**Chapter 11 Conclusions**

Capital facilities planning, financing, and budgeting are significant steps in achieving the vision of the comprehensive plan. Investing in infrastructure can be a significant indication of where a community encourages growth. This guidebook has addressed the specific requirements of capital facilities planning under the Growth Management Act, including references to the Washington Administrative Code, Growth Management Hearings Board cases, and through providing examples of how local governments are addressing the issues. We conclude the guidebook with a few additional thoughts:

**Think Like a Business**

Some aspects of capital facilities, especially provision of domestic water and sanitary sewer, lend themselves to running them like a business. Strategic planning for long time operation of the systems is critical. What actions can be taken to maximize the return on investment? Which operation and maintenance programs will provide the best return? Are the rates set at a level that adequately funds the system over time, including reserve requirements, regular operation and maintenance, repairs, and eventual replacement?

**Be a Good Fiscal Steward**

Local governments have a responsibility to be good stewards of resources, including the infrastructure and the financial responsibilities to own and operate it. Work closely with the public, elected officials, and stakeholders to ensure the systems are cared for in the public interest. Keep long term needs in mind during the day-to-day operations. Ensure elected officials keep long term needs in mind during the development of the 6-year CFP and budgeting process. Work regularly with the finance staff to track investments and long term needs.

**Leave a quality legacy**

Perhaps people don’t think about capital facilities when they think of leaving a quality legacy. But ensuring a jurisdiction can meet the adopted LOS with a growing population – and position itself to pay for the needed systems – is no small feat. This commitment is truly essential for full implementation of a community’s comprehensive plan and vision. Below are some of the key strategies that can help a community leave a quality legacy:

- Invest where you want new growth to occur.
- Understand how the growth pattern selected affects the investments that will be needed.
- Remember that new residences will not increase the tax base significantly but will increase the need to provide services for years to come. Select growth and development patterns that allow for efficient and effective provision of public services.
• Understand that infrastructure built by others, but then deeded to the city or county, has short term and long term costs – for maintenance and operation, and eventually will need significant repair, then replacement. Make sure your jurisdiction has a financial plan to support these infrastructure expenditures.

• Before expanding UGAs, consider alternatives and the costs of each, prepare the CFP to show funding needed and sources to cover the alternatives - and refer to the UGA guidebook. Use this information to have candid and collaborative conversations with the public, other service providers, and elected officials.

• Work collaboratively with all service providers - using the same population forecasts, timeframes, assumptions - and the Future Land Use Map in the comprehensive plan. This will help ensure all parties are working toward the same outcomes.

Various growth patterns and intensity of development have different infrastructure needs, and therefore costs. Understanding the financial aspects of the growth patterns being considered can have a direct outcome of the alternative selected. In “Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development,” Smart Growth America found:

1. In general, smart growth development costs one-third less for upfront infrastructure.
2. Smart growth development saves an average of 10 percent on ongoing delivery of services.
3. Smart growth development generates 10 times more tax revenue per acre than conventional suburban development.

Many municipalities have found that a smart growth approach would improve their financial bottom line. Whether by saving money on upfront infrastructure; reducing the cost of ongoing services like fire, police and ambulance; or by generating greater tax revenues in years to come, community after community has found that smart growth development would benefit their overall financial health.

- Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development

Patterns of development can also have a significant impact on the amount of energy and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from growth. Balancing community values with costs needed to implement them can certainly lead to a quality legacy.