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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 2604

03/06/2023 Authored by Jordan, Hornstein, Tabke, Koegel and Kraft
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to transit; appropriating money for certain transit service improvements,
1.3 including transit fare elimination, transit shelters, zero-emission bus transition,
1.4 arterial bus rapid transit planning, and transit signal priority system planning;
1.5 establishing a working group; requiring reports.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. TITLE.

1.8 This act may be cited as the "Local Bus and Transit Improvement Act."

1.9 Sec. 2. TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY SYSTEM PLANNING.

1.10 Subdivision 1. Establishment. By August 1, 2023, the Metropolitan Council must
1.11 convene a working group to perform planning on transit signal priority systems and related
1.12 transit advantage improvements on high-frequency and high-ridership bus routes in the
1.13 metropolitan area, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2.

1.14 Subd. 2. Membership. The Metropolitan Council must solicit the following members
1.15 to participate in the working group:

1.16 (1) one member representing Metro Transit, appointed by the Metropolitan Council;

1.17 (2) one member representing the Department of Transportation, appointed by the
1.18 commissioner of transportation;

1.19 (3) one member representing Minneapolis, appointed by the Minneapolis City Council;

1.20 (4) one member representing St. Paul, appointed by the St. Paul City Council;

2.1 (5) one member representing Hennepin County, appointed by the Hennepin County
 2.2 Board;

2.3 (6) one member representing Ramsey County, appointed by the Ramsey County Board;

2.4 (7) one member from a city participating in the replacement service program under
 2.5 Minnesota Statutes, section 473.388, appointed by the Suburban Transit Association;

2.6 (8) one member from the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of
 2.7 Minnesota;

2.8 (9) one member from Move Minnesota; and

2.9 (10) other members as identified by the Metropolitan Council.

2.10 Subd. 3. **Duties.** At a minimum, the working group must:

2.11 (1) assess the current status and capability of transit signal priority systems among the
 2.12 relevant road authorities;

2.13 (2) identify key barriers and constraints and measures to address the barriers;

2.14 (3) explore methods for ongoing coordination among the relevant road authorities;

2.15 (4) estimate costs of potential improvements; and

2.16 (5) develop a proposal or recommendations to implement transit signal priority systems
 2.17 and related transit advantage improvements, including a prioritized listing of locations or
 2.18 routes.

2.19 Subd. 4. **Administration.** Upon request of the working group, the Metropolitan Council
 2.20 and the commissioner of transportation must provide administrative and technical support
 2.21 for the working group.

2.22 Subd. 5. **Report.** By December 15, 2023, the Metropolitan Council must submit a report
 2.23 on transit signal priority system improvements to the chairs and ranking minority members
 2.24 of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance. At a
 2.25 minimum, the report must summarize the results of the working group and provide
 2.26 information on each of the activities specified in subdivision 3.

2.27 Subd. 6. **Expiration.** The working group under this section expires December 31, 2023.

2.28 **EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION.** This section is effective the day following
 2.29 final enactment and applies in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey,
 2.30 Scott, and Washington.

3.1 **Sec. 3. TRANSIT FARE ELIMINATION PILOT PROGRAM.**

3.2 Subdivision 1. **Pilot program established.** Subject to available funds, the Metropolitan
 3.3 Council must establish a pilot program to provide transit service free of charge for all riders,
 3.4 as specified in this section.

3.5 Subd. 2. **Requirements.** (a) The Metropolitan Council must implement the pilot program:

3.6 (1) from July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024;

3.7 (2) for at least two and up to four regular route bus lines, which may include express
 3.8 bus and bus rapid transit;

3.9 (3) on the entirety of each selected route; and

3.10 (4) during both peak and nonpeak service hours.

3.11 (b) The Metropolitan Council must prioritize transit lines to include in the pilot program
 3.12 based on routes with:

3.13 (1) the highest average daily ridership;

3.14 (2) the highest estimated proportions of low-income riders;

3.15 (3) the highest estimated proportions of riders who exclusively use transit; and

3.16 (4) significant connections to destinations and other high-ridership transit lines.

3.17 Subd. 3. **Legislative report.** (a) By February 15, 2025, the Metropolitan Council must
 3.18 submit a report on the pilot program to the chairs, ranking minority members, and staff of
 3.19 the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance. At a
 3.20 minimum, the report must include:

3.21 (1) an overview of pilot program implementation;

3.22 (2) evaluation of the effects on (i) ridership, (ii) travel time, (iii) service equity, and (iv)
 3.23 rider experience and other measures of quality of life;

3.24 (3) a review of fiscal impacts, including foregone revenue, costs related to service
 3.25 changes, and potential cost efficiencies;

3.26 (4) analysis of barriers, best practices, economic impacts, and other relevant
 3.27 considerations; and

3.28 (5) any recommendations regarding any subsequent implementation of free transit service.

3.29 (b) For purposes of this subdivision, "staff" means those employees who are identified
 3.30 in any of the following roles for the legislative committees: committee administrator,

4.1 committee legislative assistant, caucus research, fiscal analysis, counsel, or nonpartisan
4.2 research.

4.3 **EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION.** This section is effective the day following
4.4 final enactment and applies in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey,
4.5 Scott, and Washington.

4.6 Sec. 4. **APPROPRIATION; TRANSIT FARE ELIMINATION PILOT PROGRAM.**

4.7 (a) \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan
4.8 Council for transit system operations under Minnesota Statutes, sections 473.371 to 473.449.
4.9 This appropriation is to provide for foregone revenue due to the transit fare elimination pilot
4.10 program under section 3. This is a onetime appropriation.

4.11 (b) After accounting for foregone revenue, the Metropolitan Council may use any
4.12 remaining funds from the appropriation in paragraph (a) for transit shelter replacement and
4.13 improvements under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.41.

4.14 **APPLICATION.** This section applies in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota,
4.15 Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington.

4.16 Sec. 5. **APPROPRIATION; TRANSIT SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS.**

4.17 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan
4.18 Council for transit shelter replacement and improvements under Minnesota Statutes, section
4.19 473.41. This is a onetime appropriation.

4.20 Sec. 6. **APPROPRIATION; ZERO-EMISSION BUS TRANSITION.**

4.21 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan
4.22 Council for zero-emission bus procurement and associated costs in conformance with the
4.23 zero-emission and electric transit vehicle transition plan under Minnesota Statutes, section
4.24 473.3927. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until December 31, 2028.

4.25 Sec. 7. **APPROPRIATION; ARTERIAL BUS RAPID TRANSIT PLANNING.**

4.26 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan
4.27 Council for arterial bus rapid transit expansion planning. \$..... in each year is added to the
4.28 base for transit system operations.

5.1 Sec. 8. **APPROPRIATION; TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY SYSTEM PLANNING.**

5.2 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan

5.3 Council for transit signal priority system planning support under section 2. This is a onetime

5.4 appropriation.