

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5796

As of February 22, 2011

Title: An act relating to public transportation systems.

Brief Description: Concerning public transportation systems.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, King and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/21/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: In April of each year, transit agencies must submit six-year transit development plans for the ensuing five years and system reports. Similar reports are due to the Federal Transit Administration in September of each year.

Based on information that is submitted in the system reports, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) must prepare an annual report that summarizes individual public transportation systems. This report is due September 1 of each year.

Transit agencies own and maintain shelters and other amenities throughout their respective jurisdictions. Generally, when those facilities are located on WSDOT property, the agency is charged an air space lease.

During 2010, the Joint Transportation Committee was directed to look at these issues and to conducted a study on public transportation that included a statewide blueprint for public transportation investment. That ensuing report (Identifying the State Role in Public Transportation) identified a number of recommendations relating to the state's role, that include:

- integrating public transportation into regional and statewide planning;
- developing and promoting policies to encourage the use of all public transportation modes;
- aligning report and data collection to provide a comprehensive and useful picture of transit; and
- establishing a consistent set of measures to assess public transportation systems.

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: The due date for six-year transit development plans and system reports are changed from April 1 to September 1.

The due date for the annual summary report prepared by WSDOT is changed from September 1 to December 1. WSDOT is to include information about other modes of public transportation, if information is available to them. This should include how those modes impact the transportation system and how public transportation helps the state meet the transportation system policy goals.

New state facilities must be sited in areas that are adequately accessible by transit service.

A transit facility is defined as transit stops or stations including pavement, drainage, pedestrian areas, signage, fare collection devices, benches, kiosks, lighting, waste receptacles, and shelters owned by a transit agency.

The Legislature identifies a benefit of transit facilities to motor vehicle traffic and identifies an intent that WSDOT should not charge transit agencies air space leases.

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: This would allow transit agencies to get involved in the planning and citing process before decisions are finalized. Because the state and federal reporting dates do not align, the department has to go through several iteration of reports. This will save time and resources for transit agencies as well as for WSDOT.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Richard DeRock, Washington State Transit Association; Cathy Silins, WSDOT.