

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2601

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As of February 23, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to improving public transit through the creation of transit service overlay zones.

**Brief Description:** Improving public transit through the creation of transit service overlay zones.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Eddy, Liias, Ryu, Ladenburg and Moscoso).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/10/12, 60-35.  
**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/22/12.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

**Background:** The 2011 State Transportation budget (ESHB 1175) provided funding to the Puget Sound Regional Council to continue development of a land use planning tool called a transit service overlay zone (zone). This effort was intended to increase the linkage of land use and transportation investment decisions and improve the efficiency of transit service by encouraging transit-supportive development. The report that was required in the 2011 transportation budget proviso recommended encouraging the creation of zones by interested cities, counties, and transit agencies. To be eligible for the zone program, a designated corridor must meet an agreed upon set of criteria, including a minimum population density within walking distance to the corridor and frequent, all-day, two-direction bus service. The report indicated that changes to state law would be helpful and could also clarify protocol in the zone development process.

Counties and cities meeting specific population and growth criteria are required to conform to the major requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Counties and cities required to conform to GMA must adopt comprehensive land use plans, which are coordinated land use policy statements of the governing body. Regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) were authorized as part of GMA to ensure local and regional coordination of transportation plans.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:** An RTPO may establish eligibility criteria for the creation of zones by cities, counties, and transit agencies located within RTPO's boundaries. The eligibility criteria must include:

- frequent, all-day, two-direction bus service or inclusion in the transit agency's long range plan for such service;
- a minimum existing or planned employment and housing unit density within walking distance of the corridor;
- connection of high density employment and population centers; and
- design criteria that assist with the providing of transit service.

Cities, counties, and transit agencies may establish zones through an interlocal agreement that meets the eligibility criteria established by the local RTPO. The determination of whether the zone meets these eligibility criteria is made by the local RTPO. A zone that meets the local RTPO's eligibility criteria and is established through an interlocal agreement may be included in a city's comprehensive plan.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The bill arises from the budget proviso from last year and helps local jurisdictions work together to develop transit friendly land use development. This bill recognizes the link between land use and planning. This is an optional tool for transit planning.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Eddy, prime sponsor; April Putney, Futurewise.