

BikeAAASupportBikesonSidewalksSB392.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



Support SB392

Safe Biking on Sidewalks

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 www.bikeaaa.org

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

January 29, 2025

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 SB392.

Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children, from riding bicycles (which includes similar devices like ebikes and 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. SB392 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 SB392 to make Maryland mobility safe for all people, especially our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

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

Bike MD SB 392 – Riding on Sidewalks.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



SB 392 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 29, 2025

Josh Feldmark

joshua@bikemd.org

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

At Bike Maryland our mission is to promote bicycling, increase safety, improve conditions, and provide a voice for bicyclists in Maryland. We partner with advocacy organizations to promote vulnerable road user safety legislation on the state and county level and work with government agencies, including police departments, to develop policy and awareness campaigns that protect the rights and well-being of ALL bicyclists and pedestrians in Maryland.

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 SB 392 and urges a favorable report.

SB0392 - OATM - LOS - Bicycles Play Vehicles Unicy

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

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,

Joe McAndrew
Assistant Secretary,
Planning and Project Development
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1006

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

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.

2025-SB392-BikesOnSidewalks-WABA-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Gray

Position: FAV



SB 392: Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

January 29, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Transportation safety is a paramount mobility concern. SB 392, allowing bikes on sidewalks as the default state-wide would make bicycling a safer, more accessible transportation option. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports the bill.

Biking in traffic with cars, trucks, and buses can be dangerous and discouraging for bicyclists, yet Maryland law 21-1103 prohibits people, including children, from riding bikes, (and similar devices like e-bikes and scooters) on sidewalks unless the local jurisdiction expressly permits it by ordinance. Montgomery, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties have had ordinances to allow bikes on sidewalks for some time and have experienced no significant issues. It's time to make this simple and sensible provision uniform across the state by enacting SB 392.

Maryland has committed to Vision Zero, a goal of zero traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. Municipalities, counties, and the state are building out networks of safer options for biking, via bike lanes and multi-use trails, while working to make streets safer for all users. Allowing bicycling on sidewalks is part of this important in-progress work.

Allowing bicycling on sidewalks also advances transportation equity. Many individuals do not have access to personal vehicles and rely on bikes for trips to work, school, get groceries, and to other points of interest, but live and travel in areas that lack safe bikeways.

Making bikes on sidewalks the default, via SB 392, will help Maryland meet our transportation safety and equity and Vision Zero pledges.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a favorable SB 392 committee report and Senate floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Peter Gray
peter@waba.org

SB 392_ Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – A

Uploaded by: Steve Ashurst

Position: FAV

January 29, 2025

SB 392: Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Authorizations and Requirements

To Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I support SB 392, which changes the default authorization to allow bicyclists to ride on sidewalks unless prohibited by local jurisdictions.

Current bicycling infrastructure in the State of Maryland is lacking needed connectivity to most major shopping and community centers, usually located along high-speed and high-traffic corridors. Allowing bicycles to ride on sidewalks will provide immediate refuges for the most vulnerable road users and bring consistency across all counties.

I urge you to pass this bill out of committee so that it can be brought to the Senate floor for a vote. This bill has the potential to improve the lives of countless Marylanders who rely on bicycles as a mode of transportation.

Sincerely,

Steve Ashurst
14401 Hollyhock Way
Burtonsville, MD 20866
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330-474-3147

2025 SB00392 Testimony For with Amendment 2025-01-

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: FWA

Testimony For SB0392 with Amendment

Honorable Senators

Please enter a favorable decision with amendment for SB0392.

These vehicles should have a warning device, such as a bell or horn that should be sounded as the riders approach pedestrians from the rear. It is difficult to hear vehicles that are rapidly approaching from behind.

Please enter a favorable decision with amendment for SB0392.

Alan Lang
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January 31, 2025