



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0258R, **Version:** 0

* 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 R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Moving Dirt Bike Use Out of Neighborhoods and Into Dirt Bike Parks**

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

Recitals

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

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

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

For years, advocates have argued that rather than criminalizing all dirt bike activity, the City should instead work to steer dirt bikes out of neighborhoods and into more appropriate venues by creating

and maintaining one or more dirt bike parks where their use would be authorized. If opening a dirt bike park could indeed solve the problem of dirt bike operation in inappropriate places it would achieve the goal that prohibition efforts have failed to reach in a cooperative rather than confrontational way. It is past time that concrete steps be taken to bring this plan to fruition.

Creating a safe space for dirt bike riding would give young riders an opportunity to enjoy their hobby without fear of reprisal from police, while simultaneously taking them out of the neighborhoods currently being disrupted by riders. This would immediately translate into an improved quality of life in these neighborhoods, greatly reduce the need for police action against riders, free up resources to focus on the City's other pressing needs, and remove one significant irritant from the relationship between the police department and the community.

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

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

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

dlr15-1246~intro/17Aug15
ccres/DirtPark/tw

dlr15-1246~intro/17Aug15
????
ccres/DirtPark/tw