises. (R-2-21 Resolution to State.pdf)

Recommendation document developed by the Annapolis Transportation Board. (Annapolis Transportation Board Recommendations-STATE.pdf)

Slide presentation on recommendations above (Bicycle.pdf)



**HB0519-JPR-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**HB 519**

March 29, 2023

**TO:** Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 519 – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements

**POSITION: Support**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill 519.

HB 519 allows the use of bicycles and similar vehicles on sidewalks unless forbidden in local ordinance. This language affirms the right of more vulnerable road users to a safe riding experience while also prioritizing the comfort and safety of pedestrians.

Maryland is home to many communities lacking safe and reliable access to safe transportation alternatives. Our transportation corridors are lacking in terms of high-quality, dedicated bike and e-scooter infrastructure. Changing Maryland's existing stance regarding the riding of bikes on sidewalks from "prohibited" to "allowed" will expand access and send a clear message that our transportation corridors should accommodate all users. Though a long-term goal of local governments, including Baltimore City, is the installation and construction of safe bicycle infrastructure, we believe this is a step in the right direction.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 519. We believe the legislation would expand safe access to our streets for a variety of road users.

# **HB 519 Bikes on Sidewalks LOS 2023.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patricia Stevens

Position: FAV

March 28, 2023

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support House Bill 519 - Bikes on Sidewalks



Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am a resident of District 38C, Chair of the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition and the Eastern Shore Representative of the Maryland Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. In these capacities I am writing in support of HB 519.

Currently Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children from riding bicycles and similar devices like scooters on sidewalks, unless there is a local ordinance expressly allowing it that jurisdiction. A number of larger jurisdictions have implemented such ordinances including City of Annapolis, Montgomery and Howard Counties and have not experienced complaints from pedestrians or issues with bicyclists on sidewalks.

Here on the Eastern Shore, as in other places, many people rely on bicycles for transportation, especially in lower income communities which also lack frequent bus or train options. While we are working to create a regional network of trails and bike lanes to allow safe multi-modal transportation for trips to school, shopping, and work, there are still many areas that do not have routes separate from vehicle traffic, and riding on the sidewalk is in some places the only safe option. An example in Worcester County is the walkway on the Harry Kelly Bridge that brings route 50 traffic into Ocean City. Children biking to school and J-1 students biking to jobs should not risk being ticketed for riding on sidewalks when there is not another safe option. People are currently riding on sidewalks to get around safely, yet Maryland law prohibits this.

HB 519 will align Maryland Code with safe and equitable biking and is in line with Maryland's Vision Zero goals of eliminating death and injury to vulnerable road users. The bill includes a requirement for bike riders to yield to pedestrians and those who do not could still be cited for a violation. It also permits local jurisdictions to prohibit bikes on sidewalks where it is deemed unsafe.

Please support HB 519 to make Maryland roads safer for vulnerable road users.

Sincerely,

Patti Stevens, Chair  
Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

cc: Senator Mary Beth Carozza

**2023-HB0519-BikeOnSidewalks-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



HB0519: Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 27, 2023

Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Transportation safety is a paramount mobility concern. HB0519 would make bicycling safer. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,300 Maryland members, supports the bill.

Bicycling in traffic with cars, trucks, and buses is dangerous and discouraging for bicyclists, yet Maryland law currently prohibits people, including children, from riding a bicycle (or a scooter) on a sidewalk unless expressly allowed by local ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties do have an ordinance to allow bikes on sidewalks and have experienced no significant issues. It's time to make this simple and sensible provision uniform across the state, by enacting HB0519.

Maryland is committed to Vision Zero, a goal of zero motor vehicle-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. We are building out a network of bike lanes and trails while working to make neighborhood streets safer for all users. Allowing bicycling on sidewalks is part of this important in-progress work.

Allowing bicycling on sidewalks also advances equity. Many lower-income individuals rely on a bicycle for trips to work, school, shopping, and other destinations, and bike for recreation, but live and travel in areas that lack safe bikeways.

Making bikes on sidewalks the default, via HB0519, will help Maryland meet our transportation safety and equity and Vision Zero pledges.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable HB0519 JPR report and Senate floor vote.

Seth Grimes, Maryland organizer  
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# **HB0519 Bikes on Sidewalks Support - FBC 2023-03-28**

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Position: FAV

# HB0519 – Bikes on Sidewalks

## Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 28, 2023

Tom Rinker, President  
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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.