



HB 422: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Crosswalks
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 6, 2025

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

Roadway safety is a paramount transportation concern, especially for vulnerable road users. HB 422, or the Bicycle Safety Start, would make Maryland’s roadways safer for bicyclists. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members and thousands of other supporters in the State, supports the bill.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. 54.5% of bicyclist injuries occur at intersections, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Bicyclists are at risk of being rear-ended when stationary, ‘right hooked’ by turning vehicles, or sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. Allowing people on bikes to proceed through an intersection when the pedestrian walk signal is illuminated will reduce these threats by improving the visibility of bikers for drivers and reducing conflicts between vulnerable road users and vehicles.

According to the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#), Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs), the crosswalk lights that allow pedestrians to establish a presence in the crosswalk before drivers of vehicles are given a green indication, are considered a proven safety countermeasure. FHWA reports that LPIs can lead to a 13% reduction in pedestrian vehicle crashes at intersections.

Like pedestrians, bicyclists are vulnerable road users who will benefit from an early start across intersections. We are encouraged by findings from a pilot program in New York City. In the pilot initiative, the [NYC Department of Transportation evaluated potential impacts](#) of allowing bicyclists to use the pedestrian signal. They conducted a study of crashes at intersections in the study compared to a set of control sites and they found a reduction in crashes at the study sights compared to an annual average before the safety treatment. They also found that the number of crashes in crosswalks in both the control and study groups was both similar and low, with all of the pedestrian injuries related to drivers. None of the pedestrian/bike crashes in the study and control groups were related to the LPI.

In Maryland, road laws designed for motor vehicles apply to bicyclists even though bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Allowing a bicyclist to be more visible through intersections improves their safety and avoids delaying other traffic. Bicycling becomes safer, less stressful, and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

WABA urges a favorable HB 422 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

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