

MINUTES
Public Feedback Meeting
Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan
February 19, 2025
6pm
Dundalk, MD

6:00 Introductions and Meeting Expectations

The MD Highway Safety Office introduced their team. Crash Core introduced their team.

6:15 What is the Strategic Highway Safety Plan?

Crash Core explained the need for and the contents of the MD Strategic Highway Safety Plan, including how many agencies in the state of MD collaborate on traffic safety concerns.

6:30 Open Forum: Public Opinion on Traffic Safety Priorities

Emphasis Area Feedback

Pedestrian and Bicycle

- Explanation of the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy
- is there some way to enforce Complete Streets laws
 - Buy in from secretary meaning you have to submit a waiver if you don't want to follow it
 - MDOT adopted a Complete Streets policy so all modes have a role in it so education from HSO to explain why roads are designed the way they are, why behaviors are important to keeping others safe
- Explanation of the PBEAT team and meetings-PBEAT has advocates, engineers, highway safety, just about every discipline; public is welcome
- Youth program from Washington bicyclist association-ambassadors that are trying to educate other youth and change the safety culture
- Pedestrian airbag and detection systems are improving

Impaired Driving

- Explanation of DADSS program- Currently there is technology that will stop your vehicle from starting if the driver is over the legal alcohol limit; some manufacturers are worried about people not wanting to buy their vehicles with that technology

Speed and Aggressive Driving

- Concerns about speeding in work zones leading to fatalities
- Suggestion to reduce the speed threshold before tickets are issued
- Suggestion to use entrance cameras on Route 200 (ICC) to calculate drivers' average speed and assess how many are speeding

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- Current penalties: \$50 fine, no points, and possible court visit-this is not enough to deter offenders.
- Speed cameras
 - Speed cameras in work zones
 - 12 mph over is too much
 - Protection of cyclists
Explanation from SHA of new laws in work zones, fines rated to the speed over
 - New technology has to go to legislature
 - Still discussion at hearings about how we make sure citations go to the driver, not just the owner
 - 30% of MD AE citations are out of state plates; if you don't pay there is no consequence; presents an opportunity since so many of our states have AE
- Suggestion for increasing penalties by adding points to license to improve compliance
- MD does not have ticket reciprocity; could correct with respect to AE
- Concerns that car commercials emphasize speed, horsepower, and quick acceleration, which contradicts road safety goals.
- Western Baltimore County concerns with high rates of citizens running red lights
- Prince George's County:
 - Most traffic fatalities in the state; nearly 3x higher than other counties.
 - Possible reasons why PG County is different than others:
 - PG has more mixed use roadways (vehicles and pedestrians sharing space)
 - MoCo has more urban infrastructure, making roads safer for pedestrians; infrastructure slows down drivers naturally overall on the roads
- Vehicle speed sign recognition isn't always correct
- Questions around OEMs slowing down their cars or making them smaller
- Speed governor technology exists to prevent the car from going over certain speed if drivers are offenders; it uses technology that knows what the speed of the road is you're traveling on; it's adjustable and can be "set" by the court or by the legislation
- Suggestion to set speed limits that are 15-20mph in neighborhoods, instead of 25 mph
- Drivers can receive up to \$1000 fine; threshold needs to be revisited through general assembly
- Cars have gotten more comfortable-don't feel vibrations, etc.

Other Topics

General

- The Anne Arundel County School District is promoting bus safety through:
 - Social media campaigns
 - "Buster the Bus" program: an electronic bus that goes to schools within the county to educate students about bus safety.
- Concerns about excessively bright LED headlights and elevated truck lights reducing visibility for other drivers
- Need for safety culture emphasis area
- MHSO gave explanation of Vision Zero- MD became a VZ state in 2019 by legislation; anything more than zero fatalities is unacceptable, so the ultimate goal is 0 road fatalities by 2030
- MD has an SJOL position who will work closely with judges and educate/communicate with fellow judges so they understand the issues
- Need mode shift-public transportation-what agency can address this? discussion around transit systems and plans
- Advocate for giving police more authority to pull drivers over and issue traffic citations
 - Attitudes toward law enforcement has become negative
 - Police need to be allowed to go back out there and do their job
 - Some drivers speed up instead of slowing down when they see a marked police car
 - A bill is being heard in Annapolis to make primary enforcement secondary, including seat belts
 - Citizens who are tired of seeing this bad driving behavior should look up their representative and tell them the "secondary law" bill will make it even more difficult for police to do their job
 - Negative reinforcement through enforcement works
- There are concerns about the potential for racial disparities in traffic stops, as studies have shown that people of color are disproportionately stopped by police
- Concerns with AVs: we do not yet have any vehicles on the roads that are fully autonomous; though we do have a working group

Driver Education & Safety Enforcement

- Propose mandatory refresher courses on updated traffic laws for license renewal
- Work with insurance companies to incentivize safe driving habits
- Suggested pilot – practical and written exam every two years to maintain license
- Have an insurance policy that gives a lower rate based on taking exam more frequently
- A lot of the programs insurance companies offer to monitor your driving behavior make drivers skeptical and refuse to take part in the programs- mentioned tracker that lowers rates; company by company-not tied with states; telematics data is used for traffic safety
- MHSO said they could put module on website, but won't get traffic to make much of a change

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- There is a project at federal level that is looking at the 10% of people who don't wear seatbelt
- Families should also be aware of elderly driver actions