

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2948

As Passed House:
February 13, 2018

Title: An act relating to the responsibilities for state routes in cities or towns.

Brief Description: Concerning the responsibilities for state routes in cities or towns.

Sponsors: Representatives Graves, Sullivan, Haler, Hargrove, Pike and Senn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/5/18, 2/6/18 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/18, 86-12.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Raises the population threshold, at which a city or town must assume additional responsibility for streets within its boundaries that are also part of the state highway system, from 25,000 to 35,000, in five-year increments of 2,500, through 2033.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Wylie, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McBride, Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Shea, Stambaugh, Tarleton, Valdez and Van Werven.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Morris and Young.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

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.

Background:

Certain city streets are designated as part of the state highway system, and the jurisdiction and control of these streets is defined in statute. In cities or towns with a population of 25,000 or less, the Department of Transportation is responsible and has authority for:

- roadway surfaces and shoulders;
- slope stability;
- traffic control signals; and
- snow plowing when necessary.

In 1991 a task force was created to study the maintenance responsibilities of cities and towns and to reexamine the population threshold. Following the completion of the task force's recommendations, the Legislature raised the population threshold from 15,000 to 22,500. In 2007 the population threshold was raised to 25,000.

Once a city or town is determined to have exceeded the population threshold, the transfer of maintenance responsibilities takes effect three years from the date of the determination. During this time, cities and towns may plan for additional staffing, budgetary, and equipment requirements.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The population threshold, at which a city or town must assume additional responsibility for streets within its boundaries that are also part of the state highway system, is raised from 25,000 to 35,000, in five-year increments of 2,500, through 2033.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Cities with a population of 25,000 or more have to maintain the state routes within the city limits. Maple Valley, among others, is about to cross this threshold and take on this additional cost, and in the case of Maple Valley, this additional cost will be for two different state routes that will disproportionately affect the city. A city of 25,000 people used to be a major city, but this is no longer the case and such cities should not be responsible for state routes.

State Route (SR) 522 runs through the City of Kenmore, which has a population of around 23,000. Over 60,000 cars use this route each day after the tolling of SR 520, and Kenmore will soon have to pay for much of the route maintenance. Kenmore has already contributed funds to projects on SR 522.

The City of Bonney Lake has a population of 20,000, so it is about to cross the population threshold. However, only 15 percent of the population on SR 410 is local traffic. The city has spent money on local intersections, but the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) sends its own engineers and inspectors for work on state routes and then bills the city. The city also already provides litter control and landscape maintenance.

New costs for cities will have an effect on cities' ability to pay for other expenses. Every little bit of money that cities can save will help.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Changing the threshold as proposed in this bill would cost the state \$4 million per biennium.

Moving the state routes in seven cities, with their 63 lane miles, back to WSDOT's responsibility will stretch WSDOT's limited maintenance budget. The statute already allows cities three years to make the transition to being responsible for state routes.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Graves, prime sponsor; David Baker, City of Kenmore; Don Morrison, City of Bonney Lake; Sean Kelly, City of Maple Valley; Linda Johnson, City of Maple Valley City Council; and Jane Wall, Association of Washington Cities.

(Other) Mike Ennis, Association of Washington Business; and Greg Selstead, Washington State Department of Transportation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.