

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

In general, this bill prohibits new guideway (e.g., rail transit) projects without state authorization and eliminates a requirement of state funding for existing light rail transit lines' operating and maintenance costs.

It prohibits completion of alternatives analyses or selection of locally preferred alternatives for new "guideway" projects without either legislative authorization or an appropriation of money for the project. A guideway includes light rail, commuter rail, intercity passenger rail, streetcars, highway bus rapid transit, express bus service operated primarily within a dedicated right-of-way, and any multimodal station serving two or more lines for intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, light rail transit, streetcars, highway bus rapid transit, or bus service operated primarily within a dedicated right-of-way.

It directs the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) to provide funding for 100 percent of the operating and capital maintenance costs of transitways that the board has previously funded, prevents CTIB from awarding grants to begin or continue work on new transitways beginning in calendar year 2016 unless debt service and costs of current transitways are covered, and provides that CTIB may make grants for capital and operating assistance for transit systems generally, including bus operations and arterial bus rapid transit.

Section

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- 1 **Legislative authorization.** Provides that the powers of the commissioner of transportation related to passenger rail are subject to the requirements of section 4 of this bill.
- 2 **Commuter rail; exercise of power.** Provides that the powers of the commissioner of transportation related to commuter rail are subject to the requirements of section 4 of this bill.
- 3 **Definitions (guideways).** Modifies and adds to the definition of “guideway” so it includes *highway* bus rapid transit, express bus service operated primarily within a dedicated right-of-way, and any multimodal station serving two or more lines for intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, light rail transit, streetcars, highway bus rapid transit, or bus service operated primarily within a dedicated right-of-way. Excludes from the definition *arterial* bus rapid transit, limited-stop bus service, and express bus service that is not operated primarily within a dedicated right-of-way.
- 4 **Guideway development authorization.** Requires specific legislative authorization or funding before MnDOT or a political subdivision completes an alternatives analysis or selects a locally preferred alternative for a guideway project.

Effective the day after enactment and applies to any project not approved by the Federal Transit Administration for preliminary engineering or a subsequent project phase as of that date.
- 5 **Definitions (CTIB).** Defines “transitway” to mean “guideway” as defined in section 3 above, excluding intercity passenger rail.
- 6 **Grant awards; use and allocation requirements (CTIB).** Expands purposes for which CTIB may make grant awards to include capital and operating assistance for transit systems, including bus operations and arterial bus rapid transit.
- 7 **Priority of fund uses (CTIB).** Provides that CTIB must fully fund existing transitways, and must not award any grants to begin or continue work on new transitways unless all debt service and existing transitway costs have been covered.

Effective the day following final enactment and applies to grants made for calendar year 2016 and after.
- 8 **Legislative authorization.** Provides that the powers of a county regional railroad authority are subject to the requirements of section 4 of this bill.
- 9 **Legislative authorization.** Provides that the powers of a responsible authority related to light rail transit are subject to the requirements of section 4 of this bill. A “responsible authority” is defined in section 473.3993, subdivision 4, to mean either the Metropolitan Council or the commissioner of transportation.
- 10 **Operating costs (Metropolitan Council).** Requires all light rail transit operating and maintenance costs that are not covered by operating revenue and federal money, to come from nonstate sources. Specifies that state sources include general fund appropriations and revenue from the motor vehicle sales tax.

Section

- 11** **Repealer.** Repeals the requirement that any grant award by CTIB to the Metropolitan Council must supplement, not supplant, operating and capital assistance provided by the state.
- 12** **Effective date.** Effective the day following final enactment, unless otherwise indicated. Those portions of the bill relating to the Metropolitan Council apply in the seven-county metropolitan area.