



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Andrew Meese, TPB Program Director, Systems Performance Planning  
C. Patrick Zilliacus, TPB Transportation Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Summary of Automated Traffic Enforcement Deployment in the National Capital Region  
**DATE:** December 9, 2021 – **DRAFT**

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This memorandum provides a summary of Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) deployment in the TPB membership area, following a request at the November 17, 2021 TPB meeting for this information. The focus of the information contained herein is on systems as deployed in the region according to information gathered through staff desk research, with general information on legal enabling of or restrictions on deployments of such devices.<sup>1</sup>

### ABOUT AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) generally involves use of an electronic camera to enforce traffic laws by assisting with detection of infractions and providing photo documentation of the vehicle or driver violating the traffic law. Two of the most common types of automated enforcement systems are red-light cameras and automated speed enforcement cameras.<sup>2</sup> There are other less common use cases, including some additional use cases in the National Capital Region, described below. Devices may be permanently installed at locations, or portable, and many jurisdictions use a combination of fixed and portable devices.

### OVERVIEW OF AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT IN THE REGION

ATE systems to cite red light runners and speeders are deployed in the District of Columbia (on D.C.-maintained roads only), as well as in many TPB-member cities and counties in Maryland and Virginia, plus in some Maryland municipalities that are not members of the TPB.

In addition to enforcement of speed limits and traffic signal red lights, D.C. uses automated enforcement to identify overheight commercial vehicles and stop sign violators. ATE does not appear to be deployed on streets, parkways and other roads under direct control of federal government agencies (generally the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense and the Architect of the Capitol). In Virginia, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) is authorized to use ATE to identify illegal users of the Dulles Access Highway and issue summonses to violators.

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<sup>1</sup> No information in this memorandum constitutes a legal review or finding.

<sup>2</sup> This definition adapted from “Research Brief: An Overview of Automated Enforcement Systems and Their Potential for Improving Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety”, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, [www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org), undated.

## CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Use of and restrictions on ATE are set forth in a variety of District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia state laws. These laws, including the delegation of implementation authority, vary between the three “states” and among the localities.

Conditions and requirements for speed ATE may differ on a case-by-case basis among the localities in this region, but frequently include:

- Limited to school zones or highway work zones (there are some exceptions);
- Approval by a state agency for a local government to install ATE on a state-maintained road is required;
- Speed tolerances set by law;
- Monetary penalties set by law;
- Days of week and hours of operation may be specified or limited by law;
- Signage requirements approaching a segment of road monitored by ATE;
- Speed measuring equipment must be calibrated and then recalibrated regularly;
- Speeding violations detected by ATE are generally not considered moving violations; are not entered on driving records and do not carry “points;”
- Private contractors may operate ATE on behalf of a jurisdiction or agency subject to conditions imposed by law;
- The number of devices deployed within a jurisdiction may be limited by law; and
- In some jurisdictions any trained person may review and certify ATE speeding violations, in other jurisdictions this must be done by a sworn law enforcement officer.

Conditions and requirements for red light ATE may differ on a case-by-case basis among the localities in this region, but frequently include:

- Agency that controls the signal must verify that the yellow phase duration is long enough to comply with regulations or standards;
- Traffic signal must be properly installed;
- Monetary penalties set by law;
- Private contractors may operate and administer some aspects of a red signal ATE system on behalf of a jurisdiction or agency;
- The number of devices deployed within a jurisdiction may be limited by law; and
- Red light violations detected by ATE are generally not considered moving violations; are not entered on driving records and do not carry “points.”

## JURISDICTIONAL SUMMARY OF AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT DEPLOYMENTS

Table 1 shows a summary of ATE deployments in TPB member jurisdictions as per TPB staff desk research conducted in November 2021. Information has been kept at a general level for clarity. The summary lists whether each jurisdiction has speed cameras, red light cameras, or both, with notes

for additional use cases: stop sign running and overheight vehicle enforcement in the District of Columbia, and enforcement of bus-only slip ramps between the Dulles Toll Road and the Dulles Access Highway. Also shown is whether the responsible implementing public agency is a law enforcement agency or a transportation agency.

ATE is currently deployed in some form in all but six TPB member jurisdictions (additionally, ATE is deployed in Frederick County only by and within the municipal limits of Thurmont), plus by the Maryland Department of Transportation in work zones, and (as noted above) by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority along the Dulles Access Highway.

Staff welcomes feedback for any deployment or related fact that may not have been uncovered in our desk research. Please contact [ameese@mwacog.org](mailto:ameese@mwacog.org) with corrections or comments.

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**Table 1: Summary of Automated Traffic Enforcement Deployment in the National Capital Region**  
 (Source: COG/TPB staff compilation, November 2021) – DRAFT

JURISDICTION	DEVICES DEPLOYED?		TYPE		RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC AGENCY	NOTES
	YES	NO	SPEED	RED LIGHT		
District of Columbia	✓		✓	✓	DDOT	On D.C. maintained streets only. Note: automated traffic enforcement also deployed for stop sign running and overheight vehicles.
<b>Maryland</b>						
Charles County	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
Frederick County	Note				Law Enf. Agy.	Only within corporate limits of one or more non-TPB member jurisdictions (speed cameras)
Montgomery County	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	Also within corporate limits of one or more non-TPB member jurisdictions (speed cameras)
Prince George's County	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	Also within corporate limits of one or more non-TPB member jurisdictions (speed cameras)
City of Bowie	✓		✓		Law Enf. Agy.	
City of College Park	✓		✓		Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Frederick	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Gaithersburg	✓		✓		Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Greenbelt	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Laurel	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Rockville	✓		✓		Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Takoma Park	✓		✓		Law Enf. Agy.	
Maryland Department of Transportation	✓		✓		MDOT	Permitted for work zones on state highways and MDTA roadways (speed cameras)
<b>Virginia</b>						
Arlington County	✓			✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
Fairfax County		✓				
Loudoun County		✓				
Prince William County		✓				
City of Alexandria	✓			✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Fairfax	✓		✓	✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Falls Church		✓				
City of Manassas	✓			✓	Law Enf. Agy.	
City of Manassas Park		✓				
Urbanized area around Warrenton in Fauquier County		✓				
Metro. Washington Airports Authority	Note				Law Enf. Agy	Enforcement of bus-only slip ramps onto the Dulles Access Highway