WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM SAFETY UPDATE

Kurt Erickson
President and CEO
Washington Regional Alcohol Program

COG Board of Directors
March 13, 2024

Agenda Item #10

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Presentation Topics

- Overview of the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP)

- Key findings from the latest "How Safe Are Our Roads?" annual report

- Recommendations to reduce drunk driving in our region

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Washington Regional Alcohol Program

- Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the metropolitan Washington region.

- Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average.

- WRAP, however, may be best known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide®.

- The 31st-annual "How Safe Are Our Roads?" report is prepared by COG for the nonprofit WRAP.

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Findings from the Report

- Fatalities: Regional alcohol and/or drug-impaired traffic fatalities increased by 12.94 percent between 2021 and 2022 (from 85 to 96 such fatalities).

- Injuries: Regional alcohol and/or drug-related traffic injuries increased over 9.54 percent between 2021 and 2022 (from 1,489 to 1,631 such injuries).

- Crashes: Regional traffic crashes attributed to alcohol and/or drugs increased by over 13 percent between 2021 and 2022 (from 3,694 to 3,853 such crashes).

- Arrests: Local arrests for either driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while impaired (DWI) decreased by 9.3 percent between 2021 and 2022 (from 10,248 to 9,296 such arrests).

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Recommendations

- **Double-Down on What Works**
  - Sobriety checkpoints
  - Technology including ignition interlocks

- **Buckle-Up**
  - Including enacting primary seatbelt legislation in Virginia

- **Increase Testing**
  - Mandatory for all drivers in fatal crashes (2023 Virginia bill)
  - Oral fluids pilot programs

- **Embrace Technology**
  - Ignition interlocks
  - Passive (inc. Maryland and Virginia's Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety / DADSS programs)

Recommendations

- **Alternative to DUI**
  - SoberRide® (District of Columbia / Maryland / Virginia)
  - Rideshare
  - WMATA / Metro (inc. restoration of weekend / evening hours of service)

- **Ensure/Maximize Reciprocity**
  - Fully implement state-to-state driver history record capability thereby gaining "timely, accurate information on high-risk drivers at the time of their encounter" (AAMVA)

- **Enforcement**
  - Fully staff, support and prioritize DUI enforcement
  - "Traffic safety IS public safety!"

Agenda

- Project Purpose & Objectives
- Research & Literature Review
- Regional Crash Data Review
- Campaign Recommendations
- Project Timeline
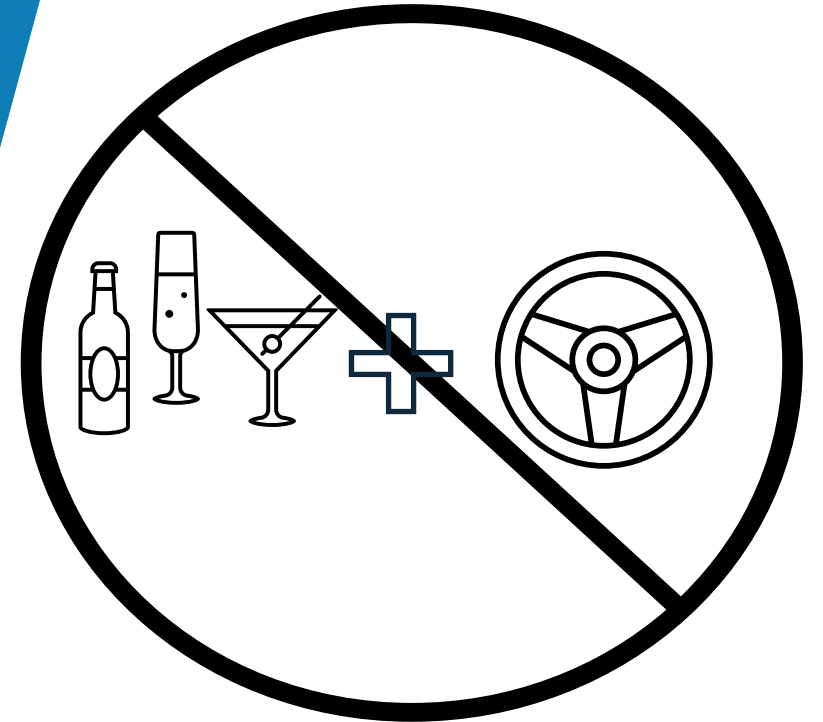
Project Purpose & Objectives

- Alcohol is a contributing factor in 1 out of 5 fatal crashes in the region.

- Arlington, in coordination with other regional Vision Zero communities (Montgomery Co, Prince Georges Co, DC, Alexandria), is researching:
  - Existing and successful anti-drunk driving programs and strategies
  - Regional alcohol-related crash patterns and factors

- The objective is to create recommendations for regional municipalities to use to educate their communities on local drunk driving issues and alternatives to foster a consistent message across the region.

- Information gathered from this effort could also inform the future development of relevant marketing materials.

Research & Literature Review

- Benchmark the state of the practice on reducing impaired driving:
  - Documenting existing programs in the region that target impairment and crashes,
  - Identifying states/municipalities with lowest impairment rates in the Country or globally as well as their key policies,
  - Identifying factors that lead people to drive impaired or potential incentives that encourage people not to drive drunk, and
  - Furnishing a literature review to document best practices for messaging toward behavior change.


Four Lowest States

Alcohol-impaired Driving Fatalities per 100 Million VMT
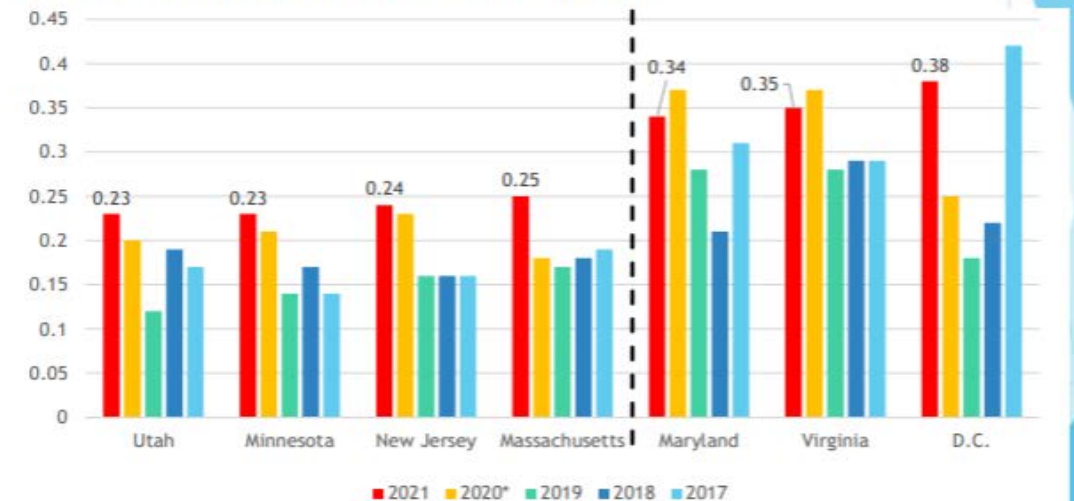
Regional Crash Data Review

- Conduct a detailed review of crash data for alcohol-involved crashes in the region:
  - Patterns in locations of alcohol-involved crashes.
  - Patterns in origins of the drunk drivers involved in a crash.
  - Patterns in factors or circumstances around alcohol-involved crashes.
  - Other trends or outlying factors identified in the regional review of alcohol-involved crashes.
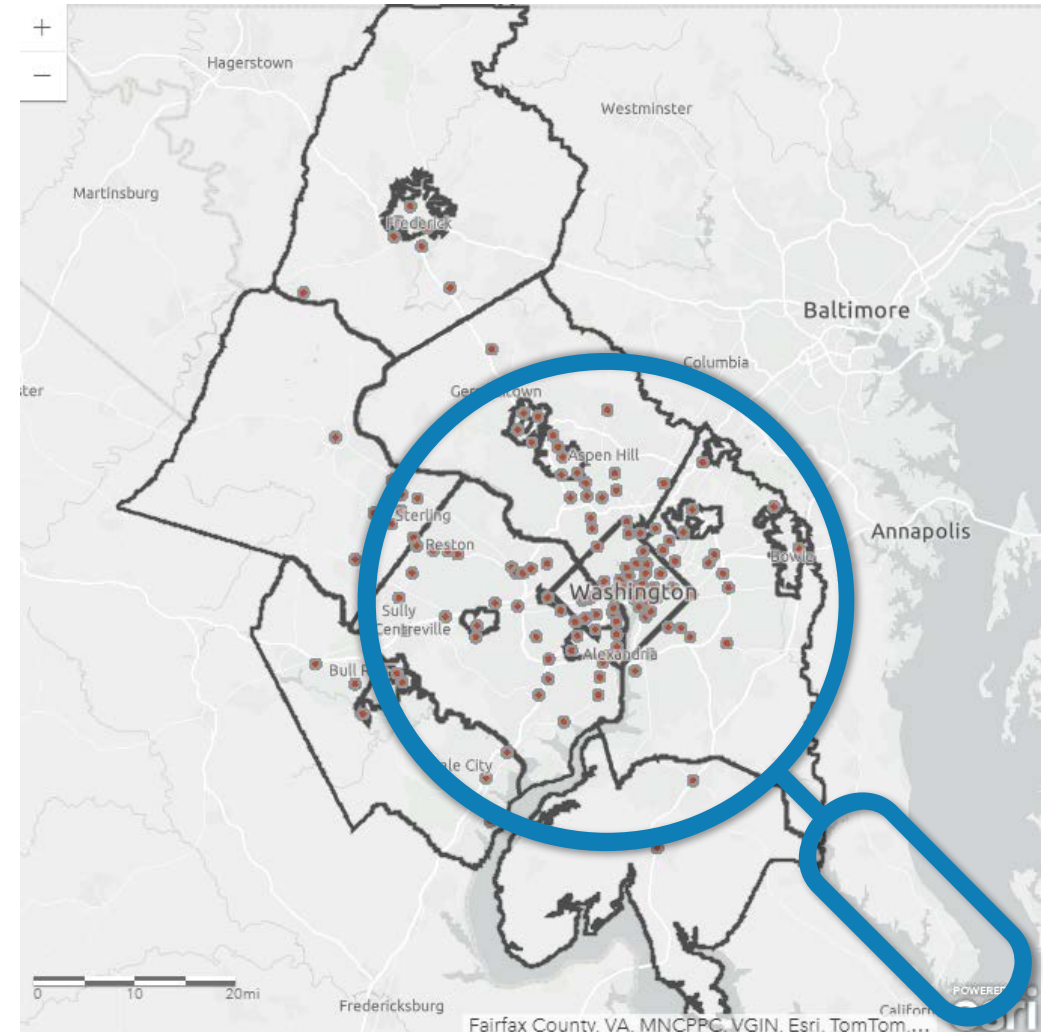
Campaign Recommendations

- Create uniform campaign strategy that can be shared and disseminated using existing resources to link people to existing, funded anti-drunk driving resources.
- Furnish a list of actions for municipalities ranging from no-cost actions to larger scale initiative concepts.
    - For those concepts that would require larger-scale initiatives, this project can be used to "make the case" to foster policy changes or generate funding for bold initiatives to discourage impaired driving and reduce alcohol-related crashes.

Project Timeline

Spring 2024:
Finalize literature review, research, and data analysis

Summer 2024:
Develop recommendations and report

Fall 2024:
Share findings and results throughout the region

THANK YOU!

Staff contacts:

- Christine Baker, AICP, Vision Zero Program Manager- csbaker@arlingtonva.us
- Nate Graham, Public Engagement Specialist - nsgraham@arlingtonva.us

VISIONZERO
ARLINGTON COUNTY

Kurt Erickson

President and CEO

Washington Regional Alcohol Program

(703) 893-0461

kurt@wrap.org

wrap.org

Christine Baker, AICP, Vision Zero

Program Manager

Vision Zero in Arlington County

703-228-3780

csbaker@arlingtonva.us

arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Transportation/Vision-Zero

mwcog.org

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20002

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments