

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 17-26: MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC - SPEED MONITORING SYSTEMS AUTHORIZED - AMENDMENTS

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) finds the anticipated racial equity and social justice (RESJ) impact of Bill 17-26 is indeterminate. There are several unknown factors to determine how allowing speed cameras throughout the County's High Injury Network (HIN) would impact community members by race and ethnicity and racial and social inequities in the County.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.¹ This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.²

PURPOSE OF BILL 17-26

In April 2025, the Governor signed House Bill 1173 into law. This authorized Montgomery County and local municipalities to use speed monitoring systems (i.e., speed cameras) on highways in the County that are at high risk of vehicular crashes.³

The purpose of Bill 17-26 is to codify the County's new authority granted under state law. It also aims to enhance safety in high crash risk areas as part of the County's Vision Zero objective of eliminating serious and fatal injury crashes.⁴ To this end, the Bill would allow speed cameras:⁵

- In school zones with speed limits of 20 miles per hour or more; and
- On highways identified by the state or County as high risk for vehicular crashes.

Additionally, the Bill would authorize the County Executive "to implement future speed-monitoring measures without Council action, if future laws are adopted by the Maryland General Assembly."⁶

The Council introduced Bill 17-26 on behalf of the County Executive on March 17, 2026.

This RESJIS builds on those for the following Bills:

- Bill 11-23, Motor Vehicles and Traffic – Traffic Signals, Devices, and Automated Enforcement Plan, published in March 2023;⁷
- Bill 14-24, Vehicle Noise Abatement Monitoring – Pilot Program, published in August 2024;⁸ and
- Bill 28-25, Motor Vehicles and Traffic – Parking in Bikeways – Prohibited, published in September 2025.⁹

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Please refer to these RESJISs for background on vision zero, civil fines, traffic safety and racial equity.

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

The HIN, which is identified in the County's Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan, are roadway corridors in the County with the highest concentration of serious and fatal crashes.¹⁰ According to the County Executive, 60 of 100 miles of the HIN are currently not allowed to have speed cameras.¹¹ Bill 17-26 would remove this restriction and allow speed cameras to be placed throughout the HIN. Bill 17-26 would also clarify that speed cameras are allowed in school zones with speed limits over 20 miles per hour. Note, speed cameras are already allowed in school zones.

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 17-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

Community members who travel in parts of the HIN where speed cameras could be placed – including those who drive, walk, bike, and roll – could benefit from increased traffic safety in these areas. Several studies, including one conducted in the County,¹² have found speed cameras are effective in reducing injuries and deaths from crashes.¹³ Conversely, community members who drive would also be burdened by the increased potential for speeding fines in these areas.

There are several unanswered questions for determining how Bill 17-26 would impact community members by race and ethnicity and racial and social inequities in the County. Some of these are listed next. Of note, OLO drew some of these questions from previous Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs) that analyzed funding for traffic safety signals:¹⁴

- How will the locations of the speed cameras be selected? What will be the criteria and prioritization approach? Will community members be engaged in this process?
- What are the racial and ethnic demographics of community members in the areas selected for speed cameras?
- Are there existing racial disparities in speed camera enforcement by race and ethnicity? If there are, how would the newly placed speed cameras impact these disparities?
- Will newly placed speed cameras be deployed with surveillance technologies like automated license plate readers (ALPRs)¹⁵ that would affect the civil rights and civil liberties of community members?

Given these unanswered questions, OLO finds the anticipated impact of Bill 17-26 is indeterminate.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.¹⁶ OLO finds the anticipated impact of Bill 17-26 is indeterminate. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments. However, should the Council seek to improve the RESJ impact of this Bill, OLO offers two policy options for Council consideration:

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- **Require community engagement that prioritizes BIPOC community stakeholders to develop County’s Automated Enforcement Plan.** The County’s Automated Enforcement Plan explains the plan, goals, and strategies to increase automated enforcement programs in the County. The plan must be updated by the County Executive and resubmitted to the Council annually.¹⁷ The Council could require community engagement for the plan that prioritizes engagement with BIPOC stakeholders. This would help ensure the plan to deploy more speed cameras in the HIN minimizes harm to BIPOC communities and advances RESJ.
- **Study and address potential racial disparities in the County’s speed camera enforcement.** Studies in other jurisdictions have shown that Black communities are overburdened by automated traffic enforcement.^{18,19, 20} This can worsen existing racial disparities in fines and civic debt.²¹ The Council could commission a study to understand potential racial disparities in the County’s speed camera enforcement. This could be used to inform efforts to locate speed cameras and other traffic safety investments in a way that minimizes harm and maximizes safety to BIPOC communities.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council’s decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO’s endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from M. Gamblin et al., [“Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs,”](#) Bread for the World and [Racial Equity Tools](#).

² Ibid.

³ [House Bill 1173](#), Maryland General Assembly, Signed into Law May 13, 2025.

⁴ Legislative Request Report, [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 17-26](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced March 17, 2026, pg. (12).

⁵ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 17-26](#), pg. 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [RESJIS for Bill 11-23](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, March 21, 2023.

⁸ [RESJIS for Bill 14-24](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, August 27, 2024.

⁹ [RESJIS for Bill 28-25](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, September 10, 2025.

¹⁰ [Supporting Data Analysis for the Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan](#), Vision Zero Montgomery County, July 2021, pg. 5.

¹¹ Legislative Request Report, [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 17-26](#), pg. (12).

¹² [“Speed cameras reduce injury crashes in Maryland county, IIHS study shows,”](#) Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, October 1, 2015.

¹³ J. Gao, et al, [“Assessing the impact of fixed speed cameras on speeding behavior and crashes: A longitudinal study in New York City,”](#) Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, March 2025.

¹⁴ [Racial Equity Impact Assessment Supplemental Appropriate #24-25](#), Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, November 1, 2023.

¹⁵ [Automated License Plate Readers](#), Electronic Frontier Foundation.

¹⁶ [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established](#), Montgomery County Council.

¹⁷ [Montgomery County Code Sec. 31-9D](#).

¹⁸ W. Farrell, [“Predominantly black neighborhoods in D.C. bear the brunt of automated traffic enforcement,”](#) Fines and Fees Justice Center, June 28, 2018.

¹⁹ P. Solman, [“Why automated speed cameras disproportionately affect Black and brown drivers,”](#) PBS News, July 8, 2023.

²⁰ W. Xu, et al., [“The racial composition of road users, traffic citations, and police stops,”](#) Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, June 3, 2024.

²¹ [RESJIS for Bill 14-24](#), pg. 2.