

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.5670
Title:	An Act pertaining to the laying out of streets, ways, and highways in the city of Holyoke
Sponsor:	Rep. Patricia Duffy
Committee:	Municipalities and Regional Government
Hearing Date:	November 9 through November 16, 2026 written testimony only
Current Law:	Chapter 438 of the Acts of 1896 revised the charter of the city of Holyoke. Section 22 of the act authorized the board of aldermen, with approval of the mayor, to lay out or discontinue all streets, ways and highways in the city. They may assess any damage caused by such actions, and to act in relation to any claims of damage. The section also prescribes the method for approving such actions.
Summary:	Section 1 of the bill deletes the current charter section 22. Section 2 amends section 22 by adding new language that changes the reference from board of aldermen to city council, and updates the vote requirement for appropriating or expending money for laying out such streets, ways and highways from \$200 to \$1,000. Section 3 repeals any part of the 1896 and 1936 special acts that may be inconsistent with the new special act. Section 4 contains language stating that the Legislature may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, and authorizes the mayor and city council to approve amendments before enactment. Section 5 provides for the act to take effect upon its passage.
Notes:	Language approved by Holyoke City Council on August 4, 2026 by a vote of 12 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 absent; approved by the mayor. According to the sponsor, this bill would amend section 22 of the city charter by increasing the dollar amount of financial transfers that would require City Council approval. Currently, any transfer between budget lines \$200 and over must be approved by the City Council. The change would increase that amount to \$1,000 to reflect the impacts of inflation. It is understood that the \$200 threshold has been in place since the founding of the current charter.