



808-2025: Enacting new Sections 401.711 and 450 relating to under-speed vehicles

Legislative Purpose

This ordinance creates new rules for operating "under-speed vehicles," such as golf carts, on city streets in Cleveland. Consistent with state law, it defines these vehicles as having a top speed of 20 mph and weighing less than 3,000 pounds. The legislation permits their use on streets with a speed limit of 35 mph or less, but only for legitimate business purposes (not including rentals by individuals or use as personal vehicles). The ordinance also establishes requirements for these vehicles, including title and registration, an annual \$150 inspection, and specific safety equipment, such as headlights, brake lights, and seat belts. Violations of these rules can result in a minor misdemeanor charge and a fine.

Background

Ohio Revised Code Section 4511.215 states that a local authority may authorize the operation of under-speed vehicles on streets and highways under its jurisdiction by ordinance or resolution. The local authorities are required to limit operation of under-speed vehicles to streets with speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less, require vehicle inspections by a local law enforcement agency, and require titling and registration. This ordinance includes those provisions and additional requirements as determined necessary by the Director of Public Safety.

This legislation originated at the request of two small business owners seeking to use under-speed vehicles to provide short-distance rideshare and touring opportunities in Downtown Cleveland and surrounding neighborhoods. One business owner operates a bike fleet tourism company and seeks to offer the same service using under-speed vehicles. The second business owner is interested in using a fleet of under-speed vehicles for rideshare opportunities that will promote accessibility to commercial centers and during special events.

The ordinance and administrative rules and regulations are based on an assessment of policy and experiences in other cities to identify best practices in the safety, regulation, and administration of under-speed vehicle services. They were drafted through cross-departmental collaboration between Public Safety and City Planning.





Details

The ordinance gives broad discretion to the Director of Public Safety to promulgate administrative rules and regulations governing the details of the under-speed vehicle program. It specifies that proof of successful annual inspections conducted by the Cleveland Division of Police must be prominently displayed on the under-speed vehicles at all times, and grants authority to the Director to limit service areas and impose special event restrictions. It also establishes required equipment for the vehicles, including lights, turn signals, horn, and seat belts. Rules and regulations may be updated administratively as the City gains experience with under-speed vehicles and are effective following seven-day notice in the City Record.

This legislation advances the city's goals of a more accessible and connected urban environment by facilitating low-speed, short-distance, on-demand transportation services. The use of under-speed vehicles offers a new mobility option for "last mile" trips, extending residents' travel range and improving accessibility for individuals with diverse physical abilities. This, in turn, could support local businesses by making them easier to reach.

