



Legislation Text

File #: 18-0286, Version: 0

**Explanation:** Capitals indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

\* **Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.  
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

**Introductory\***

**City of Baltimore  
Council Bill**

Introduced by: Councilmember Dorsey

A Bill Entitled

An Ordinance concerning

**Transit and Traffic - Speed Limits**

For the purpose of establishing the general maximum speed limit for various types of roadways in the City; creating a process for altering the general maximum speed limits for specific roadways; and generally relating to maximum speed limits.

By adding

Article 31 - Transit and Traffic

Section(s) 16-65 and 16-66, to be under the new designation

“Part 11. Speed limits”.

Baltimore City Code

(Edition 2000)

**Whereas**, a 2014 report by the Maryland Highway Safety Office shows that Baltimore City’s crash rate is 370% the rate of the rest of Maryland;

**Whereas**, a 2018 Allstate Insurance report on driver behavior established that Baltimore ranks 200 out of 200 for Worst Drivers in the U.S., dropping in ranking from 199 in 2017;

**Whereas**, conditions such as these are understood to be determinants of Baltimore’s comparatively high auto insurance rates, relative to rates for drivers throughout the rest of Maryland;

**Whereas**, a pedestrian’s likelihood of surviving being struck by a vehicle dramatically decreases the faster the vehicle is traveling, with critical differences between 20, 30, and 40 m.p.h. travel speeds, and enforcement not typically occurring except where vehicles are traveling more than 10 m.p.h. above a posted speed limit;

**Whereas**, a recent study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety shows that lowering posted speed limits is effective at reducing driver speeds;

**Whereas**, in recent years, other cities such as Boston, New York, Portland, and Seattle have reduced local speed limits, and the “Worst Drivers” report had previously ranked Boston below Baltimore City and Boston’s ranking has

improved since reducing speed limits; and

Whereas, 30% of households in Baltimore City lack access to a vehicle, and these and all residents', tourists' and others' safety when walking to and from destinations, including public transportation stops, should be given paramount consideration in policy-making and environmental conditions.

Now, Therefore,

**Section 1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore,** That the Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

**Baltimore City Code**

**Article 31. Transit and Traffic**

**Subtitle 16. Use-of-the-Road Regulations**

*Part 11. Speed limits.*

**§ 16-65. General speed limits.**

Unless a different speed limit has been set in accordance with § 16-66 {"Exceptions to general speed limits"} of this subtitle, the Director must post maximum speed limit signs as follows:

- (1) for a street meeting the criteria for an *Arterial road or a Major Collector*, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration, 25 miles per hour;
- (2) for a street meeting the criteria for a *Minor Collector or a Local road*, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration, 20 miles per hour;
- (3) for an alley, 15 miles per hour.

**§ 16-66. Exceptions to general speed limits.**

(a) *Basic limitations.*

Except as provided in this section, the Director of Transportation does not have the power to adopt rules, regulations, orders, or directives setting or altering speed limits on any City street, lane, or alley.

(b) *Temporary regulation.*

- (1) By administrative regulation, the Director may establish reasonable and safe maximum temporary speed limits based on a determination that any maximum speed limit specified by § 16-65 {"General speed limits"} of this subtitle is greater or less than reasonable or safe under existing conditions on any part of a City street, lane, or alley.
- (2) Unless extended as provided in this section, the administrative regulation is effective for a period of not more than 6 months.

(c) *Procedure to extend regulation.*

- (1) The Director may seek to extend the administrative regulation indefinitely or for a term of years by giving written notice of the proposed extension, not less than 30 days before the end of the 6-month period, to the President of the City Council and to each member of the City Council who represents all or part of the affected area.
- (2) If, within the 30-day period, no written objection to the extension is made and submitted to the Director by the Council President or by a member of the City Council who represents all or part of the affected area, the regulation is extended at the end of the 6-month period.
- (3) If a timely written objection is received by the Director, the Council President shall introduce a proposed ordinance setting forth the provisions of the administrative regulation and, depending on the passage or failure of the ordinance, the administrative regulation will become effective in accordance with the terms of the ordinance or be of no further force or effect.

(d) *Termination by ordinance.*

At any time after an administrative regulation is adopted or extended under this section, the Mayor and City Council may enact an ordinance rescinding or modifying the administrative regulation.

**Section 2. And be it further ordained,** That the catchlines contained in this Ordinance are not law and may not be considered to have been enacted as a part of this or any prior Ordinance.

**Section 3. And be it further ordained,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date it is enacted.