

## Prince George's County FFY2023 Problem Identification

### Overall

Prince George's County accounted for 15.0% of the population and 15.8% of the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the State of Maryland on average over the past three years (2018-2020). During that time, an annual average of 108 traffic fatalities have occurred in the County, which have increased and plateaued, ranging from 103 (20.1% of all fatalities in the State) to 112 (20.9%) to 110 (19.2%). The number of serious injuries (defined as KABCO=4 on the police crash report) over the past three years in Prince George's County has decreased significantly, ranging from 573 to 523 to 341, which are 17.8%, 16.8% and 12.5% of the State total for serious injuries in 2018, 2019, and 2020<sup>1</sup> respectively.

Usually over four hundred thousand citations for traffic violations are issued across the State and adjudicated in Maryland District Courts each year (449,381 in 2018 and 438,451 in 2019)<sup>2</sup>. However, only 323,400 citations were issued and adjudicated in the year 2020 across the State. Over the previous three years, the number of traffic citations issued in Prince George's County has been alternating from 78,165 (17.4% of statewide traffic citations) in 2018 to 83,296 (19.0%) in 2019 to 59,978 (18.5%) in 2020. These citations were issued anywhere within the boundaries of Prince George's County to a resident of any jurisdiction, state, or country.

### Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving fatalities in Prince George's County during the past three years have increased, with 2 occurring in 2018, 6 in 2019, and 11 in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County have been decreasing, ranging from 28 in 2018 to 28 in 2019 and 21 in 2020. Aggressive driving crashes occurring in 2020 accounted for 18.0% of all fatalities and 12.1% of all serious injuries in the State.

Aggressive driving citations are rarely issued because a driver must be observed committing three or more specific infractions to qualify under the aggressive driving statute. In

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<sup>1</sup> In 2020, the world experienced the COVID-19 pandemic which contributed to significant changes in roadway travel and driver behavior. Reduced vehicle miles traveled and open roadways resulted in an increase in speed and other risky driving behaviors. Consequently, 573 people died in traffic-related crashes on Maryland's roads, representing an increase of more than seven percent from the previous year's total of 535, with pedestrian and bicycle fatalities comprising over one-quarter of the State's roadway deaths. While overall fatalities increased in 2020, the reduced travel contributed to marked decreases for injury and overall crashes at the statewide and jurisdictional level. Therefore, this anomalous year must be considered when drawing conclusions based on the use of 2020 crash data to evaluate highway safety programs and trends.

<sup>2</sup> Citations listed under Transportation Article 21, which are defined as "Rules of the Road" in the Citation Manual, also referred as moving violations.

Maryland, 793 such citations were issued on average over the past three years. Of those, an average of 260 were issued in Prince George's County (226 in 2018, 277 in 2019, and 276 in 2020).

### **Distracted Driving**

Since 2018, there have been an annual average of about 46 distracted driving fatalities occurring in Prince George's County. In 2020, distracted driving in the County added 48 deaths to the State's distracted driving fatalities, a point on a trend that has trended down then up over the previous three years (48 in 2018 and 41 in 2019). Serious injuries resulting from distracted driving crashes in the County have steeply decreased over the past three years, from 341 in 2018 (21.3% of all distracted driving serious injuries in the State) to 312 in 2019 (20.8% of all) to 194 in 2020 (16.0% of all). In 2020, 43.6% of all fatalities and 56.9% of all serious injuries recorded in Prince George's County resulted from distracted driving crashes.

Distracted driving citations issued in Maryland during the past three years have decreased significantly, ranging from 33,655 in 2018 to 33,978 in 2019 and 19,450 in 2020. During the same period, distracted driving citations issued in Prince George's County have increased and then decreased, ranging from 5,858 in 2018 to 6,337 in 2019 and 4,844 in 2020. As a proportion of the distracted driving citations issued statewide, those handed out in the County accounted for 17.4% in 2018, 18.7% in 2019 and 24.9% in 2020.

### **Impaired Driving**

Over the past three years, an average of 26 impaired driving fatalities occurred per year in Prince George's County. Fatalities from such crashes have risen and fallen, ranging from 24 (17.0% of all impaired driving fatalities in Maryland) in 2018 to 32 (21.1% of all) in 2019 to 22 (18.2% of all) in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County over the same time period have fluctuated, ranging from 63 in 2018 (13.5% of all impaired driving serious injuries in the State) to 65 in 2019 (13.3% of all) to 42 in 2020 (9.4% of all). In 2020, 20.0% of all fatalities and 12.3% of all serious injuries in Prince George's County resulted from impaired driving crashes, compared to 21.1% of all fatalities and 16.4% of all serious injuries from impaired driving crashes occurring throughout the State.

Impaired driving relates to driving while impaired by alcohol and/or drugs or controlled dangerous substances. Several citations may be issued at the point of an encounter with an impaired driver. Therefore, all judicial figures related to impaired driving will be quantified using arrests, not individual citations. Impaired driving arrests have steeply decreased in Maryland over the past three years, from 18,403 in 2018 to 18,279 in 2019 to 13,651 in 2020. During the same period, impaired driving arrests have risen and fallen in Prince George's County, ranging from 2,484 in 2018 to 2,729 in 2019 to 2,217 in 2020. As a proportion of impaired driving arrests in the State, the number of impaired driving arrests in the County accounted for 13.5% in 2018, 14.9% in 2019, and 16.2% in 2020. Of the impaired arrests in the County in 2020, 1.8% were of older drivers (ages 65+) while 1.9% were of younger drivers (ages 16-20).

## Speeding

During the past three years, Prince George's County averaged 14 speeding related fatalities per year, which have oscillated over that time: 14 in 2018, 10 in 2019 and 18 in 2020. Serious injuries resulting from such crashes in the County over the past three years have decreased significantly, ranging from 74 in 2018 to 74 in 2019 and 39 in 2020. In 2020, 16.4% of statewide speeding related fatalities and 13.0% of statewide speeding related serious injuries resulted from crashes in Prince George's County. Over the same year, 16.4% of all fatalities and 11.4% of all serious injuries recorded in Prince George's County were the result of crashes involving driving speed.

Speeding citations are very common even though those adjudicated through the District Court do not include automated enforcement. Speeding citations issued in Prince George's County have seesawed over the past three years, with 22,695 (11.6% of statewide speeding citations), 23,627 (13.0% of statewide), and 21,343 (14.1% of all) issued in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. Statewide speeding citations have steeply decreased over the same three years: 195,649, 182,213, and 151,419. Speeding citations comprised 35.6% of all Prince George's County citations in 2020.

## Non-motorists

Non-motorists are defined here as pedestrians (on foot) and bicyclists. Pedestrian fatalities in Prince George's County have increased over the previous three years, from 27 (2018) to 30 (2019) to 35 (2020), while serious injuries have decreased, ranging from 66 (2018) to 65 (2019) to 60 (2020). The occurrence of bicyclist fatalities in Prince George's County has been steady, with 2 in 2018, 2 in 2019, and 2 in 2020, while serious injuries to bicyclists have increased and then decreased, ranging from 5 in 2018 to 7 in 2019 to 4 in 2020.

Very few non-motorist citations are issued throughout the State, to either the pedestrian or the motor vehicle driver. Typically, more violations are issued to drivers, and in Prince George's County 47 were issued to drivers against pedestrians or bicyclists in 2020, while 52 were issued to pedestrians or bicyclists that year. As a proportion of statewide totals (933 and 235), those numbers represent 5.0% and 22.1%, respectively, in 2020.

## Motorcycles

Motorcycle rider fatalities have remained almost steady over the past three years in Prince George's County, ranging from 12 (2018) to 11 (2019) to 11 (2020). Serious injuries to motorcyclists have been alternating, ranging from 41 (2018) to 29 (2019) to 39 (2020). The 2020 figures account for 14.1% of motorcycle rider fatalities and 12.4% of rider serious injuries that occurred in the State.

Maryland has had a universal helmet law in place for several decades, consequently the incidence of unhelmeted motorcyclists involved in a crash is low. The State has averaged 7 unhelmeted motorcycle rider fatalities per year over the past three years, therefore, unhelmeted motorcycle fatalities in Prince George's County have remained relatively constant (an average of

2 per year). However, 11 seriously injured riders in Prince George's County were unhelmeted in 2020, which is 12.6% of the State total (compared to 8 in 2018 and 10 in 2019).

### Older Drivers

In Maryland, older driver safety programs focus on drivers of age 65 years or older. The data presented here on fatalities and serious injuries include any person involved in a crash with an older driver. Older drivers were involved in crashes that resulted in an average of 94 fatalities in Maryland each year (85 in 2018, 105 in 2019 and 91 in 2020). During that time, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in Maryland have seen a significant decrease, ranging from 518 in 2018 to 512 in 2019 to 381 in 2020. Fatal crashes involving older drivers in Prince George's County averaged 11 over the same period (ranging from 11 in 2018, 10 in 2019 to 13 in 2020). Further, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in the County have varied, ranging from 74 in 2018, 107 in 2019 to 35 in 2020.

A total of 10,971 citations for moving violations or restraint usage were issued to drivers of age 65+ in Maryland in 2020. Over the past three years, the number of traffic citations issued to older drivers in Prince George's County has trended up then down from 2,459 (14.3% of those issued statewide) in 2018 to 2,647 (15.0%) in 2019 to 1,723 (15.7%) in 2020.

### Young Drivers

In Maryland, young driver safety programs focus on individuals between ages 16 and 20. The data presented here on fatalities and serious injuries include any person involved in a crash with a young driver. Young drivers were involved in crashes that resulted in an average of 52 fatalities in Maryland each year (54 in 2018, 46 in 2019, and 56 in 2020). During that time, serious injuries resulting from these crashes in Maryland have fluctuated, ranging from 384 in 2018 to 407 in 2019 to 345 in 2020. In 2020 there were 10 fatalities involving young drivers in Prince George's County, a number that has been alternating over time, with 10 in 2018 and 7 in 2019. Further, serious injuries due to crashes involving younger drivers have fallen and plateaued over the same time period, from 61 in 2018 to 39 in 2019 to 39 in 2020.

A total of 35,236 citations for moving violations or restraint usage were issued to drivers of age 16-20 in Maryland in 2020. Over the past three years, the number of traffic citations issued to younger drivers in Prince George's County has varied: 5,783 (13.8% of those issued statewide), 6,262 (15.2%), and 4,925 (14.0%) in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively.

### Occupant Protection

An unrestrained occupant is defined as a child under the age of eight not reported to be restrained in a child safety seat (which includes harness and booster seats) or a person over the age of eight not reported as restrained by a seat belt while riding in a passenger vehicle or light truck. Unrestrained occupant fatalities have oscillated over the past three years in Prince George's County, ranging from 12 (2018) to 27 (2019) to 19 (2020). Serious injuries have risen and fallen over the same period: 53 (2018) to 61 (2019) to 38 (2020). The 2020 values accounted for 14.8% of the unrestrained fatalities and 9.8% of the unrestrained serious injuries occurring in the State.

In 2020, 16,858 citations were issued statewide for safety equipment violations (including seat belt violations and child safety seat violations), which was a much lower total when compared to the numbers issued in the previous years (27,342 in 2018 and 29,660 in 2019). In Prince George's County, 4,264 such citations were issued in 2020, representing 25.3% of the statewide total, compared to 5,207 from 2018 and 5,766 from 2019. The MHSO conducts an annual roadside survey of seat belt usage in Maryland. The statewide observed seat belt usage rate for Maryland in 2020 among drivers and front seat passengers of all vehicles was 91.4%, while the overall observed seat belt usage rate for Prince George's County was 89.1%.

**Note:** Citation frequencies and percentages reported here may be underestimates of actual issued citations due to an ongoing system conversion.