



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

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Secretary of Transportation

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December 10, 2015

The Honorable Curtis King
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
P.O. Box 40414
Olympia, WA 98504-0414

The Honorable Judy Clibborn
Chair, House Transportation Committee
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Mr. David Schumacher
Director, Office of Financial Management
P.O. Box 43113
Olympia, WA 98504-3113

Re: 2ESHB 1299, Section 218 – Report on improving consistency between existing and planned transportation demand models.

The 2015 Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation to identify ways to improve consistency between existing and planned transportation demand models in 2ESHB 1299, Section 218.

The proviso states:

"The department shall work with appropriate local jurisdictions to improve consistency between existing and planned transportation demand models. The department shall report back to the transportation committees of the legislature and the office of financial management by December 31, 2015, with any recommendations requiring legislative action."

Summary:

Local jurisdictions are currently consistent between their existing travel demand models. The planned statewide travel demand model would also be consistent with existing models and would help the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other jurisdictions with consistency in data and forecasting of external passenger and truck volumes. The stakeholders committee does not recommend any legislative action.

Background:

A statewide multimodal travel demand model is an analytical tool that helps to understand the system-wide movement of people and goods across the state. The model would help to execute "what if" scenario analyses, enhance transportation planning and coordination with jurisdictions, make better investment/policy decisions to maximize

system efficiency and reduce travel delay. The model would also provide improved information for conducting performance-based planning and programming for surface transportation based on MAP-21. In addition, this model would provide travel demand forecasts for areas or regions without resources to develop their own model and provide all regions with data on trips entering and exiting regional boundaries for passenger vehicles and truck volumes.

The Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to work with local jurisdictions to identify strategies that will improve consistency between existing and planned transportation demand models. For this task, WSDOT convened a stakeholders committee made up of seven members from our state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations and one member from WSDOT Freight Division. This committee is representative of all jurisdictions with regional travel demand models of various sizes, and members have expertise in the development and application of travel demand models. The members are:

- Barbara Ivanov – WSDOT Freight Division
- Craig Helmann – Puget Sound Regional Council
- Deb LaCombe – Yakima Valley Council Of Governments
- Hugh Conroy – Whatcom Council Of Governments
- Kevin Murphy – Skagit Council Of Governments
- Ryan Stewart – Spokane Regional Transportation Council
- Shinwon Kim – Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
- Thera Black – Thurston Regional Planning Council

The committee met several times and discussed various modeling issues to identify inconsistencies (if any) between existing and planned travel demand models.

Proviso Response:

1. *Consistency between existing models:*

Committee members concluded that regions achieve consistency and coordination among existing travel demand models through their Growth Management Act (GMA) planning processes. GMA requires jurisdictions to follow RCW 43.62.035 in determining population projections and RCW 36.70A.115, to provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development within their jurisdictions to accommodate their allocated housing and employment growth.

2. Improving consistency between existing models and the planned model:

GMA requires that jurisdictions follow Office of Financial Management's (OFM) forecast for population. But GMA doesn't give guidance on employment forecasts. In addition, there is no requirement for consistency in forecast years. The planned statewide travel demand model would help MPOs and regions with consistency in:

- future employment data for jurisdictions
- similar forecast years
- truck volume forecast
- auto volume forecast external to the regions

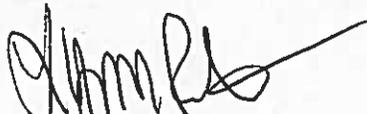
Jurisdictions (MPOs and the state) already coordinate and work together on growth issues. In the future, we may form a strategic group for coordination. This could be in the form of a Technical Advisory Committee with representation from all jurisdictions to coordinate and work together on common land use forecast, growth, and modeling and data issues. As all of the coordinating agencies recognize the value of it, there would be opportunities for cooperation and leveraging resources including those for data collection. Pooling limited resources together to collect and analyze survey and other data would be very helpful and cost-effective for all jurisdictions.

3. Legislative Action:

The stakeholders committee feels that there is no need for legislative action regarding consistency between existing and planned travel demand models, since they would be consistent. Potential future legislative action would be to further the development of the statewide travel demand model and data collection efforts.

Should you have any questions, or need further information, please contact Kerri Woehler, Director of Multimodal Planning Division, by telephone at 360-705-7958, or by e-mail at woehlek@wsdot.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Lynn Peterson
Secretary of Transportation

LP:kw