

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 15-0258R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Welch, Branch  
Introduced and read first time: August 17, 2015  
Assigned to: Recreation and Parks Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Police Department, Department of Finance, Department of Recreation and Parks

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Moving Dirt Bike Use Out of Neighborhoods and Into Dirt Bike Parks**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from the Police Department, the Department of  
4 Recreation and Parks, the Department of Finance, the Law Department, the dirt bike riding  
5 community, and neighborhoods impacted by dirt bike riding to join with the City Council in a  
6 series of work sessions to create a viable plan for addressing the inappropriate operation of  
7 dirt bikes in Baltimore’s neighborhoods by creating a world class dirt bike park in Baltimore  
8 City.

9 **Recitals**

10 Despite being illegal to operate in Baltimore, dirt bikes are an all too common sight in our  
11 city’s streets and public spaces. Some neighborhoods are simply inundated by them, with dirt  
12 bikes taking over their streets and sidewalks every weekend. When dirt bikes are used in this way  
13 they are a menace, putting both the public and riders at risk of serious injury while significantly  
14 degrading the quality of life in afflicted communities.

15 It has become clear that the prohibitions on dirt bikes either cannot or will not be effectively  
16 enforced. And, indeed, some question whether they even should be – arguing that dirt bikes can be  
17 a productive hobby diverting young riders from more harmful activities while teaching them useful  
18 skills.

19 Regardless of one’s position on the merits of dirt bikes in general, it’s obvious that the way  
20 they are currently used and treated in the City is a problem, and that a new approach to this  
21 problem is required.

22 For years, advocates have argued that rather than criminalizing all dirt bike activity, the City  
23 should instead work to steer dirt bikes out of neighborhoods and into more appropriate venues by  
24 creating and maintaining one or more dirt bike parks where their use would be authorized. If  
25 opening a dirt bike park could indeed solve the problem of dirt bike operation in inappropriate  
26 places it would achieve the goal that prohibition efforts have failed to reach in a cooperative  
27 rather than confrontational way. It is past time that concrete steps be taken to bring this plan to  
28 fruition.

29 Creating a safe space for dirt bike riding would give young riders an opportunity to enjoy their  
30 hobby without fear of reprisal from police, while simultaneously taking them out of the  
31 neighborhoods currently being disrupted by riders. This would immediately translate into an

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 improved quality of life in these neighborhoods, greatly reduce the need for police action against  
2 riders, free up resources to focus on the City's other pressing needs, and remove one significant  
3 irritant from the relationship between the police department and the community.

4 In order to be successful, a dirt bike effort will require work from many stakeholders in City  
5 government, the affected neighborhoods, and the riding community. The first step in this effort  
6 must be to get these stakeholders together to discuss and agree on what will be needed to make a  
7 dirt bike park a success and how these goals can be achieved. Broad and inclusive hearings on  
8 these issues in cooperation with the City Council would be an ideal way to jump start the effort.

9 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the Council  
10 calls on representatives from the Police Department, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the  
11 Department of Finance, the Law Department, the dirt bike riding community, and neighborhoods  
12 impacted by dirt bike riding to join with the Council in a series of work sessions to create a viable  
13 plan for addressing the inappropriate operation of dirt bikes in Baltimore's neighborhoods by  
14 creating a world class dirt bike park in Baltimore City.

15 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
16 Police Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of Finance, the City  
17 Solicitor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.