

Interjurisdictional Coordination

Vision Statement

The Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) includes a Vision Statement that is presented in its entirety within the Introduction of the Plan. The Vision Statement is an aspirational goal that the Plan aims to help bring to fruition through the goals, objectives, and policies of each element. The Vision of Snohomish County is:

We’re all in this together: In 2044 Snohomish County is a resilient, vibrant, and inclusive place to live with a high-quality of life where all residents can thrive.

The Interjurisdictional Coordination Element furthers the vision by guiding how the County will communicate, collaborate, and coordinate with other local jurisdictions to be more resilient and ensure that all county residents can thrive. The environment, climate change, equity, and many other topics do not follow jurisdictional boundaries and must be addressed collectively by cities and towns and the County to produce positive results.

Intergovernmental or interjurisdictional coordination ~~((has been described as))~~ is a (“(“)) meaningful effort to bring all parties together to identify concerns, discuss issues, examine solutions, resolve problems, and employ joint approaches, where appropriate ~~((, to manage the uncoordinated and unplanned growth posing a threat to the environment, economic development and high quality of life in the state.” (Working Together – A Guide to Intergovernmental Coordination Under the Growth Management Act, State of Washington – DCD, July 1992)))~~. Such cooperative efforts between jurisdictions can lead to increased efficiency in the preparation of plans, provision of public services, annexations and incorporations, and many other activities by minimizing conflicts and duplications.

There are many planning and regional growth management issues such as transportation and water quality management that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. The lack of a range of housing opportunities near employment centers, public facility sizing, and scheduling of transportation improvements concurrent with development are all issues that could be better managed through a coordinated approach.

The development of unincorporated land adjacent to cities has created a number of complex issues. When cities seek to extend their corporate boundaries through annexation without coordination with the county, they may find it difficult to provide public services to this new

land at appropriate urban service levels because of: incompatible lot sizes; road alignments; utility line sizes; and differing design standards typical of these more rural areas. If unincorporated, urbanizing areas remain under the county's jurisdiction, there often is pressure for the county to provide additional urban services that may be cost prohibitive. Once areas are annexed, the county faces a loss of tax revenues that may exceed the former costs of servicing the area, may have been dedicated to amortizing capital facilities in the area, and may reduce the county's ability to provide regional services.

Annexations and incorporations may affect county programs such as stormwater management or financing of transportation improvements if the land removed by annexation no longer contributes financially to the program. Special purpose districts are also affected by annexations and transition measures need to be considered as service providers change.

Snohomish County and its cities, towns, and the ~~((Tulalip Tribes))~~ federally recognized tribes recognize the benefits of coordinated planning. The cities, county and Tribes continue to participate in Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), a joint planning process through which goals have been formulated to guide the development and revision of local comprehensive plans. These goals form the basis for the countywide planning policies which were also developed through SCT. SCT has been instrumental in developing annexation policies which are used by the county and the cities.

The county and the cities realize that coordinated planning is beneficial in updating comprehensive plans for the unincorporated areas around cities, and particularly along identified transit emphasis corridors and within designated urban centers and urban villages. The county and cities are exploring urban transition options that would result in improved regulatory consistency between jurisdictions over standards for land use development in the UGAs.

The county's Southwest Urban Growth Area (SWUGA) includes nine cities and unincorporated county land. Urban-level services within UGAs should ultimately be provided by cities. Dividing the SWUGA into separate Municipal Urban Growth Areas (MUGAs) will facilitate coordinated planning between the cities and Snohomish County. The delineation and adoption of initial MUGA boundaries by the county council allows the county to plan for the development of these urban areas in coordination with the city they are most likely to join in the future. MUGAs which have been established within the SWUGA will continue to help ensure predictability for residents and businesses in the unincorporated areas as to the municipality that will eventually become their urban services provider.

The following goals, objectives and policies provide general policy direction for continued and improved interjurisdictional coordination.

- GOAL IC 1** Promote the coordination of planning, financing, and implementation programs between the county and local jurisdictions including tribal governments.
- Objective IC 1.A** Continue participation in joint planning processes.
- IC Policies 1.A.1** The county shall continue participation in Snohomish County Tomorrow to reconcile, monitor and, if necessary, adjust population and employment growth targets and to resolve possible inconsistency between the local jurisdictions' plans.
- 1.A.2** The county shall work with cities, transit agencies, utility providers and other ~~((stakeholders))~~ parties, including ~~((private citizens))~~ residents to develop more detailed plans where local conditions and interests demand it – particularly within designated centers and transit emphasis corridors.
- Objective IC 1.B** Work with cities and towns to provide for the orderly transition of unincorporated to incorporated areas within UGAs.
- IC Policies 1.B.1** The county shall work with cities in planning for orderly transfer of service responsibilities in anticipation of potential or planned annexations or incorporations within UGAs.
- 1.B.2** In newly annexed areas within UGAs, the county shall continue to provide regional services while the cities provide urban services.
- 1.B.3** The county shall seek interlocal agreements with the cities to establish a process for transferring authority over pending projects, permits, and records and establishes reciprocal impact mitigation for transportation, parks, and schools prior to potential or planned annexations or incorporations.
- 1.B.4** The county shall not support any proposed annexation of unincorporated lands in Snohomish County by a city or special district situated predominantly outside of Snohomish County unless and until an annexation agreement has been signed by the county and said district or city. Such agreement shall address and substantially resolve issues of land use, applicable development regulations, permit processing, public services delivery, facilities financing, transportation planning, concurrency management, solid waste management, and any other
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similar jurisdictional issues identified by the county. Such agreement should be approved prior to city acceptance of an annexation petition.

1.B.5 The county and affected cities should collaborate on the development of appropriate urban design measures, such as: pedestrian, bicycle and transit orientation; compatibility and access among adjacent developments; appropriate open spaces and gathering places; adequate landscaping; and streetscapes and parking arrangements.

1.B.6 The county should consider interlocal agreements with cities to coordinate county and municipal planning under GMA within UGAs. These planning processes should emphasize public participation and the role of elected officials in local decision-making. Such interlocal agreements may address the following interjurisdictional issues:

Subsection (a) Transition processes for planning and development projects and capital facilities projects;

Subsection (b) Provision of clear, adequate public participation processes;

Subsection (c) Provision for fiscal equity between the county and the cities and identification of funding sources, fees, and revenue sharing;

Subsection (d) Coordination between and delineation of tasks and schedules for staff, planning commissions and councils in the review, adoption and appeal process;

Subsection (e) Development of application procedures and determination of applicable regulations and standards to be used;

Subsection (f) Solid waste management and planning authority; ~~((and))~~

Subsection (g) Other issues such as SEPA review, appeals, transportation concurrency, surface water, and public safety~~((-))~~; and

Subsection (h) Minimum residential density standards.

Objective IC 1.C ~~((Ensure that))~~ The county should collaborate with cities and towns on ~~((and city))~~ development regulations ~~((are consistent))~~ within UGAs.

IC Policies 1.C.1 The county ~~((shall))~~ may seek interlocal agreements with the cities which identify development standards for each UGA.

1.C.2 The county should work with cities to determine the city's role in the review of applications for development within the unincorporated portions of UGAs.

- Objective IC 1.D Promote interjurisdictional planning and implementation of capital facilities.
- IC Policies 1.D.1 The county shall seek the participation of cities when planning and financing capital facilities, particularly as part of center and/or corridor planning within UGAs.
- Objective IC 1.E Re-evaluate and, as required, modify MUGA boundaries to facilitate county planning for the development of these urban areas.
- IC Policies 1.E.1 The MUGA boundaries shall be as adopted by the county and shown in Map 3. The county and the cities within the SWUGA shall, when necessary, modify MUGA boundaries for the purposes of allocating population (Appendix D) as required by GMA and delineating future annexation areas for each of the nine cities in the SWUGA.
- 1.E.2 Inconsistencies which result in overlapping MUGAs between cities or gap areas which are not included in any city's MUGA should be reconciled between the affected cities within Snohomish County and the county as soon as is practical. "Affected cities" may also include cities located outside of Snohomish County only at such time interlocal agreements between the cities and Snohomish County have been adopted.
- 1.E.3 MUGA boundaries shall be reevaluated on a periodic basis and adjustments made as needed through the county's Comprehensive Plan amendment process.
- 1.E.4 MUGA boundaries congruent with the SWUGA boundary may be amended by agreement and action by the county and geographically affected cities following consultation with the cities, consistent with 1.E.3.
- 1.E.5 MUGA boundaries that are not congruent with the SWUGA boundary may be amended by agreement and action by the affected cities and the county, consistent with 1.E.3.
- 1.E.6 Interlocal agreements executed by the county and a city shall define terms of the transfer of responsibilities for planning and/or development within a city's established MUGA boundary.
- 1.E.7 The county shall seek interlocal agreements with the cities to establish a process for all project and permit transfers, record transfers and reciprocal impact mitigation for transportation, parks, and schools within the city's MUGA prior to potential or planned annexations or incorporations.
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- Objective IC 1.F Cooperate with local jurisdictions to access and distribute regional financial resources.
- IC Policies 1.F.1 The county shall coordinate with cities to investigate the potential for sharing of tax revenue to assist in the provision of equitable levels of public services within the county.
- 1.F.2 The county shall join with local jurisdictions in consortia for the purpose of attracting and distributing regional financial resources such as community development block grants, emergency shelter grants, and HOME investment partnerships program grants.
- Objective IC 1.G Promote and support public health initiatives in collaboration with partner agencies and community ((stakeholders)) parties.
- IC Policies 1.G.1 The county should work with community ((stakeholders)) parties to promote increased access to and consumption of healthy and locally grown foods.
- ~~((IC POLICY 1.G.2 The county should coordinate with the Snohomish Health District and other community stakeholders on initiatives which promote physical activity and a greater understanding of the relationships between the built environment, transportation, and human health in Snohomish County.))~~
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