

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 1171

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning high capacity transportation system plan components and review.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Armstrong, Lias, Billig, Angel, Finn, Appleton, Seaquist and Reykdal.

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

In the central Puget Sound region, high capacity transportation (HCT) systems may be established and financed by a regional transit authority (Sound Transit) and potentially by certain other transit agencies. Outside the central Puget Sound region, HCT systems may be established by certain transit agencies only in Clark, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima counties.

High capacity transportation service means a system of public transportation services within an urbanized region operating principally on exclusive rights of way, and the supporting services and facilities necessary to implement the system, including interim express services and high occupancy vehicle lanes, which, taken as a whole, provides a substantially higher level of passenger capacity, speed, and service frequency than traditional public transportation systems operating principally in general purpose roadways.

Transit agencies authorized to provide HCT service may seek to finance the system and service with the following voter-approved revenue measures:

- an employer tax of up to \$2 per month per employee;
- rental car sales and use tax not to exceed 2.172 percent; and
- sales and use tax not to exceed 0.9 percent.

To assure development of an effective HCT system, the local transit agency must establish a system and financing plan, and must provide for public involvement. In addition, an expert review panel must be appointed to provide independent technical review for development of any plan which is to be funded in whole or part by HCT voter-approved taxes. The state's role in HCT planning is to facilitate cooperative state and local planning efforts, and to

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provide system and project planning review and monitoring in cooperation with the expert review panel.

In general, most transit agencies, like public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities, are authorized to impose a sales and use tax of up to 0.9 percent with voter approval for the purpose of funding public transportation services.

Summary:

The planning process required of local authorities seeking to implement a HCT system is limited to system plans that include a rail fixed guideway component or a bus rapid transit component that is planned by a regional transit authority. The requirement that an expert review panel be appointed to provide independent technical review of the plan is also limited to those system plans.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	54	44
Senate	40	6

Effective: July 22, 2011