

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6066

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Local Government, January 22, 2026
Transportation, February 9, 2026

Title: An act relating to establishing accident risk zones.

Brief Description: Establishing accident risk zones. [**Revised for 2nd 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, 2/09/26 [DP2S, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Allows a county, city, town, or the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), until January 1, 2029, to create a crash prevention zone (zone) on a certain portion of Interstate 395.
- Allows a county, city, town, or WSDOT, beginning January 1, 2029, to create a zone by identifying public roads where the incidence of collisions resulting in serious injuries or fatalities is greater than expected for similar roads or highways, as appropriate.
- Authorizes local jurisdictions that create a zone to use automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations committed within the zone.
- Doubles the penalty amount for unlawful use of a personal electronic device if committed while driving in a zone.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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.

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)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6066 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Krishnadasan, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Member; Chapman, Harris, Hunt, Shewmake and Valdez.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Alvarado, Christian, Fortunato, MacEwen, Nobles and Wilson, J..

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: I-2 Safety Program. 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.

City Streets—State Highways. 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.

Local Automated Traffic Safety Cameras. Local automated traffic safety cameras may be used to detect a variety of moving violations, including speeding in various authorized locations and zones. The local legislative authority with jurisdiction where the traffic safety cameras are to be located must prepare an analysis of the locations within the jurisdiction where traffic safety cameras are proposed to be located before enacting an ordinance authorizing their use. The analysis must include an assessment of equity considerations, and consider the results of the equity assessment when identifying where to locate traffic safety cameras. The analysis must also show a demonstrated need for traffic safety cameras based on rates of collision reports showing near collisions, travel by vulnerable roadway users, evidence of vehicles speeding, and on anticipated or actual ineffectiveness or infeasibility of other mitigation measures.

Additional requirements and conditions on the use of automated traffic safety cameras include certain signage and reporting requirements, restrictions on the use of camera images, notice of infraction processes and adjudication requirements, and limitations on the use of camera infraction revenue.

Operating a Vehicle While Using a Personal Electronic Device. It is unlawful to use a personal electronic device while driving, with exceptions. The base penalty amount for using a personal electronic device while driving is \$48.

Summary of Bill (Second Substitute): Until January 1, 2029, the legislative body of a county, city, or town, or WSDOT may create a crash prevention zone (zone) within its jurisdiction on the portion of Interstate 395 from milepost 23 to milepost 32 between Pasco and Mesa.

Beginning January 1, 2029, the legislative body of a county, city, or town may create a zone within its jurisdiction by identifying public roads where the incidence of collisions resulting in serious injuries or fatalities is greater than expected for similar roads. WSDOT may create a zone within its jurisdiction by identifying public roads where the incidence of collisions resulting in serious injuries and fatalities is greater than expected for similar highways over the previous five-year period using adopted processes in the Highway Safety Manual as published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. 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 (WSP) and local law enforcement agencies must coordinate, within existing resources and to the extent practicable, increased enforcement of traffic laws within the zone in a manner intended to reduce collisions in the zone. WSDOT may use speed reduction methods, approaches, and technologies to reduce speeding within any zone it establishes. A city, town, or county may use automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations committed within a zone, subject to current requirements and conditions on the use of such cameras, with an authorized penalty amount of up to \$290 for each infraction.

For each zone created by a city, town, or county, a corresponding local account must be created and administered by the jurisdiction in which zone infractions occur. Expenditures from each local account may only be used for engineering and traffic investigations, road sign creation and installation, and safety improvements in the zone. Any revenue generated from the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speeding violations committed in a zone must first be used to cover the costs of camera administration, including the cost of processing infractions, with any remaining revenue to be deposited into the corresponding local account.

The base penalty amount for unlawfully using a personal electronic device while driving is doubled if the infraction occurs within a zone. The total penalty amount, including statutory assessments, may not be waived, reduced, or suspended. Fifty percent of the penalty amount collected must be deposited into the corresponding local account, or the highway safety fund for such infractions committed in a zone established by WSDOT, to be used only for the same zone purposes applicable to a local corresponding account.

The zone must be dissolved once safety improvements have been implemented. Until January 1, 2029, a zone may also be dissolved at the discretion of the jurisdiction that created the zone. Beginning January 1, 2029, a zone may also be dissolved by the jurisdiction that created the zone or by direction of the Washington State Legislature.

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 TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Second Substitute):

- Authorizes local jurisdictions or WSDOT, until January 1, 2029, to create a crash prevention zone (zone) on Interstate 395 between Pasco and Mesa.
- Clarifies that, beginning January 1, 2029, local jurisdictions may create a zone identifying public roads where serious injuries and fatalities are greater than expected

for similar roads.

- Authorizes WSDOT, beginning January 1, 2029, to create a zone by identifying public roads where serious injuries and fatalities is greater than expected for similar highways over the previous five-year period using certain adopted processes.
- Authorizes zones created after January 1, 2029 to also be dissolved at the discretion of the local jurisdiction or WSDOT or by the state Legislature.
- Clarifies that law enforcement coordination on increased enforcement of traffic laws within such zones be accomplished within existing resources and to extent practicable.
- Authorizes local jurisdictions that create a zone to use traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations committed within the zone, with a penalty amount of up to \$290 to be distributed to the local jurisdiction for camera administration costs and zone purposes.
- Authorizes WSDOT to use speed reduction methods and technologies in zones it establishes.
- Creates a doubled penalty amount for unlawful use of a personal electronic device in a zone, with 50 percent of penalty revenue to the local jurisdiction or highway safety fund, as appropriate, for zone purposes.
- Removes language imposing additional penalties for traffic infractions involving speeding or collisions committed in crash prevention zones and language authorizing zone dissolution by WSDOT recommendation or by petition of 10 percent of property owners or residents within or abutting a zone.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Transportation): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: There have been too many and very recent fatal crashes on US 395 by Pasco. The bill is informed by local community meetings and a demand for a response. According to WSP, more than 250 crashes have occurred in that specific corridor. The prime sponsor has worked with multiple stakeholders to address these safety concerns. WSDOT would have jurisdiction

over the impacted stretch of this corridor. US 12 has also seen lots of crashes and fatalities. The penalty for an infraction in a designated zone should not be capped at the current amount but simply doubled. The bill provides a framework for counties to address transportation infrastructure safety issues.

CON: Every road should be considered within a crash prevention zone. Local issues should be dealt with at the local level and not at the state level. The bill creates another layer of government without a solution and only generates revenue.

Persons Testifying (Transportation): PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Maria Serra, Public Works Director at the City of Pasco; Brad Tower, Washington Counties Risk Pool.

CON: Stephen Alldridge.

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