

Baltimore City Parking & Camera Citations: An Open-Data Analysis

Prepared July 2026 · partnerships@thetrafficapp.app · thetrafficapp.app

An independent, reproducible analysis of the City of Baltimore's public parking and moving-citation dataset, prepared for city and agency stakeholders. All figures are computed directly from data the City itself publishes; methodology and limitations are documented in Section 2.

1 Executive Summary

Baltimore City publishes one of the most complete municipal citation datasets in the country: 10,958,675 parking and moving citation records reaching back to 1999, updated through July 17, 2026 at the time of this analysis. Queried in full on July 19, 2026, that dataset shows:

\$334,391,676 Total open balance across all citations with an outstanding amount	2,978,079 Open citations — 27.2% of every citation the City has ever issued remains unresolved	65.8% Of open citations are camera-issued (speed, red-light, right-on-red) — small tickets, high volume
\$190.4M 56.9% of the open balance is on citations from 2021 or earlier — aged debt with steeply declining recoverability	~\$80.8M Approximately 24% of the open balance sits on out-of-state plates, beyond MVA registration-hold leverage	\$144.0M Open balance on 2022–2026 citations — the recent, still-collectible window

All figures computed July 19, 2026 from Baltimore City open data (see Section 2); out-of-state split as of July 18, 2026.

Three structural patterns stand out. **First**, the unpaid ledger is dominated by automated-enforcement citations by volume but by parking and tag violations by dollars: camera citations are roughly two of every three open citations yet under a third of open dollars, because their balances are small (\$40–\$75 on average) — the profile of debt that goes unpaid through unawareness rather than inability to pay. **Second**, penalties — not fines — make up most of what is owed: in a 2,000-citation sample, late penalties accounted for **70.9%** of the outstanding balance, and citations at the extreme have grown from \$27 fines to balances over \$3,000. **Third**, the debt is old: over half of the open balance predates 2022, and \$74.9 million predates 2017.

2 Data & Methodology

Source

All primary figures come from the City of Baltimore's public ArcGIS feature layer **Finance_Parking_Fines** (FeatureServer layer 0, ArcGIS Online organization services1.arcgis.com/UWYHeuuJISiGmgXx) — the dataset behind the “Parking and Moving Citations” listing on Open Baltimore (data.baltimorecity.gov). The layer contains one row per citation with, among other fields, the violation description, violation date, original fine, open fine, accrued open penalty, current balance, status flag, plate state, and (on newer records) neighborhood and police district.

Pull date and query method

Aggregates were pulled on **July 19, 2026 (17:08–17:15 UTC)** using the layer's own server-side statistics engine (COUNT / SUM / AVG with GROUP BY), not row downloads — so census figures reflect the *entire* ~11-million-row layer, not a sample. Specifically:

- **Open-balance census** — count and sum of Balance where GeneralStatus = '0' (the City's own open-status flag).
- **Violation-type breakdown** — the same census grouped by Description (top 20 categories by open balance).
- **Aging profile** — the census grouped by year of ViolDate (server-side EXTRACT(YEAR ...)).
- **Camera vs. non-camera** — client-side classification of the top-20 categories. Counted as camera: *Fixed Speed Camera; Red Light Violation; Right on Red; Interstate 83; Speed Camera 12 mph to 15 mph*. All other categories counted as non-camera.
- **Penalty composition** — a 2,000-citation sample of open records (five 400-record pages at spaced offsets across the citation-number range), summing original fine vs. open penalty; plus the server-ranked top 15 open citations by accrued penalty.
- **Repeat-plate concentration** — group-by plate (tag + state) with a HAVING filter for more than five open citations.
- **Plate-state split** — a full server-side census of the same layer grouped by plate State, run July 18, 2026 as part of a four-city study; reused here with its own as-of date.

Limitations (read before citing)

- **Published data may lag internal systems.** The open layer is maintained by the City; it may not reflect very recent payments, adjudications, or write-offs. At pull time the layer contained citations dated through July 17, 2026.
- **“Open” is the dataset's flag, not an accounting opinion.** The City's internal net receivable (after allowances, write-off policy, adjudication outcomes) will differ from the gross open balance shown here.
- **The camera split is a lower bound.** It is computed over the top 20 categories, which cover 94.7% of the open balance and 94.3% of open citations; smaller camera categories outside the top 20 would raise the camera share slightly.
- **The penalty sample is systematic, not random.** Its 2,000 records span the citation-number range at fixed offsets; treat its percentages as indicative, not exact.
- **Geographic fields are sparse.** Neighborhood / police-district values are populated on only ~6% of open citations (181,596 records, \$50.2M) — too sparse for a citywide geographic analysis, so none is offered here.
- **Placeholder plates exist.** Entries such as “NO TAGS” aggregate many untagged vehicles under one tag value and are noted where relevant.
- **Point in time.** Every figure is as of its stated pull date; the dataset changes daily.

All queries are reproducible against the public endpoint by any party, including City staff. TheTrafficApp is happy to share exact query parameters on request.

3 The Open-Balance Census

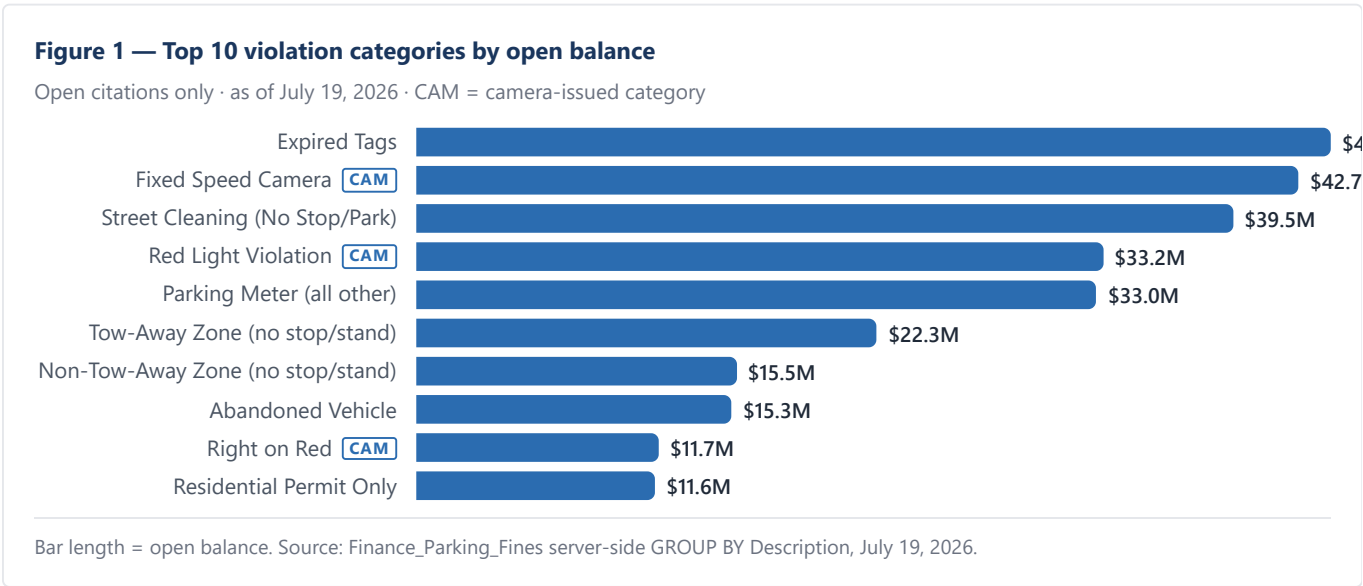
The headline: **\$334,391,676** in open balances across **2,978,079** citations — an average of **\$112.28** per open citation. Against the 10,958,675 citations ever recorded in the layer (July 1999 – July 17, 2026), that is an open rate of **27.2%**: more than one in four citations the City has issued in a quarter-century of records still carries a balance.

Measure	Value
Total citation records in layer (all statuses)	10,958,675
Citations flagged open (GeneralStatus = 'O')	2,978,079
Sum of open balances	\$334,391,676
Average balance per open citation	\$112.28
Open rate (open ÷ all records)	27.2%
Violation-date span in layer	Jul 1999 – Jul 17, 2026

As of July 19, 2026. Gross open balance per the City's published status flag; see Section 2 limitations.

4 Where the Money Sits: Violation-Type Breakdown

The top 20 violation categories account for \$316.6M — 94.7% of all open dollars. The top three alone (Expired Tags, Fixed Speed Camera, Street Cleaning) hold \$126.6M. Note the two very different debt profiles: camera categories pair huge citation counts with small average balances, while parking and tag categories carry average balances of \$200–\$730 — largely penalty accumulation (Section 7).



#	Category (as published)	Open citations	Open balance	Avg balance
1	Expired Tags	215,872	\$44,291,993	\$205.18
2	Fixed Speed Camera	1,066,001	\$42,745,304	\$40.10
3	No Stop/Park Street Cleaning	128,218	\$39,538,279	\$308.37
4	Red Light Violation	443,032	\$33,244,658	\$75.04
5	All Other Parking Meter Violations	171,055	\$32,952,107	\$192.64
6	No Stopping/Standing Tow Away Zone	79,378	\$22,336,766	\$281.40
7	No Stopping/Standing Not Tow-Away Zone	82,423	\$15,506,549	\$188.13
8	Abandoned Vehicle (sic)	20,894	\$15,280,331	\$731.33
9	Right on Red	156,275	\$11,724,368	\$75.02
10	Residential Parking Permit Only	40,755	\$11,566,335	\$283.80
11	Interstate 83	174,238	\$6,982,266	\$40.07
12	No Parking/Standing In Bus Stop/Bus Lane	15,115	\$6,651,690	\$440.07
13	All Other Stopping or Parking Violations	36,038	\$6,143,888	\$170.48
14	No Stop/Park Handicap	6,248	\$5,531,640	\$885.35
15	Speed Camera 12 mph to 15 mph	120,651	\$4,825,451	\$40.00
16	Obstruct/Impeding Movement of Pedestrian	12,884	\$4,490,301	\$348.52
17	Less Than 15 feet from Fire Hydrant	11,408	\$3,890,670	\$341.05
18	Obstruct/Impeding Flow of Traffic	7,841	\$3,248,887	\$414.35
19	No Stopping/Parking Stadium Event Camden	8,234	\$3,068,474	\$372.66
20	Exceeding 48 Hours	11,269	\$2,600,642	\$230.78

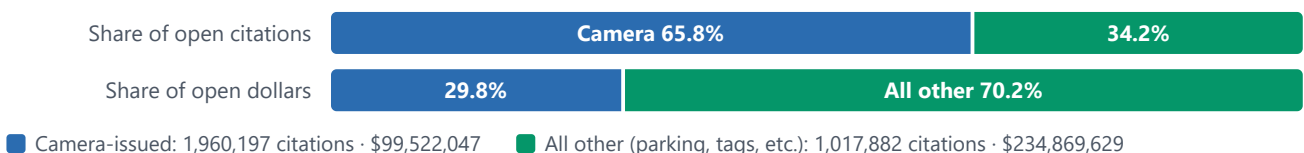
Top 20 of all categories, ranked by open balance; together 94.7% of open dollars. As of July 19, 2026.

5 Camera vs. Non-Camera: Two Different Debts

Classifying the top-20 categories (Section 2), camera programs — fixed speed, red light, right-on-red, I-83, and the 12–15 mph speed band — account for **1,960,197** open citations owing **\$99,522,047**. That is **65.8% of open citations but only 29.8% of open dollars**.

Figure 2 — Camera share of the open ledger

Open citations, top-20 categories basis (94%+ coverage; camera share is a lower bound) · as of July 19, 2026



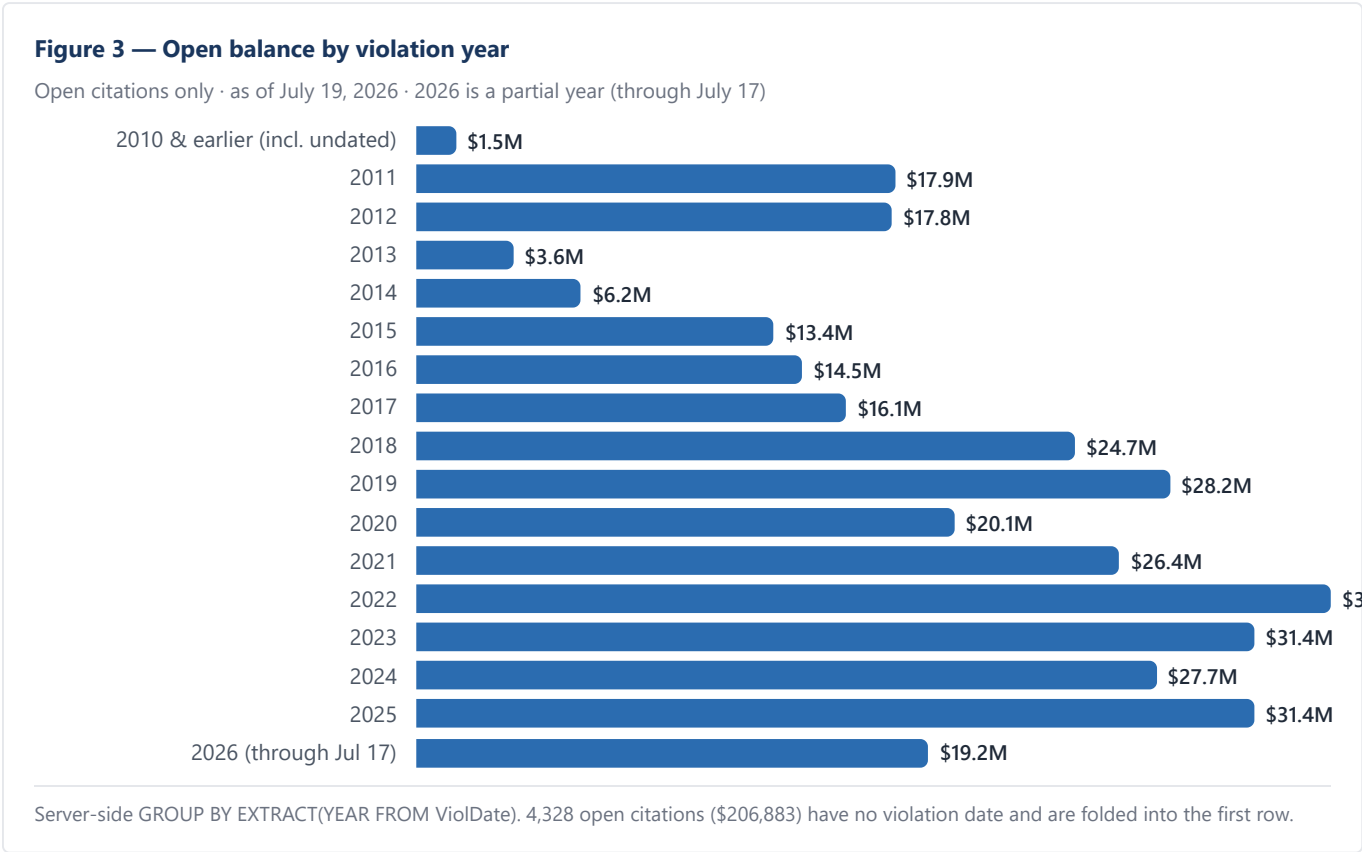
Camera categories: Fixed Speed Camera, Red Light Violation, Right on Red, Interstate 83, Speed Camera 12–15 mph.

The average open camera citation is **\$50.77**; the average open non-camera citation is **\$230.74** — four and a half times larger. The two segments fail differently:

- **Camera debt is a volume-and-awareness problem.** Over a million open fixed-speed-camera citations average just \$40.10 each — the base fine, largely un-escalated. Mailed-notice misses (moved addresses, rentals, out-of-state owners) leave owners genuinely unaware; the amounts are payable if the owner simply knows.
- **Parking/tag debt is an escalation problem.** Average balances of \$205 (Expired Tags) to \$885 (Handicap) far exceed the underlying fine schedules — these are old citations where penalties have compounded past the point where voluntary payment is likely (Section 7).

6 Aging: More Than Half the Balance Predates 2022

Grouping open citations by violation year shows a receivable that has been accumulating — not turning over — for fifteen years. **\$190,411,393 (56.9%)** of the open balance is on citations from 2021 or earlier; **\$74,859,233** is on 384,415 citations from 2016 or earlier. Notably, 2011–2012 alone still carry \$35.8M open across 256,047 citations, fourteen to fifteen years later.



Reading the curve: the recent years are not an anomaly — they are the aged years, photographed earlier. 2022's \$34.3M open is what a cohort looks like before it either gets collected or hardens into the \$15–\$28M-per-year plateau visible from 2015–2021. Debt that survives its first few years rarely leaves the ledger: 2011 and 2012 combined still show \$35.8M open. The practical collection window is the first months after issuance, before penalties compound and addresses go stale.

7 Penalty Escalation: Most of the Balance Was Never a Fine

Each Baltimore citation record separates the original fine (ViolFine), the unpaid fine portion (OpenFine), and accrued late penalties (OpenPenalty). In a 2,000-citation systematic sample of open records:

\$50.99 Average original fine in sample	\$174.96 Average open balance in sample — 3.4× the original fine	70.9% Of the sampled open balance is accrued penalty, not the underlying fine
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Sample of 2,000 open citations, July 19, 2026; systematic (not random) — see Section 2.

28.75% of sampled citations carried a penalty — and in every one of those cases the accrued penalty already equaled or exceeded the original fine. At the extreme end of the full dataset, the fifteen largest accrued penalties all belong to citations from 2006–2007, where fines of \$27–\$152 have grown into balances near or above \$3,000:

Violation	Date	Plate (masked)	Original fine	Accrued penalty	Balance today	Multiple
No Stopping/Standing (Not Tow-Away)	Jun 2006	MD 32••73	\$27	\$2,992	\$3,019	112×
No Parking/Standing in Transit Stop	Aug 2006	MD 6B••68	\$52	\$2,992	\$3,044	59×
No Stop/Park Street Cleaning	Sep 2006	MD KH••13	\$42	\$2,976	\$3,018	72×
No Stopping/Standing (Not Tow-Away)	Jul 2006	MD 4B••12	\$27	\$2,988	\$3,015	112×
Abandoned Vehicle	Jan 2007	MD 60•••26	\$152	\$2,912	\$3,064	20×
Exceeding 48 Hours	Feb 2007	MD 9C••83	\$27	\$2,912	\$2,939	109×

Six of the top 15 open citations by accrued penalty, as of July 19, 2026. Plates masked for privacy. Several vehicles appear more than once in the top 15 — even the extreme tail is concentrated in repeat vehicles.

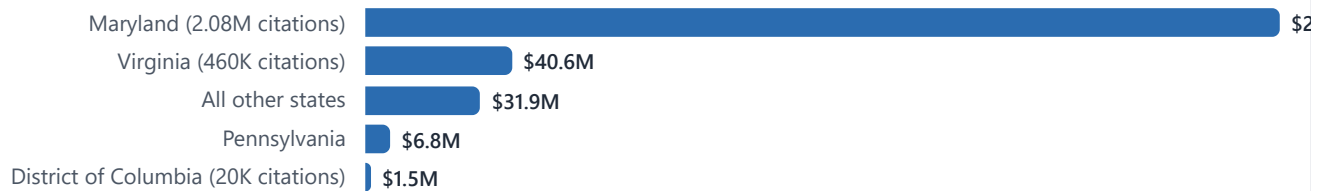
A \$27 citation that becomes a \$3,019 balance is, in practice, uncollectable — and for the resident, a debt wildly out of proportion to the original infraction. Every month between issuance and the owner's first awareness converts collectible fine into hardened penalty.

8 In-State vs. Out-of-State: The Quarter Beyond the MVA's Reach

A full census of the same layer grouped by plate state (run July 18, 2026; open citations 2,964,033 / \$334.3M at that pull) shows Maryland plates carry **\$253.5M** of the open balance — leaving roughly **\$80.8M, about 24%**, on plates registered outside Maryland.

Figure 4 — Open balance by plate state

Full-layer census grouped by plate state · as of July 18, 2026



"All other" includes NC, NJ, DE, FL, TX, and NY, each holding open balances in the millions. Totals reflect the July 18 census (2,964,033 open / \$334.3M).

This split matters because Maryland's primary enforcement lever — the MVA registration flag applied to unpaid citations — only binds vehicles registered in Maryland. The \$40.6M owed on Virginia plates and the rest of the out-of-state balance face no registration consequence in their home states; for these owners, the only path to payment is that they *find out* they owe. Notably, many will be commuters who pass through Baltimore daily and simply never receive effective notice.

9 Concentration: 120,728 Repeat Plates

Grouping open citations by plate, **120,728 distinct plates carry six or more open citations**. The 2,000 most-cited of these plates alone account for 140,332 open citations (4.7% of all open citations) and \$10,404,332 owed. Individual extremes include one Maryland plate with 282 open citations, and another owing **\$85,068** across 265 citations. (The dataset's placeholder tags for untagged vehicles — e.g. "NO TAGS" — account for roughly 1,900 further open citations under two spellings and are excluded from these per-vehicle observations.)

The ledger thus splits into two populations that warrant different treatment: a small, identifiable set of chronic accounts where escalated enforcement (boot/tow lists, targeted collection) is appropriate — and a very long tail of residents and commuters with one or two citations each, where early notification resolves the debt before it escalates at all.

10 What This Means for Baltimore

Read together, the data supports five neutral observations:

1. **A majority of the receivable is aged past practical recovery.** \$190.4M (56.9%) predates 2022 and \$74.9M predates 2017. Collection likelihood decays steeply with age as addresses go stale and penalties outgrow the underlying fine; balances like the 2006 examples in Section 7 are effectively memorial entries. The economically meaningful battle is for the **\$144.0M from 2022–2026** — and for each new cohort as it is issued.
2. **The volume problem is a notification problem.** Two-thirds of open citations are camera-issued, averaging \$40–\$75 — amounts most owners would pay if aware. Camera citations go to the registered owner by mail; every stale address, rental car, or out-of-state registration is a citation the owner may never see until it has tripled.
3. **Penalties are doing most of the compounding.** In sampled open citations, 70.9% of the balance is accrued penalty. The window between issuance and first owner awareness is where a collectible \$50 fine becomes an uncollectible \$175 balance.
4. **A quarter of the debt sits beyond Maryland's registration lever.** Roughly \$80.8M is owed on out-of-state plates that face no MVA flag. For this segment, awareness is not just the cheapest remedy — it is essentially the only one short of litigation or interstate reciprocity agreements.
5. **The data to act on all of this already exists — the City publishes it.** Every figure in this report was computed from Baltimore's own open-data layer, per citation, per plate, per day. The same data that enabled this analysis can drive owner-level notification the day a citation appears, at a marginal cost near zero.

For transparency: TheTrafficApp already uses this public dataset in production to monitor Baltimore citations for area residents who opt in, alongside DC and Montgomery County sources — which is how the patterns above first surfaced. This report, however, is offered as a standalone analysis of the City's own data, independent of any product.

11 About TheTrafficApp

TheTrafficApp is a Maryland-based traffic-violation monitoring service founded by Keya Gemechu and headquartered in Gaithersburg. It continuously monitors official citation sources across the DC–Maryland–Virginia region — including Baltimore City's open-data feed, Washington DC, and Montgomery County — and alerts vehicle owners to new citations before late penalties accrue. The company's research arm publishes open-data analyses like this one to help jurisdictions see their own citation ledgers clearly. Contact: partnerships@thetrafficapp.app · thetrafficapp.app.

12 Disclaimers & Data Notes

- **Public-data basis.** This report is an independent analysis of data published by the City of Baltimore on its open-data platform. No non-public, purchased, or scraped-behind-login data was used.
- **As-of dates.** Primary figures are as of July 19, 2026 (17:08–17:15 UTC); the plate-state split is as of July 18, 2026. The underlying dataset changes daily and published data may lag the City's internal systems.
- **No affiliation.** TheTrafficApp is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or acting on behalf of the City of Baltimore, its Department of Finance, or any government agency. All interpretations are the author's.
- **Gross, not net.** Open balances are gross amounts per the dataset's status flag and do not reflect allowances, pending adjudications, payment plans, or write-off policy.

- **Privacy.** No personal information appears in this report. License plates shown in examples are masked, although they appear unmasked in the City's own public dataset.
- **Individual verification.** Any individual balance should be verified on the City's official portal: pay.baltimorecity.gov/parkingfines/. Nothing here is legal or financial advice.
- **Reproducibility.** All aggregates were computed by the City's own ArcGIS statistics endpoint and can be re-run by any party; query parameters available on request.