Chapter 47.80 RCW
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

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RCW 47.80.010 Findings—Declaration. The legislature finds that while the transportation system in Washington is owned and operated by numerous public jurisdictions, it should function as one interconnected and coordinated system. Transportation planning, at all jurisdictional levels, should be coordinated with local comprehensive plans. Further, local jurisdictions and the state should cooperate to achieve both statewide and local transportation goals. To facilitate this coordination and cooperation among state and local jurisdictions, the legislature declares it to be in the state's interest to establish a coordinated planning program for regional transportation systems and facilities throughout the state. [1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 53.]

RCW 47.80.011 Legislative intent. The legislature recognizes that recent legislative enactments have significantly added to the complexity of and to the potential for benefits from integrated transportation and comprehensive planning and that there is currently a unique opportunity for integration of local comprehensive plans and regional goals with state and local transportation programs. Further, approaches to transportation demand management initiatives and local and state transportation funding can be better coordinated to insure an efficient, effective transportation system that insures mobility and accessibility, and addresses community needs.

The legislature further finds that transportation and land use share a critical relationship that policymakers can better utilize to address regional strategies.

Prudent and cost-effective investment by the state and by local governments in highway facilities, local streets and arterials, rail facilities, marine facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities and systems, public transit systems, transportation system management,

transportation demand management, and the development of high capacity transit systems can help to effectively address mobility needs. Such investment can also enhance local and state objectives for effective comprehensive planning, economic development strategies, and clean air policies.

The legislature finds that addressing public initiatives regarding transportation and comprehensive planning necessitates an innovative approach. Improved integration between transportation and comprehensive planning among public institutions, particularly in the state's largest metropolitan areas is considered by the state to be imperative, and to have significant benefit to the citizens of Washington. [1994 c 158 s 1.]

RCW 47.80.020 Regional transportation planning organizations authorized. The legislature hereby authorizes creation of regional transportation planning organizations within the state. Each regional transportation planning organization shall be formed through the voluntary association of local governments within a county, or within geographically contiguous counties. Each organization shall:

(1) Encompass at least one complete county;

(2)(a) Have a population of at least one hundred thousand, (b) have a population of at least seventy-five thousand and contain a Washington state ferries terminal, (c) have a population of at least forty thousand and cover a geographic area of at least five thousand square miles, or (d) contain a minimum of three counties; and

(3) Have as members all counties within the region, and at least sixty percent of the cities and towns within the region representing a minimum of seventy-five percent of the cities' and towns' population.

The state department of transportation must verify that each regional transportation planning organization conforms with the requirements of this section.

In urbanized areas, the regional transportation planning organization is the same as the metropolitan planning organization designated for federal transportation planning purposes. [2017 c 68 s 1; 2016 c 27 s 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 54.]

Effective date—2016 c 27: "This act takes effect July 1, 2016." [2016 c 27 s 2.]

RCW 47.80.023 Duties. Each regional transportation planning organization shall have the following duties:

(1) Prepare and periodically update a transportation strategy for the region. The strategy shall address alternative transportation modes and transportation demand management measures in regional corridors and shall recommend preferred transportation policies to implement adopted growth strategies. The strategy shall serve as a guide in preparation of the regional transportation plan.

(2) Prepare a regional transportation plan as set forth in RCW 47.80.030 that is consistent with countywide planning policies if such have been adopted pursuant to chapter 36.70A RCW, with county, city, and town comprehensive plans, and state transportation plans.

(3) Certify by December 31, 1996, that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect the guidelines and principles developed

pursuant to RCW 47.80.026, are consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan, and, where appropriate, conform with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070.

(4) Where appropriate, certify that countywide planning policies adopted under RCW 36.70A.210 and the adopted regional transportation plan are consistent.

(5) Develop, in cooperation with the department of transportation, operators of public transportation services and local governments within the region, a six-year regional transportation improvement program which proposes regionally significant transportation projects and programs and transportation demand management measures. The regional transportation improvement program shall be based on the programs, projects, and transportation demand management measures of regional significance as identified by transit agencies, cities, and counties pursuant to RCW 35.58.2795, 35.77.010, and 36.81.121, respectively, and any recommended programs or projects identified by the agency council on coordinated transportation, as provided in *chapter 47.06B RCW, that advance special needs coordinated transportation as defined in *RCW 47.06B.012. The program shall include a priority list of projects and programs, project segments and programs, transportation demand management measures, and a specific financial plan that demonstrates how the transportation improvement program can be funded. The program shall be updated at least every two years for the ensuing six-year period.

(6) Include specific opportunities and projects to advance special needs coordinated transportation, as defined in *RCW 47.06B.012, in the coordinated transit-human services transportation plan, after providing opportunity for public comment.

(7) Designate a lead planning agency to coordinate preparation of the regional transportation plan and carry out the other responsibilities of the organization. The lead planning agency may be a regional organization, a component county, city, or town agency, or the appropriate Washington state department of transportation district office.

(8) Review level of service methodologies used by cities and counties planning under chapter 36.70A RCW to promote a consistent regional evaluation of transportation facilities and corridors.

(9) Work with cities, counties, transit agencies, the department of transportation, and others to develop level of service standards or alternative transportation performance measures.

(10) Submit to the agency council on coordinated transportation, as provided in *chapter 47.06B RCW, beginning on July 1, 2007, and every four years thereafter, an updated plan that includes the elements identified by the council. Each regional transportation planning organization must submit to the council every two years a prioritized regional human service and transportation project list. [2009 c 515 s 15; 2007 c 421 s 5; 1998 c 171 s 8; 1994 c 158 s 2.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 47.06B RCW was repealed by 2011 c 60 s 51.

RCW 47.80.026 Comprehensive plans, transportation guidelines, and principles. Each regional transportation planning organization, with cooperation from component cities, towns, and counties, shall establish guidelines and principles by July 1, 1995, that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the

transportation elements of comprehensive plans, where such plans exist, and to assure that state, regional, and local goals for the development of transportation systems are met. These guidelines and principles shall address at a minimum the relationship between transportation systems and the following factors: Concentration of economic activity, residential density, development corridors and urban design that, where appropriate, supports high capacity transit, freight transportation and port access, development patterns that promote pedestrian and nonmotorized transportation, circulation systems, access to regional systems, effective and efficient highway systems, the ability of transportation facilities and programs to retain existing and attract new jobs and private investment and to accommodate growth in demand, transportation demand management, joint and mixed-use developments, present and future railroad right-of-way corridor utilization, and intermodal connections.

Examples shall be published by the organization to assist local governments in interpreting and explaining the requirements of this section. [1994 c 158 s 3.]

RCW 47.80.030 Regional transportation plan—Contents, review, use. (1) Each regional transportation planning organization shall develop in cooperation with the department of transportation, providers of public transportation and high capacity transportation, ports, and local governments within the region, adopt, and periodically update a regional transportation plan that:

(a) Is based on a least cost planning methodology that identifies the most cost-effective facilities, services, and programs;

(b) Identifies existing or planned transportation facilities, services, and programs, including but not limited to major roadways including state highways and regional arterials, transit and nonmotorized services and facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, marine ports and airports, railroads, and noncapital programs including transportation demand management that should function as an integrated regional transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities, services, and programs that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

(i) Crosses member county lines;

(ii) Is or will be used by a significant number of people who live or work outside the county in which the facility, service, or project is located;

(iii) Significant impacts are expected to be felt in more than one county;

(iv) Potentially adverse impacts of the facility, service, program, or project can be better avoided or mitigated through adherence to regional policies;

(v) Transportation needs addressed by a project have been identified by the regional transportation planning process and the remedy is deemed to have regional significance; and

(vi) Provides for system continuity;

(c) Establishes level of service standards for state highways and state ferry routes, with the exception of transportation facilities of statewide significance as defined in RCW 47.06.140. These regionally established level of service standards for state highways and state ferries shall be developed jointly with the department of transportation, to encourage consistency across jurisdictions. In

establishing level of service standards for state highways and state ferries, consideration shall be given for the necessary balance between providing for the free interjurisdictional movement of people and goods and the needs of local commuters using state facilities;

(d) Includes a financial plan demonstrating how the regional transportation plan can be implemented, indicating resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the plan, and recommending any innovative financing techniques to finance needed facilities, services, and programs;

(e) Assesses regional development patterns, capital investment and other measures necessary to:

(i) Ensure the preservation of the existing regional transportation system, including requirements for operational improvements, resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation of existing and future major roadways, as well as operations, maintenance, modernization, and rehabilitation of existing and future transit, railroad systems and corridors, and nonmotorized facilities; and

(ii) Make the most efficient use of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the mobility of people and goods;

(f) Sets forth a proposed regional transportation approach, including capital investments, service improvements, programs, and transportation demand management measures to guide the development of the integrated, multimodal regional transportation system. For regional growth centers, the approach must address transportation concurrency strategies required under RCW 36.70A.070 and include a measurement of vehicle level of service for off-peak periods and total multimodal capacity for peak periods; and

(g) Where appropriate, sets forth the relationship of high capacity transportation providers and other public transit providers with regard to responsibility for, and the coordination between, services and facilities.

(2) The organization shall review the regional transportation plan biennially for currency and forward the adopted plan along with documentation of the biennial review to the state department of transportation.

(3) All transportation projects, programs, and transportation demand management measures within the region that have an impact upon regional facilities or services must be consistent with the plan and with the adopted regional growth and transportation strategies. [2005 c 328 s 2; 1998 c 171 s 9; 1994 c 158 s 4; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 55.]

RCW 47.80.040 Transportation policy boards. Each regional transportation planning organization shall create a transportation policy board. Transportation policy boards shall provide policy advice to the regional transportation planning organization and shall allow representatives of major employers within the region, the department of transportation, transit districts, port districts, and member cities, towns, and counties within the region to participate in policy making. Any members of the house of representatives or the state senate whose districts are wholly or partly within the boundaries of the regional transportation planning organization are considered ex officio, nonvoting policy board members of the regional transportation planning organization. This does not preclude legislators from

becoming full-time, voting board members. [2003 c 351 s 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 56.]

RCW 47.80.050 Allocation of regional transportation planning funds—Eligibility—Federally recognized tribes, voting membership. (1) Biennial appropriations to the department of transportation to carry out the regional transportation planning program shall set forth the amounts to be allocated as follows:

(a) A base amount per county for each county within each regional transportation planning organization, to be distributed to the lead planning agency;

(b) An amount to be distributed to each lead planning agency on a per capita basis; and

(c) An amount to be administered by the department of transportation as a discretionary grant program for special regional planning projects, including grants to allow counties which have significant transportation interests in common with an adjoining region to also participate in that region's planning efforts.

(2) In order for a regional transportation planning organization to be eligible to receive state funds that are appropriated for regional transportation planning organizations, a regional transportation planning organization must provide a reasonable opportunity for voting membership to federally recognized tribes that hold reservation or trust lands within the planning area of the regional transportation planning organization. Any federally recognized tribe that holds reservation or trust land within the planning area of a regional transportation planning organization and does not have voting membership in the regional transportation planning organization must be offered voting membership in the regional transportation planning organization every two years or when the composition of the board of the regional transportation planning organization is modified in an interlocal agreement. [2019 c 118 s 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 57.]

Effective date—2019 c 118: "This act takes effect August 1, 2019." [2019 c 118 s 2.]

RCW 47.80.060 Executive board membership. In order to qualify for state planning funds available to regional transportation planning organizations, the regional transportation planning organizations containing any county with a population in excess of one million shall provide voting membership on its executive board to the state transportation commission, the state department of transportation, the four largest public port districts within the region as determined by gross operating revenues, any incorporated principal city of a metropolitan statistical area within the region, as designated by the United States census bureau, and any incorporated city within the region with a population in excess of eighty thousand. It shall further assure that at least fifty percent of the county and city local elected officials who serve on the executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority. [2007 c 511 s 1; 2005 c 334 s 1; 1992 c 101 s 31.]

Section headings not part of law—Severability—Effective date—1992 c 101: See RCW 81.112.900 through 81.112.902.

RCW 47.80.070 Statewide consistency. In order to ensure statewide consistency in the regional transportation planning process, the state department of transportation, in conformance with chapter 34.05 RCW, shall:

(1) In cooperation with regional transportation planning organizations, establish minimum standards for development of a regional transportation plan;

(2) Facilitate coordination between regional transportation planning organizations; and

(3) Through the regional transportation planning process, and through state planning efforts as required by RCW 47.01.071, identify and jointly plan improvements and strategies within those corridors important to moving people and goods on a regional or statewide basis. [1994 c 158 s 5.]

RCW 47.80.080 Majority vote on state matters. When voting on matters solely affecting Washington state, a regional transportation planning organization must obtain a majority vote of the Washington residents serving as members of the regional transportation planning organization before a matter may be adopted. [2003 c 351 s 2.]

RCW 47.80.090 Regional transportation planning organizations—Electric vehicle infrastructure. (1) A regional transportation planning organization containing any county with a population in excess of one million in collaboration with representatives from the department of ecology, the department of commerce, local governments, and the office of regulatory assistance must seek federal or private funding for the planning for, deployment of, or regulations concerning electric vehicle infrastructure. These efforts should include:

(a) Development of short-term and long-term plans outlining how state, regional, and local government construction may include electric vehicle infrastructure in publicly available off-street parking and government fleet vehicle parking, including what ratios of charge spots to parking may be appropriate based on location or type of facility or building;

(b) Consultations with the state building code council and the department of labor and industries to coordinate the plans with state standards for new residential, commercial, and industrial buildings to ensure that the appropriate electric circuitry is installed to support electric vehicle infrastructure;

(c) Consultation with the workforce development council and the student achievement council to ensure the development of appropriate educational and training opportunities for citizens of the state in support of the transition of some portion of vehicular transportation from combustion to electric vehicles;

(d) Development of an implementation plan for counties with a population greater than five hundred thousand with the goal of having public and private parking spaces, in the aggregate, be ten percent electric vehicle ready by December 31, 2018; and

(e) Development of model ordinances and guidance for local governments for siting and installing electric vehicle infrastructure, in particular battery charging stations, and appropriate handling, recycling, and storage of electric vehicle batteries and equipment.

(2) These plans and any recommendations developed as a result of the consultations required by this section must be submitted to the legislature by December 31, 2010, or as soon as reasonably practicable after the securing of any federal or private funding. Priority will be given to the activities in subsection (1)(e) of this section and any ordinances or guidance that is developed will be submitted to the legislature, the department of commerce, and affected local governments prior to December 31, 2010, if completed.

(3) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Battery charging station" means an electrical component assembly or cluster of component assemblies designed specifically to charge batteries within electric vehicles, which meet or exceed any standards, codes, and regulations set forth by chapter 19.28 RCW and consistent with rules adopted under RCW 19.27.540.

(b) "Battery exchange station" means a fully automated facility that will enable an electric vehicle with a swappable battery to enter a drive lane and exchange the depleted battery with a fully charged battery through a fully automated process, which meets or exceeds any standards, codes, and regulations set forth by chapter 19.28 RCW and consistent with rules adopted under RCW 19.27.540.

(c) "Electric vehicle infrastructure" means structures, machinery, and equipment necessary and integral to support an electric vehicle, including battery charging stations, rapid charging stations, and battery exchange stations.

(d) "Rapid charging station" means an industrial grade electrical outlet that allows for faster recharging of electric vehicle batteries through higher power levels, which meets or exceeds any standards, codes, and regulations set forth by chapter 19.28 RCW and consistent with rules adopted under RCW 19.27.540. [2012 c 229 s 592; 2009 c 459 s 2.]

Effective date—2012 c 229 ss 101, 117, 401, 402, 501 through 594, 601 through 609, 701 through 708, 801 through 821, 902, and 904: See note following RCW 28B.77.005.

Finding—Purpose—2009 c 459: "The legislature finds the development of electric vehicle infrastructure to be a critical step in creating jobs, fostering economic growth, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing our reliance on foreign fuels, and reducing the pollution of Puget Sound attributable to the operation of petroleum-based vehicles on streets and highways. Limited driving distance between battery charges is a fundamental disadvantage and obstacle to broad consumer adoption of vehicles powered by electricity. In order to eliminate this fundamental disadvantage and dramatically increase consumer acceptance and usage of electric vehicles, it is essential that an infrastructure of convenient electric vehicle charging opportunities be developed. The purpose of this act is to encourage the transition to electric vehicle use and to expedite the establishment of a convenient, cost-effective, electric vehicle infrastructure that such a transition necessitates. The state's success in encouraging this transition will serve as an economic

stimulus to the creation of short-term and long-term jobs as the entire automobile industry and its associated direct and indirect jobs transform over time from combustion to electric vehicles." [2009 c 459 s 1.]

RCW 47.80.100 Summary of per capita vehicle miles traveled. The department shall compile, maintain, and publish a summary of the per capita vehicle miles traveled annually in each city in the state, and in the unincorporated portions of each county in the state. [2023 c 228 s 10.]

RCW 47.80.902 Captions not part of law—1994 c 158. Captions used in this act do not constitute any part of the law. [1994 c 158 s 11.]

RCW 47.80.904 Effective date—1994 c 158. This act shall take effect July 1, 1994. [1994 c 158 s 13.]