



Legislation Text

File #: 2015-0379, **Version:** 3

A MOTION requiring that the executive prepare a report evaluating the feasibility of utilizing automated traffic safety cameras as authorized by RCW 46.63.170 for the enforcement of speed limits in school zones in unincorporated King County.

WHEREAS, more than one million trips are taken on King County's unincorporated one-thousand-five-hundred-mile road network each day. In addition to unincorporated residents, more than a quarter-million other people use the same roads to commute to school and work, recreational activities, to move goods from farm to market and as routes for freight and businesses, and

WHEREAS, several county agencies have responsibilities for the safety of drivers and pedestrians using the county's unincorporated roads. The King County department of transportation is responsible for the safety and maintenance of the county's roads, the King County sheriff's office is responsible for enforcement of traffic laws on these roads, the King County district court is responsible for adjudicating and processing traffic enforcement citations and the King County department of public health is responsible for monitoring safety and public health risks including those related to traffic safety, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2012, four thousand seven hundred forty-three pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States, and another seventy-six thousand pedestrians were injured. According to the federal data, this averages to one crash-related pedestrian death every two hours and a pedestrian injury every seven minutes. The federal government also reports that pedestrians are one and one-half times more likely than passenger vehicle occupants to be killed in a car crash on each trip. In 2012, more than one in every five children between five and fifteen years old who were killed

in traffic crashes were pedestrians, and

WHEREAS, the department of public health reports that traffic crashes are a significant source of injury burden in King County each year, noting that from 2008 to 2012, four hundred twenty-four people died in King County in a motor vehicle-related crashes, which is an average of about eighty-five people per year, and an additional three thousand one hundred eighty-two people were seriously injured, which is about six hundred thirty-six people per year, and

WHEREAS, the department of public health also reports that speeding is one of the main causes of traffic crashes. "Exceeding reasonable safe speed" was one of the leading contributing causes reported by law enforcement officers for all traffic collisions in Washington state in 2012, and accounted for seven thousand two hundred sixty-one collisions in King County, and

WHEREAS, the department of transportation reported in its 2013 Collision Data Report a total of one thousand six hundred ninety-three collisions on King County maintained roadways in the unincorporated area with total societal and economic costs of these collisions estimated at seventy-one million dollars. The county found that speeding was a primary contributing factor in thirty-six percent of all fatalities and fifteen percent of all injuries, and

WHEREAS, a recent summary study of speeding complaints from homeowners living on residential streets in unincorporated King County showed that the average speed was thirty-five to forty-five percent higher than posted limits, and

WHEREAS, speeding is a deadly and costly problem in school zones. A national survey found two-thirds of drivers exceed the posted speed limit in school zones during the thirty-minute periods before and after classes resulting in injury accidents and fatalities for school age youth, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Traffic Safety Institute have identified automated speed enforcement cameras as an evidence-based best practice for reducing speed and speeding-related crashes, along with related property damage, injuries and fatalities, and

WHEREAS, the Washington state Legislature enacted legislation in 2009 that created RCW 46.63.170, which allows local jurisdictions to use automated traffic safety cameras to detect school speed zone violations, and

WHEREAS, state statute makes these violations punishable as civil infractions subject to a fine of up to two hundred fifty dollars, but they are considered nonmoving violations and do not affect an individual's driving record or become part of a criminal record, and

WHEREAS, King County has eighty-two schools in its unincorporated area with significant numbers of school-age children, and

WHEREAS, school zone speed safety cameras can provide a constant enforcement presence that changes driver behavior for improved community road safety and are currently used in nine King County cities, including Bellevue, Federal Way, Des Moines, Issaquah, Kent, Lake Forest Park, Renton and Seattle, to improve school safety, and

WHEREAS, while Seattle is consistently recognized as one of the safest cities in the country, more than ten thousand traffic collisions occur each year. In 2014, three thousand four hundred forty-nine injury collisions were reported to the Seattle Police Department. Fifteen people died in traffic crashes, including five who were walking or riding a bike. To address these safety issues, the city has created a policy effort entitled "Vision Zero," with the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. The effort includes a variety of safety efforts including a significant expansion of the city's use of school zone safety camera zones to improve safety for students as they make their way to and from school, and

WHEREAS, the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances recommends dedicating infraction revenue from automated traffic law enforcement to road safety projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive shall develop and submit to the council for review and acceptance, a report on feasibility of utilizing automated traffic safety cameras as authorized by RCW 46.63.170 in school zones in

unincorporated King County. The report should summarize the recommendations, findings and options for the use of automated traffic safety cameras on a pilot basis at certain school sites in unincorporated King County. The executive shall complete a technical report as required in section B. of this motion. The completed technical report shall be reviewed by a school traffic safety work group as required in section C. of this motion. A combined technical report with the school traffic safety work group recommendations shall be transmitted to the council as required in section E. of this motion.

B. The technical report shall, where available, include information on:

1. The county's current data on traffic volumes, numbers of pedestrians, vehicle collisions, traffic violations and other data related to traffic safety at or near school sites in unincorporated King County;
2. Practices in relevant sample jurisdictions that have experience utilizing automated traffic cameras;
3. Options for types of cameras, including fixed loop or mobile cameras, options for locating cameras, the preferred times for camera operations and potential vendors of camera services;
4. Procurement options for the acquisition of automated traffic cameras and camera services;
5. Cost estimates based on best practices for the installation of automated traffic safety cameras and associated equipment;
6. Estimates of the potential number of citations that might be issued and fine revenue generated;
7. Estimates on the county costs to operate an automated traffic safety camera system, to include the costs of: camera equipment installation; camera vendor operations; sheriff deputy citation review; district court processing, collections and appeals hearings; and data collection;
8. Recommendations for whether or not a pilot or test program should first be implemented, and if so, how best to implement a pilot or test program for evaluating the use of automated traffic safety cameras at selected school sites in the county; and
9. A review of best engineering practices for traffic safety in school zones and alternative technical solutions for school zone safety and associated costs.

C. The executive shall establish a school traffic safety work group to include, but not be limited to, representatives of the following agencies and entities:

1. The executive's office;
2. The department of transportation;
3. The sheriff's office;
4. The district court;
5. The department of public health;
6. Representatives of school districts with school sites in unincorporated King County, if they choose

to participate;

7. The Washington state Department of Transportation, if it chooses to participate;
8. Community representatives, including representatives from King County's Community Service

Areas; and

9. Council staff.

D.1. The school traffic safety work group shall review the technical report and evaluate the proposed recommendations and options with the goal of providing policy recommendations to the executive.

2. The department of transportation and the school traffic safety workgroup shall work with the King County office of equity and social justice to review data and any policy recommendations with the goal to identify and present strategies to address any adverse equity and social justice impacts resulting from any proposed program recommended pursuant to this legislation.

E. The executive shall should file a final report containing the technical report and materials containing the options and recommendations of the school traffic safety work group by September 30, 2016, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment committee and the law, justice and emergency

management committee, or their successors.