

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5593

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning urban growth area boundaries.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Housing & Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Short, Lovelett, Gildon, Hasegawa and Mullet).

**Senate Committee on Housing & Local Government**  
**House Committee on Local Government**

**Background:** Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA sets forth the following three broad planning obligations for those counties and cities who plan fully under the GMA:

- the county legislative authority must adopt a countywide planning policy;
- the county, and the cities within the county, must adopt comprehensive plans and designate critical areas, agricultural lands, forestlands, and mineral resource lands, and adopt development regulations accordingly; and
- the county must designate and take other actions related to urban growth areas (UGAs).

The GMA directs planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land-use plans that are generalized, coordinated land-use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans must address specified planning elements, each of which is a subset of a comprehensive plan. The implementation of comprehensive plans occurs through locally adopted development regulations.

Urban Growth Areas. Counties that fully plan under the GMA must designate UGAs, within which urban growth must be encouraged and outside of which growth may occur only if it is not urban in nature. Planning jurisdictions must include within their UGAs sufficient areas and densities to accommodate projected urban growth for the succeeding 20-year period. Cities must include sufficient areas to accommodate the broad range of needs and uses that will accompany the projected urban growth, including, as appropriate,

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medical, governmental, institutional, commercial, service, retail, and other nonresidential uses.

**Summary:** Each county that designates UGAs under the GMA shall review its designated UGAs, patterns of development within the UGA, and the densities permitted within the incorporated and unincorporated portions of each UGA during the jurisdiction's regularly scheduled comprehensive review update cycle.

If, during the jurisdiction's regularly scheduled review, the county determines the patterns of development have created pressure in areas that exceed the available and developable lands within the UGA, the county may revise the UGA to accommodate identified patterns of development and future development pressure for the succeeding 20-year period. Areas added to the UGA must not be designated as long-term commercial significance or contain more than 15 percent critical areas. The areas added must be suitable for urban growth and contiguous. The revision may not result in an increase in the total surface area of the existing UGA.

A jurisdiction's transportation element and capital facility plan element must identify the transportation facilities, public facilities, and related services needed to serve the added areas to the UGA.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49	0
House	98	0

**Effective:** June 9, 2022