

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 182

(Delegate Marriott, *et al.*)

Judiciary

(By Request – Baltimore City Administration)

Judicial Proceedings

Baltimore City - Special Traffic Enforcement Officers - Jurisdiction and Requirements

This bill provides a special traffic enforcement officer (STEO) in Baltimore City with the same authority as a city police officer to control and direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic citywide under the following circumstances: (1) during regular high traffic periods; (2) as necessitated by an emergency situation or incident; and (3) in connection with a special event.

The bill also requires each special traffic enforcement officer to complete an accredited conflict resolution training course and requires the Police Commissioner of Baltimore City to keep a record of the completion of such a training course by each special traffic enforcement officer.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Because this bill is not expected to have a significant impact on the issuance of citations, it will not have a measurable impact on the workload of the District Court.

Local Effect: Minimal. The bill provides Baltimore City with greater flexibility for deployment of the STEO unit. Because the unit already is assigned to peak hour traffic enforcement and events, expanding the jurisdiction of these officers citywide should not significantly increase the overall workload of the unit or the number of citations issued by the unit. The officers of the STEO unit are already scheduled to receive conflict resolution/customer service training beginning in the spring 2006, through the Baltimore City Human Resources Department.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An STEO in Baltimore City may only exercise the same authority of a city police officer, under State and local law, to control and direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic within the boundaries eligible for inclusion in the downtown commercial district (as authorized under Chapter 604 of 1992) and on property controlled by the City's Department of Recreation and Parks (as authorized under Chapter 469 of 2003). They do not have the power to make arrests and may only issue citations for a failure to obey lawful traffic direction or traffic control devices.

The boundaries of the downtown commercial district are delineated in the Baltimore City Charter (Article II, § 61) as follows:

- On the North – a line beginning at the Jones Falls Expressway, going west on Centre Street to Park Avenue, then north on Park Avenue to Read Street, then northwest on Read Street to Howard Street, then north on Howard Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard, then southwest on Martin Luther King Boulevard to Eutaw Street, then south on Eutaw Street to Franklin Street, then west to Greene Street;
- On the West – Greene Street and Russell Street;
- On the South – a line running generally westerly from Russell Street and Lee Street to Lee Street and Light Street, and then following Light Street to Key Highway, and then following Key Highway to Lawrence Street; and
- On the East – the Jones Falls Expressway and President Street.

The district may also include properties binding on either side of the authorized boundaries.

Background: According to Baltimore City, 47 special traffic enforcement officers currently work in the city's Department of Transportation. These positions are budgeted at \$1.9 million in fiscal 2006. Although they are authorized to issue citations in certain circumstances, their primary role is to move traffic during peak periods, such as for Ravens and Orioles games, during rush hour, and for other special events like concerts.

The city estimates that these officers write about 10,500 moving violation citations per year.

Baltimore City has 392 park properties with a total area of approximately 5,700 acres, which include: 215 playgrounds, 170 ball fields, 101 basketball courts, 105 tennis courts, 85 monuments, 36 picnic groves, 45 recreation centers, 1 therapeutic recreation center, 35 comfort stations, 22 wading pools, 19 outdoor swimming pools, 3 indoors swimming pools, 11 historic mansions, 18 pavilions, 2 soccer arenas, 1 arboretum, 1 conservatory, 1 ice rink, 1 skateboard park, 1 rowing facility, 1 nature center, 1 senior center, and 5 maintenance yards.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 240 (Senator McFadden) (By Request – Baltimore City Administration) – Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

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