

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Laura Friedman, Chair  
AB 917 (Bloom) – As Introduced February 17, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Vehicles: video imaging of parking violations

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes all public transit operators to install automated forward facing parking control devices on transit vehicles for the purposes of enforcing parking violations occurring in transit-only traffic lanes and at transit stops and stations. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Permits transit agencies to share the relevant data, video, and images of parking violations collected with the local parking enforcement entity and local agency in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred.
- 2) Requires a transit agency to issue only warning notices for 30 days and to make a public announcement of the program at least 30 days prior to commencement of issuing notices of parking violations.
- 3) Permits the registered owner to review the video image evidence of the alleged violation during normal business hours at no cost.
- 4) Requires that the video evidence be destroyed either six months from the date the information was first obtained or 60 days after final disposition of the citation, whichever date is later, unless there is no evidence of a violation, in which case it shall be destroyed in 15 days.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Authorizes the City and County of San Francisco and the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) to install automated forward facing parking control devices on city-owned public transit vehicles for the purpose of video imaging parking violations occurring in transit-only traffic lanes.
- 2) Sunsets AC Transit's authority on January 1, 2022.
- 3) Defines a "transit-only traffic lane" to mean any designated transit-only lane on which use is restricted to mass transit vehicles, or other designated vehicles including taxis and vanpools, during posted times.
- 4) Provides that a violation of any regulation governing the standing or parking of a vehicle under the Vehicle Code, federal statute or regulation, or local ordinance, is subject to a civil penalty.
- 5) Authorizes designated employees of the City and County of San Francisco or a contracted law enforcement agency for AC Transit to review video image recordings for the purpose of determining whether a parking violation occurred in a transit-only traffic lane, and permits alleged violators to review the video image evidence of the alleged violation during normal business hours at no cost.

- 6) Requires automated forward facing parking control devices to be angled and focused so as to capture video images of parking violations and not unnecessarily capture identifying images of other drivers, vehicles, and pedestrians.
- 7) Requires that prior to issuing notices of parking violations in transit-only lanes using bus-mounted video equipment, the City and County of San Francisco and AC Transit commence a program to issue only warning notices for 30 days and make a public announcement of the program at least 30 days prior to commencement of issuing notices of parking violations.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** Cities are designating lanes for transit-only use in order to make public transit more efficient. According to *Best Practices in Implementing Tactical Transit Lanes*, a guide produced by UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, transit-only lanes have been able to improve peak congestion travel times by 20-28%. These lanes can produce dramatic decreases in the variability of transit travel times. Research suggests that reducing total amount of time it take a transit rider to go door-to-door by 5-15% can increase urban pike ridership by 2-9%. This bill expands the authority that AC Transit and SFMTA have been given statutorily to enforce parking violations using cameras to apply statewide. In addition, this bill expands the authority to use the cameras to enforce parking at transit stops and stations.

Cars parking in transit-only lanes can reduce the benefits of establishing these lanes by slowing down transit. In San Francisco, this problem was successfully addressed with the passage of AB 101 (Ma), Chapter 377, Statutes of 2007, which authorized San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to equip transit buses with forward-facing parking control devices and to issue citations to vehicles blocking a bus in a transit-only lane. A report issued on the effectiveness of that program by SFMTA showed that during the pilot phase of the program, transit delays were reduced by as much as 20%.

Moreover, there is also reason to believe the enforcement changed behavior of motorist as intended. In 2012, 3,700 citations were issued using the cameras authorized by this program. Those numbers dropped to 3,400 in 2014. . Similarly, in 2009, when the program started, 101 vehicles were issued 3 or more citations. By 2011 that number dropped to 51. Only 13.7% of the vehicles cited in 2014 had 2 or more citations.

Following SFMTA's success, the California Legislature passed SB 1051 (Hancock) Chapter 427, Statutes of 2016, authorizing AC Transit to use cameras on buses to enforce parking in transit only lanes. That authority is set to sunset January 1, 2022. Like SFMTA, AC Transit was required to provide the Legislature with a report on their program's implementation.

Due to implementation delays, AC Transit began using the cameras in October of 2020. Unlike SFMTA, AC Transit did not have data to show a before-and-after effect, as AC Transit did not have transit-only lanes in operation prior to this program's implementation. AC Transit reports that on-time performance improved from 54% to 75% since the service began. AC Transit is operating the cameras on a 9.5 mile route from Uptown Oakland to San Leandro Transit Center. Based on data provided to the Committee, but not in the report, a total of 532 tickets were issued for parking in transit lanes between November of 2020 and February of 2021; the vast majority of which were issued by the cameras on the bus. That is in comparison to 340 citations issued by

hand between November 20, 2019 and November 14, 2020. It is unclear if the improvement in travel time is a result of the citation program, as the Tempo line only began operating in August and automated citations were not issued until October. A month by month performance was not provided in the report.

According to the author, “Bus only lanes are important transit infrastructure. Lanes are clearly identified with pavement markings and signage, yet still frequently ignored. Unfortunately, bus lane violations and parked cars negatively affect the reliability of public transit and pose safety issues to riders. For example, LA Metro observed one violation every four minutes in their bus only lanes on congested Wilshire Boulevard. Camera enforcement is cost-effective and ideal for busy streets where parking enforcement is not realistic. Camera enforcement works. AB 917 will deter drivers from violating bus only lane designations, ensure the reliability of public transit, and help transit remain competitive in our efforts to reduce congestion.”

According to the California Transit Association, a co-sponsor of this bill, “California has witnessed a growing number of cars on the state’s roads in recent years, and with it an increase in drivers parking in designated transit-only lanes and at transit stops. Illegal parking in these zones compromises transit operators’ ability to provide safe, reliable, and accessible public transit service. Until the vehicle relocates, transit-only lanes and transit stops are effectively rendered out of service. This reduces transit system reliability by slowing down transit vehicle speeds and negatively impacts transit riders. In addition to the service impacts, a partially blocked transit stop creates significant safety concerns. When a transit operator is not able to reach the curb, riders are forced to negotiate the street and the gap that is created between the transit vehicle and the curb. This is a potentially dangerous maneuver for riders to make, and an impossible one for those with a disability or mobility limitations, including seniors.”

Double referral: Should this bill pass this committee it will be referred to the Committee on Privacy and Consumer Protection.

*Committee comments:* Transit-only lanes have the potential to rapidly improve transit service by making sure the buses run efficiently. The results from the SFMTA report show that camera enforcement both enhanced travel times, while also cutting down on repeat offenders who were parking in bus only lanes, ultimately making the programs costlier to run than the revenue generated, dispelling concerns that these cameras could be used for profit purposes. Further, while the transit associations are paying for these cameras, the ticket revenue ultimately goes to the cities they are located in, which generally play a small role, if any, in the funding of public transit.

Los Angeles Metro is currently operating 29 miles of transit-only lanes, with plans to significantly expand their use. Transit-only lanes are cheaper than rail, and can quickly be established. Expanding this camera program statewide could benefit low-income transit riders. The median household income for a LA Metro rider (\$16,890) is less than a third that of the county’s median households income (\$57,952). Expanding bus rapid transit in Los Angeles and improving travel times may significantly benefit underserved populations, while also potentially making transit more attractive to individuals that would otherwise chose to drive. LA Metro is currently planning on expanding bus rapid transit throughout the San Fernando Valley and San Gabriel Valley. The use of these cameras to discourage drivers from improperly parking in these bus lanes may further improve this service.

The AC Transit pilot was short-lived and provides a small snapshot of its use. However, the Legislature should consider the success of the SFMTA pilot when determining whether to expand this program statewide and the benefits it could provide to transit riders and ridership.

*Related Legislation:* AB 550 (Chiu) of 2020, authorizes a pilot program for automated speed enforcement. That bill is pending before this committee.

SB 111 (Newman) of 2020, authorizes school districts to use automated enforcement on school bus stop signs. That bill is pending before Senate Transportation Committee.

SB 735 (Rubio) of 2020, authorizes a pilot program for the use of automated speed enforcement in school zones. That bill is pending before Senate Transportation Committee.

*Previous Legislation:* SB 1051 (Hancock) Chapter 427, Statutes of 2016, authorized a pilot program for video enforcement of parking violations in transit-only traffic lanes.

AB 1287 (Chiu), Chapter 485, Statutes of 2015, removed the sunset on the authority of San Francisco's pilot program for video enforcement of parking violations in transit-only traffic lanes.

AB 1041 (Ma), Chapter 325, Statutes of 2011, extended the sunset on the authority of San Francisco's pilot program for video enforcement of parking violations in transit-only traffic lanes to January 1, 2016.

AB 101 (Ma), Chapter 377, Statutes of 2007, authorized San Francisco to establish a pilot program for video enforcement of parking violations in transit-only traffic lanes which expired January 1, 2012.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (Co-sponsor)  
California Transit Association (co-sponsor)  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (co-sponsor)  
City of Santa Monica Big Blue Bus  
East Bay Transit Riders Union

### **Opposition**

None on file

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