

APPENDIX G

Land Use Planning

APPENDIX G: LAND USE PLANNING

Washington State Growth Management and Shoreline Management Acts

Various provisions of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) require local comprehensive plans to address planning issues of statewide importance. Relative to natural resource lands (mineral, agricultural, and forestry lands), and critical areas (wetlands, fish, and wildlife conservation, frequently flooded, critical aquifer recharge, and geologically hazardous areas), the expression of state interest is clear and specific. These must be designated and “protected” (critical areas) or “conserved” (agriculture, minerals and forestry) by regulation (36.70A.060). Currently, Walla Walla, Columbia and Garfield Counties opted into planning under the GMA. That is, they made a decision to do comprehensive planning under the guidelines set forth in the GMA, but were not required to as set forth in the Act. All five of the counties and the incorporated cities in the Region are required to adopt critical areas ordinances as defined in the GMA.

A comprehensive plan is a legal document adopted by local elected officials establishing goals and policies that will guide the future development, growth, and land use within the counties over the next 20 years. Comprehensive plans are typically broken down into elements: land use, transportation, capital facilities, economic development, utilities, and rural. The goals and policies within a comprehensive plan are the primary directives for land use decision-making and long range planning. They are also the principal directives to county decision-makers and staff relative to what planning and public works actions, studies, and other projects, have to be undertaken during the planning horizon in order to address current and future growth, development, and resource issues. The planning and public works actions are directed through the development regulations (ordinances) based on the comprehensive plan goals and policies.

The GMA (RCW 36.70A) is intended to avoid the possibility of uncoordinated and unplanned growth inherent in anticipated population increases. Subsequent amendments to the GMA require that counties and cities include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas. In addition, counties and cities must give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries. GMA and Shoreline Management Act (SMA) adoption and latest major revision are detailed in Table G-1.

State Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Guidelines are standards which local government must follow in drafting their master program. The Guidelines translate the broad policies of RCW 90.58.020 into standards for regulation of shoreline uses. The state legislature directed Ecology in 1995 to update the state's guidelines, which had not been revised since 1972 and were showing their age. Ecology adopted the 2003 Shoreline Management Act Guidelines as Part III of WAC 173.26, effective January 17, 2004. A significant feature of the Guidelines is the requirement that local governments include within their shoreline master program, a "real and meaningful" strategy to address restoration of shorelines. The new Guidelines specify how the policies in a shoreline master program must appropriately promote "restoration" of impaired shoreline ecological functions.

The guidelines recognize that development of an effective restoration strategy begins with appropriate consideration and analysis of existing shoreline ecological processes and functions. This analysis, which uses information collected during the shoreline inventory process, will reveal existing "degraded areas and impaired ecological functions" that present a shoreline "restoration opportunity". Once identified, these shorelines with restoration potential, must be prioritized, coordinated and matched with existing and needed restoration projects and programs in the community. The restoration strategy should be a tool for raising awareness of local shoreline restoration needs and funding opportunities, and for coordinating both regulatory and non-regulatory local, state and federal programs and public and private restoration efforts.

The SMPs cover, as applicable, all marine waters; streams with a mean annual flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second; and lakes 20 acres or larger. See RCW 90.58.030, Definitions and concepts. The Shoreline Act

also states that "the interests of all the people shall be paramount in the management of shorelines of statewide significance." The act specifies the shorelines of statewide significance as:

- Pacific Coast, Hood Canal and Puget Sound shorelines;
- All waters of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca;
- Lakes or reservoirs with the surface acreage of 1,000 acres or more;
- Larger rivers (1,000 cubic feet per second or greater for rivers in Western Washington, 200 cubic feet per second and greater east of the Cascade crest);
- Wetlands associated with all of the above.

Transportation Systems

Transportation is an element of comprehensive plans, but local transportation systems, county, city and private, are also regulated through a variety of laws, such as RCW 36.70. Roads and Bridges-County Road Administration Board, Title 47 Public Highways and Transportation, and 76.09 Forest Practices. Improvements to the local infrastructure, mostly passage related, have been on-going in most counties and cities in the state through salmon recovery funding and many other sources. Surface maintenance and management in the Snake River Region by local governments is unknown at this time, but should be examined in the future as it applies to salmon recovery.

It is important to note that counties typically use a six-year transportation-planning horizon for road improvements. Many of the jurisdictions have various improvements that could potentially be beneficial for salmon and other species, but not as an objective. Examples include stormwater improvements, improved drainage systems on rural roads, and surface improvements, such as the use of lignin to bind the surface materials on gravel and dirt roads (dust and runoff control).

Table G-1. GMA and SMA Adoption Date and Most Recent Revision

Municipality	Comprehensive Adoption Date	Last Major Revision	Ordinance Adoption Date	Last Revision	Shoreline Master Program Adoption Date	Last Revision
Asotin County	1980	1999	****	2001	1980	1994
Asotin						
Clarkston	1999	2004 (Critical Areas)	1999	2004 (CAO)	None- see County	
Columbia County	1995	1996	1995	1996/2003****	1976*	None
Dayton	1995	1996	1995	1996/2003****	1976	None
Starbuck					1976	None
Garfield County	1996	2003	1997	2004 (CAO)	1976	None
Pomeroy						
Walla Walla County	1998/2001**	2005	1998/2001	2005	1973*	None
College Place	1995	2005	1984	1996	N/A	
Prescott					1973	None
Waitsburg	1998	Only minor	1998	None	1996	1999
Walla Walla	1992	2002	1992	2002	1973	None
Whitman County	1979	1993-2001***	1993	1993-2001***	1974*	None

*These plans are regional in nature, that is county and cities within the county that the plan applies to.

**Walla Walla completed an urban growth area plan prior to a county wide plan. In addition, in 1993 they completed their original critical areas ordinance. Ordinances adopted and revised concurrently.

***Whitman County has been updating one element of their comprehensive plan at a time- roughly one per year (natural resource related- wetlands 1994, fish and wildlife conservation areas 1996 etc.).

****1996 was the last overall revision of the comprehensive plan and codes. In 2003 the critical areas and related ordinances were revised.

Blank cells indicate data not available at the time of report completion.