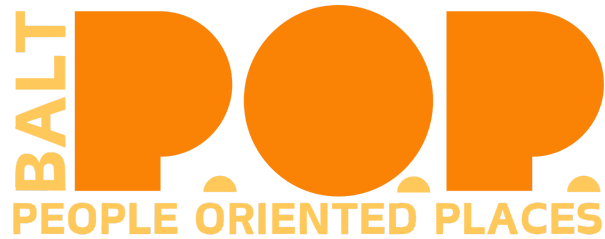


Bill: HB0381

Bill Title: State Highway Administration - Urban Core and Urban Center Traffic Control Devices - No Turn on Red



Position: **Favorable with Amendments**

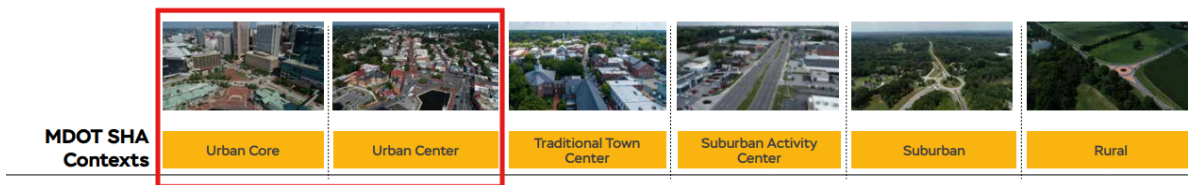
Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group that advocates for active transportation and human-scale development in the Baltimore region’s urban areas, BaltPOP supports the adoption of **evidence-based safety interventions** that improve safety for all road users, which is why **we support a prohibition of right-turn on red in urban core and urban center contexts**.

HB 381 codifies a policy that MDOT SHA has recommended for >5 years

The Maryland Department of Transportation’s (MDOT) State Highway Administration (SHA) has recognized that the design of our state roads must adapt to the local land use context. In more densely-developed, mixed use areas there is significant opportunity for non-motorized transport along our roads and increased pedestrian use of adjoining sidewalks. Special care must be taken in these contexts to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users. Recognizing the need for a state-wide standard, SHA published their Context Driven Design Guide in 2020 [1].

The SHA defines 6 distinct land use contexts for consideration in adapting roadway design to the local environment, illustrated below:



This legislation applies to only the most densely developed land use contexts identified by the SHA [2]

Within each context, the MDOT SHA Context Driven Design Guide provides recommended safety interventions to balance the safety and accessibility across all road uses. Within the Design Guide itself, there are illustrations of applicable safety interventions for each context. For both the Urban Core and Urban Center contexts, MDOT SHA recommends “Right on Red Restriction, Reduces right turn injury crashes by 38%” [3], [4].

HB 381 is Naturally Limited in Scope

Maryland is home to many urbanized areas, MDOT SHA's graduated context areas provide sufficient granularity to separate truly urban areas from suburban. The vast majority of Urban Core and Urban Center land use in Maryland is within Baltimore City limits. As Baltimore City controls all roads within their jurisdiction, the impact of this bill on SHA is limited and achievable in the time frame required. In fact, using the current MDOT SHA Context map overlay, the total signalized intersections on state roads in an Urban Center or Urban Core in Baltimore County is limited to just 8 intersections in Towson [5].

Nonetheless, this bill will have real safety improvements around the state, serving a wide variety of residents: Urban Core or Urban Center contexts exist in Cumberland, Hagerstown, Frederick, Annapolis, Rockville, Bethesda, Wheaton, Silver Spring, College Park and Ocean City in addition to Towson. Across the state, pedestrians and cyclists will see a small, but meaningful, improvement in their safety. Many, many state residents who are not themselves "Urban Core" residents will benefit from this safety improvement when they visit or vacation in Ocean City south of 29th Street.

Minor Amendments for Consistency and Collaboration

However, BaltPOP would recommend that this prohibition be generalized to all turning motions when faced with a solid red signal. Unless otherwise prohibited, §21–202(i) of the Transportation Article of the Maryland Code allows for two turning motions against a solid red signal: a right turn or a left turn onto a one-way street from a one-way street. Although unusual in general, many state highways run as pairs of one-way streets through urban areas and this situation does exist within our state. Therefore, **we recommend that the word "right" be removed from section (A) of the proposed legislation for consistency.**

While HB 381 clearly requires the SHA to prohibit right on red, it does allow for an exception in the case where such a prohibition would significantly impair public safety. We recognize that our roadways vary widely through the state with unique situations that can lead to unanticipated consequences. It is the recognition of this complexity that causes us to request that **the safety analysis must be publicly transparent and in collaboration with local jurisdictions.** Complex road networks can not be analyzed as if each intersection exists in a vacuum and must take into account the traffic flow mitigations that a local jurisdiction could apply to surrounding streets.

Position: Favorable with Amendments

We thank Delegates Lehman, Charkoudian, Healey, Taveras, and Terrasa for sponsoring this important safety legislation. We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0381, with our suggested amendments.** Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

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

[1] MDOT SHA: "Context Driven: Access and Mobility for All Users 1.0" published Fall 2020. Available for download at

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3476e680584c49e48303fe6d52ceeda9/page/Resources>

[2] *ibid*, pg. 6-7

[3] *ibid*, pg. 15 and 17

[4] MDOT SHA makes the following citation for this crash reduction claim: Right-on-Red Restrictions | Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse. (2009, December). Permit right-turn-on-red. Retrieved from <http://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/detail.cfm?facid=376>

[5] MDOT SHA Context Zones map, available at

<https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=35aa8925aab490d9fc20f36df55961e> + Google Streetview survey