Washington State Growth Management Act: The Basics
Purpose/History

• Enacted in 1990
  • Amended virtually every year since
• Manage Growth
  • Concentrating population in urban areas
  • Efficiency of public services
• Preserve Rural Areas
• Protect Critical Areas
• Conserve Resource Lands
Hierarchy of Planning

• Countywide Planning Policy (CPPs)
  • Regional framework developed by county and cities; ensures consistency among plans

• Comprehensive land use plan
  • Goals, policies and future land use map
    • Land use designations

• Development regulations
  • Implements comprehensive plan goals and policies;
  • Zoning code & map; CAO; other land use regulations (e.g., subdivision)
Key GMA Provisions

- GMA Goals – RCW 36.70A.020
  - overarching / not prioritized
- Comprehensive plan elements - .070
- Urban Growth Areas - .110
- Comprehensive plan & development regulations amendments/updates - .130
- Countywide Planning Policy - .210
- Review and Evaluation Program - .215
Comprehensive plan

• Required Elements
  • Land use
  • Housing
  • Capital facilities
  • Utilities
  • Rural
  • Transportation
  • Economic Development (optional)
  • Parks & Recreational
Urban Growth Areas

• RCW 36.70A.110
• “Areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature.”
• Each city shall be included within an UGA
• Urban facility and service capacities
  • Urban services cannot extend outside UGA
Urban Growth Areas

- Sizing UGAs
  - Based on a 20-year population projection
  - "The land speaks first"
    - Identify resource and critical areas first
  - Urban growth first in areas already characterized by urban growth; second in areas characterized but not yet with urban services; and third adjacent to such areas
  - UGA based upon projected population at urban densities, public service provision, greenbelt and open spaces
    - Do this through a land capacity analysis
Comprehensive plan

• Housing
  • Sufficient land, variety of housing types,
• Land use element
  • Including densities, uses, public facilities, open space, stormwater
• Capital facilities plan
  • LOS, Location, capacity, and funding
  • Requirement to reassess land use if funding is not adequate
Comprehensive plan

• Utilities Element
  • Gas, electricity, telecommunications

• Rural Element
  • Variety of rural densities, uses, essential public facilities, rural governmental services
  • Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD)
    • Three types
Comprehensive plan

- Transportation Element
  - LOS; traffic forecast, concurrency
- Economic Development
  - Optional
- Parks & Recreation
  - Optional
- Subarea Plans
Development Regulations

• Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO)
• Zoning Regulations
• Subdivision Regulations
• Shoreline Management Act

• All must implement and be consistent with the comprehensive plan
Review and Update

• Required under RCW 36.70A.130
• A single “8 –year” review
  • consideration of critical area ordinances
  • analysis of the projected population in most recent OFM
  • UGAs
  • Permitted densities in UGAs
  • Extent of urban growth occurring within UGAs
  • Revise UGAs and densities to accommodate the projected urban growth for the succeeding twenty-year period.
  • Revise implementing development regulations as needed
Review and Update

• Buildable Lands Report (BLR)
  • Required of certain jurisdictions
  • A "look back" at how we are doing
  • Where we need to focus on update to meet GMA goals and County vision
    • Whether we need any additional reasonable measures
Issues

• Consistency
  • With GMA – goals and substantive requirements
  • Capital budget decisions
  • Internal – w/in itself and development regulations
  • External – with CPPs; city plans

• Concurrency

• Public Participation -- enhanced
Growth Board Appeals

• Growth Management Hearing Board
• Jurisdiction to hear petitions alleging:

  (a) A county is not in compliance with the requirements of GMA, SMA (plans) or SEPA relating to plans, development regulations or amendments thereto

  (b) That the twenty-year growth management planning population projections adopted by OFM should be adjusted;
Growth Board Appeals

• Appeals must be brought within 60 days of publication of a notice of adoption
• Plans, amendments and development regulations are presumed valid
• Growth Hearing Board is to give deference to local jurisdiction