

January 31, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 392 – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 392 as an opportunity to improve comfort and convenience for those vulnerable roadway users riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles.

Alternatives to automobiles such as bicycles, play vehicles, and unicycles offer a less expensive, climate-friendly option for transportation. SB 392 authorizes, unless prohibited by local ordinance, people riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles on a sidewalk or sidewalk areas as the default legal standard, thereby expanding access to operate on sidewalks. Laws that increase comfort and convenience for people using these modes, particularly less experienced and younger riders, promote their usage and serve as a tangible sign of support for sustainable modes of transportation.

Safety is MDOT's top priority, and any change to the rules of the road must maintain safety for all users. This is particularly true for pedestrians, the most vulnerable roadways users. The bill explicitly requires people riding bicycles, play vehicles, or unicycles to yield to a pedestrian or a person riding on an electric personal assistive mobility device, thereby requiring faster modes to yield the right of way to pedestrians. The bill also allows localities to prohibit use of the sidewalk by local ordinance, giving localities the freedom to create exceptions based on local needs.¹

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 392 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ Specifically, localities may want to consider how level 3 electric bikes, which have more of the characteristics of a moped or scooter, should operate within a shared setting.