

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1090

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to transportation system signage using icons and pictograms.

Brief Description: Using pictograms in transportation signs.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Jarrett, Sommers, Bailey, Morris, Strow, Nixon, Kenney, Hasegawa, Lantz, Flannigan, Santos, Murray, Wood, Upthegrove, Dickerson, B. Sullivan, Schual-Berke, Cody, Pettigrew, Conway, Simpson, Woods, McIntire, Kagi, Chase, Tom, Morrell and Kilmer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/31/05, 2/10/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Declares legislative intent to assist travelers, particularly non-English speaking visitors, with travel on public transportation facilities.
- Requires the Seattle Monorail Authority and Sound Transit to use a system of pictograms to identify stations along the transportation route. The requirements apply to new sign installations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Flannigan, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7347).

Background:

Federal, state and local laws and policies govern the signage required on many transportation facilities.

In most instances, the signage now used to locate major transportation facilities employs internationally accepted symbols and the Roman alphabet. Similarly, urban rail systems use the Roman alphabet to identify stations. Languages using a different symbol set, into which Sound Transit translates some ridership information, include Thai, Khmer, Korean and Chinese. Signs using the Roman alphabet can be difficult for some international visitors to use. Transit systems in the cities of Calgary and Mexico, among others, use pictograms to provide a simple visual designation of a rail station stop or activities near the transit station.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Sound Transit and the Seattle Monorail Authority are to incorporate in plans, for stations, signing easily understood by the traveling public, including non-English speaking persons. The signage must employ graphics consistent with international guidelines and programs and must also employ pictograms as a means to identify stations. The sign requirements are intended to apply to new signing and replacement of existing signs.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

In the regional transit authority section, the requirement is limited to signage at light rail stations. The symbols or pictograms may be developed by the regional transit authority. Points of interest may be the subject of pictograms, but are not required to be. Existing signs are those installed before the effective date of the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2005.

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

Testimony For: This is geared toward the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, it will be a great opportunity to pull tourists down from that event. It will be a great enhancement to have simple visual designations for our railroad system. It is culturally sensitive. There are 439,000 Asian Pacific Americans in the state of Washington made up of 47 subgroups. Many are limited English proficient. It is also good for international visitors. Martin Luther King said, "Technology has made the world a neighborhood. It is up to us to make it a sister and brotherhood." There is an international language that people understand, and icons are critical to that. Thousands of people who come to El Centro de la Raza do not speak English. Seattle is a world class city and becoming ever more so. Sound Transit supports this bill but would like some changes, to apply the requirements only to light rail. Our proposal would be implemented by 2010 and demonstrates how we might use our public art program when developing pictograms. We hope this will make wayfinding easier and our system more accessible to all users.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor; Ellen Abellera, Commission on Asian Pacific Americans; Antonia Ginatta, Hispanic Commission; Roberto Magstas, El Centro De La Raza; and Melanie Newman, Sound Transit.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.