

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2166

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Encouraging coordinated transportation services.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives Huff, K. Schmidt, Clements, Buck, Talcott, Johnson, Mitchell, Carlson, Delvin, Cooke and Chandler).

### House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget Senate Committee on Transportation

**Background:** In 1996, the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) was directed to conduct a public transportation assessment of eight tasks to address the state's interest in and evaluation of transit, transit financial planning, several transit-related accounts, transit effectiveness and efficiency, interjurisdictional interests, special needs transportation, and governance. Study oversight was provided by a Transit Working Group, which consisted of four House of Representatives and four Senate members. The group forwarded a series of study recommendations to the LTC, in the 1996 Public Transportation Assessment. One of the recommendations for special needs transportation was to establish an Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) to facilitate coordination among public and private transportation providers.

There are a number of agencies and programs involved with providing and/or sponsoring transportation services for persons with special needs. At the state level, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) play major roles in providing these transportation services. At the local level transit agencies, area agencies on aging, senior services and county human services all provide transportation for special needs populations.

Transportation provided by an agency or a program is often for selected groups of people who meet specific eligibility requirements for that particular agency or program. This creates a situation in which multiple transportation providers are running duplicate routes serving only their selected population, which can result in costly and inefficient service and reduced service levels or areas.

In the 1997-99 transportation budget, \$1 million was appropriated to the Department of Transportation for grants to facilitate and demonstrate cooperation among transportation providers. Administration of this effort is overseen by a council, appointed by the Secretary of Transportation, which has nine voting and eight

nonvoting members. In 1997, grants were made to five local and private nonprofit agencies for six different contracts. The department will report to the Legislature on the results of these grants.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) regulates every private, nonprofit transportation provider in the state. This includes setting insurance requirements, safety requirements for vehicles used, and rules to ensure that the vehicle used is adequate for the proposed service, and regulating the fares charged by these providers.

**Summary:** The Legislature declares its intent to coordinate transportation services and programs to achieve increased efficiencies, and expansion of services to a greater number of persons with special transportation needs.

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT ) is created. The council consists of nine voting members and eight nonvoting legislative members. The nine voting members are the Secretary of Transportation, who will serve as chair; the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and six members, serving two-year terms, appointed by the Governor, and representing consumers of special needs transportation, pupil transportation, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, the Community Action Council Association, and the Washington State Transit Association. Four members from the House of Representatives and four members from the Senate, representing each caucus and the Transportation, House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committees, will be appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate respectively. The council is classified as a Class 1 board, which restricts reimbursement of members to expenses only.

The ACCT is responsible for: (1) developing standards and strategies for coordinating special needs transportation; (2) identifying, developing, funding (as resources are available), and monitoring demonstration projects; (3) identifying barriers to coordinated transportation; (4) recommending statutory changes to the Legislature to assist in coordinated transportation; and (5) working with the Office of Financial Management to make necessary changes for identification of transportation costs in executive agency budgets.

The council is directed to report to the Legislature on December 1, 1998, and every two years thereafter on council activities, including results of demonstration projects and associated benefits. The Department of Transportation is to provide support for the council. The council is dissolved on June 30, 2003.

The UTC's authority to regulate fares charged by paratransit providers is eliminated.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 93 0

Senate 47 0 (Senate amended)

House 96 0 (House concurred)

**Effective:** June 11, 1998