

Weekly Legislative Update: **Transportation**

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February 4, 2024

Overview

This week begins with major decisions being made in the fiscal and transportation committees, with the Monday, February 5, cutoff for bills to be passed in those committees. Below you will see that many of the bills the League is supporting will have final decisions on Monday.

This week in the Resources section below there are a number of new resources cited, which you are encouraged to read.

In addition to the bills we are following, the League is participating with allies in encouraging changes in the supplemental budget that would support increased rail service. Rail has been largely left out of the transportation system analysis to date but could contribute greatly to traffic and greenhouse gas reductions as well as potentially supporting improvements to the electric grid. These changes include:

- Seeking federal funding for projects that reduce travel time between Seattle and Portland and between Seattle and Vancouver, BC.
- Using multi-modal transportation funding to establish a Rail Office.
- Using multi-modal transportation funding to examine a number of short-haul rail opportunities.
- Using Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funds to support passenger rail projects in WA State.
- Using CCA funds for a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) of electrification of rail yards in Washington.

These will be supported in testimony to the Transportation Committees for their supplemental budget proposals.

Bills We Are Following

SHB 1368 Requiring and funding the purchase of zero emission school buses. This is a high priority for the League. **HB 1368** has moved from the House Appropriations Committee to the House Rules Committee. This bill would mandate acquisition of zero-emission buses for school

transport with technical and financial support from OSPI and Ecology. This would reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as reduce health risks to children who ride the buses.

HB 2160 Promoting community and transit-oriented housing development. These bills would make a number of changes to regulatory requirements to facilitate more development of multi-family housing near transit facilities. **HB 2160** passed the House Housing Committee as a substitute and has been referred to the House Capital Budget Committee, where it had a public hearing and was passed out of committee as a new substitute bill on February 2. It will go next to Rules Committee. The original bill prohibited minimum parking requirements in these transit-oriented development areas, but that provision was removed in the most recent substitute bill. The intention had been to encourage transit use by reducing parking capacity.

HB 2356/SB 6115 Concerning speed safety camera systems. **HB 2356** passed the House Transportation Committee and is now in the House Rules Committee. **SB 6115** is scheduled for executive session in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5. This bill would address administration, penalty structure, and enforcement of speed safety camera system violations in state highway work zones. It would require WSDOT to create a website to educate the traveling public about the operation of speed safety camera systems in state highway work zones. The prohibition on driving a vehicle in a state highway work zone at speeds greater than allowed would be made clear. Warnings would be issued for the first violation but fines would apply for subsequent events.

HB 2456/SB 6237 Ensuring connectivity for Washington wildlife through safe passages. **HB 2456** was referred to the House Rules Committee but that committee referred it back to the House Appropriations Committee. **SB 6237** moved from the Senate Transportation Committee to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. This bill requires WSDOT to negotiate an MOU with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to establish connectivity that would allow safer migration of many animals and avoid the extensive damages and costs that are now incurred from vehicles colliding with wildlife.

HB 2485 Establishing an automated highway speed safety camera pilot program, would authorize WSDOT to develop a traffic camera pilot program to test the use of two to three traffic cameras on state highways to evaluate the technology, determine the impact on speeding behavior in areas of testing, and compile public responses to the use of traffic cameras on highways. It restricts the use of photos and data captured by the traffic cameras in the pilot program. This bill is scheduled for executive session in the House Transportation Committee on February 5.

SSB 5383 Concerning pedestrians crossing and moving along roadways. This bill is scheduled for executive session in the Senate Transportation Committee on Monday, February 5. It would make significant change to jaywalking laws, allowing a pedestrian to cross a roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour or less at any point as long as such crossing does not impede the flow of traffic, requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians crossing the roadway and more.

SB 5959 Concerning automated traffic safety cameras. This bill would authorize cities and counties to use automated traffic safety cameras if approved by local ordinance but analysis that is required to do this includes equity considerations, such as impact of camera locations on livability accessibility, economics, education, and environmental health. It is scheduled for executive session in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

SB 6304 Implementing certain recommendations of the transportation electrification strategy. This bill would prioritize strategies for electric utilities and other entities to implement systems that include residential and fleet charging and upgrades to grid infrastructure in order to deliver power to electric vehicles. It includes a requirement that these entities also meet or exceed the same equity-related investment requirements in RCW 70A.535.080 as implemented by the department of ecology or a higher standard as set by relevant commissions. It is scheduled for executive session in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

SB 6114 Requiring local airport operators to provide sustainable aviation fuel for use in private jets. This bill would require any local airport operator that provides aviation fuel to offer sustainable fuel and establishes deadlines for such requirements. This is a greenhouse gas emission strategy. It is scheduled for executive session in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

Bills That Have Died

SB 5431 Companion bill to **HB 1368 Requiring and funding the purchase of zero emission school buses**, has not moved in the Senate and is therefore considered dead, though its companion bill is still alive. This bill would mandate acquisition of zero-emission buses for school transport with technical and financial support from OSPI and Ecology and would reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as reduce health risks to children who ride the buses.

HB 1428 Companion bill to **SSB 5383 Concerning pedestrians crossing and moving along roadways**, has not changed status since the beginning of session and is dead, since it will not have had any committee action by the cutoff on February 5.

Resource Information

Transportation Choices Coalition, one of the coalitions to which League belongs, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. If you haven't been aware of this group, check it out [here](#).

Read the report, [Ticket to Walk: How Jaywalking Enforcement Impacts Washingtonians](#), that shows how jaywalking enforcement impacts people across Washington State.

For information about accessibility on transit, see this federal DOT information, [Incorporating Accessibility in Transportation Projects](#).

Read what other states are doing about transit funding, [With Public Transit on the Brink, Some States Prepare to Boost Funding](#), Governing, February 1, 2024.

Read about parking reform, [How Parking Reform Is Helping Transform American Cities](#), Yale Environment 360, January 31, 2024

Check out the WSDOT Open Houses for a variety of projects and plans [here](#).

How You Can Be Involved

- Respond to Action Alerts in the legislative newsletter. These will primarily appear in the section of the newsletter related to transportation.
- Contact [Cynthia Stewart](#), Transportation Issue Chair, to receive additional information.