

2023 Legislative Session Summary: **Transportation**

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The Legislative transportation priority this session have been safety. The League's priority has been transit and rail. All three categories fared reasonably well. One issue that was anticipated but did not move ahead is the shift in transportation funding to a system such as a road usage charge, which would replace some of the revenue lost because of diminishing gas tax revenues from more energy efficient vehicles and that would also have greater flexibility. The gas tax can only be used for roads and ferries. This is likely to come up again in the next session.

All of the bills that died this session will retain their assigned numbers and can be restarted in the 2024 session.

Bills that Passed

SB 5023 Concerning roadside safety measures. This bill sets forth requirements for safety measures by tow trucks at accidents on highways. This bill passed the Senate, 49-0, and passed the House on March 24 with a vote of 96-0. It was signed by the Governor on April 6 and will be effective on July 23.

SB 5272 Relating to speed safety camera systems on state highways, would require enforcement of speeding caught on cameras. This bill passed the Senate as a substitute with a vote of 47 to 2. It passed the House with additional amendments, and the Senate concurred with House amendments on March 29. It was signed by the Governor on April 4 and will be effective July 23.

SB 5317 Concerning the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high-capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety. This bill authorizes an immediate tow of any vehicles that would obstruct high-capacity vehicles. It passed the Senate with a vote of 49-0 and passed the House on March 24 with amendments from the Senate version with a vote of 95-1. The Senate concurred with the House amendments and the bill has been sent to the Governor for signature.

SB 5412 Reducing local governments' land use permitting workloads. This bill would ensure objective and timely design review for housing and other land use proposals and supports transit-oriented development. It was passed by the House with amendments on April 12 with a vote of 95 to 2. On April 14, the Senate declined to concur with the House amendments, but a

compromise set of amendments was approved and both chambers passed an identical bill. It has been delivered to the Governor for signature.

[SB 5452](#) Authorizing impact fee revenue to fund improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would add bicycle and pedestrian facilities that were designed with multimodal commuting as an intended use to the uses allowable with transportation impact mitigation fees. This bill passed the Senate with a vote of 34-14 and in the House passed on April 7 with a vote of 57 to 0. Since the Senate did not amend the House version of the bill, it was delivered to the Governor, and the Governor has now signed this bill.

[SB 5504](#) Addressing open motor vehicle safety recalls, would establish a system of assuring that people are notified of and held accountable for responding to vehicle safety recalls. This bill passed the Senate on March 8 with a vote of 49-0. It passed the House on April 10 with amendments on a vote of 96 to 0. The Senate concurred with House amendments and the bill has now been sent to the Governor for signature.

[SB 5583](#) Improving young driver safety, would require driver training for individuals between 18 and 25 to get a driver's license. This bill has passed the Senate as a substitute with a vote of 41-7. It passed the House on April 12 with a vote of 93 to 4. Since it was amended in the House, this bill will need to have a process for reconciliation between House and Senate to address the differences if it is to pass entirely.

[HB 1084](#) Concerning freight mobility prioritization, would establish a board to advise on freight mobility needs while addressing transition to zero emissions technology and historically overburdened communities. This bill passed the House as a substitute on March 7 with a vote of 95-0. It passed the Senate on April 12 with a vote of 48 to 0. Since there were no amendments in the Senate, this was sent to the Governor for signature, and he signed it on April 25.

[HB 1257](#) Concerning the authority of cargo and passenger ports. This bill would authorize cargo and ports to coordinate with others without liability under federal antitrust laws. This is a bill that League is watching, with neither a support nor an oppose position. It passed the House on February 28 with a vote of 97-0. It passed the Senate on April 12 with a vote of 49 to 0 with amendments. The House concurred with the Senate amendments, so the bill has been sent to the Governor for signature.

[HB 1540](#) Requiring driver training curriculum to include instruction on sharing the road with large vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles and buses. This bill passed the House with a vote of 97-0 and passed the Senate on March 22 with a vote of 48-0. It now been signed by the Governor.

[HB 1791](#) Relating to studying the need for increased commercial aviation services, would replace the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission with a Commercial Aviation Work Group and direct that group to evaluate the commercial aviation needs of the state within the

broader context of state transportation needs and the specific needs of western Washington and to investigate the expansion of existing aviation facilities and possible siting locations for new greenfield aviation facilities and report on the strengths and weaknesses of each site considered. League is watching this bill as there is no League position on this issue but it does affect the state transportation system and responds to the recent airport siting controversy. This bill passed the House on March 8 as a substitute with a vote of 88 to 9. It passed the Senate on April 12 with amendments on a vote of 31 to 17. The House concurred with Senate amendments and the bill has been sent to the Governor for signature.

Budget—Transportation Appropriations

The adopted 2023-25 transportation budget appropriated \$13.5 billion for agencies and services in the transportation categories. Included in that amount are (rounded):

• State Patrol	\$ 650.4 million
• Licensing	\$ 430.9 million
• Transfers to other departments & offices	\$2.3 billion
• Public Transportation	\$ 679.1 million
• Rail	\$ 325.4 million
• Aviation	\$ 17.7 million
• Ferries	\$1.3 billion
• Local Transportation Programs	\$ 703 million
• Other Transportation (primarily highways & Facilities	\$7.8 billion

This was a significant increase over the \$11.6 billion Move Ahead WA budget passed in 2022.

The appropriations for public transportation and rail – which were League priorities this year - were notably higher, with public transportation more than doubled, over what was passed in 2022. Details are available as follows:

- [Highway Improvements Program](#) – by project/county
- [All Projects](#) – including Freight Mobility, Local Programs, Rail, Public Transportation and Ferries

Bills that Did Not Pass

[HB 1832](#) Implementing a per mile charge on vehicle usage of public roadways. Recognizing the value of electric vehicles to the environment and climate but also that they do not contribute to road preservation and maintenance through the gas tax, this bill establishes a voluntary road usage charge program in 2025 in anticipation of a permanent program in 2030. The charge would be 2.5 cents/mile and participants can have their electric vehicle charges waived. This bill has had a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee on February 23. Because it is a bill that establishes a revenue, it may not be subject to the same cut-off schedule, though it is very unlikely to move ahead in this session.

[HB 1118](#) Addressing school bus safety, would require seat belts and safety cameras in school buses as of September 2024. This bill passed from the House Education Committee as a substitute to the House Appropriations Committee but did not pass out of the Appropriations Committee by the cut-off date.

[HB 1414](#) Concerning the removal of vehicles by a regional transit authority when obstructing the operation of high-capacity transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety. This bill passed the House Transportation Committee as a substitute and was in the House Rules Committee but did not move to the floor for a vote before the cutoff.

[HB 1485](#) Concerning roadside safety measures. This bill sets forth requirements for safety measures by tow trucks at accidents on highways. It passed the House Transportation Committee and was in the House Rules Committee and placed on second reading but did not move to the floor for a vote before the cutoff.

[SB 5314](#) Relating to electric-assisted bicycle use on certain trails and roads, would allow electric-assisted bicycles on any routes open to non-motorized bicycles where the surface is suitable, subject to enforcement of all other rules, such as speed limits. Electric-assisted bicycles are those with a motor that helps the pedals turn when riding, but no throttle like a motorcycle or dirt bike would have.

[SB 5383](#) Concerning pedestrians crossing and moving along roadways. This bill makes several changes to jaywalking laws and directs driver responses to persons on the roadway. It passed the Senate Transportation Committee and was in the Senate Rules Committee but did not move to the floor for action before the cutoff.

[SB 5431](#)/[HB 1368](#) Requiring and funding the purchase of zero emission school buses, requires that any school buses purchased by school districts, charter schools, or state-tribal education compact schools be zero-emission school buses beginning September 1, 2035. SB 5431 has had a public hearing in the Senate Early Learning Committee. HB 1368 passed the House Environment & Energy Committee and has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee. Neither bill progressed sufficiently before the cut-off dates to move ahead.

[SB 5466](#) Transit-oriented development, would amend the Growth Management Act to prohibit siting multi-family housing on parcels where any other residential use is permitted and prohibits local governments from requiring off-street parking within a transit station area. This bill passed the Senate as a substitute with a vote of 40-8. It passed the House Housing Committee with amendments and the Capital Budget Committee with additional amendments and has now been referred to the House Rules Committee. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass the House by the cutoff of April 12 and has died.

[SB 5471](#) Relating to the use of electric-assisted bicycles on certain trails and roads by persons with disabilities, would allow any person with a current disabled parking placard to use electric-assisted bicycles on all nonmotorized natural surface trails and closed roads where

bicycles are allowed. This bill passed the Senate Transportation Committee as a substitute and the Senate Ways & Means Committee and was in the Senate Rules Committee but did not get referred to the floor in time for a vote before the cutoff.

[SB 5514/](#)[HB 1582](#) Prohibiting drivers from making a right turn within proximity of certain facilities. This bill would remove the “free” right turn on a red light within 1000 feet of facilities such as schools, parks, hospitals and more. Both bills have had public hearings in their respective Transportation Committees but have not progressed.

[SB 5742](#) Codifying certain existing grant programs at the department of transportation. This bill was newly introduced this week. It would establish grant programs for transit service for people with disabilities and other special needs and will establish a paratransit program, freight rail investment bank and public transit ride share program. This bill had a public hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee but has not yet had any further action.

Resource Information

Transportation Choices Coalition, one of the coalitions to which League belongs, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. If you haven't been aware of this group, check it out [here](#).

How You Can Be Involved

- Respond to Action Alerts in the legislative newsletter. These will primarily appear in the section of the newsletter related to transportation.
- Contact Cynthia Stewart, cstewart@lwvwa.org, to receive additional information.