

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5687

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### As Passed House - Amended:

March 3, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to certain traffic safety improvements.

**Brief Description:** Addressing certain traffic safety improvements.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, C., Lias, Billig, Das, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña and Stanford.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/25/22, 2/28/22 [DP].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/22, 55-42.

### Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House)

- Extends the authority to establish a maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour (mph) on a non-arterial highway from cities and towns to all local authorities, and from non-arterial highways in residential and business districts, to all non-arterial highways.
- Authorizes the Washington State Department of Transportation to establish a maximum speed limit of 20 mph on a non-arterial state highway without making a determination based on an engineering and traffic investigation.
- Requires a pedestrian to exercise due care when walking or moving along a roadway to avoid colliding with a vehicle.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Fey, Chair;

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Bronoske, 2nd Vice Chair; Ramos, 2nd Vice Chair; Berry, Donaghy, Duerr, Entenman, Hackney, Paul, Ramel, Riccelli, Slatter, Taylor, Valdez and Wicks.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Goehner, Griffey, Klicker, McCaslin, Orcutt, Sutherland and Walsh.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chapman.

**Staff:** Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

### **Background:**

#### Maximum Speed Limits.

Except where a special hazard exists that requires a lower speed limit and as specified below, speed limits are set at:

- 25 miles per hour (mph) on city and town streets;
- 50 mph on county roads; and
- 60 mph on state highways.

When a local authority determines, based on an engineering and traffic investigation, that the maximum speed permitted on a roadway within its jurisdiction is greater or less than is reasonable and safe for a highway or part of a highway, the local authority may set a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit that:

1. decreases the limit at intersections;
2. increases the limit up to 60 mph; or
3. decreases the limit to as low as 20 mph.

Local authorities must determine, through the use of an engineering and traffic investigation, the proper maximum speed for all arterial streets within their jurisdiction, which may be greater or less than the maximum speed permitted, but which may not exceed 60 mph. Arterial roads include the interstate system, freeways, multi-lane highways, and roads that connect principal urbanized areas, cities, and industrial centers. "Local authorities" includes every county, municipal, and other local public board or body having authority to adopt local police regulations.

Cities or towns may establish a maximum speed of 20 mph on a non-arterial or part of a non-arterial highway (a local or collector street) that is within a residential or business district. Cities or towns do not need to select a maximum speed based on an engineering and traffic investigation if the city or town has developed procedures for establishing a maximum speed limit. Any speed limit established for a non-arterial highway may be removed within one year and the previous speed limit reestablished without an engineering

and traffic investigation. Cities and towns must consult the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices as adopted by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

When the WSDOT determines, based on an engineering and traffic investigation, that any maximum speed on a state highway is greater than is reasonable or safe under the conditions found to exist at an intersection or on any other part of the state highway system or at state ferry terminals, the WSDOT may declare a reasonable and safe lower maximum speed limit.

#### Pedestrian Traffic Regulation.

Where sidewalks are provided and are accessible, it is unlawful for any pedestrian to walk or otherwise move along and on an adjacent roadway. When sidewalks are not provided or are inaccessible, a pedestrian walking or moving along and on a highway is required to:

- when shoulders are provided and are accessible, walk on the shoulder of the roadway as far as is practicable from its edge—facing traffic when a shoulder is available in this direction; or
- when shoulders are not provided or are inaccessible, walk as near as is practicable to the outside edge of the roadway facing traffic, and when practicable, move clear of the roadway on meeting an oncoming vehicle.

#### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The authority to establish a maximum speed limit of 20 mph on a non-arterial highway or part of a non-arterial highway is extended from cities and towns to all local authorities, and from applying only to non-arterial highways in residential and business districts to applying to all non-arterial highways.

The WSDOT may establish a maximum speed limit of 20 mph on a non-arterial state highway, or part of a non-arterial state highway, without making a determination based on an engineering and traffic investigation, subject to requirements for doing so that apply to local authorities.

When walking or moving along and on an adjacent roadway, a pedestrian is required to exercise due care to avoid colliding with a vehicle on the roadway.

Rules relating to the use of sidewalks, shoulders, and the outside edge of a roadway by a pedestrian do not apply when a roadway is closed to vehicular traffic through the placement of official traffic control devices that restrict its use to pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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 based on recommendations of the Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety Council. The bill does three major things. It expands the ability of local authorities to adjust the maximum speed limit of roads without conducting a traffic and engineering study. It requires pedestrians to exercise due care to avoid vehicles, underscoring the need to better instruct pedestrians on what they need to do as roadway users. It also allows traffic cameras to be used in school walk areas to protect children traveling to and from school.

This bill will provide cities with new tools to address the impacts of speed and speeding. The expansion of cameras in school walk areas will change driver behavior and improve safety, reducing the likelihood and severity of collisions. This is an unbiased and efficient way to enforce speed limits.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Claire Wilson, prime sponsor; and Josh Diekmann, City of Tacoma.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.