

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: May 12, 2025

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Police Captain Jason Gates
Chief of Police William Penn, Jr.
Assistant City Manager Dr. Angel Wright-Lanier

Council Action Requested:

Amendment to City Ordinance 74.14.75-514 allowing the Winston-Salem Police Department to use City-owned golf carts on City streets in the performance of their law enforcement duties

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



Summary of Information:

Currently, the use of golf carts on public streets, roads, and highways within the City of Winston-Salem is limited to particular areas and circumstances. The Ordinance does not provide for the use of golf carts in a policing function. The Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) has identified a need and opportunity to use golf carts in District 4 of the City alongside its existing bike patrol unit. Such use would provide officers in this District with an additional method of negotiating the downtown area, specifically alleyways, parking decks and similar areas with limited access to patrol vehicles. The golf carts could also increase police presence in this area during special events.

The WSPD is already in possession of two golf carts which are “marked” with the WSPD badge and other identification and have been used in the past primarily by the Special Operations Division on limited occasions. These two golf carts can be reassigned to District 4 officers to meet the needs outlined above at no cost to the City. District 4 personnel would be responsible for maintaining the golf carts and making them available as needed to other WSPD personnel. The only cost to the WSPD would be outfitting the golf carts with seatbelts to bring them into compliance with State law.

(cont.)

Committee Action:

Committee	PS Committee 05/12/2025	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	
Remarks:			

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Implementing this plan would require amending the City's Ordinance on golf carts to add the allowed use of golf carts by WSPD personnel in the central business district and the central industrial business district. The golf carts would be insured as any other City vehicle. WSPD personnel would be required to complete a training/safety course before being allowed to operate the golf carts for this purpose. Storage of the golf carts has been arranged with Salem Funeral on First Street. This business will provide both a secured storage space as well as access to power for maintenance purposes.

In researching this type of deployment, WSPD staff learned that the Asheville Police Department uses golf carts and other types of utility terrain vehicles (UTV) to patrol areas of the City including the downtown district. The Asheville Police Department reported that use of the golf carts has resulted in increased visibility of patrols and has improved community outreach. Additionally, the Greensboro Police Foundation purchased a UTV in 2020 for use by the Greensboro Police Department.