



Office of The Mayor Celina Benitez

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Favorable Support for **House Bill 364 Prince George's County – Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems – Authorization PG 301-24** as introduced by Delegate Anne Healey.

Chair Korman and Environmental and Transportation Committee Members:

The Mayor and Council of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland, write in support of bill HB364 **Prince George's County – Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems – Authorization PG 301-24**, as introduced by Delegate Anne Healey.

In the wake of many street safety tragedies, including the recent death of two young children in Riverdale Park at the end of last year, we are asking support for HB364.

This bill will enable the City to hold drivers traveling in Mount Rainier accountable for ignoring traffic controls, such as stop signs, through the use of automated enforcement systems (i.e. stop sign cameras). Prince George's County continues to have one of the most dangerous roads in Maryland and this bill is a critical part of reaching not only the County's commitments, but Mount Rainier's own Vision Zero commitments, which the Mayor and Council adopted in January 2023 as Resolution 01-2023.

The City of Mount Rainier is a small historic streetcar suburb of slightly over 0.6 square miles. With approximately 8400 residents, it is the densest city in the State of Maryland. Directly bordering the District of Columbia, Mount Rainier is predominately renters, low and moderate income. Over 85% of the population are people of color, many of whom are primarily pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. 50% of Mount Rainier households (according to the most recent census) have access to no cars or only one car, meaning that many households are daily pedestrians. In addition, Mount Rainier's two elementary schools are primarily accessed on foot by schoolchildren, crossing the city's street grid.

However, the city's street grid experiences many dangerous drivers, especially as part of tremendous traffic volume by and through the city. Rhode Island Avenue, which bisects the city, sees 20,283 vehicles pass through on a typical weekday in 2022¹. Queens Chapel Road, which borders the northern edge of the city, sees 24,563 vehicles per weekday.² Eastern Avenue, which borders the western side of the City, sees over 19,000 per weekday. To avoid traffic, many of these vehicles cut-through the city utilizing Mount Rainier's neighborhood street grid, which is contiguous and continuous with the District of Columbia, Brentwood, and other areas.

This cut-through traffic often maintains the same speeds on our local streets as previously mentioned arterials. Moreover, these vehicles frequently ignore the stop signs on these local roads, meaning that normally low-speed local streets experience higher-speed continuous traffic. While our municipal police force carries out traffic enforcement, it is virtually impossible for the 2-3 officers on staff at any time to effectively cover 60+ intersections, much less address other major public safety issues at the

¹ <https://data.imap.maryland.gov/datasets/maryland::mdot-sha-annual-average-daily-traffic-aadt>

² <https://data.imap.maryland.gov/datasets/maryland::mdot-sha-annual-average-daily-traffic-aadt>

same time. A recent traffic engineering study that we carried out found traffic volumes in the thousands even on some local neighborhood streets like Arundel Road or Bunker Hill Road, meaning that manual traffic enforcement would be very difficult to carry out effectively.³

The District of Columbia, which borders Mount Rainier, already has stop sign cameras and enabling neighboring jurisdictions in Prince George's to do so as well would align policies consistently across the two jurisdictions. DC's cameras show significant violations - from January to September 2022 when first introduced, DC's eight stop sign cameras recorded 120,000 violations.⁴ With similar densities, street grid similarity, geographic proximity, and shared regional travelers, our jurisdiction is likely to experience many of the same violation numbers and subsequent safety issues - which can only be addressed by increased ticketing and enforcement.

The Mayor and Council of the City of Mount Rainier is looking forward to a Favorable support of **House Bill 364 Prince George's County – Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems – Authorization PG 301-24**. It will ensure a safer community, ensure continued economic development in our city core, and help both The City of Mount Rainier and Prince George's County achieve its Vision Zero commitments.

Thank you again for your commitment to improving transportation safety in this region. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier

³ <https://www.mountrainiermd.org/home/showpublisheddocument/3488>

⁴ <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/transportation/8-stop-sign-cameras-net-more-than-120000-citations-so-far-in-2022/3176228/>