Growth Management Act

Low Carbon Energy Project
Siting Considerations

JANUARY 27, 2022
In partnership with

Planning Association of Washington

Insurance Authority

American Planning Association Washington Chapter

Risk Management Service Agency
Short Course Resources

https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/short-course/

Short Course Video Study Guide

Get credit for taking the Short Course!

Read the Guidebook  A Short Course on Local Planning: Resource Guide (295 pages, 2017)

Watch the Videos
Introduction to the Short Course. 5 minutes
Comprehensive Planning Basics. 11 minutes
Implementing Your Plan. 10 minutes
Updating Your Plan. 10 minutes
Washington’s Legal Framework for Land Use Planning. 7 minutes
Constitutional Issues and Other Protections. 8 minutes
Roles and Responsibilities in Planning. 7 minutes
Public Participation and Effective Meetings. 7 minutes
Open Public Meetings Act. 27 minutes
OPMA Certificate
Appearance of Fairness Doctrine. 17 minutes
More Washington Places to Learn About Planning

Municipal Research and Services Center  www.mrsc.org

Regional Planner’s Forums
www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/regional-planners-forums/

Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association
www.washington-apa.org/

Planning Association of Washington  www.planningassociationofwa.org/
Comprehensive Planning under the Growth Management Act
Why Plan?

GMA Framework

Implementing the Plan

Updating the Plan
Why is Planning Important?

• Protect the good things about your community
• Agree on a shared vision for the future of your community
• Identify community needs
• Identify strategies to implement the vision and meet needs
• Agree on local spending priorities
• Build your sense of community
Planning helps to manage public expectations

• “I need to know what I can do and when I can get my permit.”

• “This affects my neighborhood and my home. I should have a say in what happens.”
Why a Growth Management Act?

The GMA was adopted in 1990 as a statewide planning framework to:

- Address uncoordinated development and urban sprawl
- Manage threats to the quality of life in Washington
- Require local planning, guided by state law, and regionally enforced

State law: **RCW 36.70A**
Advisory recommendations: **WAC 365-196**
Actual and projected WA State population

- 1980: 4,132,156
- 1990: 4,866,692
- 2000: 5,894,121
- 2010: 6,724,540
- 2020: 7,638,415
- 2030: 8,503,178
- 2040: 9,242,022
2020 Population Growth

- All counties grew in 2020
- Most growth focused in Puget Sound region

Figure 6. Distribution of Population Change by County
Fully or Partially Planning?

Faster growing counties must do more

18 Counties fully planning under GMA
10 Counties “Opted-In” to plan fully
11 Counties subject to Critical Areas and Natural Resource Lands Requirements Only
14 GMA Planning Goals

- Encourage compact urban growth
- Reduce sprawl
- Encourage coordinated, multimodal transportation
- Encourage affordable housing
- Encourage economic development
- Protect property rights
- Predictable permitting
- Maintain natural resource industries
- Retain open space, enhance recreation
- Protect the environment
- Encourage citizen participation
- Ensure availability of public facilities and services
- Encourage historic preservation
- Manage shoreline development *
GMA Mandatory Elements

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Capital Facilities Plan
4. Utilities
5. Rural
6. Transportation
7. *Economic Development
8. *Park and Recreation

*Only mandatory if funded by Legislature
Washington’s Urban Growth Areas

Fully planning counties must work with the cities to designate existing and future urban growth areas.
Allocating Population

**Urban areas to contain most of new growth**
- UGA size based on 20-year countywide population projections from OFM
- Greater housing / job densities
- Efficient use of facilities/public dollars

**Rural areas to maintain rural character**
- Low-density development
- Rural service levels
- Agriculture/Forestry

**“Buildable lands” counties**
- must consider “reasonable measures” before expanding the UGA.
Rural Element – 2002 GMA Amendments

Land use patterns and local vision that will:

- Preserve rural-based economies and traditional lifestyles
- Encourage economic prosperity
- Support small-scale, rural-based employment
- Support rural based agriculture, commercial, recreational and tourist businesses consistent with existing and planned land use patterns.
- Be compatible with fish and wildlife habitat
- Foster stewardship of land and open space
- Enhance rural sense of community and quality of life.
Natural Resource Lands

All counties must **designate and conserve natural resource lands** of long-term commercial significance.

- Agricultural lands
- Forest lands
- Mineral resource land

RCW 36.70A.170
Critical Areas

All jurisdictions must designate and protect environmentally critical areas.

- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas
- Aquifer recharge areas
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Wetlands

RCW 36.70A.172
Grant and Loan Programs Requiring Update Completion (and no active appeals):

- Public Works Trust Fund
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
- Centennial Clean Water Fund
- Recreation and Conservation Office
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants

Periodic Update Schedule; Due June 30 of Indicated Year

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2027</th>
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* Starred counties are partially planning under the Growth Management Act
Adopting the comprehensive plan

Plan Adoption Process
• Public outreach early and often
• Review by Planning Commission
• Complete SEPA environmental review
• 60-days notice to state before adopting
• City or County Council must adopt the comprehensive plan
• Transportation element to be certified by regional transportation organization

Plan Updates and Appeals
• Can be amended only once per year
• Must be updated every 8 years
• Appealable within 60 days to a regional Growth Management Hearings Board

www.gmhb.wa.gov
Commerce’s Role in GMA

• Provide Technical Assistance to counties and cities
  • Guidebooks
  • Comment on plans and regulations – 60-day review
  • Workshops
  • Planners Forums

• Administer planning grants
  • General periodic updates
  • Specific issues (housing, climate change)

• Coordinate State Agencies
  • Inter Agency Work Group
  • Comment Letters
  • Facilitation between agencies and local government

• Legislative Reports
SEPA
Planned Actions
Planned Actions - WAC 197-11-164

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared in advance of development
- Fully planning counties or cities
- May be limited to certain types of development or to specific geographies (subarea plan)
- **Must be located within an Urban Growth Area**
Examples of Planned Actions - MRSC

**Bellingham** - Waterfront District Planned Action Ordinance Summary for Waterfront Advisory Group

**Bothell** - Downtown Subarea Plan and Regulations Planned Action Final EIS

**Edmonds** - Planned Action Final EIS for the Highway 99 Subarea Plan

**Everett** - Addendum to the Final EIS for the Everett GMA Comprehensive Plan

**Kirkland** - NE 85th Station Area Plan and Planned Action - Draft Supplemental EIS

**Mountlake Terrace** - Town Center Plan Update Draft Supplemental EIS

**Puyallup** - Planned Action Ordinance No. 3173

**Tacoma** Mall - Neighborhood Subarea Plan

**Sammamish** - Town Center Sub-Area Plan Final EIS
Planned Action Criteria

WAC 197-11-164

Planned actions—Definition and criteria.

(1) Under RCW 43.21C.440, GMA counties/cities may designate a planned action. A planned action means one or more types of project action that:

(a) Are designated planned actions by an ordinance or resolution adopted by a GMA county/city;
(b) Have had the significant environmental impacts adequately addressed in an EIS prepared in conjunction with:
   (i) A comprehensive plan or subarea plan adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW; or
   (ii) A fully contained community, a master planned resort, a master planned development, or a phased project;
(c) Are subsequent or implementing projects for the proposals listed in (b) of this subsection;
(d) Are located within an urban growth area, as defined in RCW 36.70A.030, or are located within a master planned resort;
(e) Are not essential public facilities, as defined in RCW 36.70A.200; and
(f) Are consistent with a comprehensive plan adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW.

(2) A GMA county/city shall limit planned actions to certain types of development or to specific geographical areas that are less extensive than the jurisdictional boundaries of the GMA county/city.

(3) A GMA county/city may limit a planned action to a time period identified in the EIS or the designating ordinance or resolution adopted under WAC 197-11-168.
Questions?

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