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Senate Bill 967 (as introduced 2-14-12)
Sponsor: Senator Virgil Smith
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 3-13-12

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 51 of 1951, the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) law, to authorize the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) or a local road agency to enter into an agreement with a regional transit authority to operate a public transit system, and designate lanes as dedicated public transit lanes.

Specifically, MDOT or a local road agency could enter into an operating license agreement with a regional transit authority to operate a public transit system on the streets and highways of the State as provided for in State law enacted after January 1, 2012.

As part of the agreement, MDOT or the local road agency could designate at least one lane of a street or highway as a dedicated public transit lane. Such a lane could be reserved for the exclusive use of public transit vehicles operated by a regional transit authority during periods determined by MDOT or the local road agency; however, the lane would have to be made available at all times to emergency services vehicles. Lanes designated and marked as dedicated public transit lanes would be subject to the same provisions as high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes under the Michigan Vehicle Code.

(Under the Vehicle Code, when a lane has been designated as an HOV lane under the MTF law, and has been appropriately marked, the lane must be reserved during the periods indicated for the exclusive use of buses and HOVs (i.e., motor vehicles carrying at least two occupants, including the driver). The restrictions imposed on HOV lanes do not apply to any of the following:

- Authorized emergency vehicles.
- Law enforcement vehicles.
- Motorcycles.
- Transit and commuter buses designed to transport people, including the driver.
- Vehicles of public utility companies responding to an emergency call.
- Vehicles using an HOV lane to make a turn permitted by law for a reasonable distance in advance of the turn or to enter or exit a limited access highway.
- Taxicabs with at least two occupants, including the driver.
- Bicycles, if the HOV lane is the right-hand lane of a highway open to bicycles.

From December 9, 2008, until December 31, 2010, the MTF law authorized MDOT to designate as HOV lanes one or more lanes of highway US 12 in a city with a population of more than 700,000.)

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.