

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 885

(Delegate Palakovich Carr, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Finance

Transportation - Vision Zero - Establishment

This bill establishes the Vision Zero Program within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). The purpose of the program is to develop strategies to make roadways safer for motorists and passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, with the goal of having zero vehicle-related deaths or serious injuries on roadways by the year 2030. The bill establishes requirements for MDOT and specifies strategies that must be included in the implementation of the program. Funds for the program must be as provided by the Governor in the State budget.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Because the State’s existing Toward Zero Deaths program within the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) is substantively similar to the Vision Zero Program required by the bill, this analysis assumes that MDOT is able to meet the bill’s requirements through the existing program, adjusting the program as necessary, using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: MDOT must designate a coordinator to oversee the implementation of Vision Zero throughout the State. In implementing Vision Zero, the coordinator must collaborate with other State agencies and local authorities, as specified. The implementation of Vision Zero must include specified strategies, including, among other

things, (1) proposing changes to State and local laws to allow for innovative engineering and traffic calming; (2) working with research organizations to develop best practices; (3) collecting and publishing motor vehicle collision data; and (4) investing more resources into construction needs for high-accident intersections and roadway sections.

By December 31 of each year, MDOT must submit a report on the status of Vision Zero to the Governor and the General Assembly and make the report available on its website.

Current Law/Background: Vision Zero is a road traffic safety strategy to eliminate all traffic related fatalities and major injuries. Vision Zero was first adopted in Sweden in 1997. Since that time, similar strategies and programs have been adopted by numerous other countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom. In recent years, many U.S. cities and states have also adopted Vision Zero policies. For example, New York City adopted a [Vision Zero](#) plan in 2014 and North Carolina implemented [NC Vision Zero](#) in 2016.

The State has developed and implemented its own version of Vision Zero, called Toward Zero Deaths. The program is administered by the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO), which is located within MVA. MHSO's safety operations are divided into various program areas that include impaired driving, occupant protection, distracted driving, motorcycle safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and communications and social media. MHSO's activities include data tracking and reporting, program development, and providing grant funding. In fiscal 2017, MHSO provided \$7.0 million in both federal and State grant funding to various local governments, law enforcement departments, and nonprofit organizations involved in highway safety. More information on Toward Zero Deaths and MHSO's operations can be found in MHSO's [most recent annual report](#). The State Highway Administration partners closely with MHSO to implement safety programs and best practices for Toward Zero Deaths.

MDOT is required to publish a [Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#) and update the plan every five years. The plan was most recently updated in January 2019.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; University System of Maryland; Department of State Police; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City public schools; City of Laurel; Vision Zero Network; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2019
an/lgc Third Reader - March 25, 2019
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 25, 2019

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