

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 337 (Montgomery County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation

**Montgomery County - Maximum Speed Limit in Business and Residential
Districts**
MC 22-17

This bill modifies the maximum authorized speed limit within Montgomery County on all highways in a business district and undivided highways in a residential district such that the maximum speed limit may be set between 20 and 30 miles per hour, rather than at 30 miles per hour. The bill also exempts the county from the requirement to conduct an engineering and traffic investigation when decreasing a maximum speed limit as authorized by the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues due to more citations for speeding, assuming the county decreases speed limits on eligible roadways; the District Court can handle any additional caseload with existing resources. Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by as much as \$85,000 in FY 2018 only for the State Highway Administration (SHA) to replace existing signage, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not materially affected as the county is exempted from the requirement to conduct an engineering and traffic study before decreasing the speed limit as authorized under the bill. Enforcement of lower speed limits can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

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 (6) 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 not more than 50 miles per hour;
- decrease the speed limit in an urban district; or
- decrease the limit outside an urban district to not 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.

State Expenditures: Because the bill allows Montgomery County to decrease speed limits on all highways in business districts and undivided highways in residential districts within the county, SHA may incur additional expenses under the bill. Any impact depends on whether and to what extent Montgomery County chooses to use the authorization granted by the bill. In total, SHA estimates that 900 speed limit signs may need to be replaced at a total cost of \$85,000 in one-time-only TTF expenditures. This analysis assumes Montgomery County decreases the speed limit as authorized throughout the county and does so in fiscal 2018; thus, TTF expenditures are incurred in fiscal 2018.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/ljm

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