

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1507

(Delegate Addison, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Finance

Transportation - Major Change in Bus Service - Publication on Website

This bill modifies the requirements of Chapters 583 and 584 of 2023 by (1) expanding the information that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) must publish on its website before it holds a public hearing on a proposed major service change and (2) requiring MTA to distribute the report required under current law on the impacts of a proposed service change to each member of the General Assembly whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund expenditures increase, likely minimally, for MTA to modify its contract with its consultant in order to collect and publish the additional information. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law:

Transit Equity Analyses and Related Requirements

Chapters 583 and 584 require the Maryland Department of Transportation, beginning July 1, 2024, and in collaboration with MTA, to conduct two transit equity analyses, perform a cost-benefit analysis, consult with members and leaders of affected communities, and take specified actions based on the results of these activities before announcing (1) any service change that would constitute a major service change under specified federal

guidelines or (2) any reduction or cancellation of a capital expansion project in the construction program of the *Consolidated Transportation Program* that exceeds transit equity thresholds developed by MTA.

Under current law, before holding a public hearing on a proposed service change, MTA must publish on its website, for the routes or lines impacted by the service change, an evaluation on the demographics of the riders of the routes or lines and the service area. *The bill* instead requires MTA, before holding a public hearing on a proposed service change, to publish on its website with a visible link identifying the proposed service change on the primary page, for the routes, lines, or any corresponding paratransit service area impacted by the service change:

- a description of (1) the demographics of the riders on the affected route, line, or paratransit service area and the affected service area; (2) the schools in the affected service area; (3) the types of businesses in the affected service area; (4) the monthly ridership for the route, line, or service area; and (5) the effect the proposed service change would have on the commutes of riders on the route, line, or service area, the corresponding paratransit service area, and the estimated number of paratransit riders impacted;
- a summary of any publicly available minutes, records, or documents related to the proposed service change; and
- a brief statement explaining the reason for the proposed service change.

Under current law, after completing the public hearings, MTA must publish the transportation equity analysis and cost-benefit analysis on its website and compile a report on the impacts of the proposed service change. The report must include the various analyses conducted, a community outreach report, any alternatives analyzed, and, if applicable, the final alternative selected with any substantial justification statements. The report must be (1) made available to the public on MTA's website, with a visible link from the primary information page relating to the proposed service change, and (2) distributed to the members of the Board of Public Works, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, any elected officials whose districts would be impacted by the proposed service change, any community leaders consulted during the community outreach process, the Presiding Officers, and specified legislative committees. *Under the bill*, the report must also be distributed to each member of the General Assembly whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change.

Required Public Hearings for Proposed Fare and Service Changes

Generally, pursuant to current law, MTA must hold a public hearing before it:

- fixes or revises any fare or rate charged to the general public;

- establishes or abandons any bus or rail route listed on a published timetable;
- changes a bus or rail route alignment listed on a published timetable, unless the change is needed because of temporary construction or changes in the road network;
- reduces the frequency, number of days, or days of service for a commuter bus or commuter rail route without substituting a comparable level of service, except under specified circumstances; or
- establishes or abandons a rail transit station.

Statute specifies that MTA may only implement any such change during the time period that begins six weeks after the public hearing and ends six months after the hearing. If MTA gives inadequate or defective notice of a public hearing or change, MTA may not implement the change unless it makes a reasonable effort to correct the inadequacy or defect and a legally sufficient public hearing is held.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 70 (Senator McCray) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 15, 2024
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Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510