

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 1599 (Washington County Delegation)  
Environmental Matters

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**Washington County - Roads and Transportation**

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This bill updates the Public Local Laws of Washington County regarding the creation, adoption, construction, and maintenance of county roads to reflect current practice. In addition to codifying current practice, the bill increases penalties for obstructing a county road, bridge, alley, or drainage ditch and for the destruction of road signs or traffic devices on a county highway. The bill also prohibits certain vehicles from parking on county roads or county property.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The bill would not materially affect the finances or operations of Washington County.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The bill codifies current practice for the adoption, design, construction and maintenance of county roads. For any land acquired by the county for road use, a survey must be completed and a plat recorded to support the deed. The amount in which the director of public works or a designee must prepare plans and specifications for work on a road or bridge is increased from \$5,000 to \$50,000 per project. The bill requires that any person installing, maintaining, repairing, relocating, or removing pipe, wire, cable,

fiber optics, or other material or performing excavation or construction in, on, or over county property or roads in Washington County must first obtain a permit.

The bill increases the maximum penalty for a person who injures or defaces a sign, road marker, or traffic device on or along any county roads from \$50 to \$500. The penalty for a person who creates or places an obstruction in a county road, bridge, alley, ditch, or drain is increased. The maximum penalty for a person who refuses to comply with an order to remove a vehicle or object that is an obstruction within 24 hours is increased from \$100 to \$500 for each offense. The sheriff is also authorized to impound a vehicle parked illegally that constitutes a hazard to public safety or obstructs the normal movement of traffic or pedestrians. Furthermore, a person may not park an unregistered motor vehicle or an unregistered trailer on a county road or other property of the county.

The bill prohibits the closing of the Funkstown Bridge #2 on East Oak Ridge Drive for one year or until an assessment of the economic impact of closing the bridge is performed. The bridge may be closed if at any time it poses an imminent threat to public safety.

**Current Law:** The Washington County Commissioners have authority over and may adopt regulations regarding the use of the roads, streets, avenues, lanes, alleys, and bridges of the county by telegraph companies, railroads, gas, water and electric light companies, and by individuals and the traveling public. All regulations, when adopted and recorded, have the force and effect of law. The county sheriff is charged with enforcing all the regulations.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Washington County, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 24, 2008  
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