
Transportation Committee

HB 2688

Brief Description: Expanding transportation policy goals.

Sponsors: Representatives Shewmake, Fey, Fitzgibbon, Macri, Doglio, Peterson, Stonier, Riccelli and Davis.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies and expands Washington's transportation policy goals.
- Requires all transportation projects, prior to inclusion in a budget authorization, to be evaluated by a variety of state agencies relative to the state's transportation policy goals and various metrics created under the bill.
- Requires all reductions to transportation projects, prior to inclusion in a budget authorization, to be evaluated by a variety of state agencies relative to the state's transportation policy goals and various metrics created under the bill.
- States that budget authorization should not include projects that do not score above a threshold determined by the Washington State Department of Transportation, and that all projects being evaluated should be included in an regional transportation planning organization's existing regional plan.

Hearing Date: 1/22/20

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

There are currently six statewide transportation system policy goals for the planning, operation, performance of, and investment in, the state's transportation system. The powers, duties, and functions of state transportation agencies are required to be performed in a manner consistent with the goals. 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;

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.

- 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, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility;
- 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), in consultation with the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC), is directed 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 is required to submit these objectives and performance measures to the Legislature and the WSTC in each even-numbered year.

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; (5) considering efficiency tools to manage system demand, including high occupancy vehicle and toll lanes, corridor-specific and systemwide pricing strategies, active traffic management and commute trip reduction; (6) promoting integrated multimodal planning; and (7) considering engineers and architects to design environmentally sustainable, context-sensitive transportation systems.

Summary of Bill:

Washington's transportation policy goals are modified and expanded in the following ways:

- The transportation goal of economic vitality is modified such that it requires promoting and developing transportation systems that support and enhance affordability, access to opportunity, and good jobs, rather than stimulating, supporting, and enhancing the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.
- The transportation policy goal of preservation is modified to focus on the preservation of investments that meet current and future needs and goals.
- The transportation policy goal of safety is modified to include the safety of anyone interacting with the transportation system.
- The transportation policy goal of mobility is removed.
- The transportation policy goal of environment is modified such that it adds climate; requires the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, water pollution, and toxics; and requires the protection of land and waterways, rather than requiring enhancing healthy communities and protecting the environment.

- The transportation policy goal of stewardship is removed.
- The transportation policy goal of accessibility is added, which is defined as: to improve affordable access to the places and goods Washington residents, organizations, and businesses need to live, work, study, play, and pray.
- The transportation policy goal of health and resilience is added, which is defined as: to promote healthy people and communities through pollution-free transportation, multimodal transportation, integrated land use and transportation projects, clean active transportation, and appropriate infrastructure.
- The transportation policy goal of equity and environmental justice is added, which is defined as: to eliminate historic and persistent barriers and prioritize investments meeting the goals in this section for highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations, which includes direct inclusion in decision making.

Prior to inclusion in a budget authorization, all transportation projects and any reductions in transportation projects must be evaluated under the state's transportation policy goals. This analysis, which must occur prior to consideration by the Legislature and be made available on the WSDOT website, must be undertaken by the WSDOT and must include representatives from the active transportation division, the public transportation division, the multimodal planning division, and the Washington state ferries, in conjunction with the Department of Ecology, the interagency council on health disparities, the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Commerce. This evaluation must also include a public input process that is inclusive of vulnerable populations in highly impacted communities, as identified by the DOH.

Budget authorizations should not include projects that do not score above a threshold determined by the WSDOT, and projects being evaluated should be included in the regional transportation planning organization's existing regional plan.

The required project evaluations must all consider the following metrics relative to each state transportation policy goal:

Accessibility.

- Metric: Alignment with land-use goals that bring the things people need closer together. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: the ability of pedestrians to use the built environment and support for the goals and requirements of chapter 36.70A RCW and county and city plans adopted under that chapter.
- Metric: Improving the capacity of people of all abilities, both rural and urban, to get to the places they need to be. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: improvements in person throughput and the availability of transportation options to achieve improved movement for people of all abilities and needs; increases in frequency, availability, and reliability of public transportation; and provision of Americans with Disabilities Act accessible modes for all people.

Safety.

- Metric: Reduction in fatalities and serious injuries. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: decreasing the number of traffic-related fatalities on all roads to zero by 2030 and decreasing the frequency of motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian collisions.

Environment and Climate.

- Metric: Projects that help Washington meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, do not encourage sprawl in accordance with the state growth management act, and aligns with Washington legal requirements to protect the environment. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions required by RCW 70.235.020, achieving the goals in RCW 47.01.440 to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled, reducing polluted stormwater runoff, reducing and mitigating air pollution from transportation sources, and addressing impacts to fish habitat and other ecological needs.

Health and Resilience.

- Metric: Promote and improve the health of people and communities. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: promotion of healthy communities, the ability of pedestrians to use the built environment, alignment with transportation-related recommendations made by interagency council on health disparities, increasing opportunities for physical activity, reduction of noise, emittance of toxics known to impact human health in transportation construction process and materials, reduction and removal of toxics known to impact human health in the transportation system; and prevention of displacement and increases in community connectedness.

Equity and Environmental Justice.

- Metric: Equitable participation in system decision making by vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.
- Metric: Identifying and targeting system investments for the reduction of harm. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider impacts on the accessibility, safety, environment and climate, health and resilience, and economic vitality goals identified in RCW 47.04.280, and the metrics created in this section in relation to vulnerable populations in highly impacted communities, as identified by the DOH, and vulnerable populations as defined in RCW 19.405.020.

Preservation.

- Metric: Maintain and preserve a transportation system that meets current and future goals as identified in RCW 47.04.280. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: overall preservation and operational needs and appropriate maintenance at the time needed and usefulness of existing infrastructure relative to the metric created in this section.

Economic Vitality.

- Metric: Support and enhance access to opportunity. The evaluation pursuant to this metric must further consider: labor standards such as prevailing wage and project labor agreements; support for workers' industries seeing less growth compared to those seeing more rapid growth; job creation in the short and long term; impacts to local businesses resulting from construction; enhanced ability to bring goods to market from rural areas and students to training and educational opportunities; cost impacts for the full project life cycle, which must include, but is not limited to, maintenance; and transition to new employment for displaced workers in the transportation sector.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2020.

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