


F R O M	NAME & TITLE	Steve Sharkey, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 E Fayette Street, Room 527		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 22-0192	M E M O	

TO: Mayor Brandon M. Scott
TO: Economic and Community Development Committee
FROM: Department of Transportation
POSITION: **Support**
RE: Council Bill – 22-0192

DATE: 3/21/22

INTRODUCTION – Transit and Traffic - Impoundment or Immobilization - Chronic Offenders

PURPOSE/PLANS – For the purpose of authorizing the Baltimore City Police Commissioner to impound or immobilize the vehicle of a certain person; defining certain terms; and generally relating to chronic offenders of parking ordinances.

COMMENTS – Council Bill 22-0192 seeks to increase the City’s authority to address chronic offenders of automated red light and speed enforcement cameras. Within the text of Council Bill 22-0192, chronic offenders are defined as being the owner of a vehicle that has accrued \$1,000 or more in unpaid parking violations from within Baltimore City. The legislation further specifies that citations received via automated enforcement cameras are to be considered parking violations within Baltimore City Code. Maryland State Code clearly outlines that both automated red light cameras citations and automated speed camera citations are not classified as moving violations. Instead, Maryland State Code requires that both offences be considered parking violations, further specified within Title 26, Subtitle 305.

Baltimore City Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System (ATVES) Division is responsible for managing the City’s network of automated traffic enforcement cameras. Baltimore City DOT’s ATVES Division currently oversees 3 specific automated traffic camera operations, including red light cameras, school zone cameras and truck route cameras. To date, DOT’s ATVES Division currently operates 144 automated speed cameras, 143 automated red-light cameras, and 6 automated truck enforcement cameras. During the month of January 2022, DOT’s ATVES Division issued over 27,000 automated speed enforcement violations and over 16,000 automated red-light enforcement violations.

Baltimore City DOT’s ATVES Division is tasked with the goal of providing consistent enforcement of traffic regulations to modify driver behavior, reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities, and improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular safety throughout Baltimore City. Instead, a variety of relevant factors are considered including crash data, speed data, 311 service requests, and stakeholder feedback, among others. Any revenue remaining after automated camera operations are accounted for are appropriated by Baltimore City Finance Department in accordance with state law.

Reducing crashes is an important public safety priority of Baltimore City DOT. Data demonstrates that Baltimore City consistently averages roughly 18,000 reported crashes per year – or 45 to 50 reported crashes per day. In accordance with Baltimore Police Department (BPD) *Policy 905 Traffic Crash Investigating and Reporting*, all crashes resulting in a motor vehicle being towed away, personal injury, or fatality are considered reportable crashes and are investigated. First respondent officers examine physical evidence and environs at the scene and record relevant data in the Maryland Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS). Upon being submitted to ARCS, reported crash data is further review for quality control purposes prior to being finalized and submitted to Baltimore City DOT on an annual basis.

Specific to chronic offenders, as defined by Council Bill 22-0192, preliminary research conducted by Baltimore City DOT has identified over 5,500 vehicles with \$1,000 or more in unpaid automated enforcement citations, specific to Baltimore City DOT ATVES Division operations. The identified dataset of chronic offenders is projected to collectively be responsible for over 150,000 unpaid automated enforcement citations, representing 68% of all unpaid automated enforcement citations within Baltimore City DOT's ATVES Division's system.

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT POSITION – DOT recommends that the City Council work with Baltimore City DOT and our partner agencies to address several legal and operational concerns to ensure the successful adoption and implementation of Council Bill 22-0192. First and foremost, ensuring the City has legal authority to treat unpaid automated enforcement citations as parking violations is critical, and may require state enabling legislation. Furthermore, coordination involving DOT's Towing Division and Safety Division must be conducted with the assistance of the Baltimore City Department of Information Technology, to ensure DOT staff are properly equipped to enforce Council Bill 22-0192, should it go into effect.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation values ATVES Division's automated enforcement program as an important tool to moderate driver behavior and incentivize commuters to travel at safer speeds while adhering to traffic control devices. The success of DOT's ATVES Division's automated camera enforcement program is tied to broad observance of the City's speed and traffic control rules and regulations. Baltimore City Department of Transportation agrees with the overarching goals of the legislation to address pervasive reckless behavior exhibited by chronic offenders of the City's automated enforcement program and **supports** Council Bill 22-0192.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Liam Davis at Liam.Davis@baltimorecity.gov or at 410-545-3207.

Sincerely,

Steve Sharkey
Director