

SB 1572 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

Action Date: 02/22/24

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Senate Vote

Yeas: 3 - Boquist, Frederick, Gorsek

Exc: 2 - Findley, Woods

House Vote

Yeas: 6 - Boshart Davis, Evans, Mannix, McLain, Nathanson, Reschke

Exc: 1 - Pham K

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/13, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure creates an advisory group to consider how to extend commuter rail service south from the Portland metro area to Salem. It directs the Oregon Department of Transportation to study the issue and report findings to legislative transportation committees by December 1, 2024. The measure appropriates \$250,000 for the project.

Detailed Summary: Directs Oregon Department of Transportation (Department) to appoint the Westside Express Advisory Committee to provide recommendations to the Department regarding extension of commuter rail service to Salem. Requires Department to consult with advisory committee and study issues related to extending the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter rail line from Wilsonville to Salem. Specifies study is to include: governance structure of an extended WES line; ownership and operations, including maintenance services; finance plan and recommended funding sources; integration of existing transit services throughout the extension realignment; update on progress of consent or commitment from Portland and Western Railroad and BNSF Railway. Requires Department to submit report to transportation committees by December 1, 2024. Appropriates \$250,000 from the General Fund to Department for purposes of the measure. Sunsets January 2, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Potential benefits of additional passenger rail service on corridor
- Rapid population growth of Woodburn and other cities that could be served
- Desire for alternative modes of transportation in region
- Several popular regional attractions that would be accessible by commuter rail line
- Potential for economic development
- Potential impact on freight rail service
- Potential environmental benefits

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces study requirements with the following: governance structure of an extended Westside Express Service line; ownership and operations, including maintenance services; finance plan and recommended funding sources; integration of existing transit services throughout the extension realignment; update on progress of consent or commitment from Portland and Western Railroad and BNSF Railway. Directs Oregon Department of Transportation (Department) to delegate, rather than collaborate, with the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments via intergovernmental agreement. Removes directive to provide recommendations to Department on land use and transportation considerations. Adds directive to perform a gap analysis of data from the 2010

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ODOT Rail Study and adds requirement to include data from that gap analysis in the report to the legislative transportation committees. Reduces allocation of General Fund moneys from \$500,000 to \$250,000.

BACKGROUND:

TriMet is Oregon's largest provider of public transportation services, operating over 80 bus lines, five light rail lines, paratransit services, and one commuter rail line. The Westside Express Service (WES) was inaugurated in February 2009, connecting the Beaverton Transit Center to the Wilsonville Transit Center. The WES operates on freight tracks owned by the Portland & Western Railroad, and makes 10 trips north and south each weekday, roughly every 45 minutes. The WES service includes three intermediate stops and provides connections to the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) system in Wilsonville, the Yamhill County Transit Area system in Tigard, and Salem-Keizer Area Mass Transit District, also known as Cherriots, via express bus from Wilsonville to Salem.

Senate Bill 1582 A establishes a Westside Express Advisory Committee to help the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) study issues related to extending the WES southward from Wilsonville to Salem. The measure outlines particular issues that must be covered by the study and allocates \$250,000 from the General Fund to ODOT to conduct the study.