

HB 511

Transit: New GDOT Division, Funding, and Incentives

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Overview:

This legislation streamlines statewide transit planning by creating one division under GDOT responsible for transit. Eight mobility zones are designated around the state with each overseen by a Mobility Manager and a council comprised of membership from the area's Regional Commission. Pilot programs are created to incentivize employers and assist underemployed/unemployed. New funding mechanisms include a state excise tax on ride-hailing services and taxis and counties could implement a Single County Transit SPLOST.

Details:

Division of Transit and Mobility Innovations: A new division would be created under the Georgia Department of Transportation called the "Division of Transit and Mobility Innovations". The new division would have a director and would be responsible for all transit-related programs statewide with the exception of the Atlanta-region Transit Link "ATL" Authority.

Funding / New Excise Tax: A new excise tax will be levied upon "for-hire ground transportation" (taxi, limos, ride share, i.e. Uber/Lyft.) The legislation instructs that funds from this tax shall be made available and used exclusively for transit and transit projects. Fee would be .50 cents for-hire ground transport trips and .25 cents per shared for-hire ground transport trip.

Single County Transit SPLOST: Counties would be allowed to implement a Single County Transit SPLOST up to 1% and for a period of time up to 30 years. Projects would be selected from the Regional Transit Plan and approved by the new Mobility Zone Advisory Council.

Healthcare Mobility Transit Coordination Commission: A new commission would be created to review healthcare related transit services provided in Georgia. By January 1, 2021, the commission shall provide a recommendation to the Governor and General Assembly on the transfer and consolidation of healthcare related transit services into the new transit department housed at GDOT.

Mobility Zones: Eight areas are designated as a Mobility Zone with each zone tasked with developing a regional transit plan. Each zone will be led by a Mobility Manager reporting to the new GDOT transit division.

Each zone would have a Mobility Zone Advisory Council comprised of seven members appointed by the Chair of the Regional Commission with territorial limits which coincide with the mobility zone. If the mobility zone is within two regional commission boundaries, four members will be appointed by the Chair of the Regional Commission with the greatest total population and three members appointed by the Chair from the other Regional Commission. Members of the council are to be selected from among the membership of the Regional Commission and must include the chief elected official from the most populous county and include representation from at least three who represent municipalities and three who represent counties. The ATL will serve as the ninth zone and the council for Zone 9 will be the ATL Board of Directors.

Pilot Programs: A pilot program will be created to incentivize employers to invest in transit through offering corporate tax credits. Also, subject to appropriations, a pilot program will be created to provide direct assistance to individuals who are underemployed or unemployed for individuals residing in 22 counties in Georgia (based off high unemployment rates and low poverty rates).

ATL Board of Directors: This legislation clarifies the election process for the ATL Board of Directors by requiring the vote to be done in person and by secret ballot. Voting by proxy or teleconference will not be allowed.

Cobb County: This legislation extends the date for the "Cobb County Special District for Transit" for two years from 12/1/2019 to 12/1/2021.