

# Allegheny County Local Roadway Safety Plan

June 2024



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## Introduction: Fatalities and Injuries on Allegany County Roadways

From 2018 – 2022, there were 1,179 crashes on Allegany County roadways resulting in an occupant or other roadway user being injured or killed. There was a total of 138 persons killed or seriously injured (KSI) with 34 deaths and 104 serious injuries to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists and others on all roads in Allegany County over those five years. Nationally, roadway fatalities and the fatality rate declined consistently for 30 years, but progress has stalled over the last decade and went in the wrong direction in 2020. Allegany County is no different as local trends have mirrored outcomes in Maryland and across the nation.

Every traffic-related crash impacts the lives of those involved. Fortunately, 96% of all crashes result in property damage only as well as annoyance, inconvenience, aches, or pains. But for the 4% of crashes resulting in serious injury or fatality, the consequences are devastating to families and communities. Thus, this plan and most other roadway safety plans focus on the crashes which cause the most direct and indirect harm – those involving fatality or injury.

While property damage crashes tend to be more dispersed in time, location, and manner, there are clear patterns that emerge when reviewing the KSI crashes in Allegany County between 2018 and 2022.

- More than 24% of all persons killed or seriously injured involved impairment by of alcohol or drugs.
- More than 36% of all KSI crashes occurred on just under 3 miles of roadway.
- Nearly 25% of all KSI crashes occurred during dark hours (7PM to 6AM), while only 19% of daily VMT occurs during those hours.
- More than 13% of all persons killed or seriously injured were vulnerable roadway users such as bicyclists and pedestrians.

## Part I: Traffic Safety Baseline for Allegany County

### Project Overview

Through the National Roadway Safety Strategy, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has established an ambitious long-term goal of zero roadway fatalities. Achieving this goal requires sustained partnership at all levels of government and spanning a range of agencies and disciplines including public health, law enforcement and the judiciary, public works, education, and many others. The state of Maryland, acting through the Department of Transportation (MDOT), has adopted a zero-deaths plan that is led by the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO). The plan's philosophy is that all crashes are preventable, and every injury is avoidable; saving lives and preventing injuries can only be achieved through a comprehensive set of traffic safety programs.

In turn, MDOT has challenged every local government to examine their programs, policies, and practices and develop a local strategic roadway safety plan (LRSP). The plan not only drives local efforts to improve traffic safety but also is a prerequisite to receiving funds through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the USDOT's *Safe Streets for All* (SS4A) grant program which makes \$1 billion available annually on a competitive basis for comprehensive safety implementation activities. This LRSP is intended to meet the required elements of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as defined by USDOT to be eligible for supplemental action plan or implementation grant funds.

Through a grant from MHSO, the Allegany County Sheriff's Office led development of this plan. Partnering agencies and private organization representatives met over four months to analyze traffic safety data and develop locally supported actions that will save lives and reduce injuries on Western Maryland roadways.

This LRSP for Allegany County is prepared in two parts:

- Part 1 is a "benchmark" report that describes the county, recent traffic safety data, and stakeholder views on the nature of the traffic safety problem and potential solutions.
- Part 2 is the local roadway strategic plan itself with areas of emphasis and agreed-upon strategies to reduce the risk of fatal and serious injuries.

## County Overview

Allegheny County is located approximately 130 miles northwest of Washington, DC. Allegheny County lies primarily in the Ridge and Valley Country of the Appalachian Mountains. The western part of the county contains a portion of the steep Allegheny Front, which is the beginning of the transition to the higher elevation Appalachian Plateau and Allegheny Mountain Region. The elevation of Cumberland is only around 630 feet, while there are elevations over 2,000 feet above sea level to the west. The population of Allegheny County, according to the 2020 Census, is 68,106, which is 9% less than the County's 2010 population. Cumberland is the county seat.

Since colonial times, Allegheny County has been a key transition point in the country's movement of goods and people to and from the Mid-Atlantic region, as well as the agricultural and industrial production centers of the Ohio Valley and Midwest. Currently, Allegheny County has a diverse work force that is continuously improving to enhance the economic development of the area. According to the county government's department of Economic and Community Development's "Allegheny Works" website, the top five industries in the county in 2021 were health care and social assistance, educational services, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing. The three key anchor institutions in the county are UPMC Western Maryland, Frostburg State University, and Allegheny College of Maryland. The County's key manufacturers are National Jet Company, American Woodmark, Berry Plastics, and Berkeley Springs Instruments (BSI).

## Governance of Transportation Planning, Policy, and Safety

Allegheny County is a code home rule county governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners. A County Administrator manages the day-to-day work of the local government; most of the agencies with responsibilities related to traffic safety report to the County Administrator. This includes the Department of Planning and Zoning; Department of Public Works; and Department of Emergency Services. The Health Department and Board of Liquor License Commissioners are quasi-state agencies that effectively report to the County Administrator. All these agencies – each with their separate reporting and accountability structures – must act in concert to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Other agencies critical to traffic safety include:

- The MDOT State Highway Administration is responsible for maintenance, design, and construction of state and federal roadways.
- The Maryland State Police has primary authority for law enforcement on state and federal roadways; they are supported by the Allegheny County Sheriff who is the county's chief law enforcement officer and is elected by the voters countywide.
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Police is responsible for patrol of roadways within state parks and has statewide authority on public roadways.
- The Allegheny County Public Schools which is governed by a separately elected Board of Education.
- Judges of the District Court of Maryland adjudicate most traffic-related charges; they are appointed by the Governor of Maryland with the advice and consent of the State Senate.

All these agencies – each with their separate reporting and accountability structures – must act in concert to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

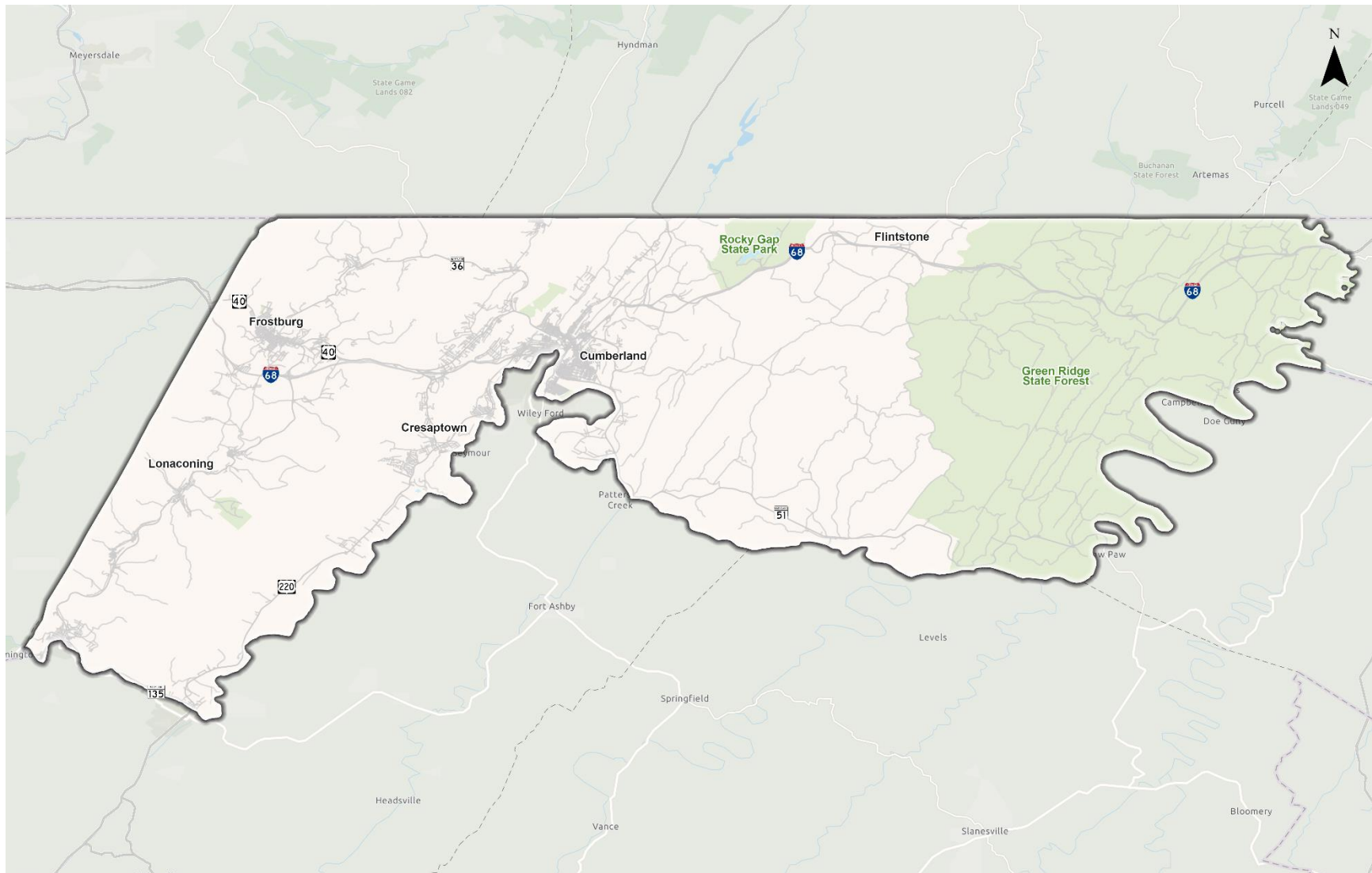
The following are the county’s seven municipalities, which play a role that is critical to traffic safety:

- City of Cumberland
- City of Frostburg
- Town of Barton
- Town of Lonaconing
- Town of Luke
- Town of Midland
- Town of Westernport

#### Transportation Network & Planned Safety Improvements

As a largely rural community, single-occupancy vehicles are the predominant mode of travel. Interstate 68, US Routes 40 and 220 are the major highways in Allegany County. Primary roads that serve and connect the municipalities and developed areas are MD 35, 36, 51, 135, and 807. Topography is a significant consideration in how the roads in and through Allegany County were designed. Many roads have steep grades and winding turns due to the mountainous terrain that cuts through the County. The County has a very limited capital budget for road improvements. There are no active roadway projects in the County’s capital improvement program other than emergency repairs due to drainage washout; however, the county does have an active bridge replacement/rehabilitation program.

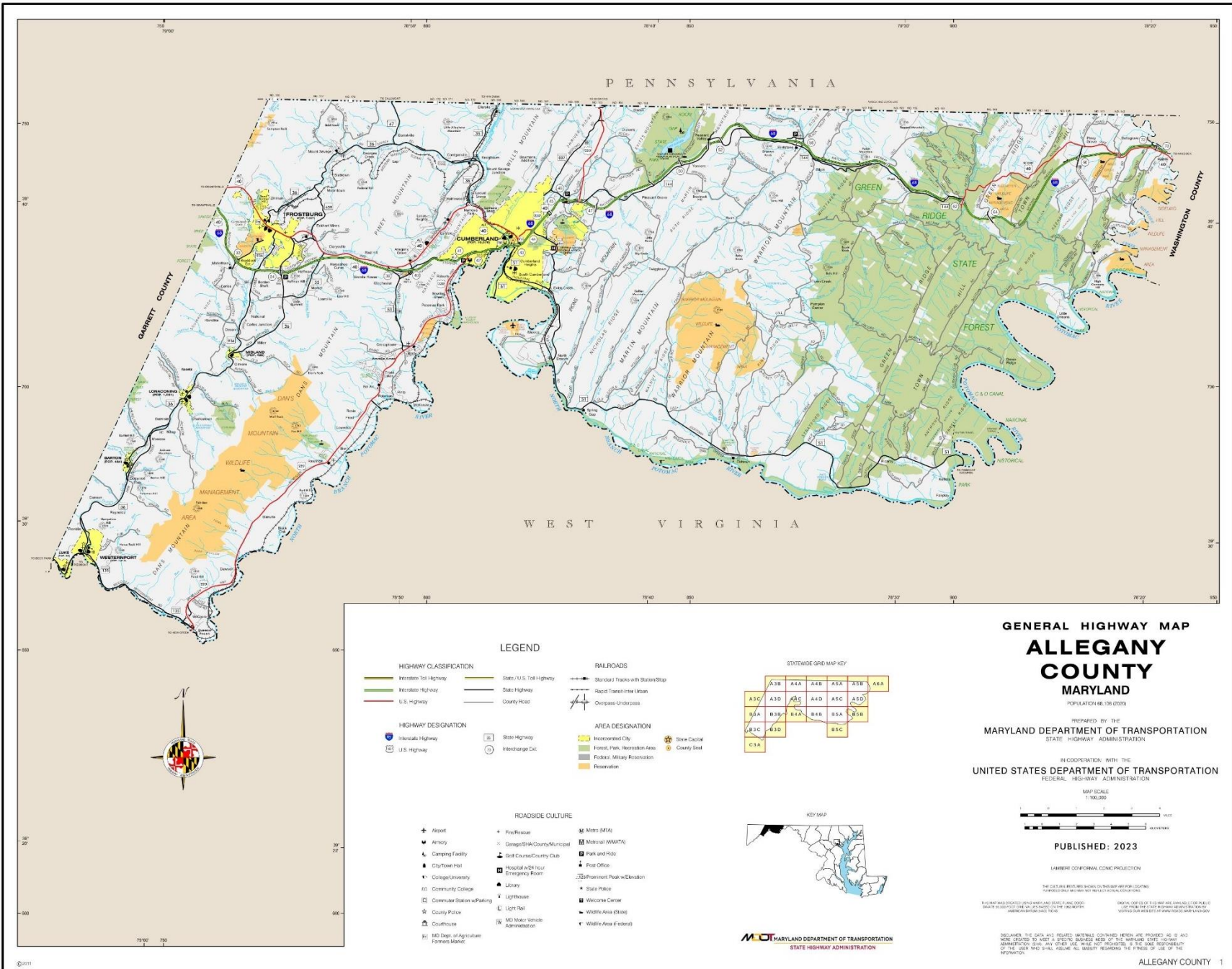




**Figure: Highway Map of Allegany County**

The State Highway Administration has far greater resources, although they are spread thin across all of the mountain counties. In addition to its regular resurfacing and spot safety improvement projects in Allegany County, MDOT SHA shows the following projects in the Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program for 2024 – 2029:

- Interstate 68 safety and resurfacing improvements from MD 936 to MD 55
- Roadway and intersection improvements along US 220, MD 53, and MD 636 in Cresaptown, including turn lanes and additional sidewalk connectivity (design and right of way funding only)
- US 220 study to upgrade or relocate and/or MD 53 from I-68 to Cresaptown (study completed, no further funds)
- Baltimore Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Route (City of Cumberland)
- Bel Air Elementary School Pedestrian Bridge (Safe Routes to School)
- MDOT SHA has five active bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects and six active resurfacing and safety improvement projects in Allegany County



### Transit Services

Allegheny County transit services offer fixed bus routes for the general public, and AllTrans, a demand response and ADA paratransit. The fixed route system operates on weekdays only with headways of 60 – 90 minutes. The eight routes of the Allegheny County Transit system all originate in downtown Cumberland on Frederick Street. Services are offered to LaVale, Cresaptown, Frostburg, Frostburg State University campus, Midland, Lonaconing, Barton, and Westernport. There is a set rate fare with no transfer fees. Public Transportation services are not offered on certain listed holidays. For rider convenience, there are bus tracking and rider portal applications.



### Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

The sidewalk network in Allegheny County is generally limited to primary roads within municipal limits and even then, considerable gaps exist. There are few, if any, designated bicycle lanes in Allegheny County; however, off-road recreational trails are common throughout the County.



*Primary state-owned roads through municipalities such as MD 36 in Lonaconing (left) and MD 135 in Westernport (right) tend to have sidewalks.*

## Data Driven Analysis of Traffic Safety

Local Roadway Safety Plans are intended to be data driven, although the qualitative experience of community residents, planners and engineers, law enforcement officials and others cannot be discounted. From 2018 – 2022, there were 3,585 reported<sup>1</sup> traffic crashes in Allegany County of which 1,146 resulted in an occupant or other roadway user being injured or killed. This section explores a few datapoints which shape the Local Roadway Safety Plan for Allegany County.

## Data Sources and Analytical Methods

Crash data was sourced from both the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) as well as the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP). Data from the MHSO includes the calendar years 2018 through and including 2022 while data from the MDSP includes data from January 1, 2018, to December 17, 2023. Data from the MDSP is submitted through the Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) which relates every crash with a mappable location. Certain crashes may not appear in this dataset due to insufficient detail and coordinates may not represent the exact location of crashes. Therefore, this analysis utilizes data from the MSHO to provide more reliable statistics while the data from the MDSP serves primarily to identify High Injury Networks (HIN) and to establish a visual representation of where crashes occur throughout the county.

Data on roadway mileage, traffic volumes, etc. was sourced from the MDOT SHA Data Services Division’s annual reports. The analysis herein may or may not align specifically with the analysis of MDOT SHA or MHSO because of differences in calculation methods. For example, there are four causes/contributing factor categories in the datasets relating to impairment which include alcohol, illegal drugs, medications, or combinations thereof. All were combined into a single category here because they are interrelated.

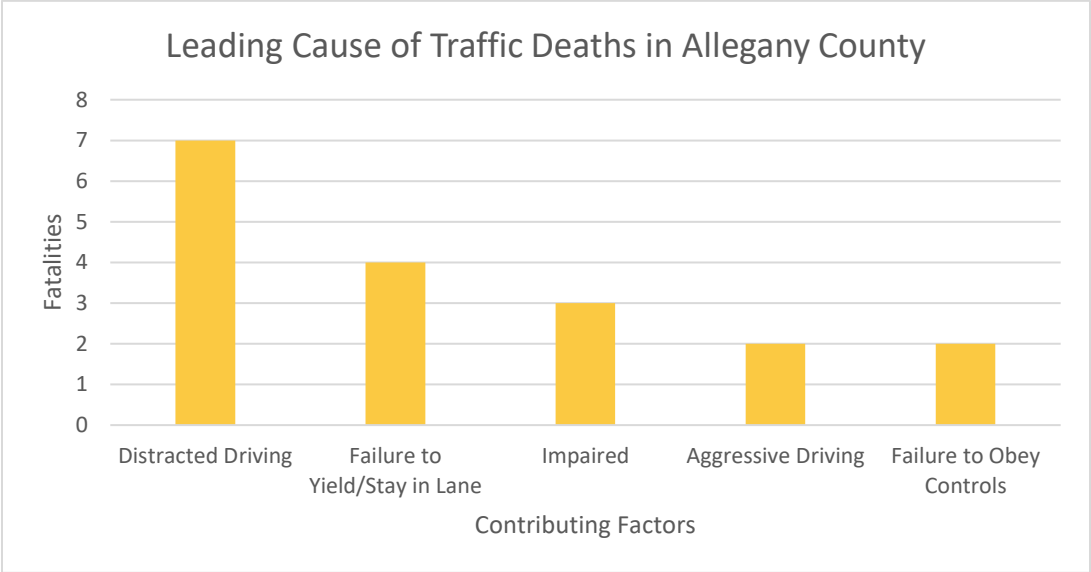
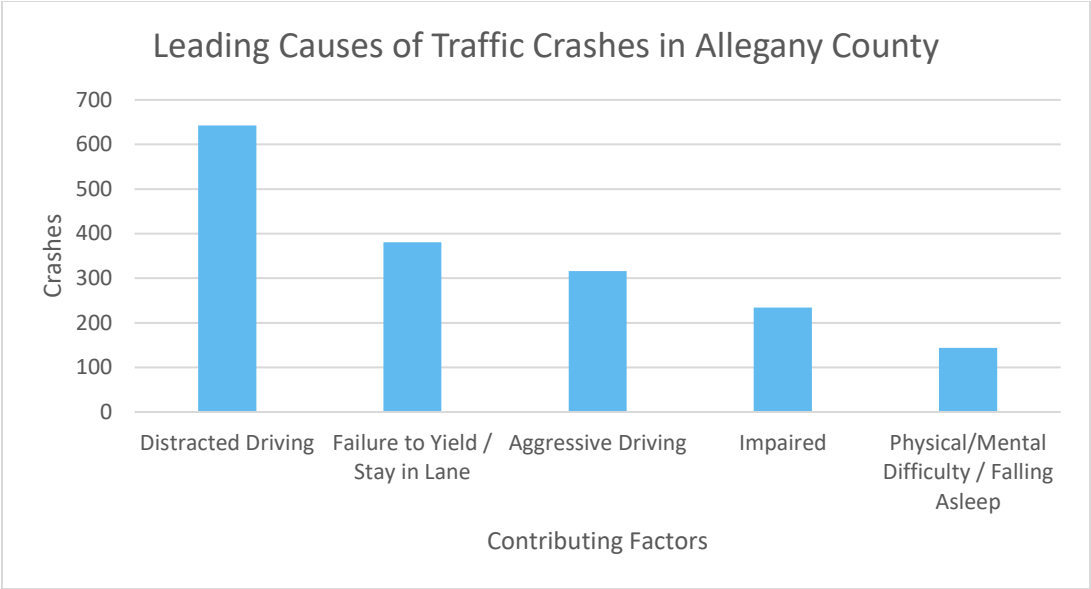
The LRSP is focused on “top lines” of traffic safety data, meaning that the findings below should be considered indicative of crash patterns. More granular analysis as to crashes at certain locations or by certain causes or contributing factors is necessary in making specific programmatic decisions or investments.

## Leading Causes and Contributing Factors of KSI Crashes

The causes and contributing factors of KSI crashes are primarily behavioral in nature; that is, decisions made by drivers that lead to poor outcomes. Examples of behavioral factors include driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, driving while distracted, speeding, and aggressiveness. While improving roadway infrastructure can reduce the seriousness of crashes, changing driver behavior through enforcement and education will have the most significant impact on fatalities and serious injuries.

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<sup>1</sup> Discussions within the advisory committee indicated that there are hundreds, if not thousands more crashes that occur every year that do not get reported. Failure to document these crashes – although they tend to be minor and involve only property damage – indicates that a full picture of traffic safety is not available.



### High Injury Network

Although the leading causes and contributing factors of severe crashes are behavioral in nature, those outcomes are disproportionately concentrated on just a few roadway segments; 33% of all injury/fatal crashes occur on just 2.9% (35.5 miles) of all roadways in the County. These roadway segments are deemed the “High Injury Network” for Allegany County and shown/listed in the maps and accompanying tables below.

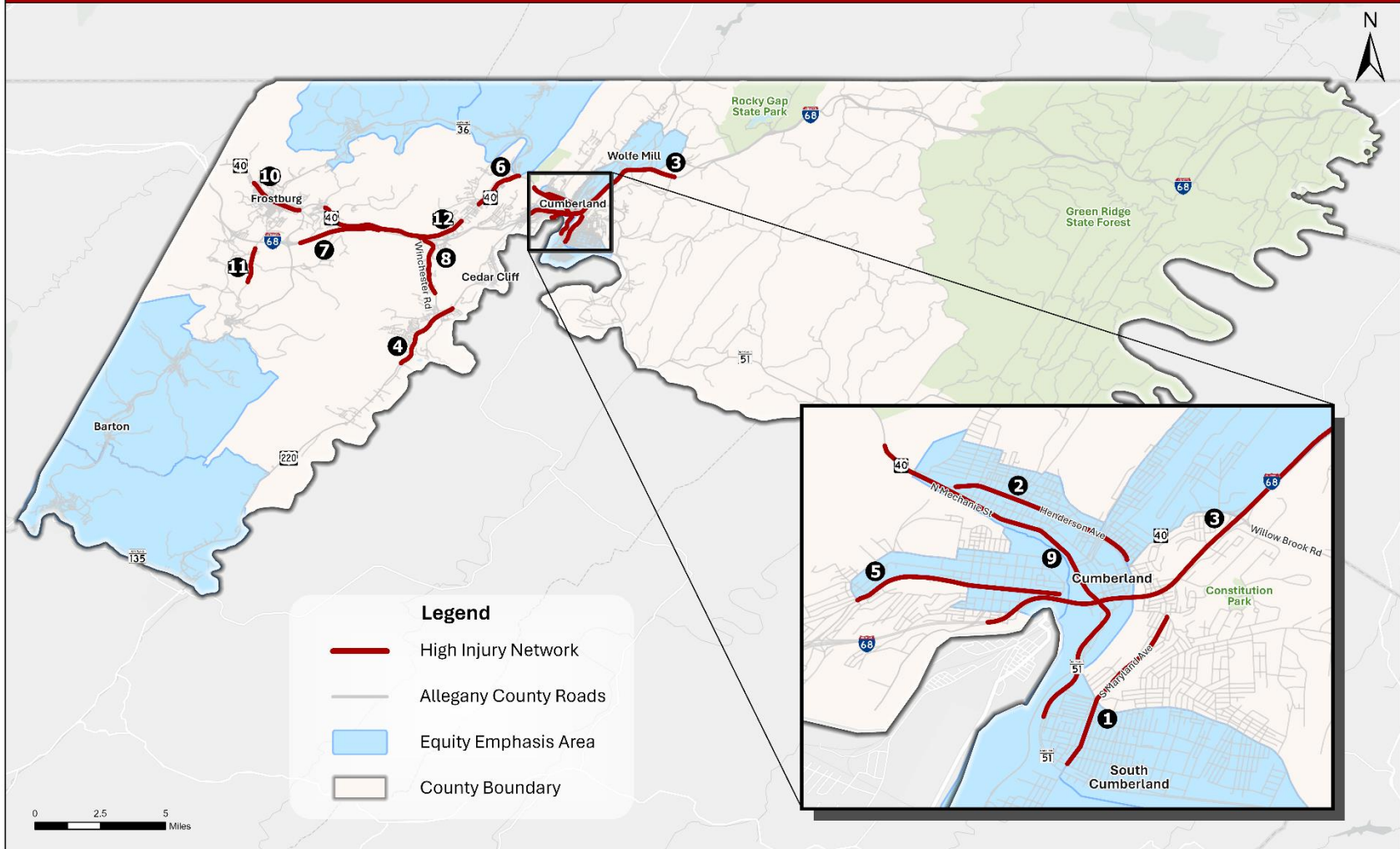
Designation of roadway segments as part of the High Injury Network can focus resources on reducing or mitigating severe crashes. For example, if a roadway on the High Injury Network has significant horizontal or vertical curves, there are mitigation measures that can be taken to slow traffic, alert drivers of roadway conditions, and lessen the impact at locations when crashes most frequently occur. Long, flat road segments or segments with high traffic volumes on the High Injury Network may lend themselves to saturation patrols and greater enforcement of speed limits. Specific strategies are explored later in the report plan.

| Fatalities & Injuries (2018 - 2023) |                                      |                                       |  | Roadway Mileage      |                          |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Road Ownership                      | Injury/Fatal Crashes on HIN Segments | Total Injury/Fatal Crashes Countywide | HIN Injury/Fatal Crashes as % of Total Crashes | HIN Centerline Miles | Total Centerline Mileage | HIN Mileage as a % of Total Mileage |
| State Roads                         | 378                                  | 1090                                  | 34.7%  | 30.5                 | 412                      | 7.4%                                |
| County/<br>Municipal -Roads         | 85                                   | 318                                   | 26.7%  | 5                    | 827                      | 0.6%                                |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>463</b>                           | <b>1408</b>                           | <b>33%</b>                                     | <b>35.5</b>          | <b>1,240</b>             | <b>2.9%</b>                         |

| High Injury Network for Allegany County, MD |   |               |                |                           |                               |                        |                        |               |
|---|---|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Label                                       | Roadway   | Fatal Crashes | Injury Crashes | Bike/Ped (Injury + Fatal) | Injury/Fatal Crashes per Mile | Segment Length (Miles) | Number of Travel Lanes | Speed Limit   |
| 1   | Virginia Ave / Maryland Ave<br>(MD 51 to Williams St)             | 0             | 21             | 7                         | 19.24                         | 1.09                   | 2                      | 25            |
| 2   | US 40 - Henderson Ave<br>(Mechanic St to Baltimore Ave)           | 1             | 19             | 1                         | 19.70                         | 1.02                   | 2                      | 25            |
| 3   | I 68 - Cumberland<br>(Kelly Rd to Jeffries Rd)                    | 2             | 57             | 1                         | 18.37                         | 3.21                   | 4/6                    | 70            |
| 4   | US 220<br>(MD 956 to Pioneer St)                                  | 4             | 68             | 3                         | 26.50                         | 2.72                   | 2                      | 30/40         |
| 5   | Greene St<br>(Fayette St to MD 942)                               | 0             | 11             | 5                         | 10.28                         | 1.07                   | 2                      | 25            |
| 6   | US 40 - Maryland Ave<br>(Long Dr to Locust Grove Rd)              | 1             | 30             | 1                         | 18.47                         | 1.68                   | 2                      | 40            |
| 7   | I-68 (Hoffman)<br>(East of MD 36 to West of MD 53)                | 2             | 24             | 0                         | 10.70                         | 2.43                   | 2                      | 70, Trucks 45 |
| 8   | Winchester Rd<br>(BlueJay Dr to US 40)                            | 2             | 41             | 3                         | 18.19                         | 2.36                   | 2/4                    | 40            |
| 9   | MD 51 - Industrial Blvd<br>(1st St to East of La Vale)            | 1             | 50             | 1                         | 21.41                         | 2.38                   | 2/4                    | 25/45         |
| 10  | US 40 - Main St<br>(Shaw St to MD 36)                             | 1             | 20             | 6                         | 11.90                         | 1.77                   | 2                      | 25            |
| 11  | MD 936 - Upper Georges Creek<br>(South of I-68 to Kaefer Acre Dr) | 1             | 4              | 1                         | 3.82                          | 1.31                   | 2                      | 35            |
| 12  | US 40 - National Hwy<br>(Parkersburg Rd to Eleanor St)            | 1             | 85             | 4                         | 18.36                         | 4.68                   | 2/4                    | 40/50         |



# Allegany County High Injury Network



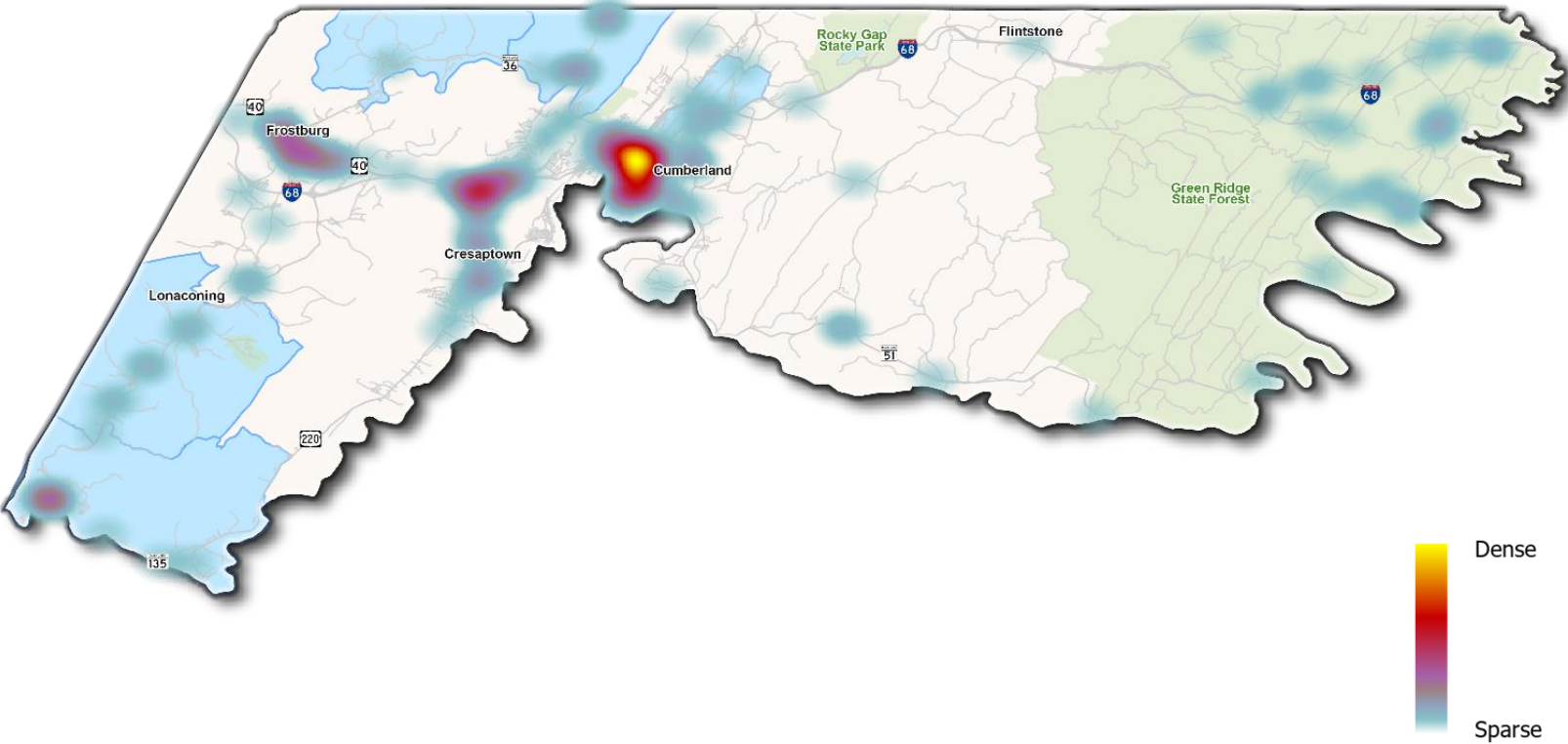
### Commercial Vehicle Safety Issues

Commercial vehicles on the roadways of Allegany County pose unique safety concerns compared to passenger vehicles. Their large presence in the area on the winding and often difficult to navigate terrain create opportunities for improving safety for all road users. A common issue is heated and locked braking, which occurs when commercial vehicles are traveling too fast and end up locking and/or overheating their brakes. Within the crash data analyzed from 2018 to 2022, there were 309 crashes involving commercial vehicles, including 6 fatal crashes. The injury crashes resulted in 107 individuals being injured. These crashes are typically significantly more damaging than crashes only involving passenger vehicles due to the size of the commercial vehicles, the driver sight limitations associated with commercial vehicles, and the fact that most drivers of commercial vehicles traveling through Allegany County are not familiar with the area and are passing through infrequently. The terrain and speed limitations for trucks can be difficult for new or infrequent users to recognize and become familiar with. There have been multiple occasions of truck brakes overheating and causing fires in downtown Cumberland as they come down the steep incline of I-68, causing various damage to the surrounding areas and all roadway users.

### Vulnerable Roadway Users

Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, low-speed and farm vehicle operators, and other roadway users with less protection from collisions are considered “vulnerable roadway users.” Of the 33 traffic fatalities between 2018 and 2022 in Allegany County, approximately one quarter involved a vulnerable roadway user, with six pedestrian fatalities and two fatalities occurring on motorcycles. The map below shows the spatial distribution of injury/fatal crashes involving vulnerable roadway users. Most vulnerable roadway user fatalities occurred in or between Frostburg and Cumberland.

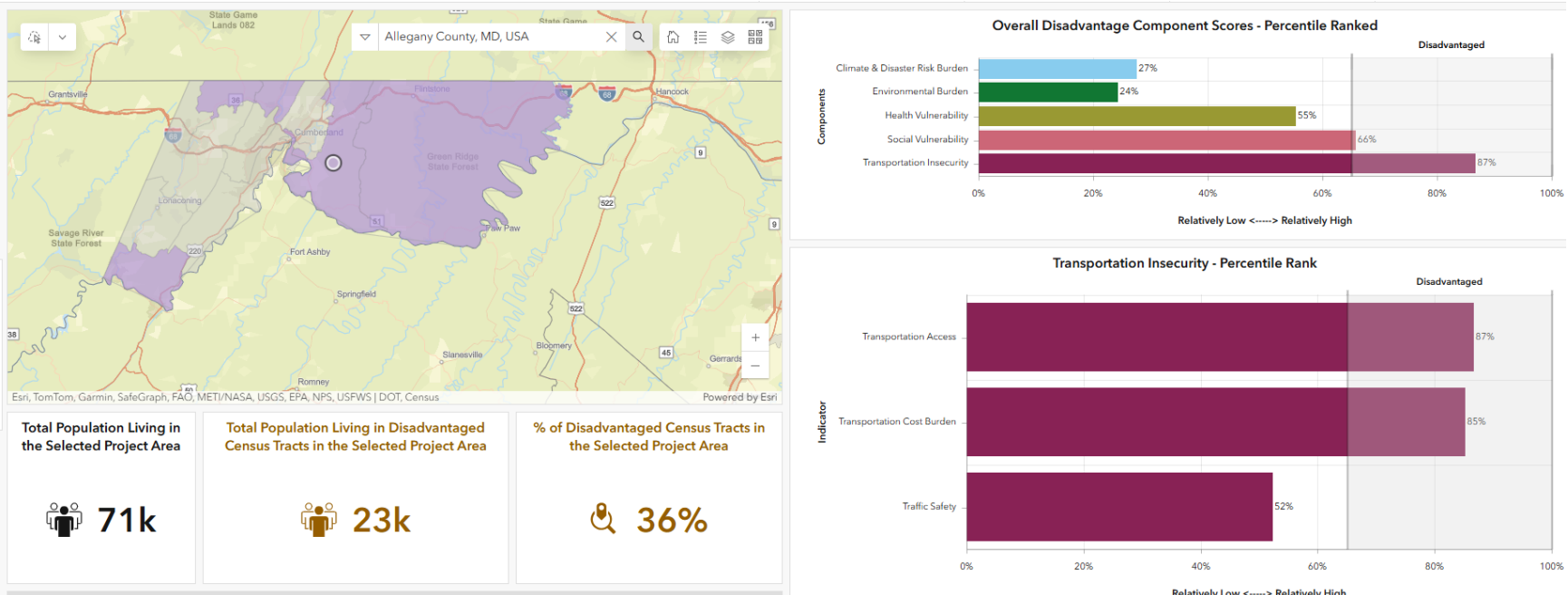
**Spatial Distribution of Vulnerable Roadway User Involved Injury & Fatal Crashes**



## Equity Analysis

Equity considerations in transportation planning emphasize an understanding of how the benefits and burdens of decisions affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged populations. Transportation equity is integral to the success of Allegany County’s roadway safety initiatives because it involves meeting the needs of all types of roadway users where they are, in the ways they need. Specified equity emphasis areas are the focus of these efforts so that those that need the most support are able to receive and benefit from the chosen projects.

In a location such as Allegany County, equity considerations in traffic safety are both overlapping and sometimes difficult to discern. As described above, there are nine census tracts defined “equity emphasis areas” in Allegany County. An equity emphasis area is a regional planning concept that is used to evaluate equity and inform future growth and investment decisions based on census tracts with high concentrations of traditionally underserved communities. Two of these areas (Cumberland and South Cumberland) have experienced many KSI crashes. That said, the roadways on which the KSIs have occurred are primary arterials with considerable through traffic and therefore it does not necessarily correlate that the KSI crashes involved persons of economic or social disadvantage. Reliable data does not exist in this regard. It can only be noted that there were 427 out of 1,408 injury or fatal crashes occurred within equity emphasis areas. Of these crashes, 37 involved non-motorists, making up 37.4% of all pedestrian injury or fatal crashes.



Still, the opportunity for equity to be considered in policy, program, and budget decisions is apparent. For example, areas of greater economic and social disadvantage tend to have lower rates of auto ownership and higher rates of travel on foot or bicycle. Focusing on pedestrian-safety investments in the equity emphasis areas could have a positive outcome in reducing KSI crashes. A potential negative outcome could occur, though, if a higher rate of traffic stops in equity emphasis areas disproportionately impacts persons of economic and social disadvantage. The importance of creating and fostering an environment for transportation safety for all modes of transportation in the equity emphasis areas relies on the approach reaching and communicating such needs, including the potential positive and negative consequences, with the residents and visitors to these areas at a common ground. It is key that all those who travel through these areas receive the benefits associated with traffic safety improvements. Crashes are preventable, and knowledge regarding how to do so needs to be made available to all.

The high number of pedestrian injuries and deaths in Cumberland and South Cumberland can be largely explained by the large number of shopping centers and other pedestrian trip generators which are separated from each other and from residential areas by busy roads with high-speed limits. Providing safer conditions for pedestrians near shopping areas would not only help reduce the largest pedestrian crash hotspot of the county but would also directly benefit the safety of nearby vulnerable and historically disadvantaged residents.

### Stakeholder Engagement & Viewpoints

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of the strategic process to develop roadway safety plans. TCCSMD selected two primary means of stakeholder engagement: a project advisory committee and information-gathering interviews with agency and community leaders to gain their views on policy and program gaps, opportunities, and priorities. Broader stakeholder engagement will occur when the LRSP is brought to the Board of County Commissioners for public hearing and adoption.

From Allegany County, agencies and organizations invited to serve on the project advisory committee included:

- Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)
- Maryland State Police
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Allegany Department of Planning and Zoning
- Allegany County Public Schools
- Allegany County Department of Public Works
- Allegany County Sheriff's Office
- City of Cumberland
- City of Frostburg

Interviews were conducted confidentially so that stakeholders could openly share their views on traffic safety challenges in the County. Several key themes emerged from these interviews:

- Commercial vehicles transiting local roads from nearby mines and timbering operations, as well as commercial vehicles travelling through the county on I-68 and US 220 often have difficulty navigating the hills and curves resulting in severe crashes. Law enforcement officials have noticed an increase in the number of commercial vehicle drivers for whom English is not their primary language. Although required by the commercial vehicle code to read and write in English, law enforcement personnel indicated that adding Spanish-language notices on warning signs and other communications may be useful.
- Agencies are not resourced for success in reducing serious injuries and fatalities. For example, law enforcement officers who are supposed to be dedicated to traffic safety are often deployed to escort oversized vehicles, provide funeral details, and backfill patrol shifts. The County's capital improvement program does not include any funding for minor safety-related projects such as spot geometric improvements, traffic calming, guardrail and rumble strip installation, and warning beacons.
- Engineering and law enforcement efforts tend to be complaint-driven rather than data-driven. While citizen complaints about speeding, for example, indicate community quality of life concerns, those complaints tend to not correlate to historical patterns of fatalities or serious injuries.
- A comprehensive safety education, enforcement, and preventative engineering effort in school zones would be welcomed by all stakeholders.
- Drivers that are not familiar with driving in the area are more likely to have safety and awareness difficulties due to the intensely different terrain and speed limits posted along certain highly populated roadways. This leads to an increase in major accidents due to unfamiliar drivers traveling above advised speed limits, though there is current signage posted.
- Pedestrian error is often the leading cause of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Roads in Allegany County are not often designed with the pedestrian in mind – and even when they are, pedestrians tend to take the shortest distance which is not always the safest route to their destination.
- Rural roadways do not have mitigations or protections that could reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Lighting at intersections, guard rails at sharp curves, centerline and edge line rumble strips, and micro-surfacing to improve traction, and other efforts should be more widely used.

### Recommendations for Emphasis Areas & Targets

Based on data analysis, stakeholder views, and to achieve alignment with other local, regional, and state plans, the following emphasis areas are recommended to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Allegany County roadways. Specific strategies are discussed in Part 2 of the LRSP.

- **Systematically Address the High Injury Network**
- **Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving**
- **Reduce Crash Potential of Commercial Vehicles**
- **Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users**
- **Address the Unique Issues of Rural, Mountainous Communities**

## Part II: Strategies to Eliminate Roadway Deaths and Serious Injuries in Allegany County

### Emphasis Area #1: Systematically Address the High Injury Network

More than 43% of all serious injuries and fatalities occur on the High Injury Network described in Part 1 of the LRSP. As county and state agencies make resource allocation decisions, they should be mindful of where investments will likely have the greatest impact. The following actions should be pursued:

- Reduce posted speeds along the High Injury Network
- Conduct roadway safety audits on all High Injury Network segments and immediately implement the low-cost, low-effort items generated from the audit.
- Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan specific to the US 40 corridor that limits crossings at unsignalized locations, improves pedestrian visibility, manages vehicular speeds, and uses other effective safety countermeasures.
- Conduct near miss studies using camera surveillance to further identify the types and causes of crashes occurring on the High Injury Network.
- Give budget priority to improvements on the High Injury Network.

### Emphasis Area #2: Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving

Speeding and distracted driving are consistently amongst the most common causes of automobile crashes in the United States. Allegany County is no different with speeding and distracted driving claiming over 23% of all deaths and over 20% of all injury crashes. The following speed control policies and programs should be brought about in efforts to improve road safety:

- Reduce posted speeds along the High Injury Network.
- Form a speed enforcement task force comprised of the municipal and County agencies, and the Maryland State Police to agree on speed reduction strategies and develop a resource sharing agreement to implement them.
- Encourage the judiciary to strictly adjudicate the most egregious speeding cases.
- Consider deployment of automated speed enforcement systems to the extent permitted by the county code.

### Emphasis Area #3: Reduce Risk and Severity of Commercial Vehicles Crashes

The mountainous roads of Allegany County have been especially deadly for drivers of commercial vehicles and pose a broader public health and safety risk than just at the crash scene itself. Many of the 18-wheel trucks that traverse roads in Allegany County are carrying hazardous materials that if spilled can contaminate local waterways, cause respiratory distress, and severely damage roadway infrastructure. Collisions



along I-68 approaching Cumberland tend to be the most severe and have the most significant cascading impacts beyond the crash site; a severe crash that closes or snarls traffic along the interstate then pushes vehicles onto local and state roads not designed to accommodate the volume of trucks that are diverted. Many secondary state roads and most county roads on which commercial vehicles travel lack enhanced safety infrastructure to minimize run-off road events which are the most frequent crash types beyond the interstate.

The following actions should be considered:

- Reinststate the use of wayside thermal imaging for hot brakes and implement downstream dynamic warning signage to alert drivers of the threat of harm.
- Analyze the need for other weigh and inspection stations (fixed or mobile) for commercial vehicles traveling north or south through Maryland on US 220 before they reach I-68, and/or at I-70 near Hancock.
- Create multilingual communications (especially Spanish) to warn of the hot brake risk before they enter the mountainous region.
- Investigate further actions to reduce commercial vehicle usage of Exit 42 eastbound on I-68.
- Conduct a systemic review of curve warning signage on county roads.

#### Emphasis Area #4: Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users

The vulnerability of the different types of roadway users varies based on the method of transportation used, and being aware of the significance between them is a major component of improving traffic safety. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, low-speed and farm vehicle operators, and other roadway users with less protection from collisions are considered “vulnerable roadway users.” The most vulnerable roadway users are bicyclists and pedestrians due to their lack of enforced protection from their transportation mode’s utilization efforts. An individual in a car has the car’s included safety features and mechanisms to protect them should they be involved in a crash. Bicyclists and pedestrians lack those safety measures and require much more thought and care for their safety, which is a high priority. The following details various methodologies for increasing and maintaining the safety of vulnerable roadway users being that traffic safety for all is paramount.

- Continue to build out the bicycle and pedestrian network in the urbanized areas of the county.
- Invest in quick-build safety measures including paint, safety posts, temporary sidewalk extensions, traffic calming devices, etc. near schools and community facilities.
- Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan specific to the US 40 corridor that limits crossings at unsignalized locations, improves pedestrian visibility, manages vehicular speeds, and uses other effective safety countermeasures.
- Implement measures near bus stops that help transit riders walk safely to and from their destination.

## Emphasis Area #5: Address Unique Safety Issues of Rural, Mountainous Communities

The far western counties of Maryland face unique challenges including terrain, environment, and weather; off-road vehicles; wildlife-vehicle crashes; and emergency response capacity. Solutions to these challenges are incredibly difficult to the dispersed nature of crashes and isolation of many parts of the county. More detailed information and planning is needed. the county and state should consider the following:

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offers the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP), a **competitive grant program with the goal of reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs)** while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. In 2023, neighboring Pennsylvania was awarded \$840,000 to develop a comprehensive statewide strategic plan with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission and others to address the wide-ranging challenges and opportunities associated with the safe management and stewardship for wildlife crossings across the state.
- The backbone of emergency response in Allegany County is its volunteer fire and rescue companies. Between Garrett and Allegany County, there are 39 such operations which support each other across jurisdictional lines. The companies are supported by the Allegany County Department of Emergency Services, which is responsible for interoperable communications and emergency medical services/advanced life support. Nationwide, the recruitment and retention of volunteer first-responders is a significant challenge for round-the-clock operations; maintaining sufficient and up-to-date equipment is another challenge. **Further study is necessary to understand existing and forecast future capacity of volunteer fire and rescue companies to meet National Fire Protection Association standards for rural response times.**
- Winter weather is particularly fierce in Allegany County. Snowfalls can range annually over multiple intense storms. While most residents understand the peril of winter travel, users of the major arterials and visitors to the region do not always have a full appreciation of the challenge of driving in severe weather. **Local law enforcement agencies should continue their efforts to discourage driving in severe weather and close certain roadways to travel when appropriate.**

## Roadway Safety Targets

As an aspirational goal, Allegany County is committed to achieving zero deaths and serious injuries on its roadways by 2040. The targets below relate to the emphasis areas where the county and its partners intend to make significant progress.

| Category  | 2017 – 2021 Five Year Average KSIs (Baseline) | 2029 Interim Target Annual KSIs | 2035 Interim Target KSIs | 2040 Vision |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Vulnerable Roadway Users</b>                     | 15  | 11                              | 5                        | 0           |
| <b>Impaired</b>                                     | 10  | 6                               | 3                        | 0           |
| <b>Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving</b> | 17  | 12                              | 6                        | 0           |
| <b>Rural Roads</b>                                  | 19  | 13                              | 6                        | 0           |

## Implementation Plan

| Emphasis Area  | Action   | Agencies Involved |                      |           |                   |                        |                    | Timeline (Years) |       |       | Cost |     |      |
|--|--|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------|-------|------|-----|------|
|  |  | Elected Officials | Police/ Sheriff/ MSP | Judiciary | Planning & Zoning | Public Works/ MDOT SHA | Emergency Services | Immediate        | 1 - 3 | 4 - 6 | Low  | Med | High |
| <b>Emphasis Area 1:<br/>Systematically Address the High Injury Network</b> | Evaluate and reduce posted speeds along the High Injury Network  |                   |                      |           |                   | X                      |                    | X                |       |       | X    |     |      |
|  | Conduct roadway safety audits on all High Injury Network segments and immediately implement the low-cost, low-effort items generated from the audit. |                   |                      |           |                   | X                      |                    |                  | X     |       | X    |     |      |
|  | Conduct near miss studies using camera surveillance to further identify the types and causes of crashes occurring on the High Injury Network.        |                   |                      |           |                   | X                      |                    |                  |       | X     | X    |     |      |
|  | Give budget priority to improvements on the High Injury Network.   | X                 |                      |           |                   | X                      |                    |                  | X     | X     |      |     |      |

| Emphasis Area  | Action   | Agencies Involved |                    |           |                   |                       |                    | Timeline (Years) |        |        | Cost |     |      |
|--|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------|--------|------|-----|------|
|  |  | Elected Officials | Police/Sheriff/MSP | Judiciary | Planning & Zoning | Public Works/MDOT SHA | Emergency Services | Immediate        | 1 to 3 | 4 to 6 | Low  | Med | High |
| <b>Emphasis Area 2:<br/>Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving</b> | Evaluate and reduce posted speeds along the High Injury Network.   |                   |                    |           |                   | X                     |                    | X                |        |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Form a speed enforcement task force comprised of the municipal and County agencies, and the Maryland State Police to agree on speed reduction strategies and develop a resource sharing agreement to implement them. |                   | X                  |           |                   |                       |                    |                  | X      |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Encourage the judiciary to strictly adjudicate the most egregious speeding cases.  | X                 |                    | X         |                   |                       |                    |                  | X      |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Broaden the use of speed enforcement cameras.  | X                 | X                  |           |                   |                       |                    |                  | X      |        | X    |     |      |

|  |   | Agencies Involved |                 |           |                   |                        |                    | Timeline  |        |        | Cost |     |      |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------|-----|------|
| Emphasis Area  | Action  | Elected Officials | Law Enforcement | Judiciary | Planning & Zoning | Public Works/ MDOT SHA | Emergency Services | Immediate | 1 to 3 | 4 to 6 | Low  | Med | High |
| <b>Emphasis Area 3: Reduce Risk and Severity of Commercial Vehicle Crashes</b> | Reinstate the use of wayside thermal imaging for hot brakes and implement downstream dynamic warning signage to alert drivers of the threat of harm.  |                   | X               |           |                   | X                      |                    |           | X      |        |      | X   |      |
|  | Analyze the need for other weigh and inspection stations (fixed or mobile) for commercial vehicles traveling north or south through Maryland on US 220 before they reach I-68, and/or at I-70 near Hancock. |                   | X               |           |                   | X                      |                    |           | X      |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Create multilingual communications (especially Spanish) to warn of the hot brake risk before they enter the mountainous region.   |                   |                 |           |                   | X                      |                    |           | X      |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Investigate further actions to reduce commercial vehicle usage of Exit 42 eastbound on I-68.  |                   |                 |           |                   | X                      |                    |           | X      |        |      | X   |      |
|  | Conduct a systemic review of curve warning signage on county roads.   |                   |                 |           |                   | X                      |                    |           | X      |        | X    |     |      |

|  |   | Agencies Involved |                 |           |                   |                       |                    | Timeline  |        |        | Cost |     |      |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------|-----|------|
| Emphasis Area  | Action  | Elected Officials | Law Enforcement | Judiciary | Planning & Zoning | Public Works/MDOT SHA | Emergency Services | Immediate | 1 to 3 | 4 to 6 | Low  | Med | High |
| <b>Emphasis Area 4: Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users</b> | Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan in Cumberland and Frostburg corridor that limits crossings at unsignalized locations, improves pedestrian visibility, manages vehicular speeds, and uses other effective safety countermeasures. |                   |                 |           | X                 | X                     |                    |           | X      |        | X    |     |      |
|  | Invest in quick-build safety measures including paint, safety posts, temporary sidewalk extensions, traffic calming devices, etc. near schools and community facilities.  |                   |                 |           |                   | X                     |                    |           | X      |        | X    |     |      |

| Emphasis Area  | Action   | Agencies Involved |                 |           |                   |                       |                    | Timeline  |              |              | Cost |     |      |
|--|--|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|------|-----|------|
|  |  | Elected Officials | Law Enforcement | Judiciary | Planning & Zoning | Public Works/MDOT SHA | Emergency Services | Immediate | Years 1 to 3 | Years 4 to 6 | Low  | Med | High |
| <b>Emphasis Area 5:<br/>Address Unique Safety Issues of Rural, Mountainous Communities</b> | Consider a study of wildlife/vehicle collisions in partnership with the counties, SHA, and the Department of Natural Resources.  |                   |                 |           | X                 | X                     |                    |           | X            |              | X    |     |      |
|  | Evaluate existing and forecast future capacity of volunteer fire and rescue companies to meet National Fire Protection Association standards for rural response times. | X                 |                 |           |                   |                       | X                  |           | X            |              | X    |     |      |
|  | Continue their efforts to discourage driving in severe weather and close certain roadways to travel when appropriate.  | X                 |                 |           |                   | X                     | X                  | X         |              |              | X    |     |      |