

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Without Recommendation as to Passage, Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference
Vote:	3 - 1 - 1
Yeas:	Monnes Anderson, Starr, Metsger
Nays:	George L.
Exc.:	Deckert
Prepared By:	Janet Adkins, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Creates a 17-member task force on extending Washington County Commuter Rail to Salem. Specifies membership and requires the task force to submit a report and recommendations no later than October 1, 2008. Directs the Legislative Administration Committee to provide staff for the task force. Sunsets at the beginning of the next regular biennial legislative session.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of the Washington County commuter rail project
- Potential benefits to Salem and other communities
- Purpose of the task force
- Whether the task force is necessary
- Whether population densities are sufficient for viable commuter rail system

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: In 1996, Washington County, the cities of Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin, Wilsonville and Sherwood, and Tri-Met, Metro and the Department of Transportation (ODOT) began studying the feasibility of commuter rail along a branch rail corridor that parallels Interstate-5 and Highway 217 between Wilsonville and Beaverton. In 1999, Washington County and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) began alternatives analysis and an environmental assessment process. Both processes were successfully concluded and the necessary construction is underway. The commuter rail line is expected to open in the fall of 2008. The 14.7 mile long, five-station project between Wilsonville and Beaverton will utilize an existing rail line and link five eastern Washington County regional and town centers. The branch line track extends south into the mid-Willamette Valley.

House Bill 2472-A creates a task force to study and develop a plan to generate interest in extending the commuter line to Salem. The membership specified in the measure includes four legislators and the Representative from the Fifth Congressional District, as well as representation from local jurisdictions, the Portland and Western Railroad, Tri-Met, and ODOT. All agencies of state government are directed to assist the task force in the performance of its duties.