



## GMA & Capital Facilities

Growth Management Services

*Capital facilities planning is essential for economic vitality and quality of life*



### Description

Communities throughout the state are facing huge infrastructure needs, estimated to be billions of dollars statewide. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires communities to plan for infrastructure and offers new revenue sources local governments can use for capital facilities.

Cities and counties will be able to grow successfully if they can provide adequate services to their citizens. This includes taking care of deficiencies and providing facilities to keep pace with growth.

Viable, vibrant communities depend on good infrastructure planning and financing. Washington and local governments will only be able to effectively and realistically provide for growth with well-thought-out capital facilities plans that include adequate financing methods.

### Background

Under the GMA, local elected officials gather facts about their communities' capital needs to support the land use choices set out in their 20-year comprehensive plan. Then they make tough choices about how they will provide revenues for these needs.

The GMA authorizes three new revenue sources and encourages local governments to develop a balanced and fair mix of these and other sources. Some options include using sales and real estate taxes, utility taxes, rates charged for services, impact fees, and a local infrastructure financing tool (LIFT). LIFT, authorized by the 2006 Legislature, must be used to finance public improvements identified within capital facilities, utilities, housing, or transportation elements of comprehensive plans.

If communities are not willing or able to pay for facilities and services, they can adjust the quality and quantity of services they deliver. Communities can decide if they want to arrange growth patterns in a different way so services can be delivered more efficiently. They also can plan to serve a smaller area.

Some services – such as natural gas, electricity, water, and sewer – may not be provided by cities or counties, but by private or public utilities or special districts. In these cases, cities and counties work

closely with these entities to ensure that their plans are consistent with city and county comprehensive plans.



## What's Being Done

Capital facilities program planning under the GMA is a challenging task for many local governments. Some communities have been able to prepare detailed, effective plans. For others, their capital facility plans are more of a first step in getting the information they need to make tough choices on the quality and quantity of services they can afford to deliver.

Capital facilities plans (CFPs) are essential to local and statewide efforts to maintain economic vitality and a high quality of life. Adequate water, wastewater treatment, and road capacity are important to many local efforts to attract new industry. Maintaining and expanding local stormwater management programs and upgrading or adding wastewater treatment in many localities are important to restoring wild salmon.

CFPs should be updated periodically. Local government spending needs to be consistent with the plans.

## What's Next

Capital facilities planning is an ongoing process. Many cities and counties review their CFP during their annual comprehensive plan amendment process and/or annual budget process. They do this to make sure facilities are keeping pace with growth, to determine if their growth projections are on target, to adjust rates and fees, or to address new situations that have arisen.

The state Legislature provided funds for several infrastructure studies to identify local needs and assess the state's infrastructure funding programs. Reports show billions of dollars of unmet local needs have been identified for roadways, bridges, water, sewer, and stormwater facilities. That means that the quality and quantity of services in some communities will decline, or communities will not be able to accommodate their projected growth if new sources of revenue cannot be found. A good CFP process is even more essential for communities if they want to manage future funding shortfalls and maintain their economic vitality and levels of service standards.

Growth Management Services of the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) has been working with cities and counties for the last 15 years to help them improve their CFPs. To further assist local jurisdictions, CTED offers a CFP software tool that makes the CFP process more comprehensive, user friendly, and cost effective. The free tool includes a series of Microsoft Word and Excel spreadsheets with instructions and examples. For more information and to download the tool, go to [www.cted.wa.gov/cfp](http://www.cted.wa.gov/cfp).

### For More Information

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