
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6727

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senate Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Tom, Delvin, Kline, and Kilmer)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/08.

1 AN ACT Relating to growth management planning to ensure sufficient
2 land and densities available to accommodate growth; amending RCW
3 36.70A.070, 36.70A.090, and 36.70A.110; and adding a new section to
4 chapter 36.70A RCW.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.70A.070 and 2005 c 360 s 2 are each amended to read
7 as follows:

8 The comprehensive plan of a county or city that is required or
9 chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall consist of a map or maps,
10 and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards
11 used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan shall be an
12 internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent
13 with the future land use map. A comprehensive plan shall be adopted
14 and amended with public participation as provided in RCW 36.70A.140.

15 Each comprehensive plan shall include a plan, scheme, or design for
16 each of the following:

17 (1) A land use element designating the proposed general
18 distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where
19 appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce,

1 industry, recreation, open spaces, general aviation airports, public
2 utilities, public facilities, and other land uses. The land use
3 element shall include population densities, building intensities, and
4 estimates of future population growth. The land use element shall
5 designate, as appropriate, a sufficient quantity of land needed for
6 residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The land use element
7 shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of ground
8 water used for public water supplies. Wherever possible, the land use
9 element should consider utilizing urban planning approaches that
10 promote physical activity. Where applicable, the land use element
11 shall review drainage, flooding, and storm water run-off in the area
12 and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to
13 mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state,
14 including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound.

15 (2) A housing element ensuring the vitality and character of
16 established residential neighborhoods that: (a) Includes an inventory
17 and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies
18 the number of housing units necessary to ~~((manage))~~ accommodate
19 projected growth; (b) includes a statement of goals, policies,
20 objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement,
21 and development of housing, including single-family residences; (c)
22 identifies a sufficient quantity of land suitable for meeting the
23 existing and projected housing needs identified in (a) of this
24 subsection, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing,
25 housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily
26 housing, and group homes and foster care facilities; and (d) makes
27 adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic
28 segments of the community.

29 (3) A capital facilities plan element consisting of: (a) An
30 inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities,
31 showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities; (b) a
32 forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities; (c) the
33 proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital
34 facilities; (d) at least a six-year plan that will finance such capital
35 facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies
36 sources of public money for such purposes; and (e) a requirement to
37 reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of
38 meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital

1 facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital
2 facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent. Park and
3 recreation facilities shall be included in the capital facilities plan
4 element.

5 (4) A utilities element consisting of the general location,
6 proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities,
7 including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication
8 lines, and natural gas lines.

9 (5) Rural element. Counties shall include a rural element
10 including lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture,
11 forest, or mineral resources. The following provisions shall apply to
12 the rural element:

13 (a) Growth management act goals and local circumstances. Because
14 circumstances vary from county to county, in establishing patterns of
15 rural densities and uses, a county may consider local circumstances,
16 but shall develop a written record explaining how the rural element
17 harmonizes the planning goals in RCW 36.70A.020 and meets the
18 requirements of this chapter.

19 (b) Rural development. The rural element shall permit rural
20 development, forestry, and agriculture in rural areas. The rural
21 element shall provide for a variety of rural densities, uses, essential
22 public facilities, and rural governmental services needed to serve the
23 permitted densities and uses. To achieve a variety of rural densities
24 and uses, counties may provide for clustering, density transfer, design
25 guidelines, conservation easements, and other innovative techniques
26 that will accommodate appropriate rural densities and uses that are not
27 characterized by urban growth and that are consistent with rural
28 character.

29 (c) Measures governing rural development. The rural element shall
30 include measures that apply to rural development and protect the rural
31 character of the area, as established by the county, by:

32 (i) Containing or otherwise controlling rural development;

33 (ii) Assuring visual compatibility of rural development with the
34 surrounding rural area;

35 (iii) Reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land
36 into sprawling, low-density development in the rural area;

37 (iv) Protecting critical areas, as provided in RCW 36.70A.060, and
38 surface water and ground water resources; and

1 (v) Protecting against conflicts with the use of agricultural,
2 forest, and mineral resource lands designated under RCW 36.70A.170.

3 (d) Limited areas of more intensive rural development. Subject to
4 the requirements of this subsection and except as otherwise
5 specifically provided in this subsection (5)(d), the rural element may
6 allow for limited areas of more intensive rural development, including
7 necessary public facilities and public services to serve the limited
8 area as follows:

9 (i) Rural development consisting of the infill, development, or
10 redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or
11 mixed-use areas, whether characterized as shoreline development,
12 villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads developments.

13 (A) A commercial, industrial, residential, shoreline, or mixed-use
14 area shall be subject to the requirements of (d)(iv) of this
15 subsection, but shall not be subject to the requirements of (c)(ii) and
16 (iii) of this subsection.

17 (B) Any development or redevelopment other than an industrial area
18 or an industrial use within a mixed-use area or an industrial area
19 under this subsection (5)(d)(i) must be principally designed to serve
20 the existing and projected rural population.

21 (C) Any development or redevelopment in terms of building size,
22 scale, use, or intensity shall be consistent with the character of the
23 existing areas. Development and redevelopment may include changes in
24 use from vacant land or a previously existing use so long as the new
25 use conforms to the requirements of this subsection (5);

26 (ii) The intensification of development on lots containing, or new
27 development of, small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including
28 commercial facilities to serve those recreational or tourist uses, that
29 rely on a rural location and setting, but that do not include new
30 residential development. A small-scale recreation or tourist use is
31 not required to be principally designed to serve the existing and
32 projected rural population. Public services and public facilities
33 shall be limited to those necessary to serve the recreation or tourist
34 use and shall be provided in a manner that does not permit low-density
35 sprawl;

36 (iii) The intensification of development on lots containing
37 isolated nonresidential uses or new development of isolated cottage
38 industries and isolated small-scale businesses that are not principally

1 designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and
2 nonresidential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural
3 residents. Rural counties may allow the expansion of small-scale
4 businesses as long as those small-scale businesses conform with the
5 rural character of the area as defined by the local government
6 according to RCW 36.70A.030(~~((+14))~~) (15). Rural counties may also
7 allow new small-scale businesses to utilize a site previously occupied
8 by an existing business as long as the new small-scale business
9 conforms to the rural character of the area as defined by the local
10 government according to RCW 36.70A.030(~~((+14))~~) (15). Public services
11 and public facilities shall be limited to those necessary to serve the
12 isolated nonresidential use and shall be provided in a manner that does
13 not permit low-density sprawl;

14 (iv) A county shall adopt measures to minimize and contain the
15 existing areas or uses of more intensive rural development, as
16 appropriate, authorized under this subsection. Lands included in such
17 existing areas or uses shall not extend beyond the logical outer
18 boundary of the existing area or use, thereby allowing a new pattern of
19 low-density sprawl. Existing areas are those that are clearly
20 identifiable and contained and where there is a logical boundary
21 delineated predominately by the built environment, but that may also
22 include undeveloped lands if limited as provided in this subsection.
23 The county shall establish the logical outer boundary of an area of
24 more intensive rural development. In establishing the logical outer
25 boundary the county shall address (A) the need to preserve the
26 character of existing natural neighborhoods and communities, (B)
27 physical boundaries such as bodies of water, streets and highways, and
28 land forms and contours, (C) the prevention of abnormally irregular
29 boundaries, and (D) the ability to provide public facilities and public
30 services in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl;

31 (v) For purposes of (d) of this subsection, an existing area or
32 existing use is one that was in existence:

33 (A) On July 1, 1990, in a county that was initially required to
34 plan under all of the provisions of this chapter;

35 (B) On the date the county adopted a resolution under RCW
36 36.70A.040(2), in a county that is planning under all of the provisions
37 of this chapter under RCW 36.70A.040(2); or

1 (C) On the date the office of financial management certifies the
2 county's population as provided in RCW 36.70A.040(5), in a county that
3 is planning under all of the provisions of this chapter pursuant to RCW
4 36.70A.040(5).

5 (e) Exception. This subsection shall not be interpreted to permit
6 in the rural area a major industrial development or a master planned
7 resort unless otherwise specifically permitted under RCW 36.70A.360 and
8 36.70A.365.

9 (6) A transportation element that implements, and is consistent
10 with, the land use element.

11 (a) The transportation element shall include the following
12 subelements:

13 (i) Land use assumptions used in estimating travel;

14 (ii) Estimated traffic impacts to state-owned transportation
15 facilities resulting from land use assumptions to assist the department
16 of transportation in monitoring the performance of state facilities, to
17 plan improvements for the facilities, and to assess the impact of land-
18 use decisions on state-owned transportation facilities;

19 (iii) Facilities and services needs, including:

20 (A) An inventory of air, water, and ground transportation
21 facilities and services, including transit alignments and general
22 aviation airport facilities, to define existing capital facilities and
23 travel levels as a basis for future planning. This inventory must
24 include state-owned transportation facilities within the city or
25 county's jurisdictional boundaries;

26 (B) Level of service standards for all locally owned arterials and
27 transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system.
28 These standards should be regionally coordinated;

29 (C) For state-owned transportation facilities, level of service
30 standards for highways, as prescribed in chapters 47.06 and 47.80 RCW,
31 to gauge the performance of the system. The purposes of reflecting
32 level of service standards for state highways in the local
33 comprehensive plan are to monitor the performance of the system, to
34 evaluate improvement strategies, and to facilitate coordination between
35 the county's or city's six-year street, road, or transit program and
36 the department of transportation's six-year investment program. The
37 concurrency requirements of (b) of this subsection do not apply to
38 transportation facilities and services of statewide significance except

1 for counties consisting of islands whose only connection to the
2 mainland are state highways or ferry routes. In these island counties,
3 state highways and ferry route capacity must be a factor in meeting the
4 concurrency requirements in (b) of this subsection;

5 (D) Specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance
6 locally owned transportation facilities or services that are below an
7 established level of service standard;

8 (E) Forecasts of traffic for at least ten years based on the
9 adopted land use plan to provide information on the location, timing,
10 and capacity needs of future growth;

11 (F) Identification of state and local system needs to meet current
12 and future demands. Identified needs on state-owned transportation
13 facilities must be consistent with the statewide multimodal
14 transportation plan required under chapter 47.06 RCW;

15 (iv) Finance, including:

16 (A) An analysis of funding capability to judge needs against
17 probable funding resources;

18 (B) A multiyear financing plan based on the needs identified in the
19 comprehensive plan, the appropriate parts of which shall serve as the
20 basis for the six-year street, road, or transit program required by RCW
21 35.77.010 for cities, RCW 36.81.121 for counties, and RCW 35.58.2795
22 for public transportation systems. The multiyear financing plan should
23 be coordinated with the ((~~six-year~~)) ten-year improvement program
24 developed by the department of transportation as required by RCW
25 47.05.030;

26 (C) If probable funding falls short of meeting identified needs, a
27 discussion of how additional funding will be raised, or how land use
28 assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that level of service
29 standards will be met;

30 (v) Intergovernmental coordination efforts, including an assessment
31 of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on
32 the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions;

33 (vi) Demand-management strategies;

34 (vii) Pedestrian and bicycle component to include collaborative
35 efforts to identify and designate planned improvements for pedestrian
36 and bicycle facilities and corridors that address and encourage
37 enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles.

1 (b) After adoption of the comprehensive plan by jurisdictions
2 required to plan or who choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, local
3 jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit
4 development approval if the development causes the level of service on
5 a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards
6 adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless
7 transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of
8 development are made concurrent with the development. These strategies
9 may include increased public transportation service, ride sharing
10 programs, demand management, and other transportation systems
11 management strategies. For the purposes of this subsection (6)
12 "concurrent with the development" shall mean that improvements or
13 strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial
14 commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies
15 within six years.

16 (c) The transportation element described in this subsection (6),
17 and the six-year plans required by RCW 35.77.010 for cities, RCW
18 36.81.121 for counties, and RCW 35.58.2795 for public transportation
19 systems, and the ten-year plan required by RCW 47.05.030 for the state,
20 must be consistent.

21 (7) An economic development element establishing local goals,
22 policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth and vitality
23 and a high quality of life. The element shall include: (a) A summary
24 of the local economy such as population, employment, payroll, sectors,
25 businesses, sales, and other information as appropriate; (b) a summary
26 of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy defined as the
27 commercial and industrial sectors and supporting factors such as land
28 use, transportation, utilities, education, work force, housing, and
29 natural/cultural resources; and (c) an identification of policies,
30 programs, and projects to foster economic growth and development and to
31 address future needs. A city that has chosen to be a residential
32 community is exempt from the economic development element requirement
33 of this subsection.

34 (8) A park and recreation element that implements, and is
35 consistent with, the capital facilities plan element as it relates to
36 park and recreation facilities. The element shall include: (a)
37 Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period;

1 (b) an evaluation of facilities and service needs; and (c) an
2 evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide
3 regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.

4 (9) It is the intent that new or amended elements required after
5 January 1, 2002, be adopted concurrent with the scheduled update
6 provided in RCW 36.70A.130. Requirements to incorporate any such new
7 or amended elements shall be null and void until funds sufficient to
8 cover applicable local government costs are appropriated and
9 distributed by the state at least two years before local government
10 must update comprehensive plans as required in RCW 36.70A.130.

11 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.70A.090 and 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 9 are each
12 amended to read as follows:

13 A comprehensive plan should provide for innovative land use
14 management techniques, including, but not limited to, density bonuses,
15 cluster housing, planned unit developments, mixed-use development,
16 accessory dwelling units, and the transfer of development rights.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 36.70A RCW
18 to read as follows:

19 (1) A county and one or more of its cities, or two or more counties
20 sharing a common border and their cities, may adopt countywide planning
21 policies or multicounty planning policies establishing subregions in
22 order to address housing and employment markets that cross
23 jurisdictional boundaries. Policies adopted under this section may
24 include, but are not limited to:

25 (a) Policies that reallocate among the counties and cities in the
26 subregion the population growth established for each local government
27 under RCW 36.70A.110;

28 (b) Policies that provide for a sufficient number of housing units
29 to accommodate the existing housing needs and projected population
30 growth in the subregion; and

31 (c) Policies that provide for sufficient land suitable for
32 development to meet the needs for commercial and industrial growth in
33 the subregion.

34 (2) The local governments within the subregion may use the
35 countywide planning policies or multicounty planning policies,

1 interlocal agreements under chapter 39.34 RCW, or any other appropriate
2 mechanism to implement the policies established under subsection (1) of
3 this section.

4 **Sec. 4.** RCW 36.70A.110 and 2004 c 206 s 1 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) In accordance with the requirements of this section, each
7 county that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall
8 designate an urban growth area or areas within which urban growth shall
9 be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not
10 urban in nature. Each city that is located in such a county shall be
11 included within an urban growth area. An urban growth area may include
12 more than a single city. An urban growth area may include territory
13 that is located outside of a city only if such territory already is
14 characterized by urban growth whether or not the urban growth area
15 includes a city, or is adjacent to territory already characterized by
16 urban growth, or is a designated new fully contained community as
17 defined by RCW 36.70A.350.

18 (2) Based upon the growth management population projection made for
19 the county by the office of financial management, the county and each
20 city within the county shall include areas and densities sufficient to
21 permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county or
22 city for the succeeding twenty-year period, except for those urban
23 growth areas contained totally within a national historical reserve.

24 Each urban growth area shall permit urban densities and shall
25 include greenbelt and open space areas. In the case of urban growth
26 areas contained totally within a national historical reserve, the city
27 may restrict densities, intensities, and forms of urban growth as
28 determined to be necessary and appropriate to protect the physical,
29 cultural, or historic integrity of the reserve. An urban growth area
30 determination may include a reasonable land market supply factor and
31 shall permit a range of urban densities and uses. In determining this
32 market factor, cities and counties may consider local circumstances.
33 Cities and counties have discretion in their comprehensive plans to
34 make many choices about accommodating growth.

35 Within one year of July 1, 1990, each county that as of June 1,
36 1991, was required or chose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, shall begin
37 consulting with each city located within its boundaries and each city

1 shall propose the location of an urban growth area. Within sixty days
2 of the date the county legislative authority of a county adopts its
3 resolution of intention or of certification by the office of financial
4 management, all other counties that are required or choose to plan
5 under RCW 36.70A.040 shall begin this consultation with each city
6 located within its boundaries. The county shall attempt to reach
7 agreement with each city on the location of an urban growth area within
8 which the city is located. If such an agreement is not reached with
9 each city located within the urban growth area, the county shall
10 justify in writing why it so designated the area an urban growth area.
11 A city may object formally with the department over the designation of
12 the urban growth area within which it is located. Where appropriate,
13 the department shall attempt to resolve the conflicts, including the
14 use of mediation services.

15 (3) Counties planning under RCW 36.70A.040 with populations of at
16 least one hundred seventy-five thousand must:

17 (a) Consult and cooperate with each city within an urban growth
18 area proposed for modification prior to and concurrent with actions to
19 modify the urban growth area within which the city or cities are
20 located;

21 (b) Consult and cooperate with each city within each urban growth
22 area to adopt development regulations for unincorporated territory
23 within urban growth areas that are consistent with each applicable
24 city;

25 (c) Adopt, or amend as necessary, development regulations for new
26 development in unincorporated territory within an urban growth area
27 that is, as of the effective date of this act, entirely surrounded,
28 excluding unincorporated waters of the state, by incorporated
29 territory. Development regulations adopted under this subsection
30 (3)(c) must be consistent with the adjacent city or cities from which
31 it receives its only vehicular and service access; and

32 (d) Report to the appropriate committees of the house of
33 representatives and the senate by December 1, 2008, on the
34 implementation of, and any impediments related to, the requirements of
35 (a) and (b) of this subsection (3).

36 (4) Urban growth should be located first in areas already
37 characterized by urban growth that have adequate existing public
38 facility and service capacities to serve such development, second in

1 areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served
2 adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and
3 services and any additional needed public facilities and services that
4 are provided by either public or private sources, and third in the
5 remaining portions of the urban growth areas. Urban growth may also be
6 located in designated new fully contained communities as defined by RCW
7 36.70A.350.

8 ~~((4))~~ (5) In general, cities are the units of local government
9 most appropriate to provide urban governmental services. In general,
10 it is not appropriate that urban governmental services be extended to
11 or expanded in rural areas except in those limited circumstances shown
12 to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the
13 environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural
14 densities and do not permit urban development.

15 ~~((5))~~ (6) On or before October 1, 1993, each county that was
16 initially required to plan under RCW 36.70A.040(1) shall adopt
17 development regulations designating interim urban growth areas under
18 this chapter. Within three years and three months of the date the
19 county legislative authority of a county adopts its resolution of
20 intention or of certification by the office of financial management,
21 all other counties that are required or choose to plan under RCW
22 36.70A.040 shall adopt development regulations designating interim
23 urban growth areas under this chapter. Adoption of the interim urban
24 growth areas may only occur after public notice; public hearing; and
25 compliance with the state environmental policy act, chapter 43.21C RCW,
26 and RCW 36.70A.110. Such action may be appealed to the appropriate
27 growth management hearings board under RCW 36.70A.280. Final urban
28 growth areas shall be adopted at the time of comprehensive plan
29 adoption under this chapter.

30 ~~((6))~~ (7) Each county shall include designations of urban growth
31 areas in its comprehensive plan.

32 ~~((7))~~ (8) An urban growth area designated in accordance with this
33 section may include within its boundaries urban service areas or
34 potential annexation areas designated for specific cities or towns
35 within the county.

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