

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2687

As Passed House:
February 17, 2020

Title: An act relating to planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.

Brief Description: Planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.

Sponsors: Representatives Barkis, Griffey, Corry, Blake, DeBolt, Irwin, Springer, Stokesbary, Mead and Van Werven.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment & Energy: 1/30/20, 2/4/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/20, 95-3.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires counties and cities to plan for single-family residences, such as single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, in the mandatory housing element of comprehensive plans under the Growth Management Act (GMA).
- Requires a countywide planning policy to provide for how the county and its cities will meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community if the county or city does not plan for each housing type in the mandatory housing element of comprehensive plans under the GMA.
- Requires countywide planning policies to be updated no later than 14 months prior to any update of a comprehensive plan under the GMA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chair; Dye, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Doglio, Fey, Goehner, Mead, Robinson and Shewmake.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Nikkole Hughes (786-7156).

Background:

Growth Management Act.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land-use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. Originally enacted in 1990 and 1991, the GMA establishes land-use-designation and environmental-protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a wider array of planning duties for 29 counties, and for cities within those counties, which are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA.

The GMA directs jurisdictions that fully plan under the GMA to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land-use plans that are generalized, coordinated land-use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations.

Mandatory Housing Element of Comprehensive Plans.

The comprehensive plan of a county or city must consist of a map or maps and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the plan. The plan must be an internally consistent document and all elements must be consistent with the future land-use map. Each comprehensive plan must include a plan, scheme, or design for certain enumerated elements, including a housing element.

The housing element must:

- ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods;
- include an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth;
- include a statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single-family residences;
- identify 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
- make adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.

Countywide Planning Policies.

The legislative authority of a county that plans under the GMA must adopt a countywide planning policy in cooperation with the cities located in whole or in part within the county. A countywide planning policy must address certain minimum planning requirements, including policies that consider the need for affordable housing, such as housing for all economic segments of the population and parameters for the distribution of housing.

Failure to adopt a countywide planning policy that meets the minimum planning requirements may result in the imposition of a sanction or sanctions on a county or city within the county under the GMA.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

Mandatory Housing Element of Comprehensive Plans.

The housing element of a county or city's comprehensive plan must:

- include a statement of goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single-family residences such as single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes;
- identify sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes and foster care facilities, and single-family residences such as single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes; and
- make adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community, including consideration of housing locations in relation to employment locations.

The housing element should link jurisdictional goals with overall county goals to ensure that the housing element goals are met. If a county or city does not plan for each housing type, including single-family residences such as single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, then the applicable countywide planning policy required under the GMA must provide for how the county, as a whole, and its cities will meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community during the planning period.

Countywide Planning Policies.

Countywide planning policies must be updated no later than 14 months prior to any update of a comprehensive plan under the GMA.

The minimum planning requirement for affordable housing that must be addressed in a countywide planning policy is amended such that the countywide planning policy must address:

- policies that consider the need for affordable housing, and to address how the county and its cities will jointly meet the requirements to provide for all housing types identified in the mandatory housing element of the comprehensive plan, including single-family residences, such as single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes; and
- policies to address how the county and its cities will jointly meet the requirements of the mandatory land-use element of the comprehensive plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill puts additional emphasis and clarity on the types of housing for which counties and cities should be planning. All housing types should be a point of emphasis and taken into consideration. This bill adds some metrics that require planning units to look at the types of housing that are needed. This bill is part of a comprehensive approach to making housing more affordable and attainable in the state. The bill also links countywide planning policies with the comprehensive plans of planning jurisdictions.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) It may not be appropriate for some counties to plan for certain types of housing, such as townhomes in rural counties. These new requirements require money, which makes this bill an unfunded mandate.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Barkis, prime sponsor; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington; Jacquelyn Styrna, Building Industry Association of Whatcom County; and Jeanette McKague, Washington REALTORS.

(Other) Paul Jewell, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.