



PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WRITTEN & ORAL TESTIMONY – February 3, 2022

HB 254 - State Highway Administration - Pedestrian and Bicyclist Fatalities - Infrastructure Review Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022

Testimony Delivered by: Kristy Daphnis,
Chair,
Montgomery County Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Bill Position: Support

HB 254 would require the State Highway Administration to conduct a publicly available infrastructure review for each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality involving a State highway, within 6 months of the crash. While the County police departments and State police conduct fatal crash reconstructions and evaluations and provide very important data, they focus on the crash itself, and are not meant to evaluate roadway safety conditions and potential State highway remediation actions. Having personally spent time at dozens of crash sites on or near Maryland State highways memorializing traffic fatality victims, I believe this Bill is long overdue.

The Montgomery County Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC) supports the requirement to assess roadway engineering, traffic control, and operations near the site of each fatal pedestrian and bicyclist crash; and, the requirement to thoughtfully assess potential countermeasures that are consistent with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration's Safe Systems approach. This assessment of each fatal crash will give MD SHA leaders a systematic opportunity to look at each and every crash from a Vision Zero perspective, outside of the confines of what is available in the police report and crash reconstruction documents. It will allow traffic engineers and others to identify fixes that can prevent future traffic crashes, and hopefully bring us closer to the stated State-wide goal of zero deaths.

The PBTSAC is also encouraged to see the proposed requirement to post these reports publicly on the State Highway Administration's website. This information is very valuable, for both transparency and accountability. Not only will it help the public better understand some of the dangers on our roadways, it will also allow other jurisdictions to better understand the types of issues and possible countermeasures. Widely sharing this information will lead to better and more meaningful conversations between State and local transportation officials, advocates, and victim's families – including conversations about specific actions and countermeasures that will make our roadways safer, and better information about the resources it may take to get there.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter, and for your support of traffic safety broadly - including support for The Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022 (HB 254).