

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1396

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, April 2, 2007

Title: An act relating to a single ballot proposition for regional transportation investment districts and regional transit authorities at the 2007 general election.

Brief Description: Providing a single ballot proposition for regional transportation investment districts and regional transit authorities at the 2007 general election.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Flannigan, Jarrett, B. Sullivan, Upthegrove, Rodne, Eddy, Kagi, Chase and Schual-Berke).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/07, 96-1.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/21/07, 4/02/07 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Holmquist, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer, Sheldon and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton.

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, certain counties with relatively large populations may create a regional transportation investment district (RTID) for the purposes of planning and financing regional transportation improvements. An RTID is granted several local voter-approved funding options to fund the improvements, including a sales and use tax, vehicle license fee, parking tax, motor vehicle excise tax, employer tax, and vehicle tolls. Eligible projects include capital improvements to highways of statewide significance, including associated multimodal capital improvements, and, under limited circumstances, certain local street, road, and highway improvements. Additionally, operational expenses (e.g., transit services) are allowed for project construction mitigation related to the RTID-funded projects.

The King, Pierce, and Snohomish County Councils voted in 1993 to establish the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (now known as Sound Transit). Sound Transit is vested with high capacity transportation system development authority in the three county area, including the imposition of voter-approved taxes for development and operation of such

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transportation systems. In 1996, voters in the urban areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties approved a plan and authorized funding to provide high capacity transportation services for the central Puget Sound region.

During the 2006 Legislative Session, ESHB 2871 was enacted requiring, among other things, that Sound Transit and the RTID submit to regional voters at the 2007 general election the agencies' respective transit and highway improvement plans. However, the legislation also required both ballot measures to pass in order for either to legally take effect.

Summary of Substitute Bill: At the 2007 general election, Sound Transit and the RTID must submit to regional voters their respective transit and highway improvement plans in the form of a single ballot proposition, rather than as two separate ballot measures. However, the single ballot proposition must receive support from a majority of voters within each respective taxing district in order for the proposition to legally take effect. Additionally, the proposition must make clear that each taxing district may only impose taxes within its respective boundaries.

An expedited appeal process, regarding challenges to the ballot process prescribed in the bill, is provided.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Transportation): Requires Sound Transit, as part of the single ballot proposition submitted to voters, to include in its plan assurances that it will not sign any agreement that restricts the type of transit hub serving the West end of the SR 520 bridge.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 17, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill helps clarify the joint RTID and Sound Transit ballot when it goes to voters this fall. Poll data indicates that this bill would help to facilitate a positive vote.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Shaw, RTID; Ron Main, Sound Transit; Duke Schaub, Associated General Contractors of Washington.