HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 6271

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government & Housing

Title: An act relating to annexations by cities and code cities located within the boundaries of a regional transit authority.

Brief Description: Concerning annexations by cities and code cities located within the boundaries of a regional transit authority.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Murray and Haugen).

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
Local Government & Housing: 2/22/10 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes that if a city located within the boundaries of a regional transit authority (RTA) annexes unincorporated territory, the annexed territory is simultaneously included within the RTA on the date the annexation becomes effective.

- Establishes that as of the effective date of the city's annexation of the unincorporated territory, the annexed territory is subject to all taxes, liabilities, and obligations applicable to the city by virtue of its inclusion in the RTA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Nelson, Vice Chair; Miloscia, Springer, Upthegrove, White and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Angel, Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan and Short.

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

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:

Annexation Methods.
State law authorizes multiple methods for municipal annexations. While code and non-code cities and towns have separate statutory requirements for governance and operation, the annexation methods employed are generally similar. A summary of the methods is as follows:

- *resolution/election method* - requires approval of city or town resolutions by voters residing in the proposed annexation area;
- *petition/election method* - includes initiatives petitioned by and approved by the voters residing in the proposed annexation area;
- *direct petition method* - requires approval of direct petitions signed by property owners comprising a specific percentage of land value, without voter action. An alternative direct petition method based upon the signatures of qualifying property owners and registered voters meeting specified criteria is also authorized; and
- *resolution only method* - includes annexations for municipal purposes approved by a majority of the city or town legislative body, or other actions not requiring voter or property owner action.

In addition to these methods, qualifying cities and towns may annex certain territory by ordinance through one of two additional methods if specific requirements, including the negotiation of interlocal agreements between the participating jurisdictions, are satisfied.

Regional Transit Authority.
In 1992 the Legislature authorized creation of regional transit authorities (RTAs) for the purpose of developing and operating high capacity transportation systems. An RTA must include two or more contiguous counties, each having a population of 400,000 persons or more. A high capacity transportation system is an urban public transportation system that operates principally on exclusive rights-of-way and provides a substantially higher level of passenger capacity, speed, and service frequency than traditional public transportation systems operating mainly on general purpose roadways.

An RTA is governed by a board of representatives appointed by the county executive and confirmed by the legislative authority of each member county. Membership is proportioned among counties based on population. Established in 1993, Sound Transit is the only RTA formed in the state, with boundaries that include parts of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

Statutes governing RTAs include provisions for boundary alterations. If, at the time of formation of an RTA, a portion of a city is determined to be within the boundaries of the RTA, the entire city must be included within the RTA's boundaries. Additionally, following initial voter approval of the RTA, the RTA may call elections to add areas contiguous to the RTA, provided consultation requirements have been met and the applicable county or city legislative authority agrees to the election. Only those areas that would benefit from the services provided by the RTA may be included in the annexation area and services or projects proposed for the area must be consistent with a regional transportation plan.

Summary of Bill:

When unincorporated territory is annexed to a code or non-code city that is within the boundaries of an RTA, the annexed territory is simultaneously included within the boundaries of the RTA as of the effective date of the annexation. As of this date, the annexed territory is subject to all taxes, liabilities, and obligations applicable to the city by virtue of its inclusion in the RTA.

Code and non-code cities that are within the boundaries of an RTA must notify the RTA of any annexation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) This bill is important to transit development and enhances the abilities of RTA's to provide the transit services they were intended to provide. Under the bill, if a city included within the jurisdiction of an RTA annexes an unincorporated area, the annexed area is automatically annexed into the RTA jurisdiction as well. The bill also serves to clarify taxation issues relating to RTAs. This bill is identical to House Bill 2574.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Martin Flynn, Sound Transit; and Amber Carter, Association of Washington Business.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.