

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## HB 1487

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Enhancing transportation planning.

**Sponsors:** Representatives K. Schmidt, Fisher, Mitchell and Hankins.

**House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget**

**Senate Committee on Transportation**

**Background:** A number of unanswered questions exist regarding the treatment of state-owned transportation facilities in city and county comprehensive plans and development regulations which are required by the state's Growth Management Act (GMA).

Linking transportation and land use decisions is cited as a goal of the GMA. For example, the GMA provides that the development should be encouraged ". . . in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner." However, how this linkage is to be achieved with regard to state-owned transportation facilities is unclear.

The measurement commonly used in transportation to determine adequacy is the level of service (LOS) standard. LOS is an engineering formula that measures the flow of traffic on a particular facility. An LOS standard "A" means traffic is free flowing; an LOS standard "F" means traffic is at a standstill.

Cities and counties planning under the GMA are required to develop LOS standards for all arterials and transit routes. Some local jurisdictions have interpreted "arterial" to include state-owned transportation facilities while others have not.

Determining LOS standards establishes the benchmark for determining whether the transportation facilities are adequate to support development.

The "concurrency" provision of the GMA states, in part, ". . . local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development."

The 1994 Legislature approved a study to address the treatment of state transportation facilities in local comprehensive plans. Representative from cities, counties, ports, regional transportation planning organizations, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, the private sector, and the Legislative Transportation Committee participated. The study, with recommendations, was completed in January 1995.

**Summary:** By December 31, 2000, cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act are required to include state-owned transportation facilities in the transportation element of their comprehensive plans.

The state Department of Transportation (DOT), in consultation with local governments, is authorized to set LOS standards for state highways and state ferry routes of statewide significance. (Setting LOS standards for all other state-owned transportation facilities continues to be performed by regional transportation planning organizations jointly with the DOT.)

Island counties are required to have state ferries and state highways in their comprehensive plans. These state facilities are required to meet local plan concurrency requirements.

Regional transportation planning organizations are required to work with cities, counties, transit agencies, the DOT, and others to develop LOS standards or alternative transportation performance measures.

Transportation facilities of statewide significance are set forth. These include the interstate highway system; interregional state principal arterials, including ferry connections that serve statewide travel; intercity passenger rail services; intercity high-speed ground transportation; major passenger intermodal terminals, excluding all airport facilities and services; the freight railroad system; the Columbia/Snake navigable river system; marine port facilities and service that are related solely to marine activities affecting international and interstate trade; and high-capacity transportation systems.

The Transportation Commission must designate state highways of statewide significance and submit a list of such facilities for adoption by the 1999 Legislature.

Transportation facilities of statewide significance are deemed essential public facilities under the GMA.

The Transportation Commission must give higher priority to correcting identified deficiencies on transportation facilities of statewide significance.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 89 5  
House 88 6 (House reconsidered)  
Senate 44 3 (Senate amended)  
House 91 5 (House concurred)

**Effective:** June 11, 1998