



**TO**

**DATE:** 15 February 2022

**LISA WELLMAN**

Senator

Sent via email

Senator Wellman,

On behalf of the Mercer Island City Council, thank you for sharing your intention to vote "No" on ESHB 1660; we appreciate your opposition to this legislation. We also appreciate your recent public opposition to bills, such as HB 1782 that would preempt local control of land-use decisions.

We understand that ESHB 1660 passed out of the House yesterday and will be considered by the Senate soon. If implemented, ESHB 1660 will change the regulations related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADUs). We are reaching out to you today to ask you to encourage the bill sponsors and supporters to "push pause" and engage with local jurisdictions in advance of the next legislative session to consider the effects of this proposal fully. We've included some information below, which we hope will be helpful as you discuss ESHB 1660 with your colleagues in the Senate.

Washington State's Growth Management Act defines a system where the legislature provides a statewide framework for land use and development planning. The planning process is a "bottom-up" effort led by the cities. This involves early and continuous public participation, with the central focus of decision-making being at the local level – bounded by the goals and requirements of the Act. ESHB 1660 is essentially the antitheses of the Growth Management Act's bottom-up approach.

Many cities, including Mercer Island, currently allow for ADUs and DADUs and we continue to support this type of housing on Mercer Island. Our concern with ESHB 1660 is that it proposes significant zoning and development changes. With less than three weeks left in this legislative session, we have little time to properly analyze the impacts of the bill and/or suggest meaningful amendments to strengthen the bill. Some of our immediate concerns:



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- We are concerned about the allowance for both an attached AND a detached accessory dwelling unit on a lot as well as the increase in the size of allowable ADUs to 1,350 sq ft. Our code currently allows for one accessory unit of up to 900 sq ft. We have not had time to study the impacts on critical infrastructure systems such as sewer, water, stormwater and transportation.
- We are concerned about the broad application of the bill to the entire island, especially given our substantial topography and critical areas – we argue that this is not a wise or practical approach to land use planning.
- We are concerned about the prohibition of off-street parking requirements within ¼ mile of a transit center as this will impact parking in the Mercer Island Town Center that supports commercial and retail businesses.
- We are unclear how this bill impacts existing development regulations that are important to the Mercer Island community, such as lot line setbacks, stormwater regulations, gross floor area and more.

Communities like Mercer Island are actively working together to effectively and sustainably manage land use and growth. Mercer Island just completed a collaborative multi-year, county-wide planning process to update King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), including housing and job growth targets. Having been approved by the King County Council in December 2021, these respective growth targets are currently being ratified by each jurisdiction within the county. Mercer Island's City Council is scheduled to approve in just a few weeks.

Mercer Island is also beginning to update our Housing Needs Assessment as part of the broader periodic update to the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan, including the Housing Element. We are not alone in this work – King County and all incorporated jurisdictions within the County are already planning for our region's future housing needs in effective and sensible ways.

The City of Mercer Island remains committed to sustainable and effective growth management, both for our community and our region. That is best done at the local level and we appreciate your continued support of this matter. Please let us know if there are other ways we may engage with members of the Senate to oppose EHSB 1660 and instead pursue a collaborative process ahead of the next legislative session to craft a bill that makes more sense for Mercer Island.

Thank you again for your engagement with us on this issue and your steadfast opposition to the legislation.

Sincerely,



**SALIM NICE**  
Mayor



**DAVID ROSENBAUM**  
Deputy Mayor



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