

HB 2219 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

Action Date: 03/27/19

Action: Do pass. Refer to Ways and Means.

House Vote

Yeas: 6 - Evans, Findley, Lewis, McKeown, McLain, Witt

Exc: 1 - Noble

Senate Vote

Yeas: 4 - Bentz, Beyer, Boquist, Frederick

Exc: 1 - Gelser

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/4, 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Task Force on Extending the Westside Express Service Commuter Line to Salem. Sunsets on December 31, 2020. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Relationship between transportation and land use
- Potential reduction in highway congestion
- Which agency would administer line, if completed
- Benefits of public transportation

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transit District (TriMet) is Oregon's largest provider of public transportation services. Encompassing most of the metropolitan areas of Washington, Multnomah, and Clackamas counties, TriMet operates 79 bus lines and five light rail lines, providing over 300,000 passenger trips per day. The agency also jointly operates streetcars with the City of Portland.

Beginning in 2009, TriMet inaugurated a commuter rail service between Beaverton and Wilsonville, known as the Westside Express Service (WES), which operates during the morning and afternoon commute hours, with intermediate stops in Beaverton, Tigard, and Tualatin. WES utilizes diesel vehicles and operates on tracks owned by the Portland and Western Railroad, averaging 37 miles per hour over the route. Annual ridership for WES peaked in 2014 at 500,676, and has declined steadily since, totaling 432,890 riders in 2017.

House Bill 2219 creates a task force to examine the efficacy and feasibility of extending WES service to Salem. The 17-member task force will be staffed by the Oregon Department of Transportation, and is directed to report to the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2020.