

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2021 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB1841

Special Session:

Patron: Keam

Date: 1/22/2021

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Crosswalk and sidewalk design. Requires new crosswalks and crosswalks receiving future maintenance to be painted in a zebra pattern and have warning surface tiles on the sidewalk at each end of such crosswalk that are federal yellow if installed on a dark-colored sidewalk and red if installed on a light-colored sidewalk.

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### Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$2,200,000.00; however, the locality that provided the highest estimate is based on their cost for the next 20 years. Localities that responded with a cost, noted that the bill would – (i) increase the construction, and maintenance cost, because zebra crosswalk costs more than standard crosswalk, (ii) require additional fund to upgrade all crosswalks and sidewalks. They also noted that the requirements of the bill are not consistent with the FHWA recommendations, because FHWA recommends crosswalk stripe to be parallel to traffic to reduce annual maintenance cost. Of those localities that responded with no cost, they noted that the bill would not have any impact on them because they are towns/counties, and not responsible for crosswalks since crosswalks are maintained by VDOT. They also noted that the requirements of the bill would be incompatible with national standards and possibly the ADA, because currently sidewalks are painted and have warning surfaces in accordance with ADA requirements and VDOT standards.

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### Local Analysis:

**Locality:** City of Alexandria..

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$550,000.00

The City of Alexnadria's Transportation and Environmental Services department strongly disagrees from a maintenance perspective. There are already guidelines for crosswalk installation in the MUTCD, with a variety of crosswalk options. This proposal essentially says there is a "one size fits all" approach to crosswalk markings. Zebra crossings cost additional money to install and remark compared to a "standard" crosswalk (approximately 5 times as much for a zebra crosswalk when compared to a standard crosswalk), so this is also essentially an unfunded mandate if passed without corresponding additional funding provided to localities responsible for road maintenance. This can have unintended long term consequences, as maintenance budgets for pavement markings will be stretched even thinner, resulting in crosswalks being remarked at less frequent intervals and potentially creating a safety hazard on the "back end" where the crosswalk is faded out but there is a lack of maintenance money to remark the crosswalk due to the higher maintenance cost of requiring all zebra crosswalks (compared to the mix of standard crosswalks and high visibility crosswalks currently installed). Essentially what is intended as a safety benefit could actually be a safety detriment if crosswalk maintenance funding isn't identified (and quintupled) for ongoing maintenance in conjunction with this bill.

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Locality: City of Danville

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$2,200,000.00

The estimate of \$2.2 million is based on \$110,000/yr for the next 20 years.

The definition of "zebra" is not included. We are currently upgrading to continental crosswalks which are high-visibility. If zebra refers to the diagonal striping of crosswalks, that would require us to rework many existing continental crosswalks by blacking out existing paint or grinding up thermoplastic - a process we could estimate about \$50,000/year for the next 20 years. The handicap ramp reconstruction would cost \$1000 to \$1500 per ramp. There are usually four per intersection and there are many intersections throughout the city that would need the upgrade. This process is estimated at \$60,000/year for the next 20 years.

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**Locality:** City of Harrisonburg

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

The city anticipates that there would be no financial impact from this legislation. However, it would prevent the city from installing in the future new or rehabbing existing decorative streetscape sidewalks in our downtown area.

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Locality: City of Manassas

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

There is virtually no fiscal impact of this legislation to the City of Manassas as we adhere to this standard already for most crosswalks. However, there are many localities with with historic districts and other culturally significant areas that have brick crosswalks or similar and not ones that are striped. This legislation, as currently written, would preclude having these types of crosswalks in the future. The City of Manassas has decorative brick crosswalks in our downtown, most of which are at signal-controlled intersections and on street with a lower travel speed. When future maintenance is required, this legislation would require us to have a painted crosswalk in a zebra pattern so there would be a future fiscal impact. The City of Manassas believes this should not be a universal mandate and does not support this bill as currently written.

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**Locality:** City of Norfolk

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

No fiscal impact is anticipated.

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Locality: City of Roanoke

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$30,000.00

There are somewhere around 150 existing striped pedestrian crosswalks citywide - about 25% of which are already zebra stripe high visibility installations and have red truncated domes at the sidewalk transition per ADA standard. To retrofit the remaining 75%, cost would be about \$1000 each using the pre-formed burndown thermoplastic = total of approximately \$112K. Since that pre-formed themoplastic lasts about 5 years, ongoing maintenance of all 150 crosswalks would be about \$30K per year.

Locality: City of Winchester

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$1,000.00

Our suggested comments:

- 1. Localities should have the authority to determine their own crosswalk requirements, not the state.
- 2. Historic districts should be exempted from the requirements.

Thanks!
Mary

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**Locality:** Montgomery County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

County has no or limited responsibility for crosswalks.

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Locality: Prince George County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

This proposed change would have no impact on Prince George County. Crosswalks are maintained by VDOT.

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**Locality:** Rappahannock County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$1.00

The proposed code language is inadequate to prepare a fiscal impact, \$1 entered. The VDOT Road Design Manual currently controls crosswalk design and layout for all VDOT maintained roads (not cities and counties). Specifically, Appendix F, references the MUTCD, Section 3B.17 (<https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003r1r2/ch3.pdf>). "Warning tiles" on each side of the road are also controlled by VDOT (not cities and counties) and by the ADA.

The single greatest fiscal risk is that such a law change may be incompatible with national standards and possibly the ADA, leading to risk for gross negligence. VDOT experts should weigh in.

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Locality: Town of Ashland

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$10,000.00

We already do this for new construction and rehabs of sidewalks.

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**Locality:** Town of Blacksburg

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

Currently sidewalks are painted and have warning surfaces in accordance with ADA requirements and VDOT standards. Costs are built into our maintenance budget and design standards. This bill should be coordinated with ADA and VDOT standards.

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Locality: Town of Christiansburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$20,000.00

There would be a slight increase in our construction costs - approximately \$2,000 per intersection. This would occur approximately 10 times per year for an approximate \$20,000 per year (but this may vary greatly from year to year).

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**Locality:** Town of Luray

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$50,000.00

FHWA recommends crosswalk stripe to be parallel to traffic to reduce annual maintenance.

Also the red surface tiles are not visible in low light conditions which is contrary to the intent for visually impaired pedestrians

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Locality: Town of Marion.

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$250,000.00

Understanding "future maintenance" would include routine seasonal curb painting, the cost of upgrading all crosswalk and sidewalks within the Town would likely exceed \$250,000 a year, placing a huge burden on local finances

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**Locality:** Town of Scottsville

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

Zero fiscal impact upon the Town of Scottsville, nor upon similarly situated small towns.

Small towns without street maintenance powers and public works departments instead rely on VDOT for work including the crosswalk work noted here. The surfacing change might increase VDOT costs, but these are not directly billed to the Town. The Town does not build crosswalks on its own and would not see a direct fiscal impact.

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Professional and Other Organization

Analysis:

Organization: Northern Neck PDC

No fiscal impact on localities.
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