

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1842

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to improving transit agency coordination.

Brief Description: Concerning transit agency coordination.

Sponsors: Representatives Farrell, Hargrove, Fey, Harmsworth, Senn, Wylie, Gregerson, Robinson, Walkinshaw, Zeiger, Fitzgibbon, Moscoso, Tarleton and Clibborn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/12/15, 2/25/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop an annual report regarding transit agency coordination in the central Puget Sound.
- Requires a variety of local entities in the central Puget Sound to report to the WSDOT on various aspects of their coordination efforts.
- Modifies the regional mobility grant criteria by adding coordination and integration to the criteria upon which the grants are awarded to the agencies in the central Puget Sound.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Harmsworth, Hayes, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Sells, Takko, Tarleton, Wilson, Young and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Shea.

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.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Transit Reporting Requirements.

Each September, transit agencies in Washington are required to submit six-year transit development plans for that year and the ensuing five years, as well as system reports identifying public transportation services provided in the previous year and objectives for improvements. Similar reports are due to the Federal Transit Administration at the same time.

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 December 1 of each year to the Transportation committees of the Legislature and each state municipality.

Regional Mobility Grants.

The regional mobility grant program provides \$40 million per biennium to aid local governments in funding projects that reduce delays for people and goods and improve connectivity between counties and regional population centers. This includes projects such as intercounty connectivity service, park and ride lots, rush hour transit service, and capital projects that improve the connectivity and efficiency of the transportation system. The amount of funding for the program increases to \$50 million in the 2015-17 biennium.

The WSDOT is required to submit a prioritized list to the Legislature by December 1 of each year of all the projects requesting funding. When prioritizing projects, the WSDOT must insure that the projects are consistent with various state, regional, and local plans, and must take into consideration the following criteria:

- enhancing the efficiency of regional corridors in moving people among jurisdictions and modes of transportation;
- energy efficiency issues;
- reducing delay for people and goods;
- freight and goods movement as related to economic development;
- regional significance;
- rural isolation;
- the leveraging of other funds; and
- safety and security issues.

The WSDOT must also take into consideration the objectives of the following programs and acts when prioritizing projects:

- the Growth Management Act;
- the High Capacity Transportation Act;
- the Commute Trip Reduction Act;
- transportation demand management programs;
- federal and state air quality requirements; and
- the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and related state accessibility requirements.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The WSDOT is required to develop an annual report regarding transit agency coordination in counties with a population of 700,000 or more that border the Puget Sound, which currently includes King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. By December 1 of each year, the report must be made available to the Transportation Committees of the Legislature and each transit authority in those same counties.

By September 1 of each year, all transit authorities in a county with a population of 700,000 or more that borders the Puget Sound are required to report to the WSDOT on their coordination efforts in the following areas:

- integrating marketing efforts;
- aligning fare structures;
- integrating service planning;
- coordinating long-range planning, including capital projects planning and implementation;
- integrating other administrative functions and internal business processes as appropriate; and
- integrating certain customer-focused tools and initiatives.

The regional mobility grant criteria are modified by adding coordination and integration to the criteria upon which the grants are awarded to the agencies in the central Puget Sound.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies that the new reporting requirements apply only to transit authorities in counties with a population of 700,000 or more that border the Puget Sound, removes the new regional mobility grant criteria of quality and the user experience, and limits the applicability of the new regional mobility grant criteria of coordination and integration to the grants that are awarded to agencies in counties with a population of 700,000 or more that border Puget Sound.

The substitute bill replaces several of the reporting requirements for transit authorities in the central Puget Sound with the requirements to report on integrating other administrative functions and internal business processes as appropriate, and integrating certain customer-focused tools and initiatives.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2015.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There has been a lot of transit reform lately, but there is still a constrained funding environment. Transit needs to save money and still have a pleasant use experience. This bill should provide more information about how the transit system is working, and how it can improve. It is not the intent of the bill to limit the availability of regional mobility grant funds to smaller counties or the rest of the state.

Trip-planning software is often split between sites for longer trips, and this bill might help with the integration between sites.

A lot of deadheading buses exist on the commuter routes, and the space on these buses should be used. There should be coordination between all the agencies in order to provide better service, and there should be measures of bus utilization.

King County Executive Dow Constantine has been working to better integrate King County Metro and Sound Transit. A report has been developed and the recommendations are being implemented.

Transit agencies shrank during the recession. Demand is now growing with the expansion of the area population and economy.

Transit efficiencies can come about through integration and integrated long-term planning. Customer service, service contracts, and other efforts can produce savings. Other transit agencies, the WSDOT, and the Puget Sound Regional Council are all currently working together.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Farrell, prime sponsor; Steve Beland; and Rachel Smith, King County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.