



Concurrency & GMA

Growth Management Services
Connecting development with transportation planning



Description

Concurrency refers to the timely provision of public facilities and services relative to the demand for them. To maintain concurrency means that adequate public facilities are in place to serve new development as it occurs. The Growth Management Act (GMA) gives special attention to concurrency for transportation.

The GMA requires that transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate development impacts need to be made concurrently with land development. "Concurrency" is defined by the GMA to mean that any needed improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development or that a financial commitment exists to complete the improvements or strategies within six years. Local governments have many choices about how to apply concurrency within their plans, regulations, and permit systems.

When a community establishes the level of service (LOS) it intends to provide, it also determines how the transportation network within its boundaries will be managed or expanded to maintain adopted LOS.

If concurrency cannot be demonstrated, then local jurisdictions are required to enforce adopted ordinances, which prohibit development approval unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development.

Background

The concurrency goal linking development approval and public infrastructure was established in the 1990 GMA as follows:

Public facilities and services. Ensure that those 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 levels of service below locally established minimum standards [RCW 36.70A.020(12)].



Administration of concurrency is addressed in the Washington Administrative Code, WAC 365-195. The WACs cover procedural matters including LOS, concurrency management systems, and the facilities to which concurrency applies.

In 1998 the Legislature adopted HB 1487, which adds a number of requirements to ensure more effective planning coordination for state facilities in local jurisdictions. Among other provisions, the law requires that for state-owned transportation facilities local governments establish LOS standards consistent with adopted state standards (RCW 36.70A).

What's Being Done

Most local governments have comprehensive plans that include LOS standards. If levels of service fall below those described in the transportation chapter of the local comprehensive plan, then corrective action is needed. Concurrency is managed at the local level through ordinances consistent with the standards and policies in the locally adopted comprehensive plans.

Local governments have adopted a variety of concurrency management systems to fit their circumstances. In most instances these ordinances allow concurrency to be established by committing to roadway improvements, carrying out demand management programs, or revising proposed projects. Concurrency management systems are helpful in identifying transportation improvements for inclusion in local capital facilities plans.

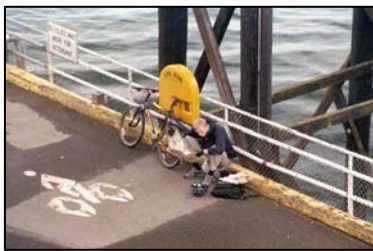
To reduce inconsistency between neighboring jurisdictions, local plans are reviewed and certified by metropolitan planning organizations and regional transportation planning organizations.

What's Next

Local governments have begun ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness and suitability of their concurrency ordinances.

The Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development continues to provide technical and financial assistance to local communities as they develop and implement concurrency ordinances.

Photos: CTED/Rita R. Robison



For More Information

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