

CHAPTER 10

CAPITAL FACILITIES AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter, and the six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), constitute the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The CFP is a technical extension of this Chapter and includes: an inventory of County capital facilities; a forecast of future needs; and a six-year financing plan. These policies are designed to ensure that the public facilities necessary to support the County's current and future population and economy are planned for and fully funded. This chapter guides and implements the provision of adequate public facilities as required by the Growth Management Act. Level-of-service (LOS) standards are included for certain public facilities, along with policies to ensure that these facilities are planned for and available to serve growth. Finally, the element includes goals and policies for the establishment of regional, or difficult-to-site facilities referred to under state law as essential public facilities.

Planning for major capital facilities enables Skagit County to:

- Demonstrate facility needs through adopted level of service standards.
- Anticipate capital improvement needs and plan for their costs.
- Integrate community capital facility wants/needs into the annual budget process.
- Monitor growth and manage development.
- Qualify for revenue sources such as federal and state grants and loans, real estate excise taxes and impact fees. This level of planning also enables the county to receive a better rating on bond issues.

Skagit County is responsible for capital facilities and service levels related to:

- Public works – County roads/ferry (transportation), surface water management and solid waste disposal
- Justice – sheriff and jail facilities, youth & family services and superior and district courts

- General government – administration buildings and maintenance facilities
- Community – parks and recreation facilities, County fairgrounds and senior services centers

CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The source documents primarily used in preparing the Capital Facilities Element are the six-year capital improvement plans prepared routinely and updated annually as required by the State, and which are necessary for obtaining funding from the State. These individual capital improvement plans define projects and proposed funding for those projects required first to rehabilitate existing facilities and secondly to provide level of service (LOS) capacity to accommodate new growth in Skagit County.

Generally, the proposed new capacity, replacement and rehabilitation of capital facilities, and financing for the next six years reflect the general planning goals and policies, as well as land use infrastructure requirements, identified in Skagit County's longer-range planning documents.

These documents include:

- The Transportation Systems Plan;
- The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan;
- The Skagit County Coordinated Water Systems Plan, wastewater facilities plans;
- Engineering reports for water and wastewater facilities; and
- Facilities plans for schools, city facilities, drainage districts, and other service providers.

GMA MANDATE

The GMA goal for capital facilities states:

- *Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.*

Based on the goal, the county and the cities and towns have adopted the following policies:

- *Public facilities and services shall be integrated and consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans and implementing regulations.(CPP 12.1)*
- *All communities within a region shall fairly share the burden of regional public facilities. (The GMA defines regional public facilities as streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks, recreational facilities and schools.) (CPP 12.2)*
- *A process shall be developed for identifying and siting essential public facilities. The Comprehensive Plan may not preclude the siting of essential public facilities. (The GMA defines essential public facilities as those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, state and local corrections facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities and group homes.) (CPP 12.3)*
- *Lands shall be identified for public purposes, such as: utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfill, sewage treatment facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses. The County shall work with the state, cities, communities and utility providers to identify areas of shared need for public facilities. (CPP 12.4)*
- *Lands designated for urban growth by this Comprehensive Plan shall have an urban level of regional public facilities prior to or concurrent with development. (CPP 12.5)*
- *Development shall be allowed only when and where all public facilities are adequate, and only when and where such development can be adequately served by regional public services without reducing levels of service elsewhere. (CPP 12.6)*
- *Public facilities and services needed to support development shall be available concurrent with the impacts of development. (CPP 12.7)*
- *The financing for system improvements to public facilities to serve new development must provide for a balance between impact fees and other sources of public funds and cannot rely solely on impact fees. (CPP 12.8)*

- *New development shall pay for or provide for its share of new infrastructure through impact fees or as conditions of development through the environmental review process. (CPP 12.9)*
- *Public water supply for new development shall conform to or exceed the Coordinated Water System Plan for public water systems.(CPP 12.10)*
- *Future development of land adjacent to existing and proposed schools and other public facilities shall be compatible with such uses. (CPP 12.11)*
- *Library service within the county should be developed and coordinated to assure the delivery of comprehensive services throughout the County, with the county, cities and towns fairly sharing the burden. (CPP 12.12)*
- *A county-wide recycling program shall be developed. (CPP 12.13)*
- *Public drainage facilities shall be designed to control both stormwater quantity and quality impacts. (CPP 12.14)*
- *Skagit County shall provide results of the required six year capital facilities plan, including a financing plan, and these shall be consistent with land use designations. (CPP 12.15)*
- *Citizens shall have the opportunity to participate in and comment on proposed capital facilities financing. (CPP 12.16)*
- *The Washington State Boundary Review Board for Skagit County should be disbanded pursuant to RCW 36.93.230 provided that the following tasks are accomplished: (a) that ALL cities and the County have adopted comprehensive plans and development regulations consistent with the requirements of these Countywide Planning Policies and RCW 36.70A, including appropriate urban levels of service for all public facilities and services; (b) that ALL cities and the County have adopted a concurrency ordinance that requires the adopted urban levels of service addressed in (a) above be accomplished in time frames that are consistent with RCW 36.70A.; (c) that special purpose districts that serve UGAs have adopted urban levels of service standards appropriate for their service areas; (d) that ALL cities and the County have an adopted capital facility plan for urban levels of service that indicates sources of revenue and a timeline for meeting such service; and (e) that ALL cities and special purpose districts have in place adopted “interlocal agreements” that discuss arrangements for transfer of assets and obligations that may be affected by*

transformation of governance or annexation of the service area consistent with the requirements of applicable RCWs. (CPP 12.17)

Goal A

Ensure that adequate public facilities are provided to accommodate the needs of Skagit County citizens for the next 20 years by:

- *maintaining level of service standards for capital facilities;*
- *providing consistency among functional plans;*
- *ensuring timely provision and financing of facility improvements; and*
- *taking advantage of revenue sources such as impact mitigation, grants, and loans.*

CAPITAL FACILITY NEEDS

GOAL A1 FACILITY NEEDS

Establish the baseline for the types of capital facilities to be addressed, levels of service, needed capital improvements to achieve and maintain the standards for existing and future populations, and to repair or replace existing capital facilities

Policies

- 10A-1.1 Capital Facilities** – Capital facilities are publicly-owned lands, buildings, and infrastructure that have an expected useful life of at least 10 years, not including county-owned vehicles, materials and furnishings that are funded through the County's annual operating budget.

10A-1.2 Capital Facilities Categories -

- A:** Capital facilities owned or operated by Skagit County and subject to the requirement for concurrency including roads, Sheriff's facilities, and county-owned drainage facilities.
- B:** Capital facilities owned or operated by federal, state, or city governments, independent districts, or private organizations and subject to the requirement for concurrency including water, fire and sewer, and drainage facilities where applicable.
- C:** Capital facilities owned or operated by Skagit County but not subject to the requirement for concurrency including parks and recreation, general government, fair, senior services, public safety and solid waste.
- D:** Facilities owned or operated by Federal, State, or City governments, independent districts, or private organizations but not subject to the requirement for concurrency including schools.

11A-1.3 Application of Standards - The following application of the LOS standards shall be used by the county in assessing facility needs and financing:

Category A facility standards shall apply to development permits issued by the County and shall be used in evaluating future capital improvement programs and budgets.

Category-B standards shall apply to development permits issued by the County but shall not apply to the County's annual budget or its Capital Improvements Program.

Category-C & D standards shall be the basis for annual reporting but not for development permit review.

10A-1.4 Urban Water Service Standards - Urban water service provided by a utility and designed to meet the needs of the designated service areas consistent with the Skagit County or City Comprehensive Plan, the Coordinated Water System Plan, and the designated water utility's Water System Plan shall meet the design criteria of the Coordinated Water System Plan.**10A-1.5 Rural Water Service Standards** - Rural water service provided by individual wells, community systems, or extensions of urban water systems

shall be designed to meet the rural water supply needs of the rural area users consistent with by the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and the Coordinated Water System Plan for rural domestic water supply and fire protection.

10A-1.6 Sanitary Sewer Standards - Except as determined by the County Health Department, urban sanitary sewer service shall only be provided in urban growth areas by cities or county-approved special districts.

10A-1.7 Fire Service Standards – The county shall ensure that adequate fire and emergency medical service facilities are located or planned to accommodate current and future population. Standards for urban levels of fire service shall be consistent with Countywide Planning Policy 1.7. Non-urban fire level of service shall be as follows:

A. Fire facilities shall maintain a Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB), public protection classification No. 8 or better, and fire flow in accordance with the Coordinated Water System Plan (Section 4 – Minimum Design Standards).

10A-1.8 Park Standards – The county shall use the following standards to determine the need for parks, open space, and recreation facilities as part of its on-going planning:

Regional Parks:	10.45 acres per thousand population
Community Parks:	0.77
Neighborhood Parks:	0.08
Open Space & Undeveloped:	7.70
Special Use Park Land:	N/A

Total: 18.75 acres per thousand population

10A-1.9 Determining Public Facility Needs – Facility needs shall be calculated using current and estimated future demand based on the adopted LOS minus the existing capacity.

10A-1.10 LOS Exceptions – Factors in addition to LOS for calculating needs include:

- Repair, renovation, or replacement of existing facilities;
- Provision of facilities exceeding LOS;
- Use of non-capital solutions such as programs that reduce needs or substitute for facilities; reduce demands;

- Replacement of traditional LOS;
- Creation of additional capacity within existing facilities; or
- Support for the provision of services at the end users' locations.

10A-1.11 Prioritizing Improvements - Capital improvement decisions shall be based on the following criteria:

- Safety – elimination of hazards;
- Efficiency – reduction of operational costs;
- LOS – achievement of adopted standards;
- Community – satisfaction of expressed desires; and
- Funding – use of non-county funds.

10A-1.12 Coordination - All facilities scheduled for construction or improvement in accordance with adopted policies shall be coordinated with any plans of the State, other local governments or junior taxing districts that may have an effect on the County's proposed capital improvement.

10A-1.13 Review of Other Providers' Plans - The County shall acknowledge and incorporate the Capital Facilities Plans of other public facility and service providers that are consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

GOAL A2 FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Provide means to balance needs with available funding.

Policies

10A-2.1 Financial Feasibility - The estimated costs of identified capital improvements shall not exceed dependable revenue sources that are available to the County.

10A-2.2 Financial Responsibility - Funding for capital facilities shall be from both current and future users depending upon the timing of need.

10A-2.3 Current Needs - Capital improvements that reduce or eliminate existing deficiencies; some or all of the replacement of obsolete or worn out

facilities; and/or pay a portion of the cost of capital improvements needed by future growth shall be funded by user fees, service charges, special assessments and/or taxes.

10A-2.4 Future Needs - New growth shall pay its fair share of capital improvements cost necessary to support its demands. This may include voluntary contributions for the benefit of any capital facility, impact fees, mitigation payments, capacity fees, dedications of land, provision of public facilities, and future payments of user fees, charges for services, special assessments and taxes. These revenue sources shall not be used to pay for the portion of any public facility that reduces or eliminates existing deficiencies.

10A-2.5 Financing Policies – Enterprise Funds. Capital improvements financed by County enterprise funds (i.e., water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater drainage) shall be financed by:

- debt to be repaid by user fees and charges and/or connection or capacity fees for enterprise services;
- current assets (i.e., reserves, equity or surpluses, and current revenue, including grants, loans, donations and interlocal agreements), or a combination of debt and current assets.

10A-2.6 Financing Policies: Non-enterprise Funds Capital improvements financed by non-enterprise funds shall be financed from either current assets: (i.e., current revenue, fund equity and reserves), debt, private sources, or a combination thereof. Financing decisions shall include consideration for which funding source (current assets, debt, or both) will be the most cost effective; consistent with prudent asset and liability management; appropriate to the useful life of the project(s) to be financed and efficient use of the County's ability to borrow funds.

10A-2.7 Funding by Referendum - If projects requiring voter approval of funding remain unfunded for more than one year after listing in the CFP, the CFP shall be revised at the next annual amendment to adjust for the lack of such revenues. Adjustments can be made by reducing the level of service for one or more public facilities; increasing the use of other sources of revenue; decreasing the cost, and therefore the quality of some types of public facilities while retaining the quantity of the facilities that is inherent in the level of service standard; decreasing demand for and subsequent use of capital facilities; or by combining any of the above alternatives.

- 10A-2.8 Uncommitted Revenue** - All development permits issued by the County, which require capital improvements that will be financed by sources of revenue which have not been approved or implemented (such as future debt requiring referenda) may be conditioned on the approval or implementation of the indicated revenue sources, or the substitution of a comparable amount of revenue from existing sources.
- 10A-2.9 Available Revenue and Capital Facilities to Support Land Use** - The county shall finance the six-year Capital Facilities Plan within the its financial capacity. If the projected costs exceed the financial capacity the county may elect to adjust level of service standards; revise the land use element; consider other sources of revenue; or select any combination of the preceding, to achieve a balance between available revenue and capital facilities needs.
- 10A-2.10 Alternative Resources** - The county shall consider alternative funding sources such as outside service contracts and joint use of capital facilities to supplement capital funding.
- 10A-2.11 Implementation Schedule Changes** - Amendments to the schedule of capital facilities may be made in conjunction with Comprehensive Plan amendments or may be concurrent with adoption of or amendment to the County budget where the Board determines that such changes are warranted, and adequate public notice is given.
- 10A-2.12 Project Delays** - Project implementation delays that affect concurrency provisions shall only be allowed if other projects can substitute for addressing the need, or the adopted LOS can be reduced to be consistent with the shortfall.
- 10A-2.13 Evaluation of Buildings and Space Improvements** - The annual review of the six-year CFP should include the evaluation of buildings and space improvements needed to provide workspace for projected staffing levels.
- 10A-2.14 Ensuring Concurrency** - Impacts of development on capital facilities occur when development is authorized. The county shall issue development permits only after it has determined that there is sufficient capacity of Category-A and Category-B public facilities to meet the LOS standards concurrent with the proposed development.
- 10A-2.15 Concurrency Determination** - Concurrency of public facilities for new development shall be determined if the facilities and services are, or will be, in place, at the time of permitting, or if the conditions of the permit are

that the facilities or services will be in place, or the County has a binding commitment for the cost of the facility or service.

10A-2.16 Capital Facilities and Concurrency in Municipal UGAs - Capital facility requirements and concurrency within municipal Urban Growth Areas shall be governed by the Capital Facilities Plan and concurrency requirements of the respective municipality.

10A-2.17 Capital Facilities and Concurrency in Non-municipal UGAs – Capital facility requirements and concurrency within county-governed, non-municipal UGAs shall be developed for the specific urban growth area using a combination of county- and non-county-provided services at adopted urban levels of service appropriate to the planned urban development.

10A-2.18 Land Use Compatibility of Category-A and Category-C Capital Facilities: Public capital facility improvements should be consistent with the adopted land use map and the goals and policies of other elements of this Comprehensive Plan.

10A-2.19 Other Capital Facilities Plans - For informational and coordinating purposes the capital facilities plans of cities and special purpose districts, including water purveyors, fire districts, port districts, public utility districts, and others as appropriate are resources for county planning.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

GOAL A3 CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Ensure that capital facility planning involves citizens.

Policies

10A-3.1 Public Participation in Capital Facility Proposals – A public process that informs, notifies and encourages participation in formulating significant capital facility proposals shall be part of the on-going comprehensive plan amendment or budget processes.

10A-3.2 Capital Facilities Financing - Citizens shall have the opportunity to participate in and comment on proposed capital facilities financing.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Essential public facilities are capital facilities "typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes" (RCW 36.70A.200). The County and the cities may also identify additional public facilities that are essential to providing services without which development cannot occur.

These policies guide the process of identifying and siting of essential public facilities. The Comprehensive Plan may not preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

GOAL B

Establish siting criteria and procedures for Essential Public Facilities to ensure that they will not be excluded from Skagit County as long as their siting conforms with this Comprehensive Plan and the County-wide Planning Policies.

Policies

10B-1.1 Acknowledgement of County Responsibility - These Comprehensive Plan policies shall not prohibit or exclude the siting of essential public facilities.

10B-1.2 Siting Procedures - The County shall use regulations and procedures to identify and site essential public facilities as established by the State Office of Financial Management as follows:

- A.** The state or local government proposing to site an essential public facility shall provide a justifiable need for a public facility and for its location in Skagit County based upon forecasted needs and a logical service area;

B. The state or local government proposing to site an essential public facility shall establish a public process by which the residents of the County and affected communities and "host" municipalities have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the site selection process.

10B-1.3 Local Compliance – Essential Public Facilities shall be required to meet adopted federal, state, and county land use regulations and be in conformance with this Comprehensive Plan.

10B-1.4 SEPA and Concurrency - All State Environmental Policy Act provisions and concurrency of supporting capital facilities shall be addressed as part of any project approval by Skagit County.

10B-1.5 Public Process - The review, location, land use, and intensity of a proposed facility, including siting, acceptance, modification or rejection shall be done with public participation.

10B-1.6 Review and Comment - Affected jurisdictions, agencies and utilities shall be consulted in during project planning and shall provide effective reviews.

10B-1.7 Review Criteria - The following criteria shall be considered in the siting of essential public facilities:

(a) Specific facility requirements for each essential facility are to be determined and identified for the following:

- Minimum acreage;
- Accessibility;
- Transportation needs and services;
- Supporting public facility and public service needs and the availability thereof;
- Health and safety;
- Site design;
- Zoning;

- Availability of alternative sites;
- Community-wide distribution of facilities;
- Capacity and location of equivalent facilities.

(b) Impacts of the facility:

- Land use compatibility;
- Existing land use and development in adjacent and surrounding areas;
- Existing zoning of surrounding areas;
- Existing Comprehensive Plan designation for surrounding areas;
- Present and proposed population density of surrounding area;
- Environmental impacts and opportunities to mitigate environmental impacts;
- Effect on agricultural, forest, or mineral lands, critical areas, and historic, archaeological and cultural sites;
- Effect on areas outside of Skagit County;
- Effect on the likelihood of associated development;
- Effect on public costs, including operating and maintenance.

