MEMORANDUM

October 9, 2014

TO: Public Safety and Education Committees

FROM:

Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **School Bus Safety Cameras**

Today the Public Safety and Education Committees will receive an update on the school bus safety camera program. A PowerPoint presentation is attached at ©1-19. Those expected to brief the Joint Committee include:

Assistant Chief Betsy Davis, Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) Captain Tom Didone, MCPD Richard Harrison, MCPD Todd Watkins, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Background

The Council passed legislation in March 2012 enabling the County to implement school bus safety cameras. The purpose of the cameras on school buses is to monitor and enforce violations where vehicles pass a stopped school bus that has its flashing signals, stop sign, and stop arm extended. The current fine is \$125 per violation.

MCPD selected Xerox Corporation in the Fall of 2013 to provide the cameras and related services. The contract term is for three years, which coincides with the end of the Department's other automated enforcement contracts. The fixed rate, turnkey contract is \$250,000 annual for the 25 cameras, and includes maintenance, rotating cameras among buses, and wiring.

MCPD implemented the program in January 2014. Twenty-five buses had cameras at that time, and 75 additional buses were to be wired, to allow MCPD to move cameras among high priority routes as needed.

During Joint Committee discussion in the spring, the Committee expressed concern that the civil penalty for violation was too low given the severity of the infraction. While State law permits a fine up to \$250, the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland set the civil penalty at \$125. The Council approved a resolution in May (attached at © 20-21) that urges the Chief Judge to raise the civil penalty and consider whether a higher penalty would better reflect the serious nature of the violation and further deter drivers from passing a stopped school bus.

Status Update

MCPD indicates that of the 75 additional buses to be wired, 10 have been completed. There are no plans to install more cameras at this time. Since the implementation of the program in January 2014, 733 citations have been issued, of which 607 have been paid. This amounts to \$78,250 collected in fines. Sixteen cases have been scheduled for court.

Public Education Initiatives: MCPD has implemented several public education initiatives in preparation for the 2014-2015 school year, including:

- A Respect the Bus public service announcement;
- County Cable Montgomery video, "Did You Know School Bus Safety"
- Ads at bus stops and on Ride-On Buses; and
- Social media safety outreach campaign.

Bus Route Assignments: MCPD and MCPS has requested data from the school bus drivers and police officers in each of the six police districts to determine how many violations they have seen on their route over the past year as well as how many tickets had been issued. MCPD and MCPS indicate they will use a "slow grow" approach toward program expansion, based on data received. The Committee may wish to ask whether preliminary data has shown a need to expand the program, and if so, to what areas? Have the citations issued shown any particular patterns in types of violations (e.g., whether multi-laned roads with center turn lanes have a higher rate of violations). If particular patterns have been identified, do MCPD and MCPS have plans to tailor their public education campaigns to address them?

Funding and Staff: When the Joint Committee discussed the program during the FY15 Operating Budget worksessions, MCPD indicated that the program was not budgeted, but instead would be absorbed using existing resources. At that time, no new staff were added for FY15. Unlike the speed and red light camera contracts that were on a per-citation paid basis, this contract is a flat, fixed rate contract for \$250,000 annually. The Committee may wish to ask if the Executive plans to fund the program in FY16 and whether any additional staff positions are needed.

This packet contains
MCPD PowerPoint Presentation
Resolution 17-1080 to Urge the Chief Judge to Increase the Fine for Violations Recorded
By a School Bus Safety Camera
20-21

SCHOOL BUS

Jenool Bus Safety Camer

Montgomery County Council

October 13, 2014

School Bus Safety Cameras

Program Status Updates BUS

- Currently 25 cameras have been installed
- 75 additional buses to be wired (10 completed)
- January to August 1, 2014
- 733 citations issued
- 607 citations paid
- \$78,250 collected in fines
- 16 cases scheduled for court

- Produced a "Respect the Bus" PSA with MCPS http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments was launched August 2014. /itv/downloadPSA.shtm
- County Cable Montgomery produced a Safety http://youtu.be/7D4nnJ5W0rs educational video Did you Know- School Bus
- Advertising at Bus stops and on Ride-on Buses began in August 2014.



- September 22 26, A One-Week Social Media Safety Outreach Campaign; Don't Pass a Stopped School Bus, but Do Pass That Message On
- Day 1 "Back to School & Back to the Problem" Day 2 - "When to Put the Brakes On"
- Day 3 "The Short Arm of the Law"
- Day 4 "New Cop in Town"
- Day 5 "We've Said it Before and We'll Say it Again"

RESPECT THE BUS Don't get BUS

Automated School Bus Cameras are here!

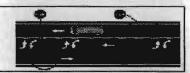
Two-lane roadway:

When school bas stope for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop!



Two-lane roadway with a center turning lane:

When school busistops for passengers, attended from both directions must stop!



Four-lane roadway without a median separation:

When ochoo bus stops for passengers, all trails from both directions must stop!



Divided highway of four lanes or more with a median separation:

When school bus stops for passengers, only traffic following the bus must slow.



Who passes a stopped school bus?

Our experience has shown that drivers who pass a stopped school bus with flashing lights fall into one of three categories:

Uninformed

This driver does not know the requirements of the law. If you are one of these drivers, reviewing the law will provide you with the information that you need to keep your community safe.

Impatient

This driver knows the law – knows that they are supposed to stop – but chooses not to because their time is more valuable than the safety of those around them. This driver needs to leave earlier, slow down, and RESPECT the BUS.

Distracted

This driver is so distracted by other factors that they sometimes never see the school bus. Operating a vehicle requires your full time and attention. Distracted driving is at epidemic levels. This driver needs to get back to the basics, be aware of their surroundings, and limit distractions.

If you are stopped by a police officer for passing a stopped school bus with flashing lights, the fine is \$570.00 and 3 points.

If you receive a citation from the automated school bus camera system, the fine is \$125.00. There are no points associated with an automated citation.

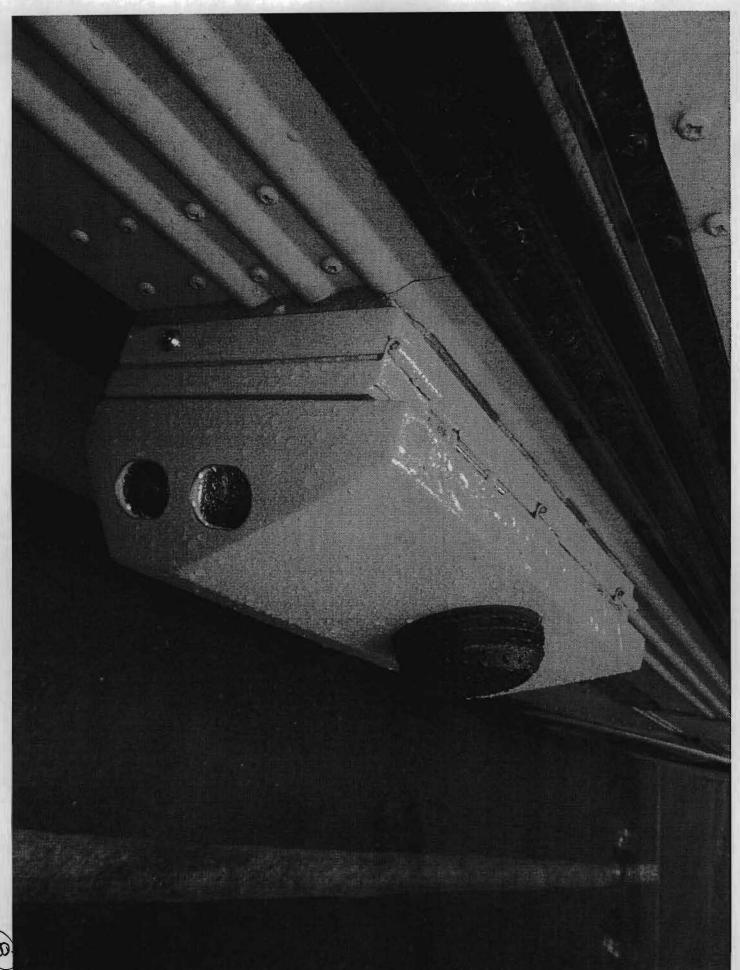


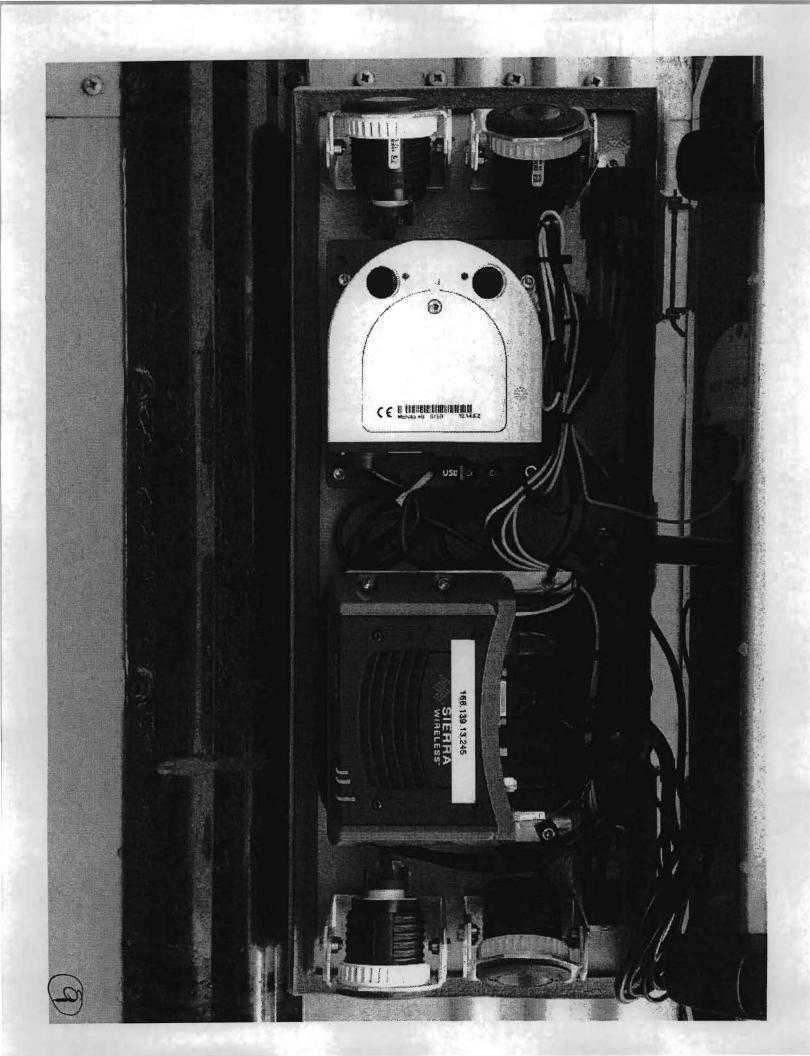
Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Police Traffic Division 240-773-6600

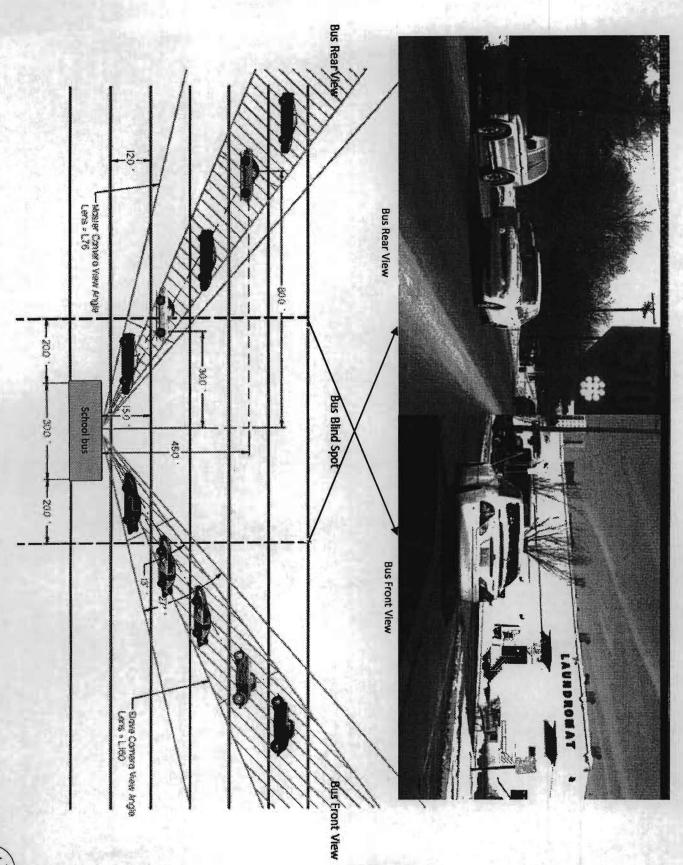


Vendor & Contract

- Xerox Corporation was selected and they also have our Red-light & Speed camera contracts.
- Three year(3) contract that coincides to end with our other automated enforcement contracts.
- Flat-fix rate, turn-key contract of \$250,000 rotation and wiring. annually for 25 cameras that includes maintenance,
- poor performance issues. Liquidated damages clause was included to remedy
- Lechnology has proven to be very reliable but we are always looking for improvements



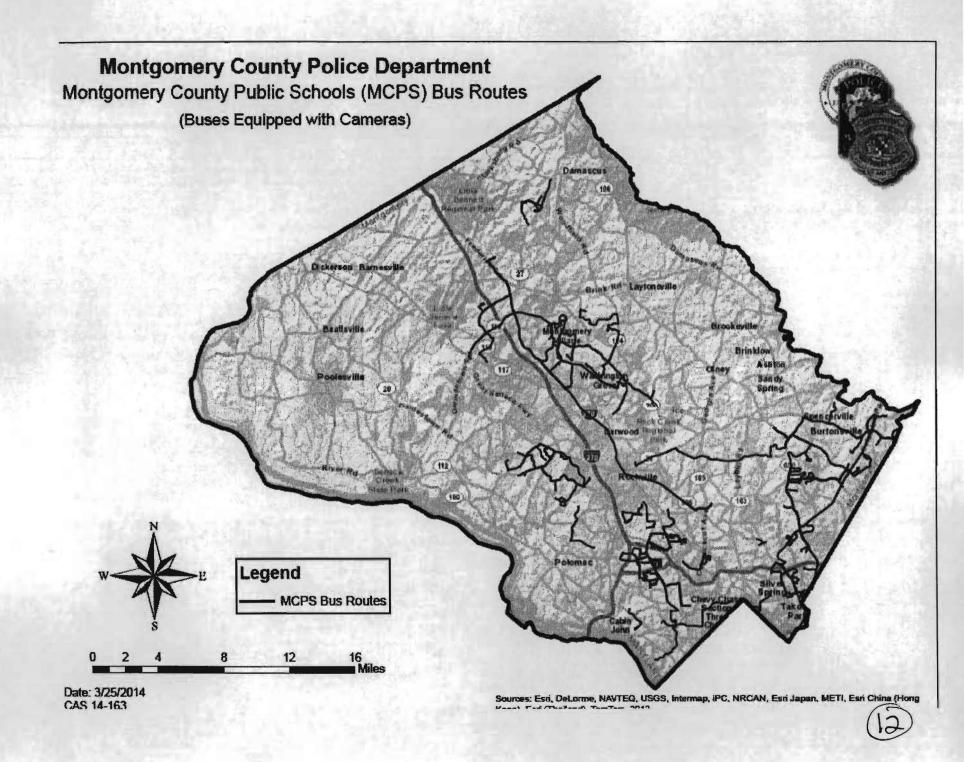






Site Selection

- MCPS & MCP working on a data driven approach to identifying bus routes.
- MCPS driver reports over the past few years.
- MCP Traffic Officers consulted and our Citation database reviewed to identify problematic routes.
- "Slow Grow" camera deployment and bus routes identified. wiring until new buses arrive and problem



School Bus Camera Bus Routes

Bus Depots	High Schools Serviced	Major Roads		
Bethesda	Walter Johnson HS	Tuckerman Ln., Montrose Rd., Rockville Pike, Kensington Pkwy, Old Georgetown Rd., Grosvenor Ln., Strathmore Ave., Parklawn Dr.		
Clarksburg	Damascus HS Gaithersburg HS	Ridge Rd., Kings Valley Rd., S. Frederick Ave., Muddy Branch Rd.		
Shady Grove N.	Gaithersburg HS Magruder HS Watkins Mill HS	Muddy Branch Rd., East Village Ave., Woodfield Rd. Girard St., N. Frederick Ave. W. Diamond Ave., Montgomery Village Ave., Emory Grove Rd., Apple Ridge Rd., Needwood Rd., Crabbs Branch Way, Redland Rd. Muncaster Mill Rd, Bowie Mill Rd		
Shady Grove S.	Springbrook HS	Sandy Spring Rd. and Bel Pre Rd.		
Randolph	Blair HS, Einstein HS, Churchill HS Kennedy HS Blake HS, Sherwood HS Wheaton HS	16th Street, East West Hwy., Blair Mill Rd., university Blvd., Georgia Ave., Thayer Ave., Layhill Rd.,Bonifant Rd., Randolph Rd., Hewitt Ave, Prince Phillip Dr, Olney-Sandy Spring Rd, Connecticut Ave		
West Farm	Paint Branch HS Springbrook HS Blair HS Blake HS	Sandy Spring Rd., Burnt Mills Ave., Old Columbia Pike, E. Randolph Rd., New Hampshire Ave., Lockwood Dr., University Blvd. E., Piney Branch Rd., Castle Blvd., Spencerville Rd.		

^{*} New Schools/Locations in Bold

Funds/Positions

- There is no additional funding for the school bus camera program in the Department's FY15
 Operating Budget to pay the vendor; the additional cost will be absorbed.
- Each of the 25 cameras costs \$830 per month for the Department to operate, with an annual cost of \$249,000.
- The administrative staff functions within the Department to support the program are expected to be absorbed within current ATEU resources given the volume of citations that are expected to be generated. (A coordinator/supervisor position will be requested if the program is expanded)

Annual Cost to Operate 25 Cameras

\$249,000

From January - August 2014

Total Vendor Fees

Total Gross Revenues

Total Liquidated Damages

\$135,511 \$78,250 \$11,356

Total Revenue, Net Vendor Fees

\$ 45, 905

Fiograin Evaluation

- Weekly meetings are held with the vendor and MCPS to discuss performance and maintenance issues.
- The original camera system installed has camera system. already been upgraded to include a second
- Continue to monitor activity from other jurisdictions and explore any new best practices.

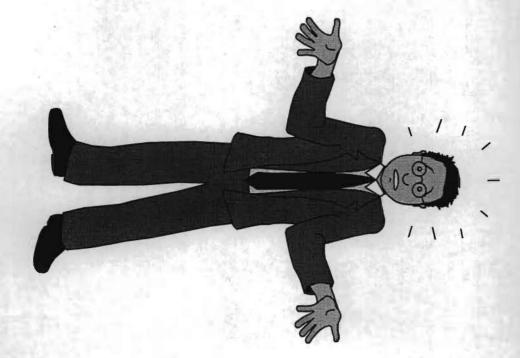
Other Jurisdictions

Prince Georges Co 8/26/14	Frederick Co	Washington Co	Montgomery Co	Jurisdiction
	Jan-Aug	_Jan-Aug	Jan-Aug	201400
20	31		2.5	2014 ₀₀ # of Cameras
	4	112	733	Citations

Moving Forward

- Continue to "Slow Grow" the program using the data driven approach.
- 10 new buses were wired and we are evaluating new bus routes for rotation-expansion.
- of cameras or any positions in FY-16 budget. We will evaluate the need to expand the number
- Program management, operational efficiencies, technological improvements and fiscal impact will also be taken into consideration.

Questions??



Resolution No.: 17-1080

Introduced:

Adopted:

May 6, 2014

May 13, 2014

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: The Public Safety Committee and the Education Committee, and Councilmembers Floreen, Leventhal, Navarro, and Riemer

SUBJECT: Resolution to urge the Chief Judge for the District Court of Maryland to increase the fine for violations recorded by a school bus safety camera

Background

- 1. State law prohibits drivers from passing school buses when a school vehicle has stopped on a roadway and is operating its flashing red lights. State law also authorizes local jurisdictions to enact local law to implement a school bus safety camera monitoring program.
- 2. In March 2012, the County Council passed legislation to implement a school bus safety camera program. The Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County Public Schools worked together to implement this program beginning in January, 2014.
- 3. In the first four months of operation, the school bus safety camera program has recorded and issued a total of 375 citations.
- 4. State law allows the civil penalty for violating this law to be a maximum of \$250.
- 5. The Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland has set the civil penalty for violation at \$125.
- 6. The Public Safety Committee and the Education Committee met on April 28 to review proposed Executive Regulation 18-13, School Bus Safety Cameras. This regulation specifies that the penalty for violation will be \$125, as required by the District Court.
 - 7. Given the potentially dire consequences of drivers violating the school bus safety law and the overall importance of school bus safety to keeping the County's children safe, the Public Safety Committee and the Education Committee expressed concern that the \$125 penalty is too low. The Committees expressed their view that the penalty should be raised as a greater deterrent for drivers, possibly up to the \$250 maximum amount allowed by State law.



Resolution No.: 17-1080

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following action:

The County Council urges the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland to raise the civil penalty for violation of State Transportation Article section 21-706, and to consider whether a higher penalty, possibly up to the \$250 maximum amount, would better reflect the serious nature of this violation and further deter drivers from passing a stopped school bus in violation of State law.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council