

Chapter 650

(Senate Bill 70)

AN ACT concerning

Transportation – Major Change in Bus Service – ~~Impacts Report~~ Publication on Website

FOR the purpose of ~~requiring the Maryland Transit Administration, before announcing any reduction or cancellation of an existing bus route or line, to compile a report on the impacts of the proposed service reduction or cancellation; requiring the Administration to publish the report on its website at least a certain number of days before the required public hearing on the proposed service change~~ altering the information that the Maryland Transit Administration is required to publish on its website before holding a public hearing on a major service change; requiring the Administration to distribute ~~the report~~ a certain report on proposed major service changes to certain officials and entities; and generally relating to ~~service reductions or cancellations of major service changes for~~ existing bus routes.

~~BY adding to~~
~~Article – Transportation~~
~~Section 7-508~~
~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~
~~(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)~~

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Transportation
Section ~~7-715~~ 7-716
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)
(As enacted by Chapters 583 and 584 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2023)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Transportation

~~7-508. 7-715.~~

~~(A) The Administration shall develop transit equity analysis policies and guidelines, including thresholds for when a reduction or cancellation of a capital expansion project in the construction program of the Consolidated Transportation Program requires analysis.~~

~~(A) (B) (1) IN THIS SECTION SUBSECTION, "ROUTE" MEANS A BUS ROUTE OR BUS LINE, OR THE CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA.~~

~~(B) (2) BEFORE ANNOUNCING ANY SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION OF AN EXISTING ROUTE, THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL COMPILE A REPORT ON THE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION THAT INCLUDES:~~

~~(1) (I) INFORMATION ON THE ROUTE, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF:~~

~~(i) 1. THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF:~~

~~1. A. THE RIDERS ON THE ROUTE; AND~~

~~2. B. THE SERVICE AREA;~~

~~(ii) 2. THE SCHOOLS IN THE SERVICE AREA;~~

~~(iii) 3. THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN THE SERVICE AREA;~~

~~(iv) 4. THE MONTHLY RIDERSHIP ON THE ROUTE; AND~~

~~(v) 5. THE EFFECT THAT THE SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION WOULD HAVE ON THE:~~

~~A. THE COMMUTES OF RIDERS ON THE ROUTE;~~

~~B. THE CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA;~~

~~AND~~

~~C. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PARATRANSIT RIDERS IMPACTED;~~

~~(2) (ii) A DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS OF ANY MINUTES, RECORDS, OR DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION; AND~~

~~(3) (iii) A BRIEF STATEMENT EXPLAINING THE REASON FOR THE SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION.~~

~~(C) (3) AT LEAST 30 DAYS BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED UNDER § 7-506 OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL:~~

~~(1) (i) PUBLISH THE REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S WEBSITE WITH A VISIBLE LINK IDENTIFYING THE IMPACTED ROUTE ON THE PRIMARY PAGE; AND~~

~~(2) (ii) DISTRIBUTE THE REPORT TO:~~

~~(i) 1. THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION; AND~~

~~(ii) 2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2 1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE:~~

~~1. A. THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;~~

~~2. B. THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;~~

~~3. C. THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE;~~

~~4. D. THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE; AND~~

~~5. E. EACH MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHOSE DISTRICT WOULD BE IMPACTED BY THE PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION OF THE ROUTE.~~

7-716.

(a) Before announcing any service change that would constitute a major service change under the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients, the Department, in collaboration with the Administration, shall:

(1) Conduct a transit equity analysis in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended to determine whether the change will create a disparate impact on persons with disabilities;

(2) Conduct a transit equity analysis in accordance with the Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients to determine whether the change will create a disparate impact or a disproportionate burden;

(3) Perform a cost-benefit analysis, including an analysis of impacts on:

(i) Economic development;

(ii) Employment;

- (iii) Education;
- (iv) Health; and
- (v) Environmental justice; and

(4) Consult with members and leaders of affected communities, including through community outreach to:

- (i) Racial minority communities;
- (ii) Low-income communities;
- (iii) Disabled riders;
- (iv) Riders with limited English proficiency;
- (v) Transit-reliant riders; and
- (vi) Senior riders.

(b) (1) If a transit equity analysis reveals disparate impact or disproportionate burden, the Administration shall:

- (i) Develop alternatives that would meet the goals of the proposed service change; and
- (ii) Conduct a transit equity analysis on the alternatives.

(2) If a disparate impact can be avoided through use of one of the alternatives analyzed, the Administration shall proceed with that alternative as the primary proposed service change.

(3) If there is no alternative that would avoid a disparate impact or disproportionate burden, the Administration:

- (i) May not implement the proposed service change unless a substantial justification exists that necessitates the change; and
- (ii) Shall implement the alternative that causes the least disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

(c) Before holding a public hearing on a proposed service change, the Administration shall publish on the Administration's website **WITH A VISIBLE LINK IDENTIFYING THE PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGE ON THE PRIMARY PAGE**, for the routes

[or lines], LINES, OR ANY CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA impacted by the service change], an evaluation on the demographics of:

(1) The riders of the routes or lines; and

(2) The service area];

(1) A DESCRIPTION OF:

(I) THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF:

1. THE RIDERS ON THE AFFECTED ROUTE, LINE, OR PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA; AND

2. THE AFFECTED SERVICE AREA;

(II) THE SCHOOLS IN THE AFFECTED SERVICE AREA;

(III) THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN THE AFFECTED SERVICE AREA;

(IV) THE MONTHLY RIDERSHIP FOR THE ROUTE, LINE, OR SERVICE AREA; AND

(V) THE EFFECT THAT THE PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGE WOULD HAVE ON:

1. THE COMMUTES OF RIDERS ON THE ROUTE, LINE, OR SERVICE AREA;

2. THE CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA;

3. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PARATRANSIT RIDERS IMPACTED;

(2) A SUMMARY OF ANY PUBLICLY AVAILABLE MINUTES, RECORDS, OR DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGE; AND

(3) A BRIEF STATEMENT EXPLAINING THE REASON FOR THE PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGE.

(d) (1) After completing the public hearings, the Administration shall:

(i) Publish the transit equity analysis and cost–benefit analysis on the Administration’s website; and

(ii) Compile a report on the impacts of the proposed service change.

(2) The report shall include:

(i) The transit equity analysis;

(ii) The cost–benefit analysis;

(iii) A community outreach report;

(iv) Any alternatives analyzed; and

(v) If applicable, the final alternative selected.

(3) If a disparate impact or disproportionate burden exists in the final alternative selected, the report shall include a substantial justification statement.

(4) The report shall be:

(i) Made available to the public on the Administration’s website, with a visible link from the primary information page relating to the proposed service change; and

(ii) Distributed to:

1. The members of the Board of Public Works;

2. The Attorney General;

3. The Secretary of Transportation;

4. Any elected officials whose districts would be impacted by the proposed service change;

5. Any community leaders consulted during the community outreach process; and

6. In accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article:

A. The President of the Senate;

B. The Speaker of the House;

C. The Senate Finance Committee; [and]

D. The House Environment and Transportation Committee;

AND

E. EACH MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHOSE DISTRICT WOULD BE IMPACTED BY THE PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.