

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5775

As Passed Senate, March 14, 2005

Title: An act relating to the creation of a small city or town street improvement program.

Brief Description: Authorizing the creation of a small city or town street and sidewalk improvement program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Mulliken).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/23/05, 3/3/05 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/14/05, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5775 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide, Esser, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

Staff: David Ward (786-7341)

Background: The 1999-2001 biennial transportation budget provided five million dollars to fund a grant program for small city pavement preservation through the Department of Transportation's Local Program. Competitive grants were made available to cities or towns with a population of two thousand five hundred or less who agreed to adopt a pavement management system. Grants made under the program averaged fifty to seventy thousand dollars per project and were exhausted by 2003.

Summary of Bill: The Small City Preservation and Sidewalk Account is created in the State Treasury. State funds appropriated from the account must be used for small city pavement or sidewalk projects selected by the Transportation Improvement Board. Eligibility for funds is restricted to cities and towns with both a population of less than five thousand and, depending on the project, a pavement management system or proposed sidewalk improvement that meets certain criteria. The account will retain its own interest income. The bill contains a null and void clause if funding is not provided by June 30, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2005.

Testimony For: When it was previously funded, the small city pavement grant program provided a greatly needed stream of funding for small cities and towns. In many cases, a single grant was sufficient to finance the preservation of one to two lane-miles of roadway. For a number of small cities and towns, that equates to preserving all of main street. Enacting this legislation would signify strong policy support for a valuable program. Funding to restart the program is one of the Transportation Improvement Board's highest priorities. Over 179 cities and towns with a population of more than 250,000 people could potentially be impacted by the program. When you consider the cost of failure versus the cost to maintain small city and town streets, the value of this kind of program is great.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Ashley Probart, Association of Washington Cities; Steve Gorchester, Transportation Improvement Board.