

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1700

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Local Government

**Title:** An act relating to the timing of updates for comprehensive plans and development regulations.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the timing of updates for comprehensive plans and development regulations.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Volz, Graham, Schmidt, Low, Schmick, Klicker, Dye, Abell, Chase, Connors, Engell, Ormsby and Hill.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government: 2/11/25, 2/14/25 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Extends the deadline for Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties, and the cities within those counties, to review and revise their comprehensive plans from June 30, 2026, to December 31, 2026.

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### 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; Parshley, Vice Chair; Klicker, Ranking Minority Member; Stuebe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Hunt and Zahn.

**Staff:** Kellen Wright (786-7134).

**Background:**

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*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.*

### Growth Management Act Planning Requirements.

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 10 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 10-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. Each element must satisfy the requirements for the individual element while also fitting within the overall comprehensive plan.

### Comprehensive Plan Review and Revision Deadlines.

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. The 10-year review and revision deadlines are staggered for different counties. King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, and the cities within those counties, had a deadline of December 31, 2024. Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of December 31, 2025. The deadlines for these two groups of counties and cities had originally been set for June 30, rather than December 31, of the year that their plans were due. Both groups of counties and cities, however, received six-month extensions of the due date, with the Legislature extending the deadline for the first group of counties and cities in 2022, and for the second group in 2024.

Of the remaining counties and cities, Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of June 30, 2026. The last group of counties and cities, Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Wahkiakum, and Whitman, and the cities within those counties, have a deadline of June 30, 2027.

The third and fourth groups of counties and cities must review and revise their comprehensive plans 10 years after their current update. The due date for the first and second group is instead nine and a half years, as the due date for those counties and cities reverts back to June 30 of the year that their next comprehensive plan is due. That means that the next deadline for the first group of counties and cities is June 30, 2034, and, for the second group, June 30, 2035. Subsequent reviews and revisions are due every 10 years thereafter.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The next comprehensive plan review and revision deadline for Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima, and the cities within those counties, is December 31, 2026. Thereafter, the next comprehensive plan review and revision deadline for these counties and cities is June 30, 2036, with subsequent reviews and revisions required every 10 years after that date.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill removes the change to the deadline for cities to accommodate additional housing within the capital facilities element of their comprehensive plans.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** 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 does not amend the GMA, but just moves a deadline to allow counties and cities some more time to do effective outreach and to hear from constituents. Comprehensive plan updates are large projects and increasingly complex, so it makes sense to give them some more time to do a thorough job and to hear from stakeholders. There are many new requirements recently added to the GMA, and these require more work and coordination to complete. These additional six months would be very beneficial, as it allows more time for thorough community engagement, reduces the burden on resources based on having to undertake multiple projects at the same time, would help prevent rushed decisions, and would make it easier to find consultants to assist in the work. The delay would also allow vital climate and housing data to be incorporated. This will allow

the updates to be done right and avoid the need for revisions later. Other counties and cities have previously been granted delays. There are some concerns with the bill. Repeatedly delaying comprehensive plan deadlines is an alarming pattern, and jurisdictions keep asking for delays. The changes to the capital facilities would delay the first two rounds of updates into the 2040s. There was some delay needed in order for capital facilities to catch up to additional development, but this delay is too long. This would also delay other requirements that are based on the comprehensive plan deadline, and those should not be delayed.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Mike Volz, prime sponsor; Richa Sigdel, City of Pasco, Deputy City Manager; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise; and Paul Dillon, City of Spokane and Council President Pro-Tem.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.