



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations

Bill 21-0017

Study and Report – City Employee Parking Benefits

Sponsor: *Councilmember Ryan Dorsey*

Introduced: *January 11, 2021*

Purpose:

For the purpose of requiring that the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Finance submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating certain matters related to providing parking and commuter benefits to City employees; and providing for a special effective date.

Effective: Date of enactment

Agency Reports

Department of Human Resources	
Department of Finance	Favorable w/Amendment
Office of the Mayor	

Analysis

Background

The Johns Hopkins University Center for Applied Public Research reported in 2020 that Baltimore City spends approximately \$850,000 annually for parking, funds that serve only 600 of the roughly 13,000 city employees. They stated that, if this benefit were eliminated, and the city were able to secure a 12% discount from the Maryland Transit Administration, then all 13,000 city employees would be eligible and able to receive a monthly transit pass.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 201 and Senate Bill 319 which requires the Maryland Transit Administration to provide ridership services on transit vehicles to any permanent employee in any unit of the Executive Branch of State government. Those permanent employees are entitled to use the Light Rail, the Baltimore Metro Subway and bus service in the Baltimore metro area at no charge with a valid State ID card. This benefit can be used anytime day or evening, including weekends. The free Mass Transit Benefit does not include MARC trains or any special event buses.

Similar Legislation: Bill 20-0558 City Officers and Employees – Commuting Benefits

This ordinance was introduced with the intent to require the Department of Human Resources to have a written policy regarding certain parking benefits. It was the opinion of the Law Department that this legislation impinged on the Charter Authority of the Board of Estimates and was outside of the scope of legislative authority of the City Council. The Law Department cited Baltimore City Charter, Article VII, Section 97 which states that the Department of Human Resources “shall administer employee benefits and pre-employment screening programs as directed by the Board of Estimates.

Now, while the City Council has no authority to legislate the fiscal policy within the jurisdiction of the Board of Estimates, what this bill does is directs the Department of Finance and Department of Human Resources to study this topic and report their findings. At the conclusion of this process the Mayor and City Council will be able to review the information that was requested to be studied, and the Mayor can elect to accept or deny in whole or in part the findings of the report. At that time those items accepted can be drafted and published into the city’s Administrative Manual. The Administrative Manual is a compilation of the provisions established in the City Charter, Board of Estimates policies and rules, Memoranda of Understanding and the directives of the City Administration.

Current Process

In the city’s annual budget, the Department of Finance allocates funds to the Mayor’s Office, the Baltimore City Council, the Office of the Comptroller, and Executive Branch agency’s for parking as a line item. Each agency or office has a representative that is designated to manage the distribution and retrieval of parking passes provided by that agency. There is no uniform policy that outlines who is entitled to receive a parking pass, that decision is strictly made at the discretion of the agency head.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): Baltimore City: Department of Transportation, and Police Department

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Analysis Date: January 25, 2021

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