

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5617

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to population criteria for designation of local downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization and official local main street programs.

Brief Description: Concerning population criteria for designation of local downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization and official local main street programs.

Sponsors: Senators Cleveland, Mullet and Wilson, L..

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community & Economic Development: 2/16/22, 2/18/22 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Clarifies that the Main Street Program's requirement for a local government to have a population of less than 190,000 within a local government's boundary is to be determined at the time of designation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Donaghy, Frame, Jacobsen, Johnson, J., Rule, Sutherland and Taylor.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kraft.

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

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.

The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (the Department) operates the Washington Main Street Program, which provides technical assistance to businesses, property owners, organizations, and local governments undertaking a downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization initiative and management strategy.

Technical assistance provided through the Main Street Program may include initial site evaluations, training, and program design assistance. To the extent funds are made available, the Department also provides financial assistance to local governments or local organizations to assist with costs associated with downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs.

The Department designates local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs and official Main Street programs according to certain criteria, including:

- the degree of interest and commitment to comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization and historic preservation by both the public and private sectors;
- the evidence of potential private sector investment in the downtown or neighborhood commercial district;
- whether a downtown or neighborhood commercial district has sufficient historic fabric to become a foundation for an enhanced community image;
- the capacity of the organization to undertake a comprehensive program and the financial commitment to implement a long-term downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program that includes a commitment to employ a professional program manager and maintain a sufficient operating budget;
- the Department's existing downtown revitalization program's tier system; and
- the National Main Street Center's criteria for designating official Main Street cities.

The Department may not designate a local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program or official local Main Street program if the program is undertaken by a local government with a population of 190,000 people or more.

Summary of Bill:

The statute that outlines the duties of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (the Department) in implementing the Main Street Program is not applicable to any local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program unless the boundaries of the program have been identified and approved by the Department. The limit of having a population less than 190,000 within the local government's boundary is clarified to be determined at the time of designation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The City of Vancouver has worked diligently to strengthen its core with the help of the Main Street Program. The Main Street Program is a proven tool that helps create and support jobs, and it has provided the structure that Vancouver needs. Small businesses are struggling, and they need all the tools and support that are available to them. The Main Street Program provides management strategies and technical assistance, which are especially critical during a pandemic. This bill ensures the continuity of Vancouver's participation in the Main Street Program by allowing Vancouver to continue to qualify even with a population over 190,000 people. Even though Vancouver has increased in size since it was designated in 2005, its downtown core remains the same size.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Annette Cleveland, prime sponsor; Michael Walker, Vancouver Downtown Association; and Brian Enslow, City of Vancouver.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.