



# Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** BL2021-594, **Version:** 2

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An ordinance lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour, allowing exceptions to that general reduction to be granted by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission, and amending Section 12.20.020 of the Metropolitan Code.

WHEREAS, Tennessee Code Annotated subsections 55-8-153(c)(2) and (d) allow the legislative bodies of municipalities and counties to prescribe lower speed limits within certain areas, zones, streets, or roads within their jurisdictions; and,

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Charter Section 11.904 authorizes the adoption of traffic regulations establishing speed zones upon Metropolitan streets and roads by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission; and,

WHEREAS, a federal study of pedestrian/vehicle crashes in the US shows that collisions at an impact speed of 23 miles per hour are half as likely to cause pedestrians severe injury or death as collisions at 31 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour has been proposed to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists (the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project); and,

WHEREAS, at its meeting on November 18, 2019, the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission passed a motion approving the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project; and,

WHEREAS, to the extent there is a need to make exceptions to the general speed limit reduction accomplished by the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project, and to allow the speed limit to remain at a speed other than 25 miles per hour in some locations, it is advisable for the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission to be authorized to approve such exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, Section 12.20.020.A. of the Metropolitan Code currently provides for the speed limit in an area where there is not a duly authorized and posted speed limit sign to be 30 miles per hour; and,

WHEREAS, it is further advisable, in conjunction with the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project, to lower the speed limit specified in Section 12.20.020.A. to 25 miles per hour.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. Speed limits on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District are hereby generally lowered from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour, except for those for which exceptions are made pursuant to the process described below, and the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission and its staff are hereby authorized to post appropriate signage indicating the speed

limit reduction.

Section 2. Authority is retained by the Metropolitan Traffic and Parking Commission to officially adopt the above-referenced general speed limit reduction as well as any exceptions to the speed limit reduction, to allow the speed limit to remain at a speed other than 25 miles per hour in some locations. Upon receipt of a request for such an exception, the Commission shall hold a noticed public hearing on the request, and may grant an exception to the general speed limit reduction if the testimony at the public hearing supports it. Upon adoption of such an exception by the Commission, the Commission and its staff shall post or retain appropriate speed limit signage, accordingly.

Section 3. 12.20.020 - Maximum speed limits.

In the absence of a posted speed limit sign duly authorized by the traffic and parking commission, and except as provided by Sections 12.20.030, 12.20.040 and 12.20.070, or any other section of this title, no person shall exceed the maximum lawful speed stated hereunder, provided that this section shall not apply to the Interstate Highway System, which is regulated under Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 55-8-152:

- A. Twenty-five miles per hour within the Urban Services District;
- B. Thirty miles per hour in any urban district outside of the Urban Services District;
- C. Fifty-five miles per hour in other locations;
- D. Section 12.84.030 sets out the penalty for violation of subsections A, B, and C of this section.

### Analysis

This ordinance, as amended, reduces the speed limit on local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District (USD) from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. Section 11.904 of the Metro Charter grants the power and authority to the Metro Traffic and Parking Commission, as part of the traffic regulations, to establish "speed zones" upon Metro streets and roads based upon the findings of the commission. T.C.A. § 55-8-153 authorizes local legislative bodies to prescribe lower speed limits within certain areas, zones, streets, or roads within their jurisdictions. The Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project recommended lowering the speed limit on streets designated as local streets on the Major and Collector Street Plan within the Urban Services District from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. The Traffic and Parking Commission approved the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction Project in November 2019.

In addition to lowering the speed limit on local streets, this ordinance provides that the Traffic and Parking Commission will retain the authority to grant exceptions to the reduced speed limit for certain roads after holding a public hearing on the requested exception if the testimony at the public hearing supports it.

A link showing a list of the streets that would be subject to the 25 mph restriction has previously been provided to the Council and can be found [here <https://nashville.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=08710299815c48db8095024440d13c13>](https://nashville.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=08710299815c48db8095024440d13c13).

Future amendments to this ordinance could be approved by resolution.

The Traffic and Parking Commission approved this ordinance at their January 11 meeting.

*Fiscal Note: The estimated cost to Metro for the replacement of speed limit signs is \$85,000, broken down as follows: Parts and materials - \$60,000, labor and overtime - \$15,000, contingency - \$10,000.*