



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 4, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: YON LAMBERT, INTERIM DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

DOCKET TITLE:

Introduction and First Reading. Consideration. Passage on First Reading of an Ordinance to Adopt the use of Photo Speed Monitoring Devices in Highway Work Zones and School Crossing Zones and Civil Penalties in Section 10-3-878.12 Article B (RECKLESS DRIVING, SPEEDING, ETC.) of Chapter 3 (OPERATION OF VEHICLES) of Title 10 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to authorize the use of speed cameras in school and work zones.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Receive and approve the proposed ordinance (Attachment 2) to authorize the use of speed cameras in school zones and work zones; and
2. Schedule it for second reading, public hearing, and final passage on Saturday, October 15, 2022.

BACKGROUND: In 2017, the Alexandria City Council adopted a Vision Zero Policy and Action Plan, which sets a goal to eliminate fatal and severe crashes in Alexandria by 2028. One of the strategies espoused in the plan was to “pursue and support state legislation to allow the use of fixed automated enforcement cameras for speed violations.”

In 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed a law authorizing the use of speed cameras in school zones and work zones. In the Fiscal Year 2023 Approved Budget, City Council approved funding for speed cameras in school zones. In Northern Virginia, Arlington County and the City of Fairfax are implementing speed camera programs.

DISCUSSION: Vehicle speed is a primary factor in the frequency and severity of crashes (Attachment 3). Higher speeds result in a greater risk of death or severe injury, particularly for vulnerable road users such as people walking and biking. Through outreach for the Vision Zero Action Plan and Alexandria Mobility Plan, as well as Alex311, staff has heard from many residents and neighborhood groups across Alexandria that vehicle speeds are a concern, and that additional City action is desired to mitigate these issues.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) recognizes speed cameras as a proven safety countermeasure. According to USDOT, speed cameras can reduce crashes by over 50 percent. As part of its National Roadway Safety Strategy, USDOT promotes the use of speed cameras to enable safer speeds and improve traffic safety.

The parameters of the proposed speed camera program align with requirements established by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Per VA Code, sworn police officers are required to confirm the veracity of violations, signs must be clearly posted to notify drivers in advance of a speed camera enforcement zone, and fines may not exceed \$100.

The Traffic & Parking Board voted to recommend adoption of the proposed ordinance at their September 26 meeting. Locations for the five cameras will be determined by T&ES in consultation with the Alexandria Police Department and Alexandria City Public Schools. The locations will be selected through a data-driven process that considers vehicle speeds, traffic volumes, number of students walking to school, equity and other factors. Any speed cameras that are installed will have advance signs to make drivers aware of the speed camera zone. If Council adopts the ordinance, staff expects the cameras to be in place by early 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adopting the proposed ordinance will allow for the deployment of speed cameras in school zones and work zones. The City Council has already approved funding for speed cameras in school zones as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget. While there is the possibility of future revenue for speeding citations, revenue is not a goal of the Vision Zero program.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1: Ordinance Cover
- Attachment 2: Ordinance
- Attachment 3: Speed & Traffic Safety
- Attachment 4: Map of School Zones in Alexandria
- Attachment 5: Presentation

STAFF:

- Chief Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
- Lt. Delton Goodrum, APD
- Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, T&ES
- Tarrence Moorer, Assistant Director, T&ES
- Christopher Ziemann, Division Chief, T&ES
- Alexandria Carroll, Complete Streets Program Manager, T&ES