

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6026

As of January 14, 2026

Title: An act relating to residential development in commercial and mixed-use zones.

Brief Description: Concerning residential development in commercial and mixed-use zones.

Sponsors: Senators Alvarado, Bateman, Conway, Frame, Lias, Nobles and Shewmake; by request of Governor Ferguson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing: 1/16/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits certain cities and counties from excluding residential uses in areas zoned for commercial or mixed-use development and requiring mixed use or ground floor commercial or retail as a condition of permitting, or departure from development regulations or certain design guidelines related to residential or mixed use development in commercial or mixed use zones, with limited exceptions.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA establishes land-use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA. These jurisdictions are sometimes said to be fully planning under the GMA. The GMA also directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans that consider various goals set forth in statute, including

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housing. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, such as zoning ordinances, and both the plans and the local regulations are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Any city or county with a population of 30,000 or more that is fully planning or chooses to plan under the GMA is prohibited from excluding residential uses in areas zoned for commercial or mixed-use development, and may not require mixed use or ground floor commercial or retail as a condition of permitting development of residential housing, or a conditional or special use permit, or departure from development regulations or design guidelines related to the location, siting, orientation, or architectural design features of residential or mixed use development in areas zoned for:

- commercial use; or
- mixed use, unless the project is located within a station area.

These limitations do not apply to any portion of the lot that:

- is located in an industrial zone area where all residential uses, except caretakers quarters are prohibited;
- is within 3200 feet of an active oil or gas refinery;
- requires the demolition of a structure designated as a historic landmark through a local preservation ordinance;
- is located outside the urban growth area;
- is in an area where residential uses are prohibited due to a military installation or a general aviation airport operated for the benefit of the general public;
- is located on a waterfront lot in a shoreline environment where all multifamily residential or mixed-use development is prohibited by a shoreline master program; or
- is located in a critical area governed by a critical area ordinance, except for critical aquifer recharge areas where a single-family detached house is an allowed use.

If a city or county has not adopted or amended ordinances, regulations, or other official controls one year after the effective date of the bill these requirements supersede, preempt, and invalidate any conflicting local regulations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.