



HB 344: Transportation - Vision Zero Advisory Commission - Establishment
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing to express Terps For Bike Lanes's strong support for the establishment of the Vision Zero Advisory Commission. Our advocacy efforts encompass several areas, including the establishment of new bike lanes and paths, the enhancement and maintenance of existing bike facilities, and the development of bike infrastructure in areas where it is currently insufficient or absent. To drive these improvements, our organization actively engages with key stakeholders, including students, the University of Maryland Department of Transportation Services (DOTS), Facilities Management (FM), and the City of College Park. As an organization dedicated to promoting the safety and well-being of all road users, we believe that this initiative is a crucial step towards achieving the goal of zero vehicle-related deaths or serious injuries on our roadways.

The Vision Zero Advisory Commission's mandate to develop strategies aimed at making roadways safer for drivers, passengers of motor vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians aligns perfectly with our mission. The current road safety landscape demands comprehensive and collaborative efforts to address the increasing number of accidents and fatalities. By bringing together experts and stakeholders, the Commission can play a pivotal role in formulating effective strategies that cater to the diverse needs of all road users.

The requirement for the Commission to advise the Department on best practices is particularly commendable. Drawing on the collective expertise of the Commission members will undoubtedly lead to the identification and dissemination of innovative solutions. This approach not only enhances road safety but also promotes a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that we stay abreast of the latest advancements in transportation safety. Moreover, the stipulation that the Department report to the Governor and General Assembly annually on the status of Vision Zero and the recommendations of the Commission is a testament to the accountability and transparency embedded in this proposal. Regular reporting will enable all stakeholders, including the public, to track progress and hold the responsible parties accountable for the implementation of recommendations.

The Vision Zero law was enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland in 2019 and subsequently signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan. Despite these measures, Maryland witnessed a concerning trend in road fatalities, with 574 deaths in 2020, including 129 pedestrians and 15 bicyclists. The following years showed minimal improvement, with 563 fatalities in 2021, 566 in 2022, and a notable increase to 601 in 2023, with 155 pedestrian casualties and 15 bicyclists among them. Regrettably, Maryland has yet to fulfill its Vision Zero pledge, showing no signs of progress.

We believe that the establishment of the Vision Zero Advisory Commission is a proactive, overdue, and necessary measure to address the urgent challenges our communities face regarding road safety. By working collaboratively, we can strive towards the ambitious goal of zero vehicle-related deaths or serious injuries. We urge you to consider our endorsement and support the implementation of this crucial initiative. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Terps For Bike Lanes looks forward to witnessing the positive impact of the Vision Zero Advisory Commission on the safety and well-being of all road users. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps For Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com