Helping Communities Plan For The Future

Moving Washington Forward with Smart Growth Management

Washington communities continued to make progress in growth management planning in the last two fiscal years.

Growth Management Services, a program of the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), was there to help them.

Large and small communities built more compact urban development, helping reduce urban sprawl. Several Western Washington counties directed more growth in urban areas, rather than use rural land.

The Role of CTED Growth Management Services

The Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed in 1990 to deal with uncoordinated and unplanned growth that posed a threat to the state’s high quality of life.

CTED’s Growth Management Services program serves as the coordinator of the state’s growth management efforts.

In addition to its coordination role, the program’s 22-member professional staff also:

- Provide millions of dollars in grants and personal planning assistance.
- Offer training and education to citizens, planning commissioners and elected government officials.
- Act as problem-solvers by providing dispute resolution or helping groups find mediators.
- Review local plans and regulations for compliance with GMA requirements and make suggestions on how to carry them out.
- Assist in collecting data on land uses, demographics, and infrastructure, and report on local achievements in meeting growth management planning goals.
- Coordinate with other state agencies that are also involved in review of comprehensive plans and development regulations.

Growth Management Service Areas by percent of staff hours

This report summarizes our critical work assisting all 320 cities and counties in Washington State.

Communities will need to plan well for future growth that could add an estimated 2 million people by 2025 and dramatically change the state’s urban landscape in the next 20 years.

The Growth Management Act is showing that we can successfully plan for growth while maintaining the quality of life we expect in Washington State.

Growth Management Services will continue its commitment to help plan for the future — and we know our work is just beginning.

Leonard Bauer
Managing Director
Growth Management Services
General Guidance–Helpful Tools For Cities And Counties

CTED Marks 15th Anniversary of the Growth Management Act

More than 160 people gathered in Tacoma in June of 2006 to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA) and to recognize outstanding work in creating livable communities in the state.

Governor Chris Gregoire spoke at the reception.

“Washington has an enviable quality of life that keeps our state competitive in the global marketplace. I am pleased to recognize the important work our communities and their partners are doing to keep Washington a great place to live.”

—Gov. Chris Gregoire

The event honored 20 state leaders who were instrumental in creating the GMA and featured oral histories of their visions and debates. The oral histories can be read at www.secstate.wa.gov/oral history.

Among those interviewed were Joe King, former Speaker, House of Representatives; Governor Booth Gardner; Dick Ford, former chair, Growth Strategies Commission; Senator Mary Margaret Haugen; Joe Tovar, FAICP, planning director, City of Shoreline; and Mike McCormick, FAICP, former assistant director, CTED Growth Management Division.


Quotes from the oral history project are included in the publication as well as comments from local and state leaders on how growth management is working.

CTED is Helping to Find a Better Way to Plan for Sewers, Bridges and Parks

CTED continued to provide training to interested small jurisdictions in the use of the Capital Facilities Planning Template, a series of Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word spreadsheets that link to each other and to informational Web sites.

The template helps plan for capital facility needs over the next six to 20 years — which ensures consistency between other elements of a jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan and the budget process.

CTED has trained several cities and counties, and six regional organizations on how to use the template through one-on-one training and by providing training to regional organizations. Those organizations in turn train local jurisdictions.

CTED is also exploring the option of making the template available to any local government or agency by converting the template to a Web-based product.


CTED delivered its report on the effectiveness of the Buildable Lands Program to the Legislature at the end of December 2007.

The Buildable Lands Program Effectiveness Report shows urban densities in several Western Washington regions have gone up dramatically over the past 10 years — a major indicator of the success of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The legislative report, which is required by statute 10 years after the creation of the program, reports all counties have vastly increased land use analysis abilities to make more informed decisions. This is a direct result of buildable lands legislation passed in 1997.

There are also differences in public involvement processes, and how that data is being translated into amendments to local comprehensive plans and development regulations.

During fiscal years 2006 and 2007, CTED provided $495,000 to six western counties, encompassing 102 cities, to help fund the work required to collect and maintain information needed for these reports. An additional $150,000 was granted to Seattle, Bellevue, and King County and its suburban cities, to supplement local funding to complete their reports.

The Buildable Lands Program monitors actual development in urban growth areas and compares it to planned densities.

New Guidance on Critical Areas Available for Local Governments

Our Small Communities Critical Areas Ordinance Implementation Guidebook, is helping small local governments determine how to carry out critical areas ordinances.

In jurisdictions that don’t have professional planners and engineers on staff, the clerk or administrator often has to answer questions about the ordinance.

The guidebook provides resources and contacts for managing critical areas, tools to inform developers and property owners of the requirements of the ordinance, and example documents that staff and elected officials can use in carrying out the ordinance.

To get a copy, Growth Management Services (360)725-3000.
Direct Assistance—Working Hand-in-Hand with Communities

Helping Communities Achieve Their Goals Through Planning

Plan review is one of our main forms of technical assistance. The Review Team offers comments to local governments on their plans and regulations. It also coordinates state review of local plans and regulations.

Between July 2005 and June 2007, CTED received 2,474 growth management documents for review. Of those, 11 staff members comprehensively reviewed 917, and provided written comments on 247.

Many jurisdictions are in the process of reviewing and updating their plans and regulations. Growth Management Services’ staff is assisting jurisdictions with this process. In Western Washington, 35 jurisdictions were required to complete their updates by December 2005. In Eastern Washington, the update deadline for 68 jurisdictions was December 2006.

In 2006, the Legislature granted smaller and slower-growing jurisdictions an additional three years to complete the update.

Planning Assistance Connects Plans, Actions

CTED partners with the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (WA-APA) to provide communities (cities, towns, neighborhoods, or rural villages) the assistance of professional planners and other specialists in articulating visions, solving problems or resolving issues. The objectives of the Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) are to connect plans and actions, identify local and regional resources for sustainable planning, and advance the principles of APA for a Livable Washington.

A CPAT project with the City of Zillah in May 2007 focused on the economic development and historic preservation aspects of the city’s effort to preserve, relocate and reuse the historic Zillah Teapot as a community centerpiece. Cle Elum got help in 2005 for downtown revitalization and the City of Concrete in 2007 for downtown preservation and development.

Interagency Teams and Work Groups

CTED Growth Management Services organize meetings each month of the Interagency Work Group, which also includes the Departments of Fish and Wildlife; Ecology; Transportation; Health; Social and Health Services; Natural Resources; and Agriculture, plus the Puget Sound Partnership.

The group exchanges information about the technical information each agency provides to communities to assist in the review, evaluation, and update of plans and regulations.

Using interagency teams, our planners coordinated joint meetings of state agencies and local governments to resolve issues in Skagit, Snohomish, Ferry, and Island Counties.

Much of this effort focused on protecting critical areas from existing and on going agricultural activity. This helped Island County address its long-standing need to protect critical areas in a way that meets the needs of local farmers.

During FY 2006, CTED developed a Web-based tool to coordinate interagency agency review of local plans. This software package streamlines agency review and simplifies the submittal requirements for local governments.

The system was installed early in FY 2007.

CTED Staff Assistance Pays Off

Our planners offer technical and financial assistance to help local officials interpret and carry out growth management requirements. During the last two years, program planners assisted with these projects:

- Island County - update to the Critical Areas Ordinance addressing farming operations in rural areas of the county.
- Ferry County - bring their Critical Areas Ordinance into compliance.
- Lewis County - review designation of agricultural resource lands.
- City of Connell - plan for the expansion of the Coyote Ridge Penitentiary.
- Sultan - develop a downtown vision for 2020 through the American Planning Association Community Design Partnership.
- Spokane County - intergovernmental coordination efforts preparing for a review of their urban growth boundary.
- San Juan County - plan for growth on Orcas Island.

Growth management staff at CTED is working with Washington communities to help them recognize, protect, and celebrate aspects of place that make it home.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) includes among its 14 planning goals: Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical, cultural, and archaeological significance. RCW 36.70A.020 (13)

Working on this goal also helps to carry out other GMA goals such as efficient multi-modal transportation, affordable housing, economic development, open space and recreation, environmental protection, and citizen involvement.

Although the GMA does not require a Historic Preservation Element in a comprehensive plan, cities and counties planning under the GMA must consider and incorporate the historic preservation goal.

Historic Preservation: A Tool for Managing Growth, a guidebook now available from CTED, provides information on how to prepare an element of historic preservation or cultural resources for a comprehensive plan.

Our Staff can offer suggestions on how to integrate historic and cultural resource planning goals, policies, and strategies within other elements and in regulations – including land use elements and development regulations.

If you have questions about historic or cultural planning, call Growth Management Services at 360-725-3000 or see http://www.cted.wa.gov/growth.
Grants—Growth Management Grants Make a Difference

Each year, the Washington State Legislature distributes money to help local governments meet the requirements of the GMA.

The state awarded 213 grants totaling $5.49 million during fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

Planning grants help communities update their comprehensive plans and address emerging growth management issues.

About two-thirds of the Legislature's appropriation funded competitive grants for special planning projects. Competitive grants help local governments meet special needs or demonstrate innovative approaches to growth management issues.

Here are some examples of planning grants awarded in 2006 and 2007:

**EDGEWOOD**
Developed new design guidelines for its Town Center, which is the foundation for the city's sense of community and economic future.

**ORTING**
Conducted an economic study of potential prospects for retail, commercial, and industrial development to bolster the city's revenue base and provide residents with property tax relief.

**WOODLAND**
Updated its parks and recreation plan as part of the city's comprehensive plan update.

**LYNNWOOD**
Prepared and adopted an Energy Element in its comprehensive plan.

**RUSTON**
Drafted plans and development regulations to transform its commercial zone into a vibrant pedestrian-oriented district.

**TUKWILA**
Completed plans for bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout the city.

**COULEE DAM**
Updated their comprehensive plan. Added new policies for bicycle and walking paths, historic preservation, critical areas, essential public facilities and a new zoning map.

**WALLA WALLA**
Hired a consultant to draft a plan to save a historic neighborhood. The design criteria remains consistent with the surrounding historical designs.

**CLARKSTON**
Studied the impacts of big box retail stores and, with citizen input, wrote a design manual and drafted new policies for their comprehensive plan.

**WENATCHEE**
Developed a downtown master plan that included implementation steps and the update of several outdated zoning codes.

**CHENEEY**
Updated zoning codes to allow for more infill development.

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**Here’s How Grants Help Communities**

- The City of Puyallup received a competitive grant to prepare an urban design plan for Puyallup’s South Hill Regional Growth Center.

  “The grant was totally essential. We were able to incorporate a more innovative approach to planning. It gave us the means to more fully combine land use planning with public health. In particular, we were able to get the public more involved. It turned it into a fabulous, fun project.”

  Nancy Eklund, Senior Planner

- Connell received an emerging issues grant to organize a summit to prepare an action plan for carrying out its vision for the city.

  “The grant was our only source of funding. We hired a consultant who organized, facilitated, and prepared a final report. Over 100 people attended the summit and its two follow-up meetings. We would not have been able to do it without the grant.”

  Art Tackett, City Administrator

- Tenino received an update grant to develop a parks master plan.

  “We used the grant to hire an intern and contract with Thurston Regional Planning Council. They organized two charettes and provided lots of plans and maps. Without this grant, there is no way we could get where we are today. The plan is now on our Web site. Check it out!”

  Dan Carnite, Senior Planner

- Sunnyside received a GMA Update grant.

  “We used the grant to hire an intern who helped us update all the elements in our comprehensive plan. Sunnyside’s comprehensive plan was over ten years old. To do the plan justice and get it up to standards, we could not do it with just one planner. We needed help. In the end, it seems like everybody liked the final product. The update was approved by both the planning commission and city council. They said that they were happy with it.”

  Jamey Ayling, Associate Planner
Two-Year Progress Report From CTED Growth Management Services

Public Outreach—Information for Those Who Need to Know

About Growth Newsletter Goes Paperless
Growth Management Services develops and distributes many publications including Washington Administrative Code guidelines, guidebooks, fact sheets, newsletters and reports. The quarterly newsletter, About Growth, went to a paperless distribution system in July of 2007 — an estimated average cost savings of $4,000 per issue.

We distributed about 15,000 publications during fiscal years 2006 and 2007. To get growth management publications, call 360-725-3000 or see www.cted.wa.gov/growth

Growth Management Web Site is a Hit
Our Web site continues to be one of the most popular CTED Web sites. Growth Management guidebooks account for 30 percent of all downloaded documents during a three-month time period.

An extensive collection of research materials can be viewed and downloaded through the site at www.cted.wa.gov/growth. It supplies quick access to technical and financial resources.

Growth Management Services is also committed to switch its various publications to a Web-based clearinghouse model.

Conferences Offer An Important Opportunity To Reach Public
Growth Management Services:

- Sponsored sessions at the Planning Association of Washington’s Spring 2006 and 2007 Conferences.
- Organized eight regional, quarterly planning forums in two years; six in Western Washington and two in Eastern Washington. At the forums, local planners share information and successes.

Short Course Draws Local Officials, Citizens
The Short Course on Local Planning, a three-hour educational program, provides a basic overview of land use planning in Washington State.


We’re receiving requests for focused courses on special topics such as density and infill strategies, economic development, subdivision design, low-impact development, level-of-service standards and the basics of design review programs.

CTED has sponsored the course for more than 30 years, in collaboration with the Planning Association of Washington.

Legislative Support:
Bills Reviewed by Staff on Land Use Issues
During the 2006 and 2007 Legislative sessions, our staff evaluated 430 bills. Top issues included:

- Agricultural lands – 16 bills: three became law.
- Annexation – seven bills.
- Critical areas – 33 bills: three became law.
- Hood Canal – seven bills: two became law.
- Limited areas of more intense rural development/rural – four bills: one became law.
- GMA Update Timelines – 10 bills: one became law.

If you have questions about the Growth Management Act and Planning, call Growth Management Services at 360-725-3000 or visit our Website http://www.cted.wa.gov/growth.
Growth Management Works In Washington
Accomplishments Under the Growth Management Act

Governor’s Smart Communities Awards Highlight State Planning Successes
CTED is proud to sponsor the Governor’s Smart Communities Awards program, which recognizes outstanding achievement in creating quality communities.

Governor Chris Gregoire presented the first Governor’s Smart Communities Awards at a Tacoma reception in 2006.

2007 Winners

SEATTLE’S BROADWAY CROSSING: Public/Private Partnerships — creation of an innovative mixed-use development partnership by strong community input.

CITY OF BELLEVUE: Neighborhood Investment Strategy — use of an extensive community-based process to preserve the character of older, at-risk neighborhoods.

CITY OF BOTHELL: Capital Facilities Plan — relied on significant public participation and used innovative technology and policy guides.

CITY OF EVERETT: Downtown Area Plan — The plan comprehensively addresses land use, urban design, transportation, off-street parking, on-street parking, streetscape, historic preservation, housing and open space.

CITY OF OAK HARBOR: Fort Nugent Park/Community Built Playground.

CITY OF SEATAC: SeaTac/Airport Station Area Action Plan and South 154th Station Area Action Plan — seizing opportunities to complement Sound Transit’s LINK light rail stations.

TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY: /Salishan Hope VI Redevelopment Project — large scale neighborhood project that incorporates low-impact development techniques

SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY: West Seattle’s new High Point shows how to create a model sustainable community.

STEVENS COUNTY: Comprehensive Plan that got created through strong public outreach and participation.

2006 Winners

CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND: Winslow Tomorrow: Emphasis on reuse of existing buildings for housing

CITY OF REDMOND: Redmond Comprehensive Plan that incorporates a housing element into a comprehensive plan.

CITY OF BREMERTON: Comprehensive Plan and Zone Code Update.

CITY OF WOODINVILLE: Greenbrier Heights Affordable Housing Community.

JEFFERSON COUNTY: Implementing Jefferson County Policy to Support Agriculture while Protecting Fish & Wildlife Habitat.

KING COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY AND GGLO: White Center Greenbridge Revitalized Neighborhood.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY: Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).

“As Washington State works to position itself in the global economy, the work of local governments and their partners in creating quality communities becomes more vital….The efforts of these awards winners help to make Washington a great state.”

—Gov. Chris Gregoire

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