

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2296

As Passed House:
February 13, 2024

Title: An act relating to extending the comprehensive plan revision schedule for select local governments.

Brief Description: Extending the comprehensive plan revision schedule for select local governments.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Griffey, Wylie, Couture, Harris and Leavitt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/23/24, 1/26/24 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/24, 96-1.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the next deadline for Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties, and the cities within those counties, to review and revise their comprehensive plans from June 30, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Duerr, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Griffey and Riccelli.

Staff: Kellen Wright (786-7134).

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

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that certain counties, and the cities within those counties, engage in planning for future population growth. Counties that have a population of 50,000 or more and, prior to May 16, 1995, had its population grow by 10 percent or more in the prior ten years, or, after May 16, 1995, by 17 percent or more in the prior 10 years, are covered by the GMA. So, too, is any county that experiences population growth of 20 percent over a ten-year period. Counties with populations under 50,000, that would otherwise be required to plan, can remove themselves from the GMA's comprehensive planning requirements. Conversely, counties that do not meet the standards for automatic inclusion in the GMA may choose to be included.

Currently, 18 counties are required to plan, 10 have chosen to plan, and 11 are not subject to the full GMA planning requirements.

Whether a county is automatically required to plan under the GMA or voluntarily chooses to, the planning requirements are largely the same, and the comprehensive plan is the centerpiece of the process. The Legislature has established 14 goals to act as the basis of all comprehensive plans. Examples of goals include reducing sprawl, providing for affordable housing, and protecting property rights. The comprehensive plan must address these goals and set out the policies and standards that are meant to guide the city or county's actions and decisions in the future. Comprehensive plans must contain certain elements, such as a land use element, a housing element, and a capital facilities plan element. These elements must satisfy the requirements for each individual element while fitting within the overall comprehensive plan.

Every 10 years, a county or city that is planning under the GMA must review and revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to ensure that the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of the GMA. This review and revision requires legislative action from the county or city.

The 10-year review and revision deadlines are staggered for different counties. Currently, King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of December 31, 2024. Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of June 30, 2025. Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of June 30, 2026. Finally, Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Wahkiakum, and Whitman counties, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of June 30, 2027.

Each of these counties, and the cities within them, must again update their comprehensive plans every 10 years after the current deadline, except for the first group of counties and cities, which will change to a deadline of June 30, 2034 and every 10 years thereafter.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The next comprehensive plan review and revision deadline for Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties, and the cities within those counties, is December 31, 2025. The following comprehensive plan review and revision deadline for these counties and cities is June 30, 2035, with subsequent reviews and revisions required every 10 years thereafter.

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) Counties are all reporting the same thing: they need a delay in the comprehensive plan update deadline because it has been difficult to enter into contracts with the Department of Commerce. Funding from the Department of Commerce must be expended by certain deadlines, and because it took so long to get the funding, local governments are now running out of time for the first year of funding. The process cannot begin until the local government receives a grant, and that has just happened for counties, while cities are still waiting. The funding should be adjusted as well as it is necessary for the local governments to hire consultants to do this work. The local governments have been actively working on integrating the many new requirements that have been adopted recently. More time is needed because of the complexity of the work and the need to be thoughtful and holistic with the implementation of the new requirements. This bill will allow these local governments to fully comply with comprehensive plan adoption requirements. A six month extension like the Puget Sound counties received will give these local governments enough time to get the update right. The additional time will be particularly helpful for being able to engage with other government partners and with the community, especially underrepresented parts of the community. The bill is not intended to give the jurisdictions 10 1/2 years in perpetuity, but only a one-time delay, and an amendment will fix that issue.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) We want to be sure that, after this year, we do not continue to push out deadlines. There have been big updates to comprehensive plans recently, so a one-time extension may be reasonable, but we do not want continual requests for extensions.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Dan Griffey, prime sponsor; Rebecca Kennedy, City of Vancouver; Ashley Arai, Thurston County; Mindy Brooks, Lewis County;

and Debora Munguia, Mason County.

(Other) Bryce Yadon, Futurewise.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.