
Transportation Committee

ESSB 6774

Brief Description: Concerning transportation benefit districts.

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

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Provides an optional, alternative governance structure for transportation benefit districts (TBD) that include territory within more than one jurisdiction, by allowing such TBDs to be governed by the governing body of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) if the TBD and the MPO have identical boundaries.
- Clarifies that a TBD may propose to fund transportation improvements that are consistent with any existing relevant state, regional, or local transportation plan, instead of all relevant transportation plans.

Hearing Date: 2/18/10

Staff: Kathryn Leathers (786-7114).

Background:

Transportation Benefit District.

A transportation benefit district (TBD) is a quasi-municipal corporation and independent taxing authority that may be established by a county or city for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing, and funding transportation improvements within the district. The proposed transportation improvement or improvements must be consistent with any existing state, regional, and local transportation plans, and must be necessitated by existing or reasonably foreseeable congestion levels. Various revenue options are available to a TBD in order to finance the improvements, most of which are subject to voter approval.

A TBD is governed by the legislative authority of the jurisdiction proposing to create it, or by a governance structure prescribed in an interlocal agreement among multiple jurisdictions. If a TBD includes an area within more than one jurisdiction, the governing body must have at least

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five members, including at least one elected official from each of the participating jurisdictions. Port districts and transit districts may participate in the establishment of a TBD but may not initiate TBD formation.

Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Federal law requires that urban areas having greater than 50,000 persons must establish a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The formation of an MPO is a precondition for receiving federal highway and transit funds. The MPO designation is made by the Governor and must have the concurrence of local government officials representing 75 percent of the population within the area, including the central city or as otherwise provided for by state or local law. The governing body of an MPO is determined by the interlocal agreement creating the MPO. Each MPO must have a transportation policy board which must include local elected officials, officials of agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation systems, and appropriate state officials. There are currently 11 MPOs in Washington.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

State law authorizes the voluntary association of governments for transportation planning purposes in the form of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO). The purpose of an RTPO is to coordinate local comprehensive planning with state transportation planning. If formed, each RTPO must: (a) encompass at least one county; (b) have a population of at least 100,000 or contain at least three counties; and (c) have as members all counties within the region, and at least 60 percent of the cities and towns within the region representing at least 75 percent of the combined population of the cities and towns. Under state law, the federally-mandated MPOs are designated as the RTPOs. State requirements for regional transportation planning largely mirror federal requirements, and also include a requirement to certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans conform with the Growth Management Act and are consistent with the regional transportation plan. Each RTPO must create a transportation policy board to provide policy advice to the RTPO. There are currently 14 RTPOs in Washington, which include every county in the state except San Juan County.

Summary of Bill:

An alternative governance structure is permitted for TBDs that include territory within more than one jurisdiction (e.g., more than one city or county). A multi-jurisdiction TBD may be governed by the governing body of the MPO serving the TBD, but only if the TBD and the MPO have identical boundaries.

It is clarified that a transportation improvement must only be consistent with any existing relevant state, regional, *or* local transportation plan, and is not required to be consistent with any existing state, regional, *and* local transportation plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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