

Senate Bill 516

By: Senators Zamarripa of the 36th, Williams of the 19th, Johnson of the 1st, Brown of the 26th and Harbison of the 15th

AS PASSED SENATE

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT**

1 To amend Chapter 9 of Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to mass
2 transportation, so as to provide that the Department of Transportation shall implement a
3 program to provide for the development and expansion of streetcar transportation and
4 attendant economic and community development opportunities; to provide for related
5 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Community Streetcar
9 Development and Revitalization Act."

10 **SECTION 2.**

11 Chapter 9 of Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to mass
12 transportation, is amended by adding a new Code Section 32-9-12 to read as follows:

13 "32-9-12.

14 (a) The department shall establish and implement a five-year grant program to provide
15 assistance to local governmental authorities as well as a public-private project initiative for
16 the capital, technical, and startup costs of development and expansion of streetcar
17 transportation and attendant economic and community development opportunities. The
18 five-year grant program will begin when funding becomes available for such purposes. The
19 five-year grant program may be renewed at the end of each five-year period, consistent
20 with the provisions of this Code section.

21 (b) The department shall form a pilot program that will provide a state level flow through
22 point for any available federal funding or other forms of financial and development sources
23 and assistance for local, regional, and public-private streetcar projects, subject to guidance
24 and approval by the Governor. The funding for such pilot and grant program shall be
25 administered by the State Road and Tollway Authority.

1 (c) The department may consider the following factors in its selection of projects that will
2 be implemented by this pilot program:

3 (1) The project is ripe for development, construction, and operation;

4 (2) The project application demonstrates strong local and private sector financial
5 participation in the project;

6 (3) The project will foster redevelopment opportunities adjacent to the streetcar line for
7 which assistance is being sought;

8 (4) The project requires the financial participation of the private owners of real property
9 abutting the streetcar line, with the exception of owner occupied residential properties,
10 for some of the capital costs of the project;

11 (5) The project application demonstrates that development or redevelopment agreements
12 are in place with respect to the project and land planning policies complimentary to the
13 project have been adopted for land in close proximity to the streetcar line, including the
14 availability of property zoned to accommodate mixed use development adjacent to the
15 streetcar line;

16 (6) The project application demonstrates either how redeveloping or new neighborhoods
17 on vacant or underutilized land will be connected by the project to each other or to major
18 attractors in the central city where the project will be carried out or how circulator or
19 connector lines under the project will connect developed neighborhoods with one another
20 or with the business district in the central city;

21 (7) The project has demonstrated desirable levels of local financial or linking resources
22 commitment, or both;

23 (8) The project may include, and is encouraged to include, a public-private project
24 initiative and organizational structure or sponsor;

25 (9) The department shall coordinate with all appropriate metropolitan, regional, and
26 municipal planning and development agencies and local transit agencies where projects
27 may be pursued and shall coordinate with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
28 in the planning, development, funding, and implementation of various streetcar projects;
29 and

30 (10) Notwithstanding the above optional factors, in urban areas in which metropolitan
31 planning organizations function, the department shall give high priority to projects drawn
32 from adopted regional transportation plans and adopted transportation improvement
33 programs.

34 (d) In order to receive grant assistance under this Code section, a sponsor of a project must
35 submit to the department an application that includes a detailed operating plan for the
36 streetcar line for which such assistance is being sought, including the frequency of service,

1 hours of operation, stop locations, and demonstration of the financial capacity of the
2 sponsor to operate the streetcar line.

3 (e) A project for which grant assistance may be provided under this Code section may
4 include streetscaping, signalization modifications, and other modifications to the road
5 system or other public rights of way on which the project is to be carried out; acquisition
6 of streetcars; and project construction, design, and engineering.

7 (f) As used in this Code section, the terms:

8 (1) 'Local government authority' and 'state' have the same meanings as under Section
9 5302 of Title 49 of the United States Code.

10 (2) 'Public-private project initiative' means a local or regional streetcar project which is
11 proposed and advanced by a cooperative entity or sponsor that involves a combined
12 public and private sector financing and development structure which includes not for
13 profit entities.

14 (3) 'Streetcar' includes, but is not limited to, a rail transit vehicle, including a modern,
15 antique, or reproduction vehicle, that is designed to fit the scale and traffic patterns of
16 neighborhoods through which it travels, is powered by electricity, and operates at lower
17 speeds generally in existing rights of way through mixed traffic, with frequent stops."

18 **SECTION 3.**

19 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.