

Department of Legislative Services
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2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1311 (Howard County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation

Howard County - Speed Monitoring Systems - Authorization
Ho. Co. 9-25

This bill authorizes the installation and use of speed monitoring systems (*i.e.*, speed cameras) in Howard County (1) on highways in residential districts with a maximum posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour; (2) on highways identified in the county’s or State’s most recent Strategic Highway Safety Plan or Vision Zero Plan as having a high risk for motor vehicle crashes, as specified; and (3) on U.S. Route 1 (Washington Boulevard). The bill includes additional specifications for how revenues from these speed cameras, as well as from speed cameras placed in school zones in the county under existing authority, must be used.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Although the bill is authorizing in nature, the District Court must be prepared should any systems be deployed, with programming costs totaling approximately \$12,200 in FY 2026 only. General fund revenues increase, likely minimally and potentially beginning as early as FY 2026, from additional contested cases in the District Court.

Local Effect: The impact on local government finances depends on the extent to which speed cameras are placed, as authorized under the bill. Local expenditures and revenues may increase, correspondingly and potentially significantly, beginning as early as FY 2026, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Existing penalties, limitations, and requirements for other speed cameras authorized to be used in the State generally apply to the speed cameras authorized by the bill. Notably, and among other things, for speed cameras placed under the bill's authority:

- the cameras must first be authorized by the governing body of the local jurisdiction by local law enacted after reasonable notice and a public hearing; and
- the maximum civil penalty for a speed violation captured by a speed camera is \$40.

However, the bill includes additional specifications for the use of speed camera revenues by Howard County that differ from the specifications that apply for other speed cameras. Specifically, from the fines collected by Howard County as a result of violations enforced by speed monitoring systems placed under the expanded authority granted by the bill or in a school zone with a posted speed limit of at least 20 miles per hour, Howard County may first recover the costs of implementing and administering the systems, but then must use the remaining balance for:

- public safety purposes, including pedestrian or highway safety programs; or
- to fund deferred maintenance work at Howard County Public Schools; however, any such funding must be used to supplement and not supplant any funds allocated in the capital budget of Howard County Public Schools.

Current Law:

Speed Monitoring Systems – Generally

State law authorizes the use of various automated monitoring systems, including traffic control system monitoring systems, speed monitoring systems, school bus monitoring systems, vehicle height monitoring systems, and work zone speed control systems.

Speed monitoring systems must be authorized in a local jurisdiction by the governing body of the jurisdiction (but only after reasonable notice and a public hearing). Before activating a speed monitoring system, a local jurisdiction must publish notice of the location of the speed monitoring system on its website and in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdiction. In addition, the jurisdiction must also ensure that each sign that designates a school zone is proximate to a sign that (1) indicates that speed monitoring systems are in use in the school zone and (2) conforms with specified traffic control device standards adopted by the State Highway Administration (SHA). Similar requirements apply to speed cameras established on Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway), grounds of institutions of higher education in Prince George's County, Interstate 83 in Baltimore City,

Maryland Route 175 in Anne Arundel County (Jessup Road) between the Maryland Route 175/295 interchange and the Anne Arundel County-Howard County line, and at the intersection of Maryland Route 333 (Oxford Road) and Bonfield Avenue in Talbot County.

In Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties only, speed monitoring systems may be used on a highway in a residential district with a maximum posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The aforementioned signage requirements do not apply to these speed cameras.

Speed Monitoring Systems – Citations and Fines

Unless the driver of the motor vehicle received a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the owner or the driver of a motor vehicle is subject to a civil penalty if the motor vehicle is recorded by a speed monitoring system while exceeding the posted speed limit. The authorized agency (*e.g.*, a local law enforcement agency) must mail a citation to the owner that includes specified information, including a copy of the recorded image, the location where the violation occurred, and the amount of the civil penalty imposed and the date by which the civil penalty should be paid. A person who receives a citation may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation, directly to the political subdivision; or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation

The civil penalty may not exceed \$40, and the District Court must prescribe:

- a uniform citation form that includes specified information and allows the person receiving the citation to pay the citation or contest the citation by standing trial, as specified; and
- a civil penalty, which must be indicated on the citation, to be paid by persons who choose to prepay the civil penalty without appearing in District Court.

With specified exceptions, penalty revenues from automated enforcement systems, including speed monitoring systems, must be paid (1) to the relevant political subdivision, in an uncontested case and (2) directly to the District Court (and consequently the general fund) in a case that is contested in District Court.

Generally, from the fines generated by a speed monitoring system, the relevant jurisdiction may recover the costs of implementing the system and may spend any remaining balance solely for public safety purposes, including for pedestrian safety programs. However, if the

balance of revenues after cost recovery for any fiscal year is greater than 10% of the jurisdiction's total revenues, the excess must be remitted to the Comptroller.

State Traffic Safety Programs

The State's traffic safety program was renamed to be Vision Zero by Chapter 377 of 2019 but is currently referred to as [Zero Deaths Maryland](#). The program is administered by the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) and housed within the Motor Vehicle Administration. SHA partners closely with MHSO to implement traffic and highway safety programs, policies, and best practices. MHSO's [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) includes a list of and information about high priority safety corridors in the State.

In support of Vision Zero and Zero Deaths Maryland, Chapters 153 and 154 of 2022 require SHA to perform an infrastructure review of each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality that occurs on a State highway or at an intersection of a State highway and another highway or municipal street. Additionally, Chapter 603 of 2024 (1) substantially expanded the responsibilities of the Vision Zero coordinator (the individual in charge of overseeing the implementation of Vision Zero throughout the State), with respect to the implementation of the State's Vision Zero program and (2) requires the coordinator to hold quarterly public meetings on the implementation of Vision Zero.

State Revenues: To the extent the District Court collects fines for citations issued under the bill, general fund revenues increase beginning in fiscal 2026. Any such impact depends on the extent to which Howard County elects to deploy speed cameras under the bill, the amount of the fine established for a violation, and whether citations are contested (and, therefore, paid into the general fund upon a guilty disposition). However, general fund revenues are likely to be minimal.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures for the District Court increase for programming changes necessary to collect payments for citations that may be issued under the bill. Programming-related costs total approximately \$12,208 in fiscal 2026. This estimate includes about 94 hours of reprogramming. Any increase in District Court caseloads can be handled with existing resources.

Local Fiscal Effect: Howard County advises that it plans to use the authority granted by the bill to expand its speed camera program; however, the county is limited to a total of eight cameras in use at one time by the Howard County Code. Howard County also advises that its current contract with the vendor that operates its speed camera program allows additional cameras to be deployed at a cost of \$7,880 annually per camera (though this annual fee is in addition to the overhead fixed cost for the program, which is unchanged under the bill).

Accordingly, local revenues increase, potentially significantly, beginning in fiscal 2026 to the extent that Howard County authorizes and places additional speed cameras as a result of the bill. Expenditures also increase beginning in fiscal 2026 for administrative costs. Based on historical data, information provided by Howard County, and the use of speed camera systems in the State to date, the increase in revenues is likely to exceed the increase in expenditures. After cost recovery, the remaining revenues may only be expended for specified safety improvements and maintenance work for the Howard County Public School System; thus, expenditures also increase for those purposes.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Howard County; Comptroller's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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km/jkb

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