

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Juan Carrillo, Chair

AB 2634 (McCarty) – As Amended April 2, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Sacramento Regional Transit District.

**SUMMARY:** Makes changes to Sacramento Regional Transit District's (SacRT) procurement powers and reduced fare requirements. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes SacRT to delegate to the appropriate officer the authority to order actions and procurements without competitive bidding in the case of an emergency.
- 2) Exempts SacRT from a provision pursuant to existing law that requires each transit operator that offers reduced fares to senior citizens to also offer reduced fares to disabled persons and disabled veterans, as defined, at the same rate established for senior citizens.
- 3) Finds and declares that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California Constitution because SacRT requires greater discretion to properly serve its community in light of the unique demographics of the Sacramento region.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the SacRT Act, which governs the powers and functions of SacRT; establishes SacRT's territory, and planning duties; and, authorizes SacRT to issue general obligation bonds and revenue bonds, as specified. [Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 102000 et. Seq.]
- 2) Requires each transit operator that offers reduced fares to senior citizens to also offer reduced fares to disabled persons and disabled veterans at the same rate established for senior citizens, as specified. (PUC § 99155)
- 3) Requires SacRT to award contracts for the construction of transit works or transit facilities in excess of \$5,000 to the lowest responsible bidder after competitive bidding. Exempts SacRT from this requirement in an emergency declared by a 4/5 vote of the district's board. [Public Contract Code (PCC) § 20321]
- 4) Authorizes numerous public agencies, not including SacRT, to delegate to the appropriate county administrative officer, city manager, chief engineer, or other nonelected agency officer the authority to order certain actions and procurements in the case of emergency without competitive bidding, as specified. (PCC § 22050)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** None

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Bill Summary and Author's Statement.** This bill authorizes SacRT to delegate to the appropriate officer the authority to order actions and procurements without competitive bidding in the case of an emergency. It also exempts SacRT from a provision pursuant to existing law that requires each transit operator that offers reduced fares to senior citizens to

also offer reduced fares to disabled persons and disabled veterans, as defined, at the same rate established for senior citizens.

According to the author, “Public transit is a lifeline for many in our community and offering free SacRT senior passes will significantly improve active transportation options and senior mobility in the Sacramento region.”

This bill is sponsored by SacRT.

- 2) **Sacramento Regional Transit District.** SacRT was established by SB 1477 (Rodda), Chapter 1374, Statutes of 1971. SacRT serves citizens in the County of Sacramento and the Cities of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova, by operating over 82 bus routes (fixed-route, microtransit, and dial-a-ride), 43 miles of light rail serving 53 light rail stations and ADA paratransit services across an approximately 440 square-mile service area.

SacRT is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors comprised of directors that are appointed by the different jurisdictions: three members by Sacramento County, four members by the City of Sacramento, two members by the City of Elk Grove, and one member each from the cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova. Areas currently authorized to join, but have yet to, are the cities of Davis, Roseville, West Sacramento, and Woodland, and specified parts of Yolo County.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1924 (Stephanie Nguyen) allows SacRT to expand its service area to any city within Sacramento County and any other portion of the unincorporated territory within the boundaries of Sacramento County where the county has declared a need for the district to operate. AB 1924 is pending on the Assembly Floor.
- 4) **Previous Legislation.** AB 709 (McCarty), Chapter 522, Statutes of 2018, made numerous changes to the SacRT Act, including clarifying SacRT’s geographic area and adding a one-eighth of one percent sales tax-rate increment to SacRT’s taxation authority.

AB 1196 (Cooley), Chapter 272, Statutes of 2021, changed the voting structure for SacRT from a weighted voting structure to a “one member, one vote” voting structure. This bill also removed the code sections pertaining to the weighted voting structure and made other technical and clarifying changes.

AB 2015 (Cooley), Chapter 182, Statutes of 2022, increased, from \$100,000 to \$125,000, the bid threshold for SacRT’s purchase of supplies, equipment, and materials. This bill also specified that if SacRT establishes a retirement board for the retirement system, board members and employees of the district may serve on its retirement board, and deleted obsolete language in the SacRT Act.

AB 354 (Nguyen), Chapter 35, Statutes of 2023, authorized the City of Elk Grove to appoint two members to the SacRT board instead of one.

AB 1052 (McCarty), Chapter 674, Statutes of 2023, made changes to the taxing authority for SacRT.

- 5) **Arguments in Support.** SacRT, sponsor of this bill, writes, “(AB 2634) would allow SacRT to offer a special discounted rate to riders identified as ‘Super’ Senior Citizens. Our region’s population is aging, and more people are deciding on their own to restrict their driving to daylight hours and when weather conditions are optimal. Some may decide not to drive at all, and others may lose the ability to drive due to age-related conditions affecting their vision, hearing, or cognitive ability. Removing the transportation barrier will allow this vulnerable population to continue access to medical appointments, shopping, and to stay connected to friends, family, and community.

“In short, public transit becomes more of a lifeline for many people, especially for the aging population. We cannot allow the lack of ability to afford transit fare to be an obstacle to our region’s older riders. SB 2634 allows SacRT to offer a special rate, or potentially free rides on our system to ‘Super’ Senior Citizens. We currently offer free rides to youth in grades K-12, and it has become a transformative community program, allowing young people easier travel to and from school, jobs, after school activities and even weekend trips just for fun. We believe the Super senior pass will significantly improve mobility in our region...The older citizens of our service territory will greatly benefit from this important bill.”

- 6) **Arguments in Opposition.** None on file.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

Sacramento Regional Transit District [SPONSOR]  
Leadingage California  
Ridership for the Masses

**Opposition**

None on file

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