

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 854

(Senator Sydnor)(By Request - Baltimore City  
Administration)

Judicial Proceedings

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**Baltimore City – Speed Limits – Establishment**

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This bill authorizes Baltimore City to establish the maximum speed limit on a highway under its jurisdiction without performing an engineering and traffic investigation.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill does not directly affect State finances or operations.

**Local Effect:** Baltimore City expenditures decrease minimally if fewer engineering and traffic investigations are conducted. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Unless there is a special danger that requires a lower speed, the maximum lawful speeds on a State highway are (1) 15 miles per hour in alleys in Baltimore County; (2) 30 miles per hour on all highways in a business district and on undivided highways in a residential district; (3) 35 miles per hour on divided highways in a residential district; (4) 50 miles per hour on undivided highways in other locations; and (5) 55 miles per hour on divided highways in other locations. A maximum speed limit of more than 70 miles per hour may not be established on any highway in the State.

If, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a local authority determines that a maximum speed is greater or less than is 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 no more than 50 miles per hour;
- decrease the speed limit in an urban district; or
- decrease the limit outside an urban district to no less than 25 miles per hour.

An engineering and traffic investigation is not required to conform a speed limit in effect on December 31, 1974, to one of the specified speed limits established by statute.

In school zones as designated and posted by the local authorities of any county, the county (or any municipality within the county) may decrease the maximum speed limit to 15 miles per hour during school hours, if the county (or municipality) pays the cost of placing and maintaining the signage.

Altered speed limits are effective when posted on appropriate signs giving notice of the limit. Any alteration by a local authority (except in Baltimore City) 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 it determines that the maximum speed limit under State law is greater than is reasonable or safe. However, the local authority must post a speed limit on appropriate signs giving notice of the speed limit.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 780 of 2019 received a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 26, 2020  
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