

Subject Transit safety, assistance, and enforcement

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Overview

This bill modifies penalties, enforcement, and rider assistance activities related to public transit. Among its provisions, the bill:

- directs the Metropolitan Council to create a Transit Riders Investment Program to improve the transit experience, as funds are available;
- specifies training requirements and duties of Transit Riders Investment Program (TRIP) personnel under the program, which include monitoring passenger activity, providing information and referrals to social services, performing inspections to verify fare payment, and issuing administrative citations;
- authorizes administrative citations as an alternative to a judicial penalty for violations related to (1) nonpayment of fares, falsified fares, or failure to show proof of payment; and (2) some specified passenger conduct activities;
- reduces the judicial penalty for fare-related as well as passenger conduct violations, lowering it from a misdemeanor to a petty misdemeanor and decreasing the amounts; and
- appropriates \$1 million from the general fund in fiscal year 2020 to implement the program on the light rail transit system for a six-month pilot period.

Under current law, both fare-related violations and passenger conduct violations carry a misdemeanor penalty with a \$100 base fine and a \$75 court surcharge (totaling \$175 with other fees potentially applying). The bill reduces the penalty level and creates two separate options for enforcement: (1) as a petty misdemeanor treated as a payable offense but potentially following a judicial process in the courts, with a base fine of \$10 and court surcharge of \$25 (totaling at least \$35); or (2) through an administrative citation administered by the Metropolitan Council, with a fine amount that can range from \$35 to \$100 as set by the council. A fare-related or passenger conduct violation could only be enforced through one or the other of the options.

Summary

Section	Description
1	<p>Administration of opiate antagonists for drug overdose.</p> <p>Authorizes personnel under the Metropolitan Council program for transit riders (being established in the bill) to administer opiate antagonists (e.g., NARCAN Nasal Spray) for emergency treatment of an opioid overdose, if the medical provider and training prerequisites are met.</p>
2	<p>Surcharges on criminal and traffic offenders.</p> <p>Reduces, from \$75 to \$25, the court surcharge imposed for fare-related violations (e.g., nonpayment of fares, falsified fares, or failure to show proof of payment) as well as transit passenger conduct violations (e.g., smoking, littering, or consuming unauthorized food or beverages). Effective July 1, 2020.</p>
3	<p>Disbursement of surcharges by commissioner of management and budget.</p> <p>Directs the entirety of the court surcharge on fare-related and transit passenger conduct violations to go to the general fund.</p>
4	<p>Transit Riders Investment Program.</p> <p>Directs the Metropolitan Council to implement a Transit Riders Investment Program for transit passenger monitoring and services, fare compliance inspection, and administrative citations, if funds are available. Sets authority and requirements for the administrative citations.</p> <p>Subd. 1. Definitions. Defines terms.</p> <p>Subd. 2. Program established. Directs the Metropolitan Council to implement the program if funds are available. Sets requirements on determining fine amounts, establishing policies and procedures for the program, stakeholder consultation, a recruitment plan for hiring transit ambassadors, and strategic deployment plan of personnel under the program.</p> <p>Subd. 3. TRIP personnel; duties, requirements. (a) Specifies duties of Transit Riders Investment Program (TRIP) personnel, which include monitoring passenger activity, providing information and referrals to social services, performing inspections to verify fare payment, and issuing administrative citations.</p> <p>(b) Requires TRIP personnel to be Metropolitan Council employees.</p> <p>Subd. 4. TRIP personnel; training. Identifies training topics for TRIP personnel.</p> <p>Subd. 5. Administrative citations; authority, issuance. Authorizes TRIP personnel as well as peace officers to issue administrative citations. Requires notifications</p>

Section Description

as part of citation issuance. Prohibits administrative citation quotas. Prevents issuance of both an administrative citation and a citation under the statute governing fare payment and rider conduct requirements for the same act.

Subd. 6. Administrative citations; disposition. Outlines requirements for disposition of administrative citation, including (1) setting a 90-day window to contest the citation, (2) directing the council to set up a process for contesting citations, and (3) providing authority to undertake collections.

Subd. 7. Administrative citations; penalties. Requires the fine amount for an administrative citation to be in the range of \$35 to \$100, as determined by the council. Authorizes the council to (1) adopt a graduated fine structure that increases the fine amount with subsequent violations, and (2) use alternative resolution processes under some circumstances.

Subd. 8. Use of funds. Directs the council to separately track and report funds from the administrative citations, and use the funds only for program costs.

5 Unlawfully obtaining services; petty misdemeanor.

Modifies the penalty for evading or falsifying fare payment for transit service, or for failure to provide proof of fare payment, to be a petty misdemeanor instead of a misdemeanor.

Sets the base fine amount at \$10, which is reduced from \$100 as currently established by the judicial branch in its statewide schedule of payable offenses (i.e., offenses that can be addressed through payment of a fine without a court appearance).

Effective July 1, 2020.

6 Prohibited activities; petty misdemeanor.

Modifies the penalty for violating transit passenger conduct prohibitions to be a petty misdemeanor instead of a misdemeanor. Specific activities are prohibited under the provision, including smoking, littering, and consuming food or beverages without authorization, and operating an electronic device with amplified sound.

Sets the base fine amount at \$10, which is reduced from \$100 as currently established in the statewide schedule of payable offenses.

Effective July 1, 2020.

Section	Description
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| 7 | <p>Transit Riders Investment Program; appropriation.</p> <p>Makes an appropriation for the program and requires a legislative report. Effective the day after enactment.</p> <p>Subd. 1. Appropriation. Appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Metropolitan Council in fiscal year 2020 to implement the Transit Riders Investment Program on the light rail system over a six-month pilot period. Directs the council to commence the program within six months of enactment of the appropriation.</p> <p>Subd. 2. Legislative report. Requires a legislative report on the program and its impacts, due within three months of conclusion of the pilot period.</p> |
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