

AN ORDINANCE BY COUNCILMEMBERS JASON DOZIER, AMIR FAROKHI, AND BYRON AMOS PROHIBITING TURNS ON RED LIGHTS WITHIN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, MIDTOWN ATLANTA, AND CASTLEBERRY HILL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta is committed to fostering a safe and vibrant environment for its residents, workers, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta serves as a metropolitan and regional hubs for commerce, culture, residential life, and community activities, attracting a diverse population that relies on the accessibility and safety of its pedestrian infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta recognizes that a thriving center city is contingent upon the well-being and security of its pedestrians, who contribute to the vitality and economic prosperity of the area; and

WHEREAS, Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Castleberry Hill are home to numerous cultural attractions, businesses, and residential areas, attracting a high volume of pedestrian traffic throughout the day and night; and

WHEREAS, fostering a pedestrian-friendly environment contributes to a sense of community, encourages social interaction, and supports local businesses, thereby contributing to the overall quality of life for downtown residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the safety of pedestrians is paramount, and initiatives aimed at reducing potential hazards, such as accidents involving turns at red lights, are integral to maintaining a secure and inviting atmosphere in Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Castleberry Hill; and

WHEREAS, the success of Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Castleberry Hill as dynamic urban centers is closely tied to the safety and accessibility of their sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian pathways; and

WHEREAS, enhancing pedestrian safety aligns with the City of Atlanta's commitment to sustainable and inclusive urban development, encouraging alternative modes of transportation and reducing the reliance on single-occupancy vehicles; and

WHEREAS, no turn on red was a standard traffic policy nationally until 1975 when the federal government demanded allowance of turns as a fuel conservation measure during the oil crisis, resulting in compliance of all states by 1980; and

WHEREAS, while the impact on fuel consumption was negligible, the impact on pedestrian cycling safety was significant as the new policy triggered a sharp increase in crashes involving conflicts between a pedestrians and cyclists and a right-turning vehicles. As reported in a 1982

study, in Ohio, such collisions rose 57% for pedestrians and 80% for cyclists, and in Wisconsin, those figures were 107% and 72% respectively.; and

WHEREAS, the number of people struck and killed by walking is at the highest number in 40 years; and

WHEREAS, the Governors Highway Safety Association estimates that the number of pedestrian deaths will continue to increase; and

WHEREAS, black pedestrians are twice as likely to be struck and killed while walking than white pedestrians with 75% of pedestrian fatality victims being black pedestrians; and

WHEREAS, since 2010, over 3,000 Atlanta families have been impacted by traffic violence; and

WHEREAS, pedestrians struck and killed by people driving cars in Atlanta more than doubled between 2020 and 2021; and

WHEREAS, in April 2020, the Atlanta City Council voted unanimously to adopt Vision Zero, a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, as Atlanta's official roadway safety program; and

WHEREAS, national research indicates that allowing turns on red lights significantly increases the risk of collisions between vehicles and pedestrians, particularly in urban environments; and

WHEREAS, research confirms that at intersections, drivers are often focused on the flow of cars that they seek to merge into, rather than anyone biking or walking in their immediate vicinity; and

WHEREAS, turning drivers often pause at red lights, blocking crosswalks as they move forward to get a better view before turning, denying the right-of-way to somebody walking or biking because a driver is blocking their path; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration has advised that turning on red "should be prohibited where and/or when there are high pedestrian volumes"; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta acknowledges the proactive measures taken by other municipalities, cities, and urban centers, such as Raleigh, NC, Washington, DC, Ann Arbor, MI, Seattle, WA, and Raleigh, NC, that have all taken measures to prohibit turns on red lights; and

WHEREAS, their actions provide valuable insights and precedents for the improvement of Downtown Atlanta's, Midtown Atlanta's, and Castleberry Hill's safety infrastructure, such as the red light turn ban by Raleigh, North Carolina, which has resulted in a substantial reduction in pedestrian accidents; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting turns on red is a proven measure aligned with Vision Zero's best practices and the city's focus on creating a safe environment for pedestrians and all modes of transportation on city streets.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1: The Mayor of his designee, on behalf of the City of Atlanta, will prohibit all turns at red lights within Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Castleberry Hill.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS.

- (a) "Downtown Atlanta" and "Castleberry Hill" collectively means the area bounded by North Avenue on the north, I-20 on the south, Northside Drive on the west, and I-75/I-85 (also known as the 'Downtown Connector') on the east.
- (b) Midtown Atlanta" means the area bounded by I-85 on the north, North Avenue on the south, I-75/I-85 on the west, and Piedmont Avenue/14th Street/Peachtree Street on the east.
- (c) "Red light" means any indication, including a signal, sign, marking, or flashing light, which is red in color and prohibits vehicular traffic from proceeding.
- (d) "Turn on red light" means any right turn made by a vehicle after coming to a complete stop at a red light and yielding the right-of-way to all pedestrians and vehicles lawfully within the intersection.

SECTION 3: PROHIBITION OF TURNS ON RED LIGHTS:

- (a) Except as provided in Subsection (b), turns on red lights are prohibited at all intersections within Downtown Atlanta and Midtown Atlanta.
- (b) The prohibition in Subsection (a) does not apply to:
 - i. Intersections specifically designated by the Department of Transportation (DOT) with signage indicating permission for turns on red lights.
 - ii. Emergency vehicles responding to a call with sirens and lights activated.

SECTION 4: SIGNAGE.

ATLDOT shall, within 180 days of the effective date of this Ordinance, post appropriate signage at all intersections within Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Castleberry Hill where turns on red lights are prohibited.

SECTION 5: ENFORCEMENT.

The Atlanta Police Department (APD) shall be responsible for enforcing this Ordinance by issuing citations to violators.

SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.

All relevant municipal bodies shall enact and implement the specified regulations and administrative procedures no later than December 31st of the calendar year in which this ordinance takes effect.