

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 351 (Delegate Stewart, *et al.*)  
 Environment and Transportation

Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup

This bill establishes a Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup to develop a State strategy that identifies State and local land use policies, business incentives, and transportation policies, investments, and programs to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the State and meet other related goals. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must provide staff for the workgroup. By December 15, 2020, the workgroup must report its interim findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly; its final findings and recommendations must be submitted by December 31, 2021. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, and terminates June 30, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$50,000 annually in both FY 2021 and 2022. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	50,000	50,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

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

**Small Business Effect:** None. The bill does not directly affect small businesses.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The workgroup must develop a State strategy that identifies State and local land use policies, business incentives, and transportation policies, investments, and programs to (1) reduce VMT in the State, as specified; (2) identify any barriers to improving transit-oriented development or reducing VMT; (3) design and align land use and transportation investments to leverage existing public transit, increase proximity between daily activities, and reduce State and local costs; (4) incentivize business locations near transit or transit opportunities; and (5) reduce combined household and transportation costs, as specified. In developing the strategy, the workgroup must review:

- the role of VMT in reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- the role of induced demand in transportation network development;
- fiscal implications of land use development patterns;
- determinants of household housing and transportation costs;
- the role of land use, community design, State and local zoning policies, local street grids, parking policy and pricing, and availability of transit in reducing VMT;
- existing State and local initiatives that impact VMT; and
- new methods for measuring access to jobs and services and methods for using these measures to inform State, regional, and local transportation policy and investment decisions.

Members of the workgroup may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

### **Current Law/Background:**

#### *Maryland Department of Transportation Programs*

While State law and regulations do not explicitly encourage the reduction of VMT, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has three programs encouraging the use of public transit, ridesharing, teleworking, biking, and walking in order to reduce VMT. First, Commuter Choice Maryland is a public transit incentive program that offers participating employers monthly transit passes to distribute to employees that allow the use of MTA's

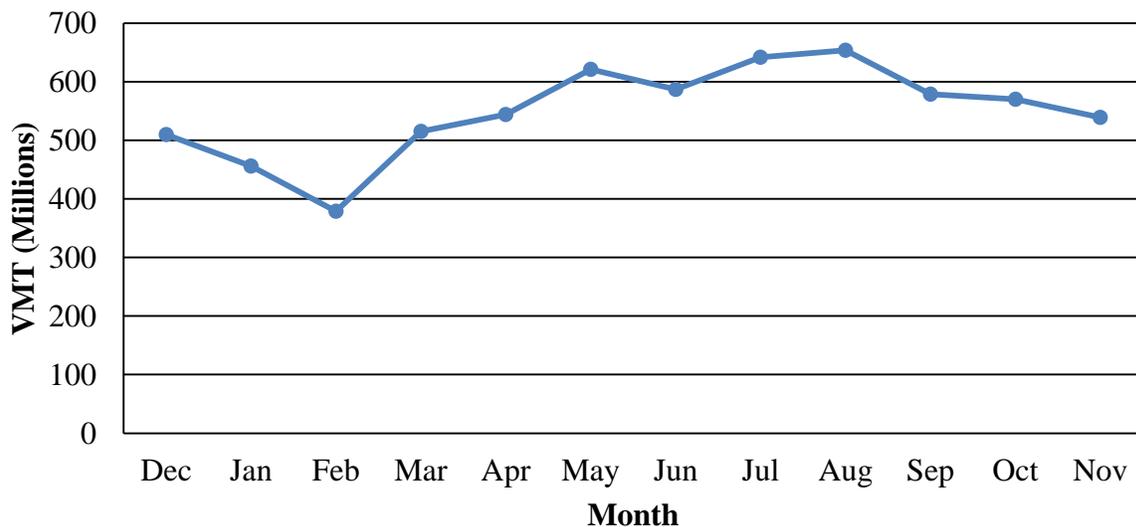
transit services for less than full fare. Second, MTA administers the Guaranteed Ride Home program, which is a free commuter insurance program that offers up to four free rides home per year to people who ride transit, commuter rail, bike, walk, carpool, or vanpool to work at least twice a week. Finally, MTA’s Commuter Assistance Office operates Maryland Rideshare to assist commuters in organizing and participating in carpools, vanpools, and other alternative commuting options.

*Data on Vehicle Miles Traveled*

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) tracks and uses VMT as a measurement for traffic volume trends across the nation. From December 2018 through November 2019 (the most recent data available), VMT across the nation totaled [nearly 3.3 trillion](#). During that same time period, VMT in the State totaled nearly 6.6 billion. **Exhibit 1** shows the month-to-month VMT for the State during that time period.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Vehicle Miles Traveled in Maryland**  
**December 2018 through November 2019**



Source: Federal Highway Administration, Department of Legislative Services

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*Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled*

According to FHWA, the [goal of reducing VMT](#) is an official goal of the U.S. Government policy as it is stated in sections of the federal Clean Air Act, the President’s 1993 Climate

Change Action Plan, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. [The U.S. Department of Transportation](#) (DOT) advises that decreasing annual VMT can directly improve air quality and the overall health of a population, and that higher VMT equates to increased sedentary time. According to DOT, some strategies that have shown success in lowering VMT include public transportation expansion and service improvement, active transportation infrastructure, and higher parking fees.

**State Expenditures:** The research and analysis necessary to develop the State strategy required by the bill is likely to be varied and complex. Specifically, the bill requires the workgroup to both study and develop a strategy regarding environmental issues, land use, transportation, housing, employment, and economic development, with the ultimate goal of reducing VMT. Given the broad subject matter, DLS requires part-time consultant assistance to support the workgroup's activities. Therefore, general fund expenditures increase by an estimated \$50,000 annually in both fiscal 2021 and 2022 for DLS to hire consultants.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Commerce; Maryland Department of the Environment; Maryland Department of Planning; U.S. Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 31, 2020  
mr/lgc

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Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510