
Transportation Committee

HB 1967

Brief Description: Concerning public transportation systems.

Sponsors: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Armstrong, Liias, Nealey, Clibborn, Billig, Frockt and Reykdal.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the due dates, and in some cases the subject matter, for various reports regarding public transportation systems.
- Requires that new state facilities be sited in areas adequately accessible by transit service.
- Recognizes the benefit of transit facilities and declares the intent of the Legislature that the Washington State Department of Transportation not charge air space leases for certain transit facilities.

Hearing Date: 2/22/11

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Each April, 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 in September of each year.

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 September 1 of each year to the transportation committees of the Legislature and each state municipality.

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.

Transit agencies own and maintain shelters and other amenities throughout their respective jurisdictions. Generally, when those facilities are located on the WSDOT property, the agency is charged annually for an air space lease.

During 2010, the Joint Transportation Committee was directed to conduct a study to identify the state role in public transportation and to develop a statewide blueprint to guide public transportation investments. The ensuing report, titled *Identifying the State Role in Public Transportation*, made a number of recommendations relating to the state's role, that include:

- integrating public transportation into regional and statewide planning;
- developing and promoting policies to encourage the use of all public transportation modes;
- assessing the adequacy of funding sources and developing new funding strategies to address statewide concerns;
- aligning report and data collection to provide a comprehensive and useful picture of transit; and
- establishing a consistent set of measures to assess public transportation systems.

Summary of Bill:

The due date for both the six-year transit development plans and the system reports are changed from April 1 to September 1.

The due date for the annual summary report on the status of public transportation systems prepared by the WSDOT is changed from September 1 to December 1. The WSDOT is also required, if such information is available, to include information about other modes of public transportation, how those modes impact the transportation system, and how public transportation helps the state meet the transportation system policy goals.

New state facilities must be sited in areas that are adequately accessible by transit service.

The Legislature recognizes the benefit of transit facilities to motor vehicle traffic, in the form of more efficient utilization of the system and a reduction in congestion and hazardous driving conditions. The intent of the Legislature is stated that the WSDOT should not charge transit agencies air space leases for transit facilities, which are defined as all benches, kiosks, lighting, waste receptacles, and shelters owned by public transportation systems.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2011.

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