
HOUSE BILL 1742

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Dye, Doglio, Fitzgibbon, Zahn, Parshley, Duerr, and Pollet

Read first time 01/30/25. Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

1 AN ACT Relating to environmentally sustainable urban design;
2 adding new sections to chapter 43.21A RCW; and creating a new
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Washington state intends to lead the
6 world in the quality of life and the environmental attributes of its
7 cities. The legislature recognizes that major environmental health
8 disparities exist within urban areas and that the architectural
9 design of urban areas plays a critical role in the function and
10 health of the ecosystems they inhabit.

11 (2) The legislature also finds that the built environment itself
12 can be a cause of various forms of pollution that harm humans and
13 wildlife. These forms of pollution include, but are not limited to,
14 noise pollution, light pollution, water pollution through impervious
15 surfaces that channel untreated stormwater runoff to waterways, and
16 building materials that radiate heat causing an urban heat island
17 effect. While regulation, incentives, investments, and innovations in
18 the energy and transportation sector will begin to address harmful
19 air emissions in urban areas, the state recognizes that additional
20 policy leadership and creativity must be directed to reducing these

1 additional forms of pollution that are a by-product of a densely
2 built urban environment.

3 (3) The legislature further finds that there are significant
4 opportunities for incorporating architectural and landscape design in
5 urban areas and the built environment with myriad environmental and
6 health benefits. These benefits include increased biodiversity, air
7 quality, and harmonization with the natural environment, along with
8 decreased energy use and mitigation of harmful impacts of buildings.
9 Design approaches that promote these benefits include green and
10 sustainable architecture, which focus on reducing negative impacts
11 from buildings, biophilic architecture, which seeks to better connect
12 occupants with nature, and regenerative architecture, which involves
13 buildings capable of breaking down at end-of-life, to a net
14 ecological benefit. These design approaches can be achieved at the
15 landscape and neighborhood scale to also incorporate parks,
16 recreation areas, and walkable amenities with more permeable and
17 natural surfaces that draw communities together.

18 (4) Therefore, the legislature intends to create a center for
19 sustainable urban design to provide leadership, to inspire the public
20 with new possibilities for environmentally sustainable urban spaces,
21 to generate policy solutions, and to identify potential projects that
22 would make measurable improvement in environmental outcomes.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21A
24 RCW to read as follows:

25 (1) The center for environmentally sustainable urban design is
26 created in the department for the purpose of encouraging the use of
27 architectural and landscape design to promote health and
28 sustainability in built environments within first-class cities and
29 other urban areas.

30 (2) The duties of the center include, but are not limited to:

31 (a) Advocating for environmentally sustainable urban design;

32 (b) Coordinating with elected leaders and the private sector to
33 achieve renewed urban spaces that improve public health and
34 environmental outcomes;

35 (c) Encouraging workforce development for related fields;

36 (d) Identifying priority projects;

37 (e) Providing recommendations on potential priority projects to
38 state agencies and local government entities, upon request;

1 (f) Coordinating a biennial design competition for a designated
2 priority project, with the successful contestant demonstrating the
3 specific health and sustainability benefits achievable in that
4 location through environmentally sustainable urban design;

5 (g) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated, awarding
6 grants on a competitive basis for priority projects that implement
7 environmentally sustainable urban design; and

8 (h) Studying, exploring, developing, and promoting ideas that
9 could inform improvements in design by incorporating the values of
10 reintegrating urban living within the greater ecosystem.

11 (3) The center shall establish criteria for the selection of
12 successful applicants under subsection (2) (f) and (g) of this
13 section. The center shall take into consideration any recommendations
14 by the advisory council established in subsection (5) of this section
15 in the final selection of awardees or grantees. The criteria for a
16 successful applicant should at a minimum include:

17 (a) Providing compelling vision to the public and elected leaders
18 of how investment in the parcel could provide health, ecological, and
19 aesthetic benefits consistent with the purposes of the center's
20 mission;

21 (b) Demonstrating the specific health and sustainability benefits
22 achievable in that location through environmentally sustainable urban
23 design; and

24 (c) Documenting the basis of claims regarding specific outcomes
25 for health and the environment.

26 (4) The first competition coordinated under subsection (2)(f) of
27 this section must be for a priority project that:

28 (a) Is located on a multiacre parcel within three miles of the
29 state capitol campus;

30 (b) Was previously used for commercial purposes in the beverage
31 processing or manufacturing industry;

32 (c) Has not been inhabited or used for commercial purposes for at
33 least 20 years; and

34 (d) Has experienced damage from a fire.

35 (5)(a) The advisory council on environmentally sustainable urban
36 design is created, consisting of 10 members to be appointed by the
37 director of the center. In making the appointments, the director
38 shall seek an advisory council membership that reflects a balanced
39 representation of interests and backgrounds.

40 (b) The members of the advisory council must:

1 (i) Have experience, or demonstrate significant familiarity, in
2 urban planning, green building design, sustainable architecture, or
3 similar subject areas; and

4 (ii) Be from each of the congressional districts existing in the
5 state as of January 1, 2025.

6 (c) The advisory council shall:

7 (i) In accordance with the criteria established under subsection
8 (3) of this section, review and recommend applicants for grants or
9 competitions coordinated or awarded by the center; and

10 (ii) Provide advice and guidance on the annual work plan of the
11 center.

12 (d) The chair of the advisory council must be elected from among
13 its members by a simple majority vote.

14 (e) The director of the center shall convene the first meeting by
15 June 1, 2026. Thereafter, the chair of the advisory council shall
16 schedule meetings and establish the agenda. The advisory council
17 shall meet at least quarterly.

18 (f) Staff support for the advisory council is provided by the
19 department.

20 (g) Members of the advisory council shall serve without
21 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses
22 in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. The advisory council
23 may use such personnel and facilities of the department as necessary
24 to carry out its duties under this section.

25 (6) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions
26 apply:

27 (a) "First-class cities" has the same meaning as provided under
28 RCW 35.01.010.

29 (b) "Environmentally sustainable urban design" means an approach
30 to urban planning and architecture that minimizes the harmful effects
31 of humans and their built spaces on the environment. The approach may
32 be characterized by incorporating natural vegetation on the exterior
33 of buildings and in public rights-of-way to create ecological
34 benefits, including but not limited to the following: Absorption of
35 carbon dioxide, production of oxygen, reduction in the urban heat
36 island effect, filtering stormwater runoff, and increasing urban
37 biodiversity. "Environmentally sustainable urban design" includes
38 sustainable, biophilic, and regenerative architecture, and may be
39 demonstrated by:

40 (i) The United States green building council rating system;

1 (ii) The international green construction code; or
2 (iii) Other reasonably equivalent standards used by professionals
3 in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban
4 planning, civil engineering, and related disciplines, approved by the
5 department in consultation with the department of commerce.
6 (c) "Priority project" means a parcel or parcels within an urban
7 area with significant potential for improvement in ecological
8 benefits or public health measures due to:
9 (i) Dilapidation by being in a state of disrepair, disuse, or
10 neglect; or
11 (ii) Falling within an area of the environmental health disparities
12 map that is experiencing higher than the median environmental health
13 disparities.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21A
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 The environmentally sustainable urban design account is created
17 in the state treasury. All receipts directed to the account from
18 federal funds, gifts, or grants from private or public sectors,
19 foundations, or other sources for competitions and grants under
20 section 2 of this act must be deposited into the account. Moneys in
21 the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from
22 the account may be used only for the purposes of section 2(2) (f) or
23 (g) of this act.

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