

Bill: SB0155

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

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings 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 SB0155.

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 image). It's been this way ever since the construction of the Maryland Avenue cycle track approximately 10 years ago. Alternatively, traffic engineers may install a separate bicycle traffic signal module to be installed. But, doing so is even more costly, hence the use of the low-cost R9-5 sign.

The need for the R9-5 sign is a work-around to spot-legalize behavior that should be made legal everywhere. Why? Cyclists are slower to accelerate from a stop than vehicles and are least stable at low speeds. Allowing cyclists and other micro-mobility users to start riding on a pedestrian indicator improves visibility for drivers, may allow cyclists to clear an intersection faster, and reduces opportunities for conflict with drivers. These safety considerations are important because despite the Vision Zero efforts of the past several years, our 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



Existing law requires installation of an R9-5 sign at all intersections to achieve this effect.

(Image from the Maryland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2011 ed.)

Non-motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries”. The absolute numbers and trend for this measure are abysmal.

The 2024 number for this measure was 398, which is a 37% *increase* over the 2005–2009 baseline number of 290. The BRTB’s proposed target for this measure is 306 by 2030 [1], an increase from last year’s 2030 target of 294 [2]. In terms of VRU deaths and serious injuries, BRTB’s target will make active transportation users less safe than 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.

While a fiscal note on SB0155 is not yet available, the fiscal note for the 2025 version of this bill (HB0422) found no impact to state expenditures and a potential for minor reductions in local expenditures. “Montgomery County advises that the bill eliminates its need to install special signage for bicyclists regarding leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) at various intersections throughout the county, at a cost of \$2,000 to \$5,000 per intersection.”[3]

SB0155 is a great opportunity to improve road safety for vulnerable road users while simplifying traffic control requirements and reducing expenses to local jurisdictions.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to vote in favor of SB0155. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

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

[1] Baltimore Metropolitan Council proposed Resolution #26-18: “Adopting Highway Safety Targets for the Baltimore Region”

<https://baltometro.org/wp-content/uploads/BRTBRes26-18-1.pdf>

[2] Baltimore Metropolitan Council Resolution #25-19: “Adopting Highway Safety Targets for the Baltimore Region”

https://baltometro.org/wp-content/uploads/files/bmc_documents/committee/resolutions/brtb/BRTBRes25-19.pdf

[3] Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly, “2025 Regular Session - Fiscal and Policy Note for House Bill 422”

https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/fnotes/bil_0002/hb0422.pdf