## HOUSE BILL 1700

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Volz, Graham, Schmidt, Low, Schmick, Klicker, Dye, Abell, Chase, Connors, Engell, Ormsby, and Hill

Read first time 01/29/25. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to the timing of updates for comprehensive plans
- and development regulations; amending RCW 36.70A.130 and 36.70A.635;
- 3 and creating a new section.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 5 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that it has
- 6 placed additional requirements to be incorporated into comprehensive
- 7 plans and development regulation updates due at the end of 2026. It
- 8 further recognizes there is a shortage of qualified planners to do
- 9 the work and local governments are struggling to accomplish the
- 10 additional work. Therefore, local governments are being granted a
- 11 six-month extension for compliance with the upcoming comprehensive
- 12 plan update.
- 13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.70A.130 and 2024 c 17 s 1 are each amended to
- 14 read as follows:
- 15 (1)(a) Each comprehensive land use plan and development
- 16 regulations shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by
- 17 the county or city that adopted them. Except as otherwise provided, a
- 18 county or city shall take legislative action to review and, if
- 19 needed, revise its comprehensive land use plan and development
- 20 regulations to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the

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requirements of this chapter according to the deadlines in subsections (4) and (5) of this section.

- (b)(i) A city or town located within a county planning under RCW 36.70A.040 may opt out of a full review and revisions of its comprehensive plan established in this section if the city or town meets the following criteria:
  - (A) Has a population fewer than 500;

- 8 (B) Is not located within 10 miles of a city with a population 9 over 100,000;
  - (C) Experienced a population growth rate of fewer than 10 percent in the preceding 10 years; and
  - (D) Has provided the department with notice of its intent to participate in a partial review and revision of its comprehensive plan.
  - (ii) The department shall review the population growth rate for a city or town participating in the partial review and revision of its comprehensive plan process at least three years before the periodic update is due as outlined in subsection (4) of this section and notify cities of their eligibility.
  - (iii) A city or town that opts out of a full review and revision of its comprehensive plan must update its critical areas regulations and its capital facilities element and its transportation element.
    - (c) Except as otherwise provided, a county or city not planning under RCW 36.70A.040 shall take action to review and, if needed, revise its policies and development regulations regarding critical areas and natural resource lands adopted according to this chapter to ensure these policies and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter according to the deadlines in subsections (4) and (5) of this section. Legislative action means the adoption of a resolution or ordinance following notice and a public hearing indicating at a minimum, a finding that a review and evaluation has occurred and identifying the revisions made, or that a revision was not needed and the reasons therefor.
    - (d) The review and evaluation required by this subsection shall include, but is not limited to, consideration of critical area ordinances and, if planning under RCW 36.70A.040, an analysis of the population allocated to a city or county from the most recent 10-year population forecast by the office of financial management.
- 39 (e) Any amendment of or revision to a comprehensive land use plan 40 shall conform to this chapter. Any amendment of or revision to

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development regulations shall be consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan.

- (2) (a) Each county and city shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program consistent with RCW 36.70A.035 and 36.70A.140 that identifies procedures and schedules whereby updates, proposed amendments, or revisions of the comprehensive plan are considered by the governing body of the county or city no more frequently than once every year. "Updates" means to review and revise, if needed, according to subsection (1) of this section, and the deadlines in subsections (4) and (5) of this section or in accordance with the provisions of subsection (6) of this section. Amendments may be considered more frequently than once per year under the following circumstances:
- (i) The initial adoption of a subarea plan. Subarea plans adopted under this subsection (2)(a)(i) must clarify, supplement, or implement jurisdiction-wide comprehensive plan policies, and may only be adopted if the cumulative impacts of the proposed plan are addressed by appropriate environmental review under chapter 43.21C RCW;
- (ii) The development of an initial subarea plan for economic development located outside of the 100 year floodplain in a county that has completed a state-funded pilot project that is based on watershed characterization and local habitat assessment;
- (iii) The adoption or amendment of a shoreline master program under the procedures set forth in chapter 90.58 RCW;
- (iv) The amendment of the capital facilities element of a comprehensive plan that occurs concurrently with the adoption or amendment of a county or city budget; or
- (v) The adoption of comprehensive plan amendments necessary to enact a planned action under RCW 43.21C.440, provided that amendments are considered in accordance with the public participation program established by the county or city under this subsection (2)(a) and all persons who have requested notice of a comprehensive plan update are given notice of the amendments and an opportunity to comment.
- (b) Except as otherwise provided in (a) of this subsection, all proposals shall be considered by the governing body concurrently so the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be ascertained. However, after appropriate public participation a county or city may adopt amendments or revisions to its comprehensive plan that conform with this chapter whenever an emergency exists or to resolve an

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appeal of a comprehensive plan filed with the growth management hearings board or with the court.

- (3) (a) Each county that designates urban growth areas under RCW 36.70A.110 shall review, according to the schedules established in subsections (4) and (5) of this section, its designated urban growth area or areas, patterns of development occurring within the urban growth area or areas, and the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of each urban growth area. In conjunction with this review by the county, each city located within an urban growth area shall review the densities permitted within its boundaries, and the extent to which the urban growth occurring within the county has located within each city and the unincorporated portions of the urban growth areas.
- (b) The county comprehensive plan designating urban growth areas, and the densities permitted in the urban growth areas by the comprehensive plans of the county and each city located within the urban growth areas, shall be revised to accommodate the urban growth projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period. The review required by this subsection may be combined with the review and evaluation required by RCW 36.70A.215.
- (c) If, during the county's review under (a) of this subsection, the county determines revision of the urban growth area is not required to accommodate the urban growth projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period, but does determine that patterns of development have created pressure in areas that exceed available, developable lands within the urban growth area, the urban growth area or areas may be revised to accommodate identified patterns of development and likely future development pressure for the succeeding 20-year period if the following requirements are met:
- (i) The revised urban growth area may not result in an increase in the total surface areas of the urban growth area or areas;
- (ii) The areas added to the urban growth area are not or have not been designated as agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance;
- 35 (iii) Less than 15 percent of the areas added to the urban growth 36 area are critical areas;
- 37 (iv) The areas added to the urban growth areas are suitable for 38 urban growth;
- (v) The transportation element and capital facility plan element have identified the transportation facilities, and public facilities

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and services needed to serve the urban growth area and the funding to provide the transportation facilities and public facilities and services;

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- (vi) The urban growth area is not larger than needed to accommodate the growth planned for the succeeding 20-year planning period and a reasonable land market supply factor;
- (vii) The areas removed from the urban growth area do not include urban growth or urban densities; and
- 9 (viii) The revised urban growth area is contiguous, does not 10 include holes or gaps, and will not increase pressures to urbanize 11 rural or natural resource lands.
  - (4) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (6) and (8) of this section, counties and cities shall take action to review and, if needed, revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter as follows:
- 17 (a) On or before June 30, 2015, for King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and the cities within those counties;
  - (b) On or before June 30, 2016, for Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties and the cities within those counties;
  - (c) On or before June 30, 2017, for Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Kittitas, Lewis, Skamania, Spokane, and Yakima counties and the cities within those counties; and
  - (d) On or before June 30, 2018, for Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties and the cities within those counties.
    - (5) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (6) and (8) of this section, following the review of comprehensive plans and development regulations required by subsection (4) of this section, counties and cities shall take action to review and, if needed, revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter as follows:
- 36 (a) Except as provided in subsection (10) of this section, on or 37 before December 31, 2024, with the following review and, if needed, 38 revision on or before June 30, 2034, and then every 10 years 39 thereafter, for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and the 40 cities within those counties;

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(b) On or before December 31, 2025, with the following review and, if needed, revision on or before June 30, 2035, and then every 10 years thereafter, for Clallam, Clark, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, San Juan, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom counties and the cities within those counties;

- (c) On or before ((June 30)) <u>December 31</u>, 2026, <u>with the following review and, if needed, revision on or before June 30, 2036, and every 10 years thereafter, for Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties and the cities within those counties; and</u>
  - (d) On or before June 30, 2027, and every 10 years thereafter, for 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.
- (6) (a) Nothing in this section precludes a county or city from conducting the review and evaluation required by this section before the deadlines established in subsections (4) and (5) of this section. Counties and cities may begin this process early and may be eligible for grants from the department, subject to available funding, if they elect to do so.
- (b) A county that is subject to a deadline established in subsection (5)(b) through (d) of this section and meets the following criteria may comply with the requirements of this section at any time within the 24 months following the deadline established in subsection (5) of this section: The county has a population of less than 50,000 and has had its population increase by no more than 17 percent in the 10 years preceding the deadline established in subsection (5) of this section as of that date.
- (c) A city that is subject to a deadline established in subsection (5)(b) through (d) of this section and meets the following criteria may comply with the requirements of this section at any time within the 24 months following the deadline established in subsection (5) of this section: The city has a population of no more than 5,000 and has had its population increase by the greater of either no more than 100 persons or no more than 17 percent in the 10 years preceding the deadline established in subsection (5) of this section as of that date.
- 38 (d) State agencies are encouraged to provide technical assistance 39 to the counties and cities in the review of critical area ordinances, 40 comprehensive plans, and development regulations.

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- (7) (a) The requirements imposed on counties and cities under this section shall be considered "requirements of this chapter" under the terms of RCW 36.70A.040(1). Only those counties and cities that meet the following criteria may receive grants, loans, pledges, or financial guarantees under chapter 43.155 or 70A.135 RCW:
  - (i) Complying with the deadlines in this section; or

- (ii) Demonstrating substantial progress towards compliance with the schedules in this section for development regulations that protect critical areas.
- (b) A county or city that is fewer than 12 months out of compliance with the schedules in this section for development regulations that protect critical areas is making substantial progress towards compliance. Only those counties and cities in compliance with the schedules in this section may receive preference for grants or loans subject to the provisions of RCW 43.17.250.
- (8) (a) Except as otherwise provided in (c) of this subsection, if a participating watershed is achieving benchmarks and goals for the protection of critical areas functions and values, the county is not required to update development regulations to protect critical areas as they specifically apply to agricultural activities in that watershed.
- (b) A county that has made the election under RCW 36.70A.710(1) may only adopt or amend development regulations to protect critical areas as they specifically apply to agricultural activities in a participating watershed if:
- (i) A work plan has been approved for that watershed in accordance with RCW 36.70A.725;
- (ii) The local watershed group for that watershed has requested the county to adopt or amend development regulations as part of a work plan developed under RCW 36.70A.720;
- (iii) The adoption or amendment of the development regulations is necessary to enable the county to respond to an order of the growth management hearings board or court;
- (iv) The adoption or amendment of development regulations is necessary to address a threat to human health or safety; or
- 36 (v) Three or more years have elapsed since the receipt of 37 funding.
- 38 (c) Beginning 10 years from the date of receipt of funding, a 39 county that has made the election under RCW 36.70A.710(1) must review 40 and, if necessary, revise development regulations to protect critical

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areas as they specifically apply to agricultural activities in a participating watershed in accordance with the review and revision requirements and timeline in subsection (5) of this section. This subsection (8)(c) does not apply to a participating watershed that has determined under RCW 36.70A.720(2)(c)(ii) that the watershed's goals and benchmarks for protection have been met.

- (9) (a) Counties subject to planning deadlines established in subsection (5) of this section that are required or that choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 and that meet either criteria of (a)(i) or (ii) of this subsection, and cities with a population of more than 6,000 as of April 1, 2021, within those counties, must provide to the department an implementation progress report detailing the progress they have achieved in implementing their comprehensive plan five years after the review and revision of their comprehensive plan. Once a county meets the criteria in (a)(i) or (ii) of this subsection, the implementation progress report requirements remain in effect thereafter for that county and the cities therein with populations greater than 6,000 as of April 1, 2021, even if the county later no longer meets either or both criteria. A county is subject to the implementation progress report requirement if it meets either of the following criteria on or after April 1, 2021:
- (i) The county has a population density of at least 100 people per square mile and a population of at least 200,000; or
  - (ii) The county has a population density of at least 75 people per square mile and an annual growth rate of at least 1.75 percent as determined by the office of financial management.
  - (b) The department shall adopt guidelines for indicators, measures, milestones, and criteria for use by counties and cities in the implementation progress report that must cover:
  - (i) The implementation of previously adopted changes to the housing element and any effect those changes have had on housing affordability and availability within the jurisdiction;
    - (ii) Permit processing timelines; and
  - (iii) Progress toward implementing any actions required to achieve reductions to meet greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled requirements as provided for in any element of the comprehensive plan under RCW 36.70A.070.
  - (c) If a city or county required to provide an implementation progress report under this subsection (9) has not implemented any specifically identified regulations, zoning and land use changes, or

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- 1 taken other legislative or administrative action necessary to implement any changes in the most recent periodic update in their 2 comprehensive plan by the due date for the implementation progress 3 report, the city or county must identify the need for such action in 4 the implementation progress report. Cities and counties must adopt a 5 6 work plan to implement any necessary regulations, zoning and land use legislative or 7 changes, or take other administrative action identified in the implementation progress report and complete all 8 work necessary for implementation within two years of submission of 9 the implementation progress report. 10
- (10) Any county or city that is required by RCW 36.70A.095 to 11 include in its comprehensive plan a climate change and resiliency 12 element and that is also required by subsection (5)(a) of this 13 section to review and, if necessary, revise its comprehensive plan on 14 or before December 31, 2024, must update its transportation element 15 16 and incorporate a climate change and resiliency element into its 17 comprehensive plan as part of the first implementation progress 18 report required by subsection (9) of this section if funds are 19 appropriated and distributed by December 31, 2027, as required under RCW 36.70A.070(10). 20
- 21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 36.70A.635 and 2024 c 152 s 2 are each amended to 22 read as follows:

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- (1) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, any city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 must provide by ordinance and incorporate into its development regulations, zoning regulations, and other official controls, authorization for the following:
- (a) For cities with a population of at least 25,000 but less than 75,000 based on office of financial management population estimates:
- (i) The development of at least two units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies;
  - (ii) The development of at least four units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies, within one-quarter mile walking distance of a major transit stop; and
- 37 (iii) The development of at least four units per lot on all lots 38 zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting

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1 higher densities or intensities applies, if at least one unit is 2 affordable housing.

- (b) For cities with a population of at least 75,000 based on office of financial management population estimates:
- (i) The development of at least four units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies;
- (ii) The development of at least six units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies, within one-quarter mile walking distance of a major transit stop; and
- (iii) The development of at least six units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies, if at least two units are affordable housing.
- (c) For cities with a population of less than 25,000, that are within a contiguous urban growth area with the largest city in a county with a population of more than 275,000, based on office of financial management population estimates the development of at least two units per lot on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use, unless zoning permitting higher densities or intensities applies.
- (2) (a) To qualify for the additional units allowed under subsection (1) of this section, the applicant must commit to renting or selling the required number of units as affordable housing. The units must be maintained as affordable for a term of at least 50 years, and the property must satisfy that commitment and all required affordability and income eligibility conditions adopted by the local government under this chapter. A city must require the applicant to record a covenant or deed restriction that ensures the continuing rental of units subject to these affordability requirements consistent with the conditions in chapter 84.14 RCW for a period of no less than 50 years. The covenant or deed restriction must also address criteria and policies to maintain public benefit if the property is converted to a use other than which continues to provide for permanently affordable housing.
- (b) The units dedicated as affordable must be provided in a range of sizes comparable to other units in the development. To the extent practicable, the number of bedrooms in affordable units must be in the same proportion as the number of bedrooms in units within the

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entire development. The affordable units must generally be distributed throughout the development and have substantially the same functionality as the other units in the development.

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- (c) If a city has enacted a program under RCW 36.70A.540, the terms of that program govern to the extent they vary from the requirements of this subsection.
- (3) If a city has enacted a program under RCW 36.70A.540, subsection (1) of this section does not preclude the city from requiring any development, including development described in subsection (1) of this section, to provide affordable housing, either on-site or through an in-lieu payment, nor limit the city's ability to expand such a program or modify its requirements.
- 13 (4)(a) As an alternative to the density requirements in subsection (1) of this section, a city may implement the density requirements in subsection (1) of this section for at least 75 percent of lots in the city that are primarily dedicated to single-family detached housing units.
- 18 (b) The 25 percent of lots for which the requirements of subsection (1) of this section are not implemented must include but 20 are not limited to:
- 21 (i) Any areas within the city for which the department has 22 certified an extension of the implementation timelines under RCW 23 36.70A.637 due to the risk of displacement;
- (ii) Any areas within the city for which the department has certified an extension of the implementation timelines under RCW 36.70A.638 due to a lack of infrastructure capacity;
  - (iii) Any lots, parcels, and tracts designated with critical areas or their buffers that are exempt from the density requirements as provided in subsection (8) of this section;
  - (iv) Any portion of a city within a one-mile radius of a commercial airport with at least 9,000,000 annual enplanements that is exempt from the parking requirements under subsection (7)(b) of this section; and
- 34 (v) Any areas subject to sea level rise, increased flooding, 35 susceptible to wildfires, or geological hazards over the next 100 36 years.
- 37 (c) Unless identified as at higher risk of displacement under RCW 38 36.70A.070(2)(g), the 25 percent of lots for which the requirements 39 of subsection (1) of this section are not implemented may not include:

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(i) Any areas for which the exclusion would further racially disparate impacts or result in zoning with a discriminatory effect;

- (ii) Any areas within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop; or
- (iii) Any areas historically covered by a covenant or deed restriction excluding racial minorities from owning property or living in the area, as known to the city at the time of each comprehensive plan update.
- (5) A city subject to the requirements of subsection (1)(a) or (b) of this section must allow at least six of the nine types of middle housing to achieve the unit density required in subsection (1) of this section. A city may allow accessory dwelling units to achieve the unit density required in subsection (1) of this section. Cities are not required to allow accessory dwelling units or middle housing types beyond the density requirements in subsection (1) of this section. A city must also allow zero lot line short subdivision where the number of lots created is equal to the unit density required in subsection (1) of this section.
  - (6) Any city subject to the requirements of this section:
- (a) If applying design review for middle housing, only administrative design review shall be required;
- (b) Except as provided in (a) of this subsection, shall not require through development regulations any standards for middle housing that are more restrictive than those required for detached single-family residences, but may apply any objective development regulations that are required for detached single-family residences, including, but not limited to, set-back, lot coverage, stormwater, clearing, and tree canopy and retention requirements;
- (c) Shall apply to middle housing the same development permit and environmental review processes that apply to detached single-family residences, unless otherwise required by state law including, but not limited to, shoreline regulations under chapter 90.58 RCW, building codes under chapter 19.27 RCW, energy codes under chapter 19.27A RCW, or electrical codes under chapter 19.28 RCW;
- (d) Shall not require off-street parking as a condition of permitting development of middle housing within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop;
- (e) Shall not require more than one off-street parking space per unit as a condition of permitting development of middle housing on

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lots no greater than 6,000 square feet before any zero lot line subdivisions or lot splits;

- (f) Shall not require more than two off-street parking spaces per unit as a condition of permitting development of middle housing on lots greater than 6,000 square feet before any zero lot line subdivisions or lot splits; and
- (g) Are not required to achieve the per unit density under chapter 332, Laws of 2023 on lots after subdivision below 1,000 square feet unless the city chooses to enact smaller allowable lot sizes.
- (7) The provisions of subsection (6)(d) through (f) of this section do not apply:
- (a) If a local government submits to the department an empirical study prepared by a credentialed transportation or land use planning expert that clearly demonstrates, and the department finds and certifies, that the application of the parking limitations of subsection (6)(d) through (f) of this section for middle housing will be significantly less safe for vehicle drivers or passengers, pedestrians, or bicyclists than if the jurisdiction's parking requirements were applied to the same location for the same number of detached houses. The department must develop guidance to assist cities on items to include in the study; or
- (b) To portions of cities within a one-mile radius of a commercial airport in Washington with at least 9,000,000 annual enplanements.
  - (8) The provisions of this section do not apply to:
  - (a) Portions of a lot, parcel, or tract designated with critical areas designated under RCW 36.70A.170 or their buffers as required by RCW 36.70A.170, except for critical aquifer recharge areas where a single-family detached house is an allowed use provided that any requirements to maintain aquifer recharge are met;
- (b) Areas designated as sole-source aquifers by the United States environmental protection agency on islands in the Puget Sound;
- 34 (c) A watershed serving a reservoir for potable water if that 35 watershed is or was listed, as of July 23, 2023, as impaired or 36 threatened under section 303(d) of the federal clean water act (33 37 U.S.C. Sec. 1313(d));
- 38 (d) Lots that have been designated urban separators by countywide 39 planning policies as of July 23, 2023; or

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1 (e) A lot that was created through the splitting of a single 2 residential lot.

- (9) Nothing in this section prohibits a city from permitting detached single-family residences.
  - (10) Nothing in this section requires a city to issue a building permit if other federal, state, and local requirements for a building permit are not met.
- 8 (11) A city must comply with the requirements of this section on 9 the latter of:
  - (a) Six months after its next periodic comprehensive plan update required under RCW 36.70A.130 if the city meets the population threshold based on the 2020 office of financial management population data; or
  - (b) 12 months after their next implementation progress report required under RCW 36.70A.130 after a determination by the office of financial management that the city has reached a population threshold established under this section.
  - (12) A city complying with this section and not granted a timeline extension under RCW 36.70A.638 does not have to update its capital facilities plan element required by RCW 36.70A.070(3) to accommodate the increased housing required by chapter 332, Laws of 2023 until the first periodic comprehensive plan update required for the city under RCW 36.70A.130(5) that occurs on or after June 30, ((2034)) 2036.
  - (13) Until June 30, 2026, for cities subject to a growth target adopted under RCW 36.70A.210 that limit the maximum residential capacity of the jurisdiction, any additional residential capacity required by this section for lots, parcels, and tracts with critical areas or critical area buffers outside of critical areas or their buffers may not be considered an inconsistency with the countywide planning policies, multicounty planning policies, or growth targets adopted under RCW 36.70A.210.

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