
Local Government Committee

SSB 5602

Brief Description: Concerning the accommodation of housing and employment growth under local comprehensive plans.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Land Use & Planning (originally sponsored by Senators Kline, Mulliken, Shin, Reardon, T. Sheldon, Esser, Oke, Sheahan, Hewitt, Prentice, Doumit, Keiser and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires local governments planning under the Growth Management Act to ensure that comprehensive plans or development regulations provide a sufficient capacity of land suitable for development to accommodate allocated housing and employment growth.

Hearing Date: 3/26/03

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Growth Management Act “ Comprehensive Plans

Enacted in 1990 and 1991, the Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes a comprehensive land use planning framework for county and city governments in Washington. Counties and cities meeting specific population and growth criteria are required to comply with the major GMA requirements. Counties not meeting these criteria may choose to plan under the GMA. Currently, 29 of 39 counties, and the cities within those 29 counties, are required or have chosen to comply with the major GMA requirements (GMA jurisdictions).

GMA jurisdictions must adopt comprehensive land use plans, which are generalized, coordinated land use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans are required to include provisions for specific planning elements, including separate housing and economic development elements. The *housing element* of a comprehensive plan must include:

- an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth;

- a statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single-family residences;
- an identification of sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group homes and foster care facilities; and
- adequate provisions for existing and projected needs for all economic segments of the community.

Under current law, local governments are not required to include the *economic development* element of a comprehensive plan, which includes summaries of the local economy and policies to foster economic growth, until state funding is provided.

Comprehensive Plan Reviews

Comprehensive land use plans and development regulations are subject to continuing review and evaluation by the adopting county or city. Any amendments or revisions of development regulations must conform to GMA requirements and must be consistent with and implement comprehensive plans. Schedule and criteria information for counties and cities reviewing and/or revising comprehensive plans and development regulations are specified in RCW 36.70A.130.

Urban Growth Areas - Accommodating Projected Growth

GMA jurisdictions also must designate urban growth areas (UGAs) within which urban growth must be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature.

Using population projections by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), GMA jurisdictions must include within their UGAs densities and areas sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county or city for the succeeding 20-year period. A UGA determination may include a reasonable land market supply factor and must permit a range of urban densities and uses.

Each county designating UGAs must review its designated UGAs and permitted densities in incorporated and unincorporated areas at least once every 10 years. City reviews of permitted densities and other factors must occur in conjunction with county UGA reviews. As a result of county UGA reviews, the county comprehensive plan designating UGAs and the densities permitted in the UGAs by the county and cities located within the UGAs must be revised to accommodate the urban growth projected for the succeeding 20-year period.

Review and Evaluation - Urban Densities and Adjustment Measures

The GMA also requires six western Washington counties and the cities within those counties to establish a review and evaluation program to:

- determine whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within UGAs by comparing growth and development assumptions of county-wide planning policies

- and comprehensive plans with actual county and city growth and development; and
- identify reasonable measures, other than adjusting UGAs, that will be taken to comply with the requirements of the GMA.

Among other provisions, the evaluation component of the required program must:

- determine whether there is sufficient suitable land to accommodate the applicable county-wide population projection provided by the OFM;
- determine the actual density of housing that has been constructed and the actual amount of land developed for commercial and industrial uses within the UGA since the adoption of a comprehensive plan under the GMA; and
- using actual density data, review commercial, industrial, and housing needs by type and density range to determine the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing for the remaining portion of the 20-year planning period used in the most recently adopted comprehensive plan.

If the evaluation demonstrates an inconsistency between what has occurred since the adoption of county-wide planning policies, comprehensive plans, development regulations, and what was envisioned, the local government must adopt and implement measures to increase consistency during the subsequent five-year period. These measures may include amending county-wide planning policies and local government comprehensive plans.

Summary of Bill:

County and cities planning under the GMA must ensure that adopted and amended comprehensive plans or development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development to accommodate allocated housing and employment growth, as adopted in applicable county-wide planning policies and consistent with 20-year population forecasts from the OFM.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.