

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 6015

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Local Government

**Title:** An act relating to parking configurations for residential uses.

**Brief Description:** Concerning residential parking configurations.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Senators Shewmake, Kuderer and Liias).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government: 2/14/24, 2/21/24 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended by Committee)**

- Requires cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act to follow specified requirements when enforcing land use regulations regarding parking.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Duerr, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Griffey and Riccelli.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

**Background:**

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*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.*

### Growth Management Act.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. Originally enacted in 1990 and 1991, the GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA.

Subject to certain limitations, cities and counties that plan under the GMA may impose minimum residential parking requirements for housing units constructed after July 1, 2019.

For housing units that are affordable to very low-income or extremely low-income individuals, and that are located within one-quarter mile of a major transit stop that receives transit at least two times per hour for 12 or more hours a day, minimum residential parking requirements may be no greater than one parking space per bedroom, or three-quarter spaces per unit.

A city may require a developer to sign a covenant prohibiting the rental of a unit subject to this parking minimum for any purpose other than housing for very low-income or extremely low-income individuals. The covenant must also address price restrictions and household income limits. A city may require additional parking if the city determines a particular housing unit is in an area with lack of access to street parking capacity, physical space impediments, or other reasons supported by evidence.

Subject to exceptions, a city may not impose minimum residential parking requirements for housing units that are within one-quarter mile of a transit stop that receives transit service at least four times per hour for 12 or more hours, and are specifically for seniors or people with disabilities.

For market rate multifamily housing units located within one-quarter mile of a transit stop that receives transit service from at least one route, and that provides service at least four times per hour for 12 or more hours per day, minimum parking requirements may not be greater than one parking space per bedroom or three-quarter spaces per unit. A city may require additional parking if the city determines a particular housing unit is in an area with lack of access to street parking capacity, physical space impediments, or other reasons supported by evidence.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

Cities and counties planning under the GMA must enforce land use regulations for residential development as follows:

- Garages and carports may not be required as a way to meet minimum parking requirements for residential development.

- Parking spaces that count toward minimum parking requirements may be enclosed or unenclosed.
- Parking spaces in tandem must count toward meeting minimum parking requirements at a rate of one space for every 20 linear feet, with any necessary provisions for turning radius.
- The existence of up to six legally nonconforming gravel surfaces in existing designated parking areas may not be a reason for prohibiting utilization of existing space in the parking area to meet local parking standards.
- Parking spaces may not be required to exceed 8 feet by 20 feet, except for required parking for people with disabilities.
- Counties, and cities with a population over 6,000 within those counties, may not require off-street parking as a condition of permitting a residential project if compliance with tree retention would otherwise make a proposed residential development or redevelopment infeasible.
- Parking spaces that consist of grass block pavers may count toward minimum parking requirements.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill specifies that gravel surfacing in parking areas must be legally nonconforming and be limited to six parking spaces to be counted toward parking standards. Counties, and cities with a population over 6,000 within those counties, may not require off-street parking as a condition of permitting a residential project if compliance with tree retention would otherwise make a proposed residential development or redevelopment infeasible. Parking spots that consist of grass block pavers may count toward minimum parking requirements.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) If something is used as a parking spot, it should be counted as a parking spot. Kent and other cities were not counting garages as parking spots and realized they had twice as many parking spots as they thought. Existing tandem and gravel spots should count toward required parking spots without allowing new gravel spots. Both enclosed and unenclosed parking spots should count. Parking rules make it much more difficult for developing new housing. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are needed for new housing, but parking requirements cause additional expenses. This bill will allow more density, help

make housing more affordable, and allow more units to be built. Parking requirements can be used to stop growth. The City of Vancouver has declared a state of emergency for housing and homelessness. Parking is not free and is one of the most expensive requirements for developers. Every inch required to be dedicated to often unused space to store a vehicle equals multiple feet of unused space for housing. Some units share tandem parking and have had no issues over the past several years. Tandem parking reduces drive aisles and saves materials and money. Tandem parking is a green solution without reducing the number of parking stalls. The Legislature needs to step in. The bill would not ban garages, but would allow builders and homeowners priority to decide how to add parking. The aging population will want ground floor access units which can be built instead of garages. Middle housing can also be frustrated by parking requirements. Recognizing garage parking allows more ADUs to be built.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There are still some lingering concerns with this bill. One objective of the bill is to lower housing costs, but there is no mechanism to ensure that cost savings are passed onto the homebuyer. Existing gravel spots that count toward existing parking spots should be limited to three. This would limit gravel being tracked onto streets.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Senator Sharon Shewmake, prime sponsor; Alex Hur, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington; Angela Rozmyn, Natural and Built Environments; Kevin Maas; Catie Gould, Sightline Institute; and Ty Stober, City of Vancouver.

(Other) Shelly Helder, City of Issaquah.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.