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HB 348 Motor Vehicles - Speed Monitoring Systems
House Environmental and Transportation Committee
February 21, 2025
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Korman and Members Environment and Transportation Committee, my name is Priscilla Kania, and I am a Volunteer with AARP Maryland, standing for our nearly 850,000 members statewide. On behalf of AARP, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **HB 348 Motor Vehicles - Speed Monitoring Systems**. This important legislation directly aligns with AARP's Livable Communities initiative, which supports the development of communities where people of all ages can live safely, independently, and comfortably as they age. We thank Delegate Stewart for sponsoring this legislation.

HB 348 authorizes the Maryland State Highway Administration to use speed monitoring systems in areas determined to be high risk to vulnerable road users and priority corridors in the Administration's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. This measure provides an added protection for ensuring that aging Marylanders can remain active, mobile, and connected to their communities.

Aging in Place: A Growing Necessity

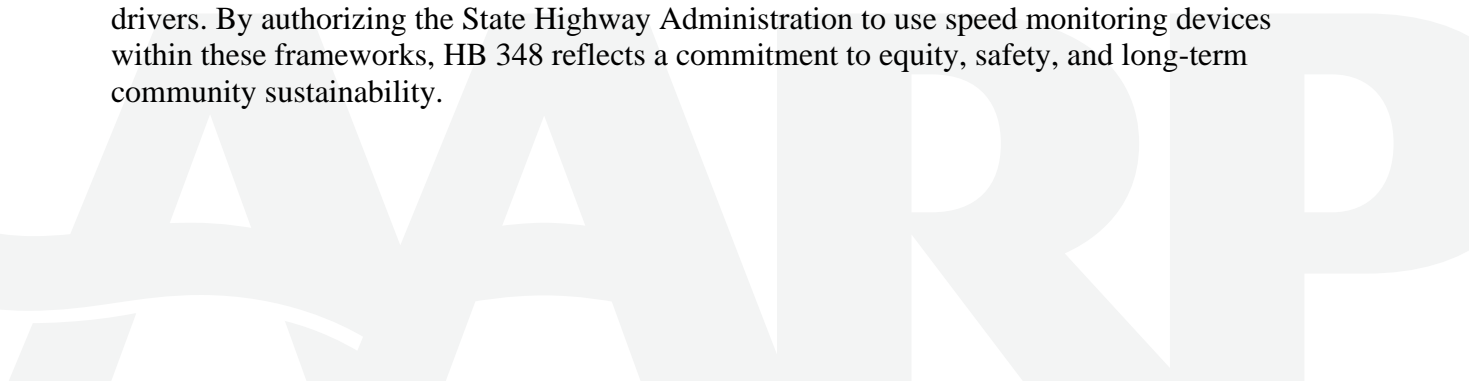
As Maryland's population ages, ensuring safe and accessible infrastructure is crucial to allowing older residents to age in place. According to AARP research, nearly 90% of older adults want to remain in their homes and communities as they age. However, this goal is only achievable if they have access to safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that meets their mobility needs. For older Marylanders, sidewalks and bike pathways are not just recreational amenities—they are lifelines that enable them to walk to the grocery store, visit their doctor, attend social events, and stay physically active. Safe and accessible pathways reduce isolation and increase independence while improving physical and mental health.

The Link Between Safe Infrastructure and Healthy Aging

Accessible and well-maintained sidewalks and pathways are critical to preventing injuries, promoting active lifestyles, and improving quality of life for older adults. The best infrastructure cannot save lives if speeding drivers are not controlled. This bill creates that deterrent.

Complete Streets and Vision Zero: Safer Streets for All

Complete Streets and Vision Zero programs aim to design transportation networks that prioritize safety and accessibility for all users—whether they are pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, or drivers. By authorizing the State Highway Administration to use speed monitoring devices within these frameworks, HB 348 reflects a commitment to equity, safety, and long-term community sustainability.



Economic and Community Benefits

Investing in speed control strengthens entire communities by:

- Increasing property values: Walkable neighborhoods are highly desirable and can boost local property values.
- Boosting local economies: Safe, pedestrian-friendly areas attract more foot traffic to local businesses.
- Reducing healthcare costs: Encouraging physical activity through walkable communities can reduce the incidence of chronic diseases and associated healthcare costs.

Reduced physical activity: Limited safe walking and biking options can discourage older residents from engaging in the physical activity they need to maintain their health. By enforcing speed limits, HB 348 directly addresses these challenges and fosters an environment where residents of all ages can thrive.

HB 348 Supports Multigenerational Communities

Safe infrastructure that promotes walking and biking benefits not only older adults but residents of all ages, including children, families, and individuals with disabilities. Lack of physical activity has been linked to negative health outcomes, including depression and cognitive decline.

AARP's Request

We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 348 to help make our streets safer, strengthening accessible communities and support aging Marylanders in their desire to age in place. Thank you for considering our testimony. For further questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy of AARP Maryland at tbresnahan@aarp.org or at 410- 302-8451. Thank you!