

Vision Zero - Establishment

(House Bill 885, Chapter 377, Acts of 2019)

A Report to the Maryland General Assembly

The Maryland Department of Transportation

Motor Vehicle Administration

MSAR # 12327

January 2023

The Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) offers this report in response to language contained in House Bill 885, Chapter 377, Acts of 2019. The language states:

“On or before December 31 each year, the Department shall submit a report on the status of Vision Zero to the Governor and, in accordance with §2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.”

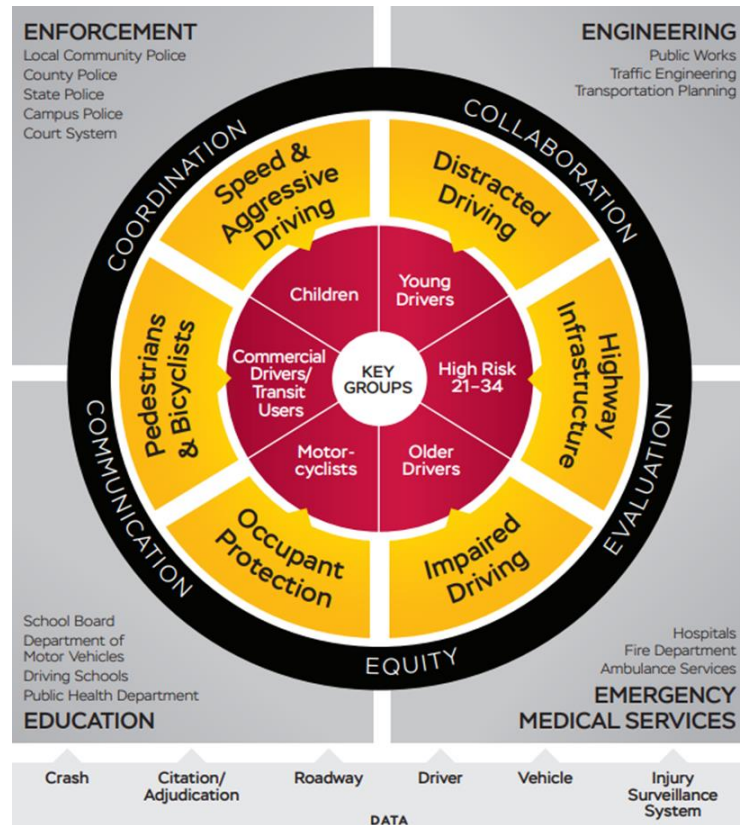
MDOT EFFORTS

The MDOT is a customer-driven leader that delivers safe, sustainable, intelligent, inclusive, and exceptional transportation solutions to connect customers to life’s opportunities. In every activity, the MDOT places significant emphasis on safety, continues to form new initiatives and build on key established efforts to drive toward the Vision Zero goal of zero vehicle-related deaths or serious injuries by 2030. With that goal in mind, the MDOT has taken the following initiatives:

- The MDOT MVA’s Highway Safety Office (MHSO) is the central point of coordination for safety programs at all levels of government and the private sector. The MHSO identifies and implements countermeasures to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Maryland’s roadways. The Director of the MHSO is the State’s premier expert on roadway safety, is charged with overseeing Maryland’s extensive network of safety planning and programs and serves as the State’s Vision Zero Coordinator. The Director reports to the MDOT MVA Administrator, who serves as the Governor’s Highway Safety Representative, and is strives to advance the Vision Zero goal. The Director reviews and recommends to the Administrator highway safety projects that will identify new and proven countermeasures that can be adopted on a State and local level.
- The MHSO staff engage in ongoing dialogue with other states and jurisdictions. In 2022, the MHSO participated in trainings and workshops held by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Governor’s Highway Safety Association (GHSA), and other state highway safety offices. These presentations and trainings focused on a variety of behavioral programs that can be implemented to reduce motor vehicle crashes and fatalities. In addition, the MHSO conducted its own highway safety summit at the Maritime Institute in April.
- Vehicle travel returned to near pre-pandemic levels in 2022 but, in contrast to many other states, Maryland experienced a downward trend of fatalities. A total of 563 people were killed on Maryland roadways in 2021, a decrease from the 573 fatalities recorded in 2020. While fatality numbers for 2022 are still incomplete, the downward trend continued to be evident through the first nine months of the year. Regardless of the decreases, risky driving behavior continues to be a concern on Maryland roadways; speeding, impairment, and lack of proper seatbelt use continue to be primary contributing factors in roadway fatalities.

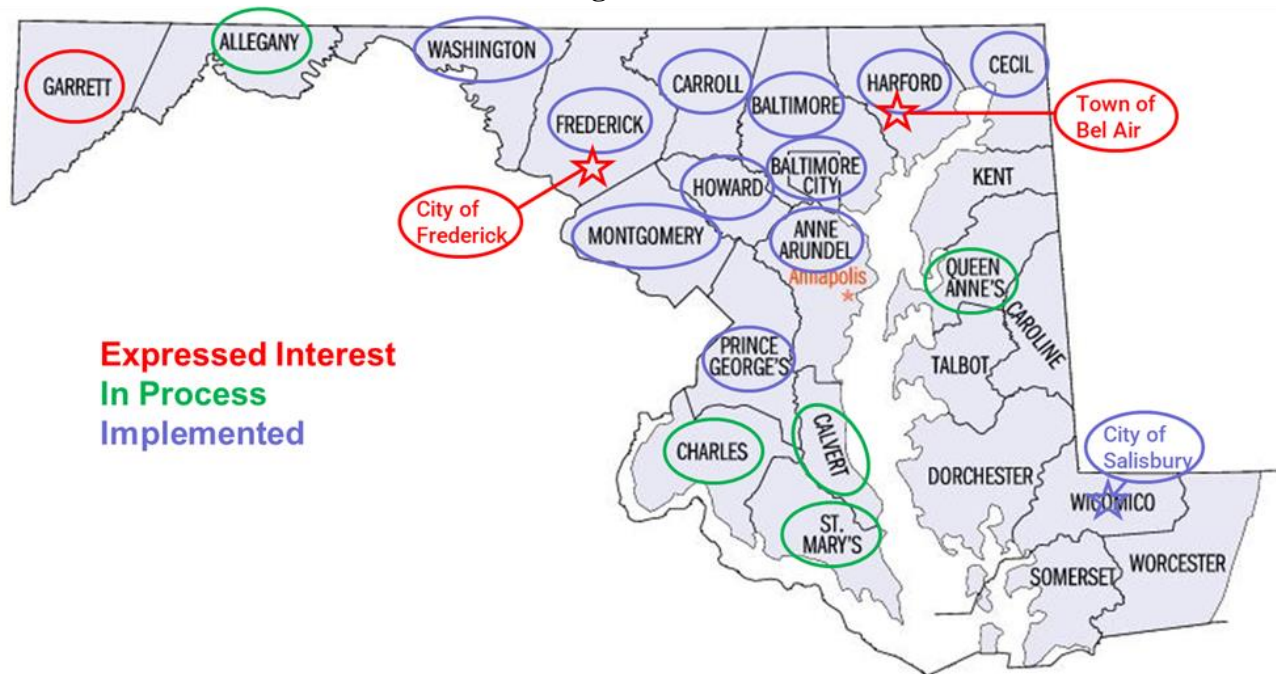
- The MHSO Director serves as a member of the Statewide Emergency Services Advisory Committee and other planning committees, working closely with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as the Washington Council of Governments and Baltimore Metropolitan Council, to coordinate highway safety efforts in those regions, which include the continued use of the *Street Smart* and *Look Alive* pedestrian safety campaigns. Additionally, the Washington Council of Governments continues to provide grant funding as part of the Transportation Planning Board's Regional Safety Program. Three rounds of funding have now taken place with several of the grants supporting Maryland-based projects.
- The MHSO's communications campaign *Be the Driver* was further expanded to include additional program areas. *Be the Driver* focuses on educational messages related to impaired driving, occupant protection, pedestrian safety, and other behaviors that can reduce crashes and save lives on Maryland's roadways. As the result of legislative action and several high-profile crashes over the past year, work zone safety and promotion of Maryland's expanded *Move Over* law were included as core elements of *Be the Driver*.
- Moving into 2023, the MHSO will continue to implement programs and activities based on NHTSA's Countermeasures that Work guidelines to reduce the number of crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Maryland's roadways. **Figure 1** provides a description of the components of the 2021-2025 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). In alignment with the National Roadway Strategy's Safe System Approach, each of these highway safety programs will be addressed through collaborative partnerships among State and local government agencies, legislative and judicial leaders, regional authorities, and non-governmental organizations. Together, these agencies and professionals are collaborating as members of Maryland's Emphasis Area Teams (EATs) with a mission to strengthen and enforce driving laws and educate the public about safe driving behaviors.
- Maryland's SHSP provides a strong foundation to apply the Safe System Approach principles and elements, which has followed several concepts, such as Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) and Vision Zero (VZ), each of which uses similar strategies to accomplish the same overall goal of zero fatalities on our roadways. The purpose of each approach is to be strategic in the planning and implementation of projects that will improve the safety of the road network.

Figure 1



- Local SHSPs engage multiple safety agencies along with state partners. Following an approach to include enforcement, education and outreach, engineering, and emergency medical services, some teams have expanded to include schools, health, and other local departments as well as the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA), MHSO, and Maryland State Police (MSP). With a multi-disciplinary team, a holistic approach is brought to traffic safety and silos are broken down. Along with coordination, collaboration, and a singular focus, these plans also qualify local jurisdictions for federal and state funding. The MDOT SHA has made funding available to local agencies with a local plan for infrastructure improvements. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, with funding intended to promote the development and implementation of local safety plans. For those without a plan, funding may be used to develop one while those with a plan may receive funding for implementation. This is a new funding structure and an important step to provide federal funding directly to local agencies. The MDOT MVA and the MHSO are continuing to work with local jurisdictions on the development of local SHSPs. **Figure 2** shows the current development of local SHSPs across the State.

Figure 2



- The website dedicated to Vision Zero and all the State’s highway safety information, resources, and initiatives is zerodeathsmd.gov. This site includes information never before offered, including password protected law enforcement training videos, monthly media tool kits, current fatality numbers, and crash data for the previous calendar year.
- The MHSO utilizes MSP crash data to provide standardized reports on the website. These benchmarks provide basic information such as the day, time, driver and pedestrian demographics, and other characteristics of motor vehicle crashes in the State and data is used to target enforcement and education efforts across each of the emphasis areas outlined in the SHSP.
- The MHSO, Maryland Transportation Authority, and MDOT SHA closely collaborate on all safety-related objectives. The MHSO and the MDOT SHA are using police crash report data to identify corridors where traffic crashes are closely aligned with needed infrastructure improvements and concerns with driver behavior. This data, along with community input, is used to inform and prioritize engineering, enforcement, and education to make these efforts as effective as possible.
- In 2019, the MDOT SHA began implementing its “Context Driven – Access and Mobility for All Users” version 1.0 guide that focuses on creating a safe, accessible, and balanced multimodal transportation system. A core tenet reestablished in this guide was the need to

appropriately balance accessibility and mobility. In the Context Guide, the MDOT SHA established six context zones, ranging from urban core to rural, to ensure this balance meets the specific needs of Maryland's varied communities. The MDOT SHA began to pursue context-appropriate improvements that reinforce or newly implement the appropriate balance between accessibility and mobility.

- The Context Guide also encourages flexibility and innovation to develop low-cost, high-impact solutions for each unique area. Proactive countermeasures may include speed limit reductions, high-visibility crosswalks, signal timing adjustments, or several other proven safety strategies. Since 2019, the MDOT SHA has completed 322 of these proactive Context Driven projects Statewide.
- In 2020, the MDOT SHA launched a new web resource for related Context Driven activities; the web portal provides access to an improved user-friendly online and printable version of the Context Guide, as well as a Context Driven Project Map and other features. Finally, the Context Driven web portal highlights other ongoing Context Driven efforts like the development of the MDOT SHA's first Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The plan identifies needs across the MDOT SHA's transportation system and identifies why, where, and how the MDOT SHA should address these needs. The MDOT SHA has undertaken a rigorous plan development process that has included data analysis, benchmarking, public engagement and input, recommendations, and prioritization and began data collection and public engagement in Fall 2020. At this time, the second draft of the PSAP has been reviewed and is currently under revision. Other context driven efforts underway include trainings and the development of case studies.
- The MDOT SHA evaluates all fatal crashes on State highways to determine whether any of the following were a factor: road surface, road segments (curves, grade, number of lanes, shoulder condition, width of lanes), junction type (gradient, length, sight distance, conflict points), road ancillary assets (traffic barriers, delineators, pavement markings, streetlights), and work zones. In response to House Bill 254 (2022), the MDOT SHA will deploy a mobile application to be used by traffic engineers when performing infrastructure reviews. An associated MDOT SHA website is under development to share the results from these reviews.

Each of these efforts are supported by the framework of the Maryland SHSP. Led by an Executive Committee consisting of leadership from multiple State agencies (MDOT, MSP, Maryland Department of Health, and Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems), the SHSP focuses on strategies and actions to help Maryland reach zero fatalities by 2030. The fatality and serious injury goals and their interim targets, which are set in the SHSP, are aligned with those reported to NHTSA through the Highway Safety Plan and to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Highway Safety Improvement Plan. These plans outline the projects and programs Maryland will utilize to improve highway safety. The FHWA requires the reporting of the number of fatalities, fatality rate, number of serious injuries, serious injury rate, and total number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. These metrics serve

as the performance measures used to track the State's progress. The federal funding agencies have indicated that targets included in these plans should be based on existing data to allow for a realistic evaluation of the State's safety programs.

The current implementation of the SHSP began January 1, 2021, and continues through December 31, 2025. The SHSP reflects the mandated fatality goal, and Maryland's commitment to zero fatalities and serious injuries. However, the interim targets will continue to be based on recent trends and will help focus highway safety resources on existing and emerging infrastructural and behavioral priorities to eliminate roadway deaths and serious injuries. Maryland's Highway Safety Plan will continue to outline the State's highway safety programs and spending and is posted online at the aforementioned website.