Unlocking Smart Growth: The Effects of Proposed Transit-Oriented Development Laws on the Puget Sound Region

Exploring the Impact of the Community and Transit-Oriented Housing Development Bills HB 2160 and SB 6024 Across Washington State’s Central Puget Sound Region

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Abstract

During the 2024 legislative session in Washington State, two bills were introduced in both the House and the Senate aimed at promoting community and transit-oriented housing development. These bills, HB 2160 and SB 6024, propose mandating cities to permit developments of a specific scale within certain distances from high-capacity transit stops. This study evaluates the extent to which the proposed increases in development capacity under these bills exceed current allowances. The findings indicate a substantial enhancement in development potential for the majority of areas within walking distance of transit stops. Specifically, for land that is developable and presently zoned for lower development capacity than what the bills propose, the average increase in capacity is projected to be +1.35 in terms of floor area ratio (FAR).

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## 1 Introduction



Central Puget Sound | Photo courtesy of [Clemens Vasters from Viersen, Germany](#X6589fc6ab0dc82cf12099d1c2d40ab994e8410c), [CC BY 2.0](#X6589fc6ab0dc82cf12099d1c2d40ab994e8410c), via Wikimedia Commons

The Puget Sound metropolitan region is one of North America’s major growth centers for people, jobs, and housing. Between 2010 and 2023, the central Puget Sound’s four-county region (King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap) added more residents and housing units than the rest of Washington state combined.[[1]](#footnote-25)

## 2 Data & Methods

## 3 Results

## 4 Discussion

## 5 Conclusion

## References

1. The source of these statistics are the author’s analysis of postcensial estimates by the Washington State Office of Financial Management. The central Puget Sound population grew by 414,400 people between 2010 and 2023, while the rest of the state’s population grew by 84,300 people. During the same period, 276,177 housing units were added in the this region, while 179,786 units were created elsewhere in the state. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)