

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 390 (Delegate Ross, *et al.*)  
Environmental Matters

---

Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits - Municipal Highways

---

Under this bill, if a municipal corporation determines that any specified maximum speed limit is greater than reasonable or safe on a municipal highway in its jurisdiction, the municipal corporation may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit. If a municipal corporation establishes a lower limit, it must post appropriate signs giving notice of the altered speed limit.

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. This bill would not directly affect governmental operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None. Municipal corporations are not required to take any action under this bill. It is expected that any changes made by municipal corporations could be handled with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

Analysis

**Current Law:** If, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a local authority determines that a maximum speed is greater or less than reasonable or safe under existing conditions on any part of a highway in its jurisdiction, the local authority may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit for that part of the highway, which may:

- decrease the limit at an intersection;
- increase the limit in an urban district to not more than 50 miles per hour;
- decrease the speed limit in an urban district; or

- decrease the limit outside an urban district to not less than 25 miles per hour.

An engineering and traffic investigation is not required to conform a posted maximum speed limit in effect on December 31, 1974 to a different speed limit specified in statute.

In school zones as designated and posted by the local authorities of any county, the county may decrease the maximum speed limit to 15 miles per hour during school hours, if the county pays the cost of placing and maintaining necessary signs. Any municipality may decrease the maximum speed in a school zone to 15 miles per hour during school hours, if the municipality pays the cost of placing and maintaining necessary signs.

Altered speed limits are effective when posted on appropriate signs giving adequate notice. However, except for Baltimore City, any alteration of a maximum speed limit on a part or extension of a State highway is not effective until approved by the State Highway Administration.

A local authority may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit for an alley if the authority determines that the maximum speed limit provided by law is greater than reasonable or safe. The local authority must post the established speed limit on appropriate signs providing adequate notice.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** The City of Westminster advises that, although the current total cost to replace one speed limit sign is \$108.75, it does not plan to change any existing speed limits in effect within its jurisdiction.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 161 (Senator Pinsky) – Judicial Proceedings.

**Information Source(s):** City of Westminster, Prince George’s County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2003  
ncs/jr

---

Analysis by: Karen D. Morgan

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510

