


FROM	NAME & TITLE	William M. Johnson, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 East Fayette Street, Room 527		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 14-0197R		

TO

The Honorable President and Members
of the City Council
c/o Natawna Austin
Room 400 City Hall

January 13, 2015

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 14-0197R which respectfully requests that the General Assembly adopt, and the Governor sign, legislation amending State Transportation Article § 21-1004 to allow Baltimore to improve traffic safety by allowing parking on the left side of designated streets.

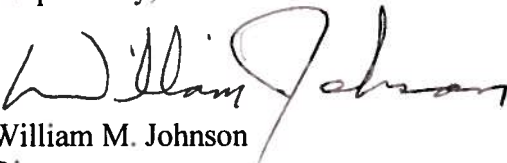
DOT does not support this request for legislation.

Current law (Section 21-1004 of the Transportation Article of the Maryland Annotated Code) requires vehicles parked on the street be parked parallel to the right hand curb with its right wheels within 12 inches of the curb except on one-way streets and where diagonal parking is allowed. The question arose as to whether this law is required under Federal guidance. DOT has researched this issue in collaboration with the State Highway Administration, and has not found that any Federal law prohibits states from authorizing parking on the wrong side of the street.

This notwithstanding, DOT has concerns with the safety of enabling parking on the wrong side of the street. Parking the wrong way on a two-way street necessarily requires a vehicle to be driven on the wrong side of the roadway, a movement necessary to enter or leave a parking space along the left side of the roadway. DOT is concerned that, in the process of parking a vehicle on the wrong side of a roadway, a driver must drive to the left of the center of the road, a maneuver that is unlawful and, even if the law were to be changed to make it lawful, often is dangerous. A vehicle traveling in the opposite direction is not expecting another vehicle to come in the opposite direction on its side of the road. The risk of a head-on or side-swipe collision would be significantly increased. The risk of such a collision would be even greater when a vehicle attempted to leave a parking space on the left side when another vehicle was parked in front of the subject vehicle. In that case, the driver of the departing vehicle would have a difficult time seeing an approaching vehicle until it encroached into the lane used by opposing traffic. Additionally, the risk to pedestrians crossing a street where opposite side parking is allowed would be increased in that a pedestrian would not be expecting a vehicle to be approaching from the right in the near lane. These safety risks are too great when weighed against the potential benefit of reducing the need for drivers to turn around at a safe location and return to the parking space on the opposite side of the street.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,


William M. Johnson
Director

WMJ/BZ

Cc: Angela Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison

