

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1233

As Reported by House Committee On: Transportation

Title: An act relating to including health in the state transportation system policy goals.

Brief Description: Including health in the state transportation system policy goals.

Sponsors: Representatives Jinkins, Moscoso, Fitzgibbon, Sells, Morrell, Green, Dunshee, Van De Wege, Moeller, Bergquist, Pollet, Pedersen, Liias, Maxwell, Riccelli, Morris, Farrell, Hansen, Upthegrove, Reykdal and Fey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/12/13, 2/21/13 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds the goal of "health" to the established policy goals for the state's transportation system.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Farrell, Fitzgibbon, Freeman, Habib, Johnson, Moeller, Morris, Riccelli, Ryu, Sells, Takko, Tarleton, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Hayes, Klippert, Kochmar, Kretz, Kristiansen, O'Ban, Rodne and Shea.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

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.

There are currently six statewide transportation system policy goals for the planning, operation, performance of, and investment in, the state's transportation system. These policy goals are identified as follows:

- economic vitality: to promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy;
- preservation: to maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services;
- safety: to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system;
- mobility: to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington;
- environment: to enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment; and
- stewardship: to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is required to establish objectives and performance measures for all state transportation agencies in order to assure that transportation system performance attains the six policy goals established in statute. The OFM was required to submit to the Legislature and the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) a baseline report on initial objectives and performance measures for attainment of the newly established policy goals during the 2008 legislative session. Subsequent attainment reports are required to be submitted to the Legislature and the WSTC in each even-numbered year thereafter.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is also required to perform certain duties to support attainment of the statewide transportation system policy goals. These duties include: (1) maintaining an inventory of the condition of structures and corridors, as well as a list of structures and corridors in most urgent need of retrofit or rehabilitation; (2) developing long-term financing plans that sustainably support ongoing maintenance and preservation of the transportation infrastructure; (3) balancing system safety and convenience to accommodate all users of the system to safely, reliably, and efficiently provide mobility to people and goods; (4) developing strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and considering efficiency tools to manage system demand; (5) promoting integrated multimodal planning; and (6) considering engineers and architects to design environmentally sustainable, context sensitive transportation systems.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A seventh statewide transportation system policy goal is added as follows:

- health: to improve the health of Washington's citizens and reduce health care costs by considering health implications when planning, designing, building, and maintaining Washington's transportation system.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The statewide transportation system policy goal of health is modified so that health implications must also be considered when planning Washington's transportation system.

The intent to consider the health implications of project planning and design is changed so that the health implications of transportation planning and community design is intended to be considered instead.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The transportation system is the backbone of our economy, but it also plays a role in preventing chronic disease and improving the health of the community. The obesity rate in Washington has doubled in the last 25 years, and health effects have been shown to be based more on our environment than on our genes. One in five children have asthma, and emissions from the transportation system have an effect. Our sedentary lifestyles have already led to baby-boomers being less healthy than their parents at the same age. Only one-third of the people in Washington walk or bike enough to actually improve their health, and there is definitely a link between depression and physical activity.

Research shows that how the transportation system is built effects people's health. When Interstate 5 was built, it cut off South Tacoma and made it more difficult to obtain food and other necessities. This is but one example of how the way we build our transportation system has engineered out the ability to exercise. When we build aspects of our environment, we should know what the effects of how we build it will be on people's health.

The choices people make are based on the choices that they have. Twenty-eight percent of car trips are one mile or less, and these trips could be done on foot if the system allowed it. Choices can also effect the ability to access medical care and economic options and opportunities. People should not be forced from their cars, but they should have healthy choices available. Also, good design precludes the need for later changes.

Voters expect people to work across boundaries to solve problems. It is necessary to have a healthier population, and this bill will help achieve that. This bill may lead, for example, to a complete streets approach in some areas where the concern would be with moving all modes of traffic.

Thurston County already takes health into account when planning. Planners should consider how transportation plans encourage walking and hiking, air quality, and traffic safety. People

are trying to be more active, and they are frustrated by the fact that there is not a safe place for them to do so. This bill would make health one of the primary goals of the transportation system.

The WSDOT recognizes the connection between transportation and health, and thinks that this goal would keep this connection in everyone's mind. Physically active transportation works best when it is interwoven into the system, and creates a complete system. It also makes the system more efficient by providing more options.

The transportation system can provide more options, or it can foreclose them. Any one at any time could find themselves in need of more transportation options, and the WSDOT tries to increase the number of available options, or improve the existing system.

The WSDOT already looks at pollution and noise effects in its major projects. Small projects, such as potholes and the like, do not need major analysis. Larger projects tend to have an environmental assessment, and efforts are made to mitigate the effects. Major projects that require an environmental impact statement tend to require a health impact assessment, but that is not going to entail a large cost or delay.

(With concerns) Discrete changes to the transportation system policy goals should not be undertaken unless they are part of a thorough review of the entire planning process. The health goal in particular is already included in the policy goals as part of the environmental goal.

(Opposed) There are other ways to achieve this goal. We have already made commercial activities too difficult, and we are paying too much attention to the environment. We have spent a lot of money on urban villages and transit corridors. This bill is going to be used to sabotage the current transportation system and promote density.

There are two reasons why this bill should be opposed. First, the primary goal of the transportation system should be traffic relief. Second, the fiscal note is indeterminate because it is not clear how health effects would be determined.

When commercial activity is impeded, you are not just effecting that activity, but the revenue that comes in to the state.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Jinkins, prime sponsor; Victor Coleman, Childhood Obesity Prevention; Chris Hawkins, Thurston County Board of Health; Brian Smith, Washington State Department of Transportation; Allene Mares, Department of Health; Lisa Quinn, Feet First; Jane Moore, ForeverGreen Trails Foundation; and Tim Gould, Sierra Club Washington.

(With concerns) Dave Overstreet, Automobile Association of America Washington.

(Opposed) John Worthington; and Mike Ennis, Association of Washington Business.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.