

SUBJECT: Allowing golf cart operation without license plates in certain communities

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — E. Thompson, Ashby, Bucy, Harris, Landgraf, Lozano,  
Martinez, Ortega, Perez, Rogers, Smithee

0 nays

2 absent — Canales, Davis

WITNESSES: For — Kevin Autin; Cathy Cody

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Don Dixon)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Stefan Krisch, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles)

BACKGROUND: Property Code sec. 209.002(9) defines a "residential subdivision" as a subdivision, planned unit development, townhouse regime, or similar planned development in which all land has been divided into two or more parts and is subject to restrictions that:

- limit a majority of the land subject to the dedicatory instruments, excluding streets, common areas, and public areas, to residential use for single-family homes, townhomes, or duplexes only;
- are recorded in the real property records of the county in which the residential subdivision is located; and
- require membership in a property owners' association that has authority to impose regular or special assessments on the property in the subdivision.

It has been suggested that recent legislation requiring golf carts and other off-road vehicles to have license plates in order to operate on highways imposes an unnecessary burden on certain communities designed to safely accommodate golf cart drivers by utilizing slow speed limits, golf paths,

and other measures.

**DIGEST:**

HB 1281 would allow the operation of a neighborhood electric vehicle or golf cart in a master planned community that is a residential subdivision and for which a county or municipality has approved one or more plats. Golf carts could be operated without license plates in such communities.

The bill would specify the authority of a county, a municipality, or the Texas Department of Transportation to prohibit the operation of a golf cart on a highway if necessary in the interest of safety.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.