

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1293

---

---

C 333 L 23  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Streamlining development regulations.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Klicker, Leavitt, Barkis, Jacobsen, Waters, Chapman, Reed and Graham).

**House Committee on Housing**  
**Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs**

### **Background:**

#### Growth Management Act.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA establishes a wide array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA. These jurisdictions are sometimes referred to as fully planning under the GMA.

Counties that fully plan under the GMA must designate urban growth areas (UGA), within which urban growth must be encouraged and outside of which growth may occur only if it is not urban in nature. Each city in a county must be included in a UGA. Fully planning jurisdictions must include within their UGAs sufficient areas and densities to accommodate projected urban growth for the succeeding 20-year period.

#### Project Review.

Before developing land, a developer must obtain permits from the local government that allow the development. These permits can include land use permits, environmental permits, building permits, and others, and are known as project permits. All counties and cities, including those not planning under the GMA, are required to combine the environmental review process with the project permit review process.

When a fully planning county or city is reviewing a project, its comprehensive plan and

---

*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.*

development regulations must serve as the basis for the project permit review. In determining if a proposed project is consistent with the comprehensive plan and development regulations, the county or city must consider the type of land use, the level of development or density proposed, and the availability of infrastructure needed to service the development. Fully planning counties and cities must comply with additional project permit processing requirements, including establishing an integrated or consolidated permit process.

Counties and cities are encouraged to adopt project review provisions to provide prompt, coordinated review and ensure accountability to applicants and the public, including expedited review for project permit applications for projects that are consistent with adopted development regulations and within the capacity of systemwide infrastructure improvements. Counties and cities also must adopt procedures to monitor and enforce permit decisions and conditions and may require preapplication conferences or a public meeting by rule, ordinance, or resolution.

#### Design Review.

Design review is a formally adopted local government process by which projects are reviewed for compliance with design standards for the type of use adopted through local ordinance. Design review focuses on the appearance of new construction, site planning, and items such as landscaping, signage, and other aesthetic issues. A design element is an optional element of a comprehensive plan, and many jurisdictions have included design elements in their comprehensive plans.

#### **Summary:**

#### Design Review.

Beginning six months after its next required periodic comprehensive plan update, a fully planning county or city may apply only clear and objective regulations to the exterior design of new development, except for designated landmarks or historic districts established under a local preservation ordinance. For the design review process, a clear and objective regulation:

- must include one or more ascertainable guideline, standard, or criterion by which an applicant can determine whether a given building design is permissible under that development regulation; and
- may not result in a reduction in density, height, bulk, or scale below the generally applicable development regulations for a development proposal in the applicable zone.

Any design review process must be conducted concurrently, or otherwise logically integrated, with the consolidated review and decision process for project permits, and may not include more than one public meeting.

#### Project Review.

During project review, counties and cities may only require preapplication conferences or a public meeting where otherwise required by state law. In addition, counties and cities are encouraged to adopt project review provisions that ensure an objective review and expedite project permit applications for projects that include dwelling units that are affordable to low-income and moderate-income households.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	94	3	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	1	(House concurred)

**Effective:** July 23, 2023