



January 3, 2024

Planning Commission
City of St. Johns
100 E. State Street, Suite 1100
St. Johns, Michigan 48879

Subject: Golf Cart Ordinance Comparison

Dear Planning Commissioners,

As requested, we have gathered information on ordinances on the use of golf carts within City limits across Michigan. The following is a table we created of our findings:

<i>Golf Cart Ordinances</i>							
	Michigan Municipal League (MML)	Owosso	Elsie	Alma	Newaygo	Lake Isabella	Michigan Legislature (Section 257.657a)
Age Restriction	16+	16+	16+	16+	N/A	12+ with supervision	16+
Valid License Required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Speed	15 MPH	15 MPH	25 MPH	15 MPH	25 MPH or 15 MPH if necessary	25 MPH	15 MPH
Helmet Required	No	No	No	Yes, unless roof is attached	Yes, unless roof is attached	Yes, unless roof is attached	Yes, for low-speed vehicles
Operation on Sidewalks	No	No	N/A	No	No	N/A	No
Comply with Signal Requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
Ride as Far to the Right as Possible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes



Maximum Speed of Road	30 MPH	30 MPH	35 MPH	N/A	N/A	N/A	30 MPH
Driving Hours	Half-hour after Sunrise to half-hour before Sunset.	Half-hour after Sunrise to half-hour before Sunset.	Half-hour after Sunrise to half-hour before Sunset.	Half-hour after Sunrise to half-hour before Sunset.	6am-10pm	N/A	Half-hour after Sunrise to half-hour before Sunset.
Lane Crossing Allowed	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Registration with Police Department	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Functioning Head/Taillights Required	N/A	N/A	Yes	2 headlamps and 1 taillamp.	A lighted headlight, taillight, and brake light.	A lighted headlight and taillight.	2 headlamps, 1 taillamp, 1 stop lamp, and 1 red reflector for each side.
Maximum Capacity	N/A	N/A	The maximum capacity designed for.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Population	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Fewer than 30,000
Mirror Requirements	N/A	N/A	N/A	Driver side and interior or passenger side.	N/A	N/A	Driver side and interior or passenger side.
Safety Belt Required	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

What We Found. Below are our comments on the information we found while searching for ordinances relating to golf carts:



1) Michigan Legislature Standards. The Michigan Legislature has an excerpt from the Michigan Vehicle Code that specifically sets restrictions on the operation of golf carts on village, city, or township streets or state trunk line highway. This excerpt, Section 257.657a, states the following:

- (1) A village or city having a population of fewer than 30,000 individuals based upon the 2010 decennial census may by resolution allow the operation of golf carts on the streets of that village or city, subject to the requirements of this section. A township having a population of fewer than 30,000 individuals based upon the 2010 decennial census may by resolution, unless disapproved by the county board of commissioners under subsection (3), allow the operation of golf carts on the streets of that township, subject to the requirements of this section.*
- (2) If a village, city, or township allows the operation of golf carts on the streets of that village, city, or township, that village, city, or township may require those golf carts and the operators of those golf carts to be recorded on a list maintained by that village, city, or township. A village, city, or township shall not charge a fee for listing golf carts or the operators of those golf carts.*
- (3) A county board of commissioners may, by resolution, disapprove the operation of golf carts on the streets of a township located within that county if the county board of commissioners conducts a hearing and determines that 1 or more of the following apply:
 - a. The operation of golf carts on the streets of that township would cause significant environmental damage.*
 - b. The operation of golf carts on the streets of that township would cause a significant concern of public safety.**
- (4) The county board of commissioners shall provide public notice of a hearing under subsection (3) at least 45 days before the hearing is conducted. The county board of commissioners shall also provide written notice of a hearing under subsection (3) to the township at least 45 days before the hearing is conducted.*

This means that any village or city with a population of less than 30,000 may create a resolution to allow the use of golf carts on streets within the village or city, so long as a county board of commissioners does not disapprove of said use of golf carts. In addition, there are also set restrictions laid out in Section 257.657a. These restrictions include:

- (5) A person shall not operate a golf cart on any street unless he or she is at least 16 years old and is licensed to operate a motor vehicle.*
- (6) The operator of a golf cart shall comply with the signal requirements of section 648 that apply to the operation of a vehicle.*
- (7) A person operating a golf cart upon a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or a vehicle proceeding in the same direction.*
- (8) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (9), a person shall not operate a golf cart on a state trunk line highway. This subsection does not prohibit a person from crossing a state trunk line highway when operating a golf cart on a street of a village, city, or township, using the most direct line of crossing.*
- (9) The legislative body of a local unit of government may request the state transportation department to authorize the local unit of government to adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of golf carts on a state trunk line highway, other than an interstate highway, located within the local unit of government. The request shall describe how the authorization would meet the requirements of*



subsection (10). The state transportation department shall solicit comment on the request from the local units of government where the state trunk line highway is located. The state transportation department shall consider comments received on the request before making a decision on the request. The state transportation department shall grant the request in whole or in part or deny the request not more than 60 days after the request is received. If the state transportation department grants a request in whole or in part under this subsection, the local unit of government that submitted the request may adopt an ordinance authorizing the operation of golf carts on the state trunk line highway that was the subject of the request. A county may submit a request for authorization under this subsection on behalf of 1 or more local units of government located within that county if requested by those local units of government.

- (10) The state transportation department shall authorize operation of a golf cart under subsection (9) only on a state trunk line highway that is not an interstate highway within a local unit of government that has already adopted an ordinance under subsection (1), that serves as a connector between portions of the local unit of government that only connect through the state trunk line highway, and that meets 1 or more of the following requirements:
- (a) Provides access to tourist attractions, food service establishments, fuel, motels, or other services.
 - (b) Serves as a connector between 2 segments of the same county road that run along discontinuous town lines.
 - (c) Includes a bridge or culvert that allows a golf cart to cross a river, stream, wetland, or gully that is not crossed by a street or county road on which golf carts are authorized to operate under an ordinance adopted as provided in subsection (1).
- (11) The state transportation department may permanently or temporarily close a state trunk line highway to the operation of golf carts otherwise authorized under subsection (9) after written notice to the clerk of the local unit of government that requested the authorization under subsection (9). The notice shall be in writing and sent by first-class United States mail or personally delivered not less than 30 days before the adoption of the rule or order closing the state trunk line highway. The notice shall set forth specific reasons for the closure. The state transportation department is not required to develop a plan for an alternate route for a state trunk line highway that it has temporarily closed to the operation of golf carts.
- (12) Where a usable and designated path for golf carts is provided adjacent to a highway or street, a person operating a golf cart may, by local ordinance, be required to use that path.
- (13) A person operating a golf cart shall not pass between lines of traffic, but may pass on the left of traffic moving in his or her direction in the case of a 2-way street or on the left or right of traffic in the case of a 1-way street, in an unoccupied lane.
- (14) A golf cart shall not be operated on a sidewalk constructed for the use of pedestrians.
- (15) A golf cart shall be operated at a speed not to exceed 15 miles per hour and shall not be operated on a state trunk line highway or a highway or street with a speed limit of more than 30 miles per hour except to cross that state trunk line highway or highway or street. A village, city, or township may, by resolution, designate roads or classifications of roads for use by golf carts under this subsection.
- (16) A golf cart shall not be operated on a state trunk line highway or the streets of a city, village, or township during the time period from 1/2 hour before sunset to 1/2 hour after sunrise.
- (17) A person operating a golf cart or who is a passenger in a golf cart is not required to wear a crash helmet.
- (18) A person operating a golf cart on a state trunk line highway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable.



(19) This section does not apply to a police officer in the performance of his or her official duties.

(20) A golf cart operated on a street of a village, city, or township under this section is not required to be registered under this act for purposes of section 3101 of the insurance code of 1956, 1956 PA 218, MCL 500.3101.

It is unclear if these restrictions apply to all municipalities or if they can be made less restrictive, as some municipalities listed in the chart have regulations that are laxer than those in the Michigan Legislature. We recommend consulting with an attorney to read into the state legislature to determine whether the restrictions can be reduced or increased.

- 2) Ordinance Comparison.** From researching several different golf cart ordinances from across the state, we discovered that some municipalities may add additional restrictions to those within the state legislature. An example of this is the city of Owosso, where golf carts must be registered with the police department. Other examples of restrictions are included in the table within this letter, such as brake requirements, engine capability maximums, and required eyewear protection.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
McKENNA

Christopher Khorey, AICP
Senior Principal Planner

Ethan Walthorn,
Assistant Planner