File #: 3156-2017, **Version:** 1

The purpose of this ordinance is to enact new Chapter 586 of the Columbus City Codes, pertaining to the licensing of micro transit, or slower-speed, vehicles operating in the City.

Beginning this year, under Ohio Revised Code, slower-speed vehicles, commonly known as golf carts, became legal to drive on all Ohio roadways. A few new companies have begun services to transport passengers using these micro transit vehicles. On May 1st of this year, the License Section under Department of Public Safety began a pilot program to license drivers and vehicles for the new micro transit service Hopper Cart. This company, and other local services, worked in collaboration with the City to develop rules and regulations to govern the operation of micro transit vehicles in Columbus. The feedback on this program has been overwhelmingly positive. Therefore, License Section is recommending the inclusion of micro transit vehicles into the City Code.

Building on Council's past work to update the City's licensing process, these additional safeguards further Council's efforts to consider innovative new industries and modernize the City Code, ensuring the health, safety and welfare of Columbus residents.

To enact new Chapter 586 of the Columbus City Codes, creating provisions for the licensing of micro transit vehicles in the City of Columbus.

WHEREAS, the License Section is responsible for rules and regulations involving vehicles used to transport the public; and

WHEREAS, micro transit services are a popular and growing mode of transportation for downtown residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the present City Code does not consider the use of micro transit vehicles, which were legalized for operation on Ohio roadways last year by the Ohio General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the License Section has worked in collaboration with micro transit companies, and other stakeholders, to develop rules and regulations, as well as code language, that will ensure that appropriate safety standards are in place; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance builds on Council's past work to update the City's licensing process and furthers efforts to consider innovative new industries and modernize the City Code, ensuring the health, safety and welfare of Columbus residents; now, therefore

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That new Chapter 586 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby enacted, reading as follows:

CHAPTER 586 - MICRO TRANSIT VEHICLES (MTV)

586.01 -- Definitions.

(A) "Director" means the Director of Public Safety and/or his or her authorized designee.

(B) "License Section" means the License Section of the Department of Public Safety.

(C) "Micro transit vehicle" or "MTV" means a three- or four-wheeled vehicle, including a vehicle commonly known as a golf cart, with an attainable speed on a paved level surface of not more than twenty miles per hour and with a gross vehicle weight rating less than three thousand pounds.

586.02 - Regulation by the Vehicle for Hire Board.

The Board may adopt rules and regulations to supplement this chapter.

586.03 - Allowing operation of an unlicensed micro transit vehicle.

No person shall solicit, drive, operate, or otherwise in physical control of any micro transit vehicle for the purpose of carrying the public generally as passengers for hire, gift, donation, or other consideration unless:

(A) The owner of such micro transit vehicle has obtained a city of Columbus Vehicle for Hire Owner's License issued pursuant to Chapter 586 prior to operation and such license is not under suspension or revocation;

(B) Each driver of the licensed micro transit vehicle has obtained a city of Columbus Vehicle for Hire Driver's License issued pursuant to Chapter 586 prior to operation and such license is not under suspension or revocation;

(C) The driver identification card is displayed in the front of the vehicle and shall be rear-facing so it is visible to passengers while the driver is operating, driving or otherwise in physical control of a licensed micro transit vehicle; and

(D) The current decals issued by the License Section are clearly displayed on the front windshield and rear windshield or comparable position.

586.04 - Identification of micro transit vehicles.

Every person owning or operating a licensed micro transit vehicle may adopt any business name, design, color scheme or method of painting or lettering that is approved by the Director. Every micro transit vehicle shall comply with the following requirements:

(A) All MTV must be registered with the State of Ohio and display a valid Ohio license plate.

(B) The identification number assigned by the Director to each micro transit vehicle shall be painted on the rear of the vehicle in letters that are not less than two (2) inches and not more than six (6) inches in height, with each line a minimum of one-half (½) inch wide;

(C) The name of the owner, or the business name under which he or she does business, shall be painted on the rear of the vehicle. The letters shall not be less than two (2) inches and not more than six (6) inches in height, with each line a minimum of one-half (½) inch wide; and

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(D) All mandatory lettering, identification numbers and wording shall contrast distinctly with the color of the body of the vehicle, be reflective, and applied with non-water soluble paint, decals or adhesive-backed lettering.

586.05 - Fare rates, posting and changes.

Every MTV owner shall maintain on file with the Director its complete schedule of rates. Whenever a new schedule of rates becomes effective for a MTV, the owner shall file an amended schedule with the Director within three (3) days of the change. No more than one amended schedule shall be filed by any owner within any period of seven (7) days. The rate schedule for each MTV shall be posted where it is clearly visible to all passengers while seated in the MTV.

586.06 - MTV standards and safety equipment.

(A) All licensed MTV shall be reasonably clean and in safe condition so as to not cause personal injury or damage the clothing or possessions of the passenger(s). The MTV exterior shall be clean and essentially free from cracks, breaks and major dents.

(B) In order to operate MTV on public streets , it must include the following equipment:

(1) Adequate brakes and braking system.

(2) Properly working brake lights, head lights, tail lights and warning devices, also known as turn signals.

(3) Properly working steering mechanism.

(4) Windshields and windshield wipers to prohibit injury from any debris from the roadway.

(5) Rear view mirror to reflect the operator a view of the public street to the rear.

(6) Appropriate street legal tires that are free of major bumps, bulges, breaks or any other condition that would be cause for unsafe conditions.

586.07 - MTV Inspections.

Inspections on all licensed MTV must be completed on a yearly schedule by the vehicle's manufacturer's service department or a qualified service technician trained in, but not limited to cart batteries, engine maintenance, and tire pressure, electrical and general preventative maintenance. At any time a License Officer or Police Officer may request a mechanical inspection or general inspection by the License Section.

(A) Inspections will be done on a yearly basis by License Section staff.

(B) All MTV licenses will expire on June 30 of each year.

(C) Applications for MTV license renewal will begin on June 1 of each year. MTV owners will be notified via email of times and dates of inspections and will be completed no later than June 30 of each inspection year.

586.08 - MTV operating regulations.

(A) MTV use of side streets, alleys or secondary streets at all times is preferred. MTVs must use side streets, alleys or

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secondary streets between the hours of 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. week days and 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. weekdays and weekends and during city approved special events.

(B) The Director's approval shall be required for routes that are outside the business boundaries.

(C) Every person owning, operating or in physical control of a MTV shall be subject to all applicable laws, rules and regulations of Chapter 2173 of the Columbus City Code pertaining to bicycles and motorcycles, Chapters 587, 589 and 592 of the Columbus City Code pertaining to vehicles for hire and the City of Columbus and the State of Ohio traffic laws. All persons owning, operating or in physical control of a MTV shall not:

(1) Impede or block the normal or reasonable movement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic in compliance with law;

(2) Wear earphones or headsets over the ears;

(3) Use an electronic device while transporting passengers except while actively utilizing it for routing;

(4) Fail to clearly display his or her driver identification card;

(5) Peddle or allow peddling from the vehicle;

(6) Allow more passengers than it has working, factory installed seat belts;

(7) Consume or use any type of alcoholic beverage or drug of abuse or allow any passenger to do so while being transported.

586.09 - Advertisement.

Advertisement cannot interfere with any safety features. All advertisements shall comply with the following requirements:

(A) All advertisement/wrap must be pre-approved by the Director.

(B) Advertisement/wrap must be maintained and in good condition. It cannot be torn, wrinkled, faded, or with any missing pieces or lettering, stripes or decals.

(C) Advertisement cannot cover, obscure, obstruct or in any way interfere with a city issued decal.

586.10 - Loading required.

Any person owning, operating, or in physical control of a MTV must load and unload passengers from the curb side of the street.

586.99 - Penalties.

(A) Whoever violates Section 586.02 shall be guilty of misdemeanor of the first degree.

(B) A violation of any other section of Chapter 586 shall be grounds for the suspension, revocation or permanent revocation of the MTV owner or driver license or in the case of a new application shall be grounds to refuse to issue such license for a determinate period of time up to ninety (90) days or permanently.

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SECTION 2. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

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