

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2124

C 318 L 05

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing state participation in public transportation service and planning.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Jarrett, Simpson, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Sells, Wallace, Dickerson, B. Sullivan, Moeller, Kenney and Hasegawa).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

Within the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Division of Public Transportation and Rail (Division) has responsibility for providing financial and technical assistance to local transit agencies. The Division also provides support and planning for passenger rail and freight rail, including subsidies for AMTRAK Cascade Services.

State grant funding for local public transportation is about \$42 million in the 2003-05 biennium. This represents about 1 percent of transit agency revenue. State funds provide support for special needs services, rural mobility for areas without transit services, trip reduction grants, and vanpools. The Division also administers federal grant funds for rural public transportation, elderly and disabled service grants, intercity service, and reverse commute for job access.

Together with the DOT's Urban Planning Office, the Public Transportation Division represents the DOT in discussions with local and regional transportation planning and service agencies. They also provide coordinated system planning through the Washington Transportation Plan.

There are 26 transit systems operating in Washington. Transit agencies plan on a six-year cycle, and plans must show how they will fund program needs. Regional transportation planning organizations plan for the long term, providing guidance for transit investments.

Summary:

The Office of Transit Mobility (Office) is created in the DOT. The Office must report quarterly to the Secretary of Transportation and annually to the Transportation Committees of the Legislature.

The primary goals of the Office are to connect and coordinate transit services and planning, and to maximize opportunities to use public transportation to improve the efficiency of transportation corridors.

The duties of the Office include:

- developing a statewide strategic plan that creates common goals for transit agencies and reduces competing plans for cross-jurisdictional service;
- developing a park and ride lot program;
- encouraging long-range transit planning;
- providing public transportation expertise to improve linkages between regional transportation planning organizations and transit agencies;
- strengthening policies for inclusion of transit and transportation demand management strategies in route development and corridor plan standards, and budget proposals;
- recommending best practices to integrate transit and demand management strategies with regional and local land use plans in order to reduce traffic and improve mobility and access;
- producing recommendations for the public transportation section of the Washington Transportation Plan; and
- participating in all aspects of corridor planning, including freight planning, ferry system planning, and passenger rail planning.

In forming the Office, the Secretary is directed to use existing resources to the greatest extent possible.

The Office is directed to establish measurable performance objectives for evaluating the success of its initiatives and progress toward accomplishing the overall goals of the Office.

Local and regional transportation agencies are directed to adopt common transportation goals. The Office is given the responsibility to review local and regional plans to ensure the efficient integration of multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional planning.

The DOT must establish a regional mobility grant program to identify projects that reduce delay for people and goods and improve connectivity between counties and regional population centers.

The DOT must biennially review the Public Transportation Division's existing grant programs and methods for allocating grant funds to determine whether the results are effective and equitable.

The act is null and void unless new transportation revenues are enacted.

Votes on Final Passage:

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|--------|----|----|-------------------|
| House | 52 | 42 | |
| Senate | 28 | 18 | (Senate amended) |
| House | 59 | 33 | (House concurred) |

Effective: July 24, 2005