



**Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville**  
**HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022**  
**February 17, 2022**  
**SUPPORT**

The Mayor and Council of Rockville thank Chairman Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to share the City’s comments on HB 656. We are thankful to Delegate Charkoudian for sponsoring this important legislation.

In July 2020, the Mayor and Council approved its Vision Zero Action Plan as a comprehensive approach to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries from traffic crashes. The Rockville Vision Zero Action Plan is consistent with the State’s Vision Zero subtitle and follows the same implementation philosophy. The City supports HB 656 and its goals to assess the infrastructure and operational practices that limit our collective ability to reach Vision Zero.

The City continues to proactively track crash locations and coordinates with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to identify state-maintained roadways and intersections in need of further assessment. Rockville has identified a High Injury Network of the roadways which have the most crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. All six segments are located along State-maintained roadways, with 52 fatalities and serious crashes. Rockville wrote MDOT over two months ago to express our serious concerns and request safety improvements. Unfortunately, we have still not received a response.

While regular collaboration between our transportation agencies is strong when identifying problematic safety locations, current processes and capacity at the State level often extends the timeline for implementation of safety improvements beyond acceptable levels, including a 90-day timeframe for responding to requests. Moreover, the recommended safety improvements often fall short of the needs of vulnerable people walking or bicycling in favor of maintaining the motor vehicle level of service or justification thresholds that predate the State’s Vision Zero policy. The requirements for comprehensive safety evaluations, consistent with the Vision Zero Program established under Title 8, Subtitle 10 of the Transportation Article; an increased and mandated budget for vulnerable roadway user improvements; and staffing assessment will help expedite proactive and innovative safety improvements along state roadways that are desperately needed.

We ask that you incorporate the following amendments into the bill:

1. Include implementation of temporary safety measures along with incremental, near-term improvements for projects taking more than 12 months to complete.
2. Expand safety recommendations to include improvements designed to reduce unsafe and illegal driving behaviors.

In closing, HB 656 is urgently needed and will further advance the State’s Vision Zero traffic safety efforts, making a safer transportation network for people walking, bicycling, driving, and using transit. We urge the Committee to provide HB 656 with a favorable report and forward the bill to the House floor for a vote.