

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R21447 AAF-D

H.B. 1656  
By: Israel et al. (Watson)  
Transportation  
5/15/2017  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

H.B. 1656 allows transit to utilize the shoulders of highways in designated areas of Central Texas to bypass heavy traffic during periods of construction. With plans for major construction on I-35 through Austin, allowing local transit authorities in Central Texas to partner with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will provide a low-cost tool to reduce work zone-related congestion by taking advantage of existing resources.

Shoulders would not be permanently dedicated to buses. Instead, transit would only be permitted by TxDOT on highway shoulders for a limited period during construction. Transit authorities will work within parameters designated by the agency. Bus drivers will also receive specific training to ensure they are able to safely bypass work zones and keep commute times as reliable as possible, even during construction.

H.B. 1656 amends current law relating to the operation of a public transit motor bus by certain mass transit entities on an improved shoulder.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 545.058(c), Transportation Code, as follows:

(c) Provides that a limitation in this section on driving on an improved shoulder does not apply to a public transit motor bus of a mass transit entity operating under Subtitle K (Mass Transportation), Title 6 (Roadways), if the motor bus is within the boundaries of a certain metropolitan planning organization and bypassing traffic by operating on the shoulder of a highway designated by the Texas Department of Transportation that is under construction. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.