

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1694

C 421 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring the agency council on coordinated transportation to coordinate special needs transportation.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Flannigan, Upthegrove and Kenney).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

State Coordination Requirements.

In 1998 the Legislature created the Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation (PACT or the Program) and the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT or the Council) for the purpose of improving the efficiency and coordination of transportation systems for persons with special transportation needs, and to facilitate a statewide approach to coordination that supports the development of community-based coordinated transportation systems serving persons with special transportation needs.

"Persons with special transportation needs" means those persons, including their personal attendants, who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation.

The 17-member Council consists of nine voting members and eight non-voting legislative members. The nine voting members are: the Secretary of Transportation, who serves as the Chair; the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and six members appointed by the Governor, representing consumers of special needs transportation, pupil transportation, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, the Community Action Council Association, and the State Transit Association. The eight non-voting legislative members include four members from the House of Representatives and four Senators, representing each caucus and the House and Senate Transportation, House Appropriations, and Senate Ways and Means committees.

The Council is required to perform various duties, in coordination with stakeholders, designed to assure implementation of the Program. To that end, the Council's duties include: (1) developing guidelines for local planning of coordinated special needs transportation; (2) providing a state-level forum at which state agencies may discuss and resolve coordination and program policy issues; (3) administering and managing grant funds to develop, test, and facilitate the implementation of coordinated systems; (4) identifying barriers to coordinated

transportation; and (5) recommending statutory changes to the Legislature to assist in coordinated transportation.

The Council expires on June 30, 2007, and the remainder of the enabling legislation expires on June 30, 2008.

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations.

State law authorizes local governments to voluntarily form regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs). The purpose of an RTPO is to coordinate local comprehensive planning with state transportation planning. An RTPO is required to certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans conform with the Growth Management Act and are consistent with the regional transportation plan.

Federal Coordination Requirements.

In 2005 the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted, which conditions receipt of certain federally-funded public transportation grant projects on the establishment of locally-developed, coordinated public transportation plans.

The SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transportation Administration indicates that each plan should identify special transportation needs, prioritize services, and establish comprehensive strategies for meeting special transportation needs. The new federal requirement is addressed in the planning process of regional transportation planning organizations or metropolitan planning organizations.

Summary:

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (Council) is reauthorized by extending its termination date from June 30, 2007, to June 30, 2010. The Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation and its duties are repealed.

The Council's duties are modified and streamlined to include the following duties: focus on results and projects that identify and address barriers to facilitating a statewide approach to coordinated transportation systems for persons with special needs; develop statewide guidelines for customer complaint processes; represent the needs and interests of persons with special transportation needs in statewide efforts for emergency and disaster preparedness planning; and submit a progress report to the Legislature by December 1, 2009.

Council membership is reduced overall, from 17 to 14 members, by making the following modifications: reducing non-voting legislative membership from eight to four, and increasing voting membership for consumers of special needs transportation from three to four.

Council meetings are required to be open to the public, with agendas published in advance and minutes kept and made available to the public. Council meetings must also be held in locations that are readily accessible to public transportation and at a time when public transportation is available.

Beginning July 1, 2007, and every four years thereafter, each regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) is required to submit to the Council an updated plan that includes certain elements identified by the Council. Every two years, each RTPO must submit to the Council a prioritized regional human service and transportation project list.

The Joint Transportation Committee (JTC), in consultation with the Council and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, as deemed appropriate, is directed to study and review the legal and programmatic changes and best practices necessary for providing effective coordination of special needs transportation at the regional level. In conducting the review, the JTC shall convene local and regional special needs transportation brokers, representatives of user groups, service provider agencies, and others that have related transportation responsibilities. The JTC must provide a draft final report to the House and Senate transportation committees by December 15, 2008.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate	46	0	(Senate amended)
House	97	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007