

Stories Beneath the Shell



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College Park City Council addresses speeding with new speed camera ordinance

by Natalie Davis

Some College Park residents will soon see more speed cameras in their neighborhoods, part of an effort to get drivers to slow down.

A new law passed by the city council on Sept. 28 allows the city to place speed cameras on residential streets with a speed limit of less than 35 mph. The cameras will improve safety by enforcing speed limits, officials said.

The city council will determine which neighborhoods receive cameras based on a speed study it's commissioning. The study will look at driver activity patterns and the physical locations of the roads, Ryan said.

Bob Ryan, the director of public services, said the speed cameras are an important tool to encourage drivers to slow down. He said he had been caught by speed cameras in other parts of Maryland and they made his own driving more cautious.

"It has been our practice to place speed cameras in areas where they will enhance pedestrian and vehicle safety," Ryan said.

The issue of speeding on College Park's streets is not a new one, said Llatetra Esters, a council member representing District Two.

"I think this a measure that will assist in helping what is a nuisance as well as a safety issue," Esters said.

Patrick Wojahn, the mayor of College Park, said that while the city is continuing to explore their options like placing radar speed signs or speed bumps, city officials have data that suggests speed cameras do work.

But Charles Pitt, a College Park resident, said that he would like the City Council to explore other options before immediately settling on more speed cameras. He encouraged the council to pursue measures like speed bumps and radar speed signs before placing speed cameras around College Park.

“Those solutions are more cost effective,” Pitt said.

The cameras give drivers leeway to speed up to 12 miles an hour before the drivers receive a ticket, Ryan said.

Mary Cook, a College Park resident, said that the new speed camera might discourage people from staying in College Park.

“My acquaintances and friends don’t like to drive through College Park because they think they’re going to get a ticket,” Cook said.

Fazlul Kabir, a council member representing the 1st district, said the speed cameras have already been proven to be effective so more aren’t necessary. The city has issued less tickets in recent years, indicating that people are slowing down, he said.

“Our goal should be to make our streets safe, not to make revenue,” Kabir said.

At the end of the day, it’s easy to avoid fines, Ryan said.

“It is very simple to avoid a fine from one of our speed cameras by obeying the speed limits.”

Featured image: A speed camera on Baltimore Avenue in College Park. Photo courtesy of the Maryland Driver’s Alliance.



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