



**MINUTES**  
**Public Feedback Meeting**  
**Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan**  
**February 26, 2025**  
**6pm**  
**Cumberland, 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**

**Impaired Driving**

- Last 4 crashes were drug/alcohol involved; meth, prescriptions, not necessarily marijuana
- Issue with after crash enforcement; officers get discouraged because nothing happens when they go to court; takes several offenses
- Mention of programs, but had to get someone to change
- Lack of marijuana enforcement-maybe signs and symptoms are not as apparent as much as you would with meth, depressants, things that stand out more
- Law enforcement can reach out to MHSO about green labs; there is a source of non-federal funding that may be available
- Problem solving courts are an option to combat drugged driving with no penalties
- Third dispensary will open soon

**Speed and Aggressive Driving**

- Concerns around Rt 51-increased amount of traffic in the last 5 years
  - There are issues with speeding: passing by school buses; pass on doubles, pass on turns;
  - Issues with safe places for officers to pull drivers over due to lack of shoulder and cliffs on either side of the road
  - Discussion around effect of "your speed is" signs; fear that these will promote speeding
  - Increase in speed related fatalities
  - Travelers use Rt 51 as a shortcut to get west

# ZERO DEATHS MARYLAND

## — Highway Safety Office —

- Discussion around speed cameras-will need legislative approval
  - Implementing a Safety Corridor could be considered
- What are thoughts on speed cameras:
  - MHSO mentioned that fines are tiered in some work zones but there are quite a few bills before the legislature asking for tiered fines in other areas
  - MHSO mentioned the surveys
  - Police: the city may have cameras
  - Allegheny county only allows cameras in school zones and work zones
  - General agreement that \$40 for an automated enforcement citation is too low and that a higher fine could be more effective
  - MHSO mentioned safety corridors: They are defined using the number and severity of crashes along a roadway segment and then comparing it with other similar roadways
- Tow truck operator hit by someone going at least 70
- Need for CHART truck with drivers, cones, and additional traffic control to funnel for safe EMS and fire operation at scenes
  - CHART truck \$8M
  - Have approached delegate for assistance to get chart truck for traffic control
  - MHSO mentioned re-purposing of out of service trucks, but drivers are still needed
  - Local action/funding may be useful? Allegheny, Washington county request? Or existing funding? Includes additional drivers
- Concern with drivers not knowing region-mountains, weather and communication barriers
- Much more traffic on 270, but less traffic congestion means more speeds/collisions
- Request for training on interstate operations
- Merge left signs are not allowed
- Less traffic on 270 is causing more speeding and increased crashes
- Commercial vehicle-3 miles of I68 that pass through Cumberland(in a bowl); trucks have hot brakes, load shift, awkward turn; lots of fatalities, truck fires, hazardous material spills, crashes-80 incidents? Big problem for safety of Cumberland as a whole; geography is a problem-no easy way to get around it-use driver education-language barrier is an issue; signage-there are a lot, but aren't working; no ramps or emergency pull-offs-need to engineer out the problem; met with delegates to establish a truck safety zone; would allow speed cameras; no place to do in person enforcement-causes more hazard than it's worth. There is no truck detour around Cumberland.
- Areas through Cumberland where trucks are forced to left lane rather than being in right lane dealing with cars pulling on and off ramps could be beneficial
- Scale house on Savage Mtn closed for 6 months will reopen possibly in March
- Request to add variable messaging or similar signs with lights to top of mountain that say "accident ahead-slow down"-traffic does not slow down
- Question about insurance program-not currently active-generally only pick a corridor

## **Other Topics**

### **Weather**

- Bad weather crashes: 68 and at the 53 mile marker at the state road bridge
- Use salt trucks to protect workers on scene
- Add variable messaging for bad weather, i.e. fog
- Martin's Mountain-snow and rain crashes WB68 on ramp pile up

### **SHA**

- Rover trucks from SHA have patrols during high traffic times
- SHA has upgraded weather response and are coming sooner than before; snow-set plows? where they are closer to the road
- SHA communication issues with mile markers caused a missed crash location; follow-up discussion needed
- What is the SHA's plan to move CHART truck project forward?
  - Not economically feasible to shut down a highway
  - Senator McKay has requested an estimate to secure additional funding for the CHART truck in order to expand services in Western MD
  - Program may start in October, but SHA is struggling to just finish active construction projects
  - Waiting for funds-no forecast when that will be made
  - Suggested talking to delegates

### **General**

- SHSP is a federal hwy plan with focus on the behavioral side but does include some engineering
- There is a local SHSP available on [zerodeathsmd.gov](http://zerodeathsmd.gov)
- Opportunity for improved communications and coordination between EMS, LE, and SHA
- Suggestions to increase enforcement action, education, more rules for CMVs, etc.
- Software Engineer present who wrote the comms code to integrate legacy traffic control systems into the coming USDOT Vision Zero AI traffic safety system to eliminate traffic fatalities. If interested in AI traffic safety initiative contact Robin Rowe 323-535-0952 or visit <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robinrowe/> Amber alert re-directs;; 8 years away-thinks it's time to start talking about it; pilot in Pittsburgh?
- Safety cloud-Haas alert-transmitter in emergency vehicles-can override Sirius XM, Google maps, etc. that can interrupt and let drivers know what is happening; looking for support for grant
- MHSO mentioned Safe Streets and Roads for All-local safety plan-might be eligible for infrastructure issues; MHSO-will follow up when it opens
- The MD Highway Safety Summit is in April



- MHSO mentioned funds for equipment-extrication, etc. if used for crashes would want to know how often it is used and requires documented education; Reimbursable; grant season closes Friday, but reach out to open off-season