

Bill: HB0422

Bill Title: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Crosswalks

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group that advocates for transportation options which contribute to the liveability, productivity, and overall appeal of our communities comprising the Baltimore region, we support HB0422.

A large number of our group's members consider bicycling a significant or primary mode of transportation. A similarly large number also bike in Baltimore City. As such, we understand the situation this bill will formally legalize state-wide.

In Baltimore City, the crossing of a street by bicyclists is controlled by pedestrian signal indications (walk/don't walk signals), but only where signed by an R9-5 sign (see right). It's been this way ever since the construction of the Maryland Avenue cycle track approximately 9 years ago. The proper/complete implementation in these situations calls for a separate bicycle traffic signal module to be installed. But, doing so is costly, hence the use of the low-cost R9-5 sign.

The need for the R9-5 sign is a bit of a clumsy work-around to spot-legalize behavior that should be made legal everywhere. Why? Because Maryland's roadways are not safe, especially for vulnerable road users (VRUs). Despite the Vision Zero efforts of the past several years, those roadways have actually gotten less safe - for everyone.

Specific to the Baltimore region, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), on an annual basis, tracks five performance/safety measures to carry out the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Safety Improvement Program. The last of those five measures is "Number of Non-motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries". The numbers for this measure are abysmal.



R9-5  
Bicycles Use Ped Signal

Sign image from the Manual of Traffic Signs <http://www.tffdesign.com>  
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The 2023 number for this measure was **410**, which is a **41% increase** over the 2005-2009 baseline number of **290**. The Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT's) current target for this measure is **294 by 2030**. [1] In terms of VRU deaths and serious injuries, MDOT is hoping to basically get us back to where we were 20 years ago. That's not progress - that's standing still.

We need to take steps to make our roadways safer for all VRUs. Allowing bicyclists to cross through intersections at the direction of walk/don't walk signals (that were originally installed with only pedestrians in mind) is a very simple, cost-effective measure that stands to make traveling by bicycle significantly safer and more convenient.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0422**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

References:

[1] "RESOLUTION #25-19 - ADOPTING HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE BALTIMORE REGION". BRTB. January 2025.

<https://baltometro.org/sites/default/files/BRTBRes25-19.pdf>