

The Veterans and Consumer Affairs Committee offered the following substitute to SB 397:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, so as to regulate the use of electric personal assistive mobility devices; to define certain terms; to change certain provisions relating to powers of local authorities generally; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, is amended in Code section 40-1-1, relating to definitions, by inserting a new paragraph (15.6) to read as follows:

"(15.6) 'Electric personal assistive mobility device' or 'EPAMD' means a self-balancing, two nontandem wheeled device designed to transport only one person and having an electric propulsion system with average power of 750 watts (1 horsepower) and a maximum speed of less than 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by such propulsion system and ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds."

SECTION 2.

Said title is further amended in said Code Section 40-1-1 by striking paragraph (33) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(33) 'Motor vehicle' means every vehicle which is self-propelled, other than an electric personal assistive mobility device (EPAMD)."

SECTION 3.

Said title is further amended in Article 13 of Chapter 6, relating to special provisions for certain vehicles, by adding a new Part 5 to read as follows:

"Part 5

40-6-360.

(a) Electric personal assistive mobility devices may be operated on sidewalks where a 48 inch clear path is maintained for access for persons with disabilities, and highways, provided that any person operating such a device shall have the same rights and duties as prescribed for pedestrians in Article 5 of this chapter and except as otherwise provided in this part.

(b) No person shall operate any electric personal assistive mobility device on the roadway of any highway unless:

(1) The maximum speed limit of the roadway is 35 miles per hour or less;

(2) The roadway is a municipal street in a residential area lacking serviceable sidewalks; or

(3) The roadway has a separately striped bicycle lane and the device is operated within the bicycle lane.

(c) When traveling in any roadway of a highway, any person operating an electric personal assistive mobility device shall travel in the same direction authorized for motor vehicle traffic on such roadway.

40-6-361.

Any person operating an electric personal assistive mobility device on a sidewalk or roadway shall comply with the requirements of this part or any local ordinance regulating the use of such devices pursuant to Code Section 40-6-371 and shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with, and shall yield the right of way to, persons traveling on foot.

40-6-362.

No person shall operate an electric personal assistive mobility device at a speed greater than 8 miles per hour when traveling on any sidewalk or 15 miles per hour elsewhere; provided, however, that a county or municipal governing authority or the commissioner of transportation may further restrict the speed of such devices in locations where pedestrian traffic is congested and there is a significant speed differential between pedestrians and operators of such devices.

40-6-363.

(a) An electric personal assistive mobility device may be parked on a sidewalk unless otherwise prohibited or restricted by an official traffic control device or local ordinance.

(b) An electric personal assistive mobility device shall not be parked on any roadway in such a manner as to prevent the movement of a legally parked motor vehicle.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, any person operating an electric personal assistive mobility device shall be subject to the same parking restrictions as provided for motor vehicles under Part 1 of Article 10 of this chapter. All violations of parking restrictions shall be deemed the responsibility of the owner of such device; and, for purposes of parking restrictions, the owner shall be deemed to be in control of the device at the time of a parking violation involving such device, and no evidence of actual control by such owner need be proven as an element of the offense.

40-6-364.

No person shall carry or transport any hazardous materials on an electric personal assistive mobility device. Oxygen carried for personal medical reasons shall not be deemed a hazardous material for purposes of this Code section.

40-6-365.

(a) Any electric personal assistive mobility device, when operated on any highway or sidewalk, shall be equipped with front, rear, and side reflectors which shall be visible from a distance of 300 feet when directly in front of lawful upper beams of headlights on a motor vehicle; a system that when employed will enable the operator to bring the device to a controlled stop; and, if the device is operated between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, a lamp emitting a white light which, while the device is in motion, illuminates the area in front of the operator for a distance of 300 feet.

(b) Any person of any age operating an electric personal assistive mobility device on any highway or sidewalk, shall wear protective headgear which meets or exceeds the impact standards for bicycle helmets required by Code Section 40-6-296.

40-6-366.

A person who is under the influence of any intoxicating liquor or any drug to a degree which renders him or her a hazard shall not operate any electric personal assistive mobility device on any highway or sidewalk. Violation of this Code section shall be a misdemeanor, punishable upon conviction by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

1 40-6-367.

2 Any person who violates any provision of this part other than Code Section 40-6-366 shall
3 not be guilty of a criminal offense or a moving traffic violation for purposes of Code
4 Section 40-5-57 but shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.00."

5 **SECTION 4.**

6 Said title is further amended in subsection (a) of Code Section 40-6-371, relating to powers
7 of local authorities generally, by inserting a new paragraph to read as follows:

8 "(18.1) Regulating the operation of electric personal assistive mobility devices, provided
9 that such regulations are no less restrictive than those imposed by Part 5 of Article 13 of
10 this chapter;"

11 **SECTION 5.**

12 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
13 without such approval.

14 **SECTION 6.**

15 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.