
Local Government Committee

HB 1456

Brief Description: Concerning metropolitan park districts.

Sponsors: Representatives Kloba, Springer, McBride, Goodman, Stanford, Slatter, Appleton, Ryu and Doglio.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a city proposing or approving a petition regarding the formation of a metropolitan park district (MPD) to limit the purpose and taxing powers of the proposed MPD in its resolution.
- Changes board membership requirements when the governing body of a city or county acts in an ex officio capacity as the board of metropolitan park commissioners.
- Generalizes the allowable purposes under which a metropolitan park district may contract indebtedness and extends the maximum term for general bond obligations.
- Authorizes cities to enter into agreements to transfer to MPDs any lands, facilities, equipment, and other interests in real or personal property.

Hearing Date: 1/25/17

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

Metropolitan Park Districts.

A metropolitan park district (MPD) is a type of special purpose district that may be created for the management, control, improvement, maintenance, or acquisition of parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities. A metropolitan park district may include territory located in portions or all of one or more cities or counties, or in one or more cities and counties. A ballot proposition must be submitted to the voters if a resolution of the city and county legislative

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authorities proposing the creation of the district is adopted or if a petition is signed by at least 15 percent of the registered voters within the proposed boundaries of the district.

Metropolitan Park Commissioners.

Metropolitan park districts are governed by five elected park commissioners who serve six-year terms. The commissioners are elected simultaneously when the voters are deciding whether a metropolitan park district should be formed. In a district wholly located within a city or within the unincorporated area of a county, however, the governing body of the city or legislative authority of the county may be designated to serve in an ex officio capacity as the board of metropolitan park commissioners. If the proposed district is located within more than one city, more than one county, or any combination of cities and counties, each city governing body and county legislative authority may be designated to collectively serve ex officio as the board of metropolitan park commissioners through selection of one or more members from each entity to serve as the board.

The board of park commissioners may impose an initial levy, not to exceed 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, of the property in the district. The board of park commissioners may levy an additional general tax on all property located in a park district each year not to exceed 25 cents per \$1000 of assessed valuation. The two levies (totaling 75 cents) are considered a single levy for purposes of the constitutional limit.

Indebtedness Limit.

A MPD may issue both voter-approved and nonvoter approved indebtedness for park, boulevard, aviation landings, playgrounds, and parkway purposes. The combined indebtedness cannot exceed one-quarter of one percent of the value of the taxable property in the district. In addition, MPDs may issue general obligation bonds up to a maximum term of 20 years.

Property Transfer.

A city may turn over to a park district any lands that it may own within the city for the purpose of creating parks, playgrounds, or parkways. Counties and municipal corporations may also transfer to MPDs any lands, facilities, equipment, and other interests in real or person property.

Summary of Bill:

Allowable Limits on Certain City Metropolitan Park Districts.

A city proposing or approving a petition regarding formation of a MPD with boundaries coterminous with those of a city and for which the governing body of the city is designated to serve in an ex officio capacity as the board of metropolitan park commissioners, may limit the purpose and taxing powers of the proposed district in its resolution.

Specifically, a city may limit the proposed district's purposes to provide the funds necessary to acquire, construct, renovate, expand, operate, maintain, and provide programming for identified public parks or recreational facilities that are otherwise authorized by law for metropolitan park

districts. The ballot proposition must identify those public parks or recreational facilities to be funded.

A city may also limit the maximum levy rate to those provided in statute. The ballot proposition must state the maximum regular levy rate. After district formation, changes to the maximum regular levy rate may be made only by a majority vote at a general or special election on a proposition to alter the levy rate. If approved, statutory limitations on regular property taxes would not apply in the first year after the proposition's approval.

Metropolitan Park Commissioners.

If the governing body of a city or the legislative authority of a county is designated to serve in an ex officio capacity as the board of metropolitan park commissioners, the number of members of the board must be equal to the number of positions on the relevant city governing body or county legislative authority.

Indebtedness Limit.

The purpose for which metropolitan park districts may contract indebtedness and issue short-term obligations and general obligation bonds is broadened to include any other purposes authorized for the MPD. In addition, the maximum allowable term for general obligation bonds is extended from 20 years to the general maximum term set in statute of 40 years.

Property Transfers.

The purpose for which a city may transfer land to a metropolitan park district is broadened to include any other purposes authorized for the district. Cities are also authorized to enter into agreements to transfer to MPDs any lands, facilities, equipment, and other interests in real or personal property.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.