



Growing Together with Transit-Oriented Development

HB 1491, sponsored by Rep. Julia Reed

A bill to promote connected communities through transit-oriented development

Over the next twenty years, Washington's population will grow by more than two million people. Without action by the state legislature, the status quo, we'll be stuck with more isolated, car-dependent sprawl that leaves people stuck in traffic while driving up carbon emissions.

But we can make a different choice with HB 1491 to promote transit-oriented development. Concentrating new development near transit will help our state meet our climate goals while improving housing affordability for working families.

What is Transit-Oriented Development?

TOD makes it easier for people to get to where they need to go without relying on a car.

- Increases access to transit by building more homes in transit walksheds
- Leverages recent investments in transit by the state legislature
- Enables a car-free/car-lite lifestyle for more Washingtonians
- Ensure compliance statewide

Transit-Oriented Development Reduces Carbon Emissions

Reducing carbon emissions from vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is an essential component of responsible climate policy. The Rocky Mountain Institute finds that directing more growth to existing low-carbon neighborhoods could reduce emissions by 70 million metric tons per year across the US.

Transit-Oriented Development Promotes Affordable Communities

Washingtonians across the state deserve to live in communities where they can easily get to work, school, parks and daycare without spending hours stuck in traffic or dropping hundreds of dollars a month on gas. Transit expansions across the state, especially in high-opportunity communities, offer us the opportunity to connect Washington families with good jobs and schools through transit.

HB 1491 increases housing choices near transit investments in light rail, bus rapid transit and commuter rail, making it easier for Washington families to get to where they need to go without relying on a car.

HB 1491: Increasing Housing Choices Near Transit

HB 1491 sets new state standards for housing development in transit walksheds by raising the minimum floor area ratio (FAR) for development near transit.

- Within 0.5 miles of a light rail stop, cities must allow an average of 3.5 FAR throughout the entire half-mile walkshed
- Within 0.25 miles of a bus rapid transit stop, cities must allow an average of 2.5 FAR. Cities may exempt up to 25% of the BRT stops, in which case requirement bumps to 3.0 FAR.

Futurewise is requesting changes to HB 1491 that would pair affordability requirements for new density with a Multi-Family Tax Exemption program around station areas.