
Transportation Committee

HB 2911

Brief Description: Creating a complete streets grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Takko, Ormsby, Morris, Nelson, Upthegrove, Liias, Williams, Simpson, Cody, Orwall, White, Morrell and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to establish a complete streets grant program.
- Creates the complete streets grant program account in the state treasury.
- Requires the WSDOT to consult with local jurisdictions prior to any design work when constructing or making major repairs to city streets that are part of a state highway.

Hearing Date: 1/28/10

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143).

Background:

Executive Order E. 1028, adopted by the Secretary of Transportation on November 24, 2003, directs the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) employees to implement a context sensitive solutions approach for all department projects. A context sensitive solutions approach means that the WSDOT employees working on projects and facilities should engage affected communities, assure the transportation objectives are clearly described and discussed with the local communities, recognize and address community and citizen concerns, and ensure the project is a safe facility for both the user and community. The WSDOT's Office of Highways and Local Programs and the State Design Engineer are responsible for carrying out this Executive Order.

One approach to context sensitive design is provided by the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) publication titled "Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban

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.

Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities." The publication provides context sensitive design principles and guidelines that can be implemented when designing major urban thoroughfares. This approach features community involvement throughout the planning process and addresses all modes of travel within the thoroughfare.

"Complete streets" refers to the practice of designing and operating streets so that safe access is provided to all users including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

With regards to city streets that are part of a state highway system, currently local communities have jurisdiction and responsibility for curb maintenance and improvements while the WSDOT is responsible for maintaining and preserving the street itself. The WSDOT can relinquish control of street maintenance to the local jurisdiction.

Summary of Bill:

Complete Streets Grant Program.

The Complete Streets Grant Program (grant program) is established in the WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs Division. The purpose of the grant program is to encourage local governments to adopt urban arterial retrofit street ordinances to provide safe access to all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users. Eligible projects:

- must be from a local government defined as an incorporated city or town with a population of at least 20,000. The local government must have adopted a jurisdiction-wide complete streets ordinance that plans for the needs of all users and is consistent with sound engineering principles; and
- must be a street retrofit project that includes the addition of, or significant repair to, facilities that provide street access with all users in mind including pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users.

Sound engineering principles are defined as the 2006 urban design principles and guidelines found in the publication developed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) titled "Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities."

The Complete Streets Grant Program Account is created in the state treasury. The WSDOT may solicit and receive gifts, grants or endowments from private and other sources and deposit those funds in the account. Moneys in the account may only be spent after appropriation. The WSDOT must report annually to the transportation committees of the Legislature on the status of any grant projects funded by the grant program.

State Highways that Include City Streets.

For WSDOT new construction or major street repair projects which include city streets that are part of state highways and are initially planned or scoped after July 1, 2010, the WSDOT must consult with the local jurisdiction in the design and planning phase. This consultation must include public outreach, meetings with stakeholders, and identification of community goals and priorities. The WSDOT must consider the needs of all users by applying context sensitive design solutions consistent with the most recent ITE Context Sensitive Solutions report. These

consultation requirements are contingent upon a local funding contribution to the project, as determined by the WSDOT.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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