

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6066

As of January 30, 2026

Title: An act relating to establishing accident risk zones.

Brief Description: Establishing accident risk zones. [**Revised for 1st Substitute:** Establishing crash prevention zones.]

Sponsors: Senators Torres, Dozier and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government: 1/15/26, 1/22/26 [DPS-TRAN].
Transportation: 2/02/26.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Allows a county, city, town, or the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to create a crash prevention zone (zone) by identifying public roads where there have been a multitude of collisions that have caused serious injuries or fatalities.
- Requires the jurisdiction creating the zone to conduct an engineering and traffic investigation of the public roads in the zone.
- Requires penalties for certain traffic infractions committed within a zone be increased if signs are posted.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6066 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Transportation.

Signed by Senators Salomon, Chair; Lovelett, Vice Chair; Torres, Ranking Member; Bateman and Goehner.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: The Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), through its I-2 safety program, provides regional roadway analyses and public outreach consistent with current highway safety project practices. The process followed, documentation required, and roles and responsibilities outlined for the I-2 safety program are informed by statutory transportation system policy goals and laws related to the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program. Using a Target Zero strategic approach under the program, WSDOT identifies and determines which locations have the highest potential for the reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes and return the greatest benefit for the cost of the project.

Certain city streets are designated as part of the state highway system. For cities or towns with populations of 32,500 or less, WSDOT is responsible for installing and maintaining on such streets: slope stability, traffic control signals, signs, striping, lane marking, and channelization. Once a city or town's population exceeds the 32,500 population threshold as determined by the Office of Financial Management, the transfer of installation and maintenance responsibilities from WSDOT to the city or town takes effect three years from the date of determination. The city or town is then responsible for such installation and maintenance responsibilities at their own expense, subject to approval of WSDOT for the installation and type only. Regardless of city or town population, WSDOT retains full responsibility for route markers and directional signs, along with all maintenance for limited access facilities.

Counties may establish, construct, and improve highways within cities and towns of that county for certain purposes subject to approval by WSDOT for such use or development on any state highway.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): The legislative body of a county, city, or town, or WSDOT may create a crash prevention zone (zone) within its jurisdiction by identifying public roads where there have been a multitude of collisions that caused serious injuries or fatalities. A county, city, or town, or WSDOT may consider and implement safety improvement approaches in designated zones. A county, with the approval of a city or town, may designate a zone that includes roadways that include public roads within the county and city or town. A county, city, or town may designate a zone that includes roadways managed by WSDOT with the approval of WSDOT. WSDOT may designate a zone on a state highway without the approval of a county, city, or town. A public hearing on the zone map must be held before the establishment of a zone.

Once a zone has been designated, the jurisdiction that established the zone must conduct an engineering and traffic investigation of the public roads in the zone to identify safety improvements, including any adjustments to the speed limits. A county, city, or town may

contract with WSDOT to conduct an engineering and traffic investigation of the public roads in the zone. The Washington State Patrol and local law enforcement agencies must coordinate increased enforcement of traffic laws within the zone in a manner intended to reduce accident risks.

If signs are posted within a zone stating that penalties are increased, the monetary penalty for a speeding infraction or infraction associated with a motor vehicle collision must be increased by \$73. This additional \$73 must be deposited into an account created for the zone and may be used to pay for the engineering and traffic investigation, creation and installation of road signs, safety improvements, and increased law enforcement presence in the zone. The account must be administered and maintained by the jurisdiction in which the infraction occurred.

The zone must be dissolved once safety improvements have been implemented. A county, city, or town, or WSDOT may also dissolve a zone under certain circumstances:

- at the discretion of the jurisdiction that created the zone;
- at the recommendation of WSDOT to a city, town, or county; or
- by a petition of 10 percent of the property owners, residents, or business owners with property that abuts or is within the zone that is presented to the jurisdiction that created the zone.

The designation, establishment, investigation, or dissolution of a zone, or any data, reports, maps, county staff comments, public comments, engineering studies, prior testimony, or other materials prepared or used in connection with the creation or management of a zone is not admissible as evidence in any civil action.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Changes the term accident risk to crash prevention.
- Clarifies that the legislative body of a county, city, or town or the Secretary of WSDOT may create a crash prevention zone within its jurisdiction by identifying public roads where there have been a multitude of collisions that have caused serious injuries or fatalities, rather than accidents.
- Clarifies that a county, city, or town or WSDOT may consider and implement safety improvement approaches in designated crash prevention zones.
- Clarifies that the jurisdiction establishing a zone must conduct an engineering and traffic investigation of the public roads in the zone and provides that a county, city, or town may contract with WSDOT to have them conduct an engineering and traffic investigation of the public roads in the zone.
- Establishes that a county, city, or town may designate a crash prevention zone that includes roadways managed by WSDOT with the approval of WSDOT and provides that WSDOT may designate a crash prevention zone on a state highway without the approval of a county, city, or town.

- Allows for increased monetary penalties of \$73 for speed-related traffic infractions or infractions related to a vehicle collision within the zone if signs are posted stating that penalties are increased in the zone. Provides that \$73 of these monetary penalties must be deposited into an account created for the crash prevention zone and requires that the account be administered and maintained by the jurisdiction in which the infraction occurred.
- Establishes that the designation, establishment, investigation, or dissolution of a crash prevention zone, or any data, reports, maps, county staff comments, public comments, engineering studies, prior testimony, or other materials prepared or used in connection with the creation or management of a crash prevention zone, is not admissible as evidence in any civil action.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Local Government): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill is designed to address an increase in fatalities in certain areas. This bill supports the policy goal of improving traffic safety. There are two intersections in the community that have regularly been the site of serious injury and fatal accidents and this bill responds to the need to address these dangerous interchanges.

OTHER: There is strong support for the policy goal of this bill and some concerns about implementation and liability. The bill provides a voluntary way for local governments to this important work but the bill needs to have some protection for municipalities from liability.

Persons Testifying (Local Government): PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Harold Stewart, City Manager at the City of Pasco; Steven Ellis, Association of Washington Cities.

OTHER: Brad Tower, Washington Counties Risk Pool; Axel Swanson, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Local Government): No one.