

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

As the General Assembly of Maryland begins its 2025 session, the 447th Session, today, January 8, 2025. Here is a preview of Bike Maryland's priority legislation, along with several other bills that Bike Maryland is tracking:

Bike Maryland Priority Bills for 2025

- Bikes on Sidewalks
- Bicycle Safety Yield
- Transportation and Climate Alignment Act
- Vulnerable Road User Enhanced Safety Bill

Bikes on Sidewalks

(HB375 / SB292)

Bike riding on sidewalks is currently prohibited in Maryland unless allowed by the local jurisdiction. Currently, riding on the sidewalk is allowed in 3 counties in Maryland – Anne Arundel, Howard, and Montgomery. It is also allowed in several cities. This bill would set the state's default to allow riding bikes on sidewalks statewide unless prohibited by local ordinance (which hopefully would be confined to very specific locations). The bill also requires people on bikes to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and people using mobility devices on sidewalks and in crosswalks.

Bicycle Safety Yield

(HB7 / SB627)

Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections: This bill allows bikes to treat stop signs as yield signs. This practice is counterintuitive to drivers but is proven to be a safer way for people on bikes to cross or turn at stop signs. Cyclists have better sight lines and can cross faster and more steadily by continuing to roll if the intersection is clear and there is no approaching traffic. A moving cyclist is also easier for a driver to notice than a stationary cyclist. 11 other states and DC now have such laws and the bill follows guidance by the [National Highway Traffic Administration](#), which has endorsed the policy.

Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025

(HB84 / SB 395)

Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments: This bill creates a significant and positive shift in how the state evaluates transportation projects. It requires MDOT and regional planning agencies to measure and mitigate any increases in climate pollution and Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) caused by planned highway expansion projects costing over \$10 million. Mitigation actions could include expanding access to mass transit, building protected bike infrastructure, expanding remote work options or locating jobs and amenities near where people live.

Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Enhanced Safety Bill

(HB234 / SB385)

Vehicle Laws - Injury or Death of Vulnerable Individual – Penalties: This bill aims to promote greater consistency in Maryland traffic law with respect to penalties for crashes involving the

serious injury or death of vulnerable road users. The bill would update the [Vulnerable Road User law the General Assembly passed in 2021](#) to include additional penalties that were included under the [Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act](#), which passed last session and exists also in the law protecting pedestrians in a crosswalk, adding the penalties of imprisonment not exceeding 2 months or a fine not exceeding \$2,000, or both.

Bike Maryland Will Track & Support other Bicycle-Friendly Bills

Bike Maryland will be tracking and supporting other bills introduced this session that would support making riding a bike a safe form of transportation and fun recreational activity for all, including but not limited to:

- **Bicyclist Safety Start (HB 422)** Bicyclists may proceed on a leading pedestrian interval – Intersections with a leading pedestrian interval show the walk signal several seconds before the traffic light turns green. This improves safety by increasing visibility of crossing pedestrians, reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, increasing the likelihood of motorists yielding to pedestrians, and enhancing safety for pedestrians who may be slower to start into the intersection. This bill would allow people on bikes to use leading pedestrian intervals (i.e., walk signal).
- **Vehicle Laws - Stopping, Standing, or Parking in a Bike Lane or Bicycle Path – Prohibition (HB 178 / SB 133)** – This bill updates Maryland law to prohibit drivers from standing, stopping, or parking in a bike lane. While there is currently no statewide prohibition, several county and municipal governments have already updated their local laws to prohibit the practice.
- **Graduated Speed Camera Fines (HB 182 / SB 113)** This bill would have fines increase as the amount over the speed limit increases. It is supported by MDOT, and would match the flexible fines already in place for workzone infractions.

Budget

Maryland again faces a difficult fiscal year and any bills that had fiscal impacts will be especially challenging. We will continue to seek to protect funding for safe biking and walking infrastructure especially in light of the alarming rise in road fatalities overall and especially among vulnerable road users.

Key dates for 2025 Legislative Session ([link](#))

January 8th Session opens.

January 15th Deadline for Governor to introduce budget bills.

January 17th Deadline to request a bill to guarantee a committee hearing.

February 3rd Senate bill introduction deadline. Rules Committee may consider late bills.

February 5th Governor delivers State of the State address.

February 7th House bill introduction deadline. Rules Committee may consider late bills.

February 11th Bike Maryland Symposium in Annapolis.

March 17th Crossover Day – Bills must pass out of one chamber to guarantee hearing in the other chamber.

March 31st Deadline to pass budget out of both chambers.

April 7th General Assembly adjourns at midnight (aka “Sine Die”).

Stay tuned in to Bike Maryland for more information and updates on the progress of these bills and other bicycle-friendly legislation.