

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 345

(Senator Waldstreicher)

Judicial Proceedings

Environment and Transportation

Transportation - Vision Zero Advisory Commission - Establishment

This bill establishes the Vision Zero Advisory Commission (VZAC) to advise the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) on best practices intended to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on roadways in all modes of ground transportation using data-driven prevention strategies, with an emphasis on a Safe System Approach. MDOT must provide staff for the commission. An existing annual report submitted by MDOT to the Governor and the General Assembly must include the findings and recommendations of the commission.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) within the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) can staff VZAC using existing budgeted resources. Any expense reimbursements for VZAC members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

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

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Bill Summary: VZAC must:

- advise the Governor and State agencies on (1) the implementation of Vision Zero; (2) policies, programs, and services affecting traffic safety for pedestrians,

- bicyclists, and drivers and passengers of motor vehicles; and (3) priorities and needs for roadway safety;
- identify State and local laws, policies, and regulations that hinder the development and implementation of Vision Zero;
 - review safety deficiencies at specified crash sites; and
 - provide guidance on any other issue directly related to roadway safety.

MDOT must include the findings and recommendations of the commission in its existing annual report on the status of Vision Zero that it submits to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31 each year.

A member of VZAC may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses, as specified.

Current Law: The State's traffic safety program was renamed Vision Zero by Chapter 377 of 2019 and is currently referred to as [Zero Deaths Maryland](#). The Federal Highway Administration's traffic safety program is known as the [Safe System Approach](#).

Zero Deaths Maryland is administered by MHSO, which is housed within MVA. The State Highway Administration (SHA) partners closely with MHSO to implement safety programs and best practices for the program. In support of the program, Chapters 153 and 154 of 2022 require SHA to perform an infrastructure review of each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality that occurs on a State highway or at an intersection of a State highway and another highway or municipal street.

MHSO's safety operations are divided into various program areas that include speed and aggressive driving, distracted driving, impaired driving, occupant protection, motorcycle safety, and pedestrian and bicycle safety. MHSO's activities include data tracking and reporting, program development, and providing grant funding for law enforcement, outreach, and education. MHSO's annual reports can be found on its [website](#), and the reports include detailed highway safety data and information on MHSO's operations and funding, including its progress on Vision Zero.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 344 (Delegate Palakovich Carr, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Federal Highway Administration; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 2024
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