Shaping a New Approach to Transportation and Land Use Planning

National Governor’s Association
Center for Best Practices Policy Academy

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WA Dept of Commerce
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Commerce Mission: Grow and Improve Jobs

A strong economy needs strong communities
Washington’s Growth Management Act
A Framework for Smart Growth

“The legislature finds that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state.”

RCW 36.70A.010
Washington’s GMA: The Basics

- 14 state planning goals
- Protect natural resource lands and environmentally critical areas
- Develop countywide planning policies
- Designate urban growth areas
- Cities and counties adopt and implement comprehensive plans
- Public participation throughout each step
The GMA and Transportation Planning

GMA Planning Goals Balance:

- Urban Growth
- Reduce sprawl
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Property Rights
- Permits
- Natural Resource Industries
- Open Space and Recreation
- Environment
- Citizen Participation and Coordination
- Public Facilities and Services
- Historic Preservation
- Shoreline Management

The Transportation Goal:
Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
The GMA and Transportation Planning

Plan Elements Must Be Consistent...

- Land Use
- Housing
- Capital Facilities Planning
- Utilities
- Rural Areas
- Transportation

...and Development Regulations must Be Consistent with the Plan.

The Transportation Element

- Inventory
- Needs Analysis Based on Land Use Assumptions
- Intergovernmental Consistency & Impact Disclosure
- Concurrency
- Finance Plan
- Level of Service Standards
How Has It Worked?

Percent of new development occurring within urban growth areas*

*Central Puget Sound and Vancouver regions
Some Success Stories

• Bellevue-Redmond Corridor
• Tacoma Mixed Use Centers
• Vancouver Esther Short Park Neighborhood and Waterfront Master Plan
• Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2040
Smart Vision Award
Comprehensive Planning
City of Bellevue
Bel-Red Subarea Plan
Smart Vision Award
Comprehensive Planning
City of Bellevue
Bel-Red Subarea Plan

The vision for NE 16th Street: Entirely new neighborhoods built around a light rail corridor, a high degree of pedestrian orientation, major bicycle facilities, and significant landscaping.

Existing conditions of 130th Avenue NE: Utilitarian street lined with a mix of aging light industrial and commercial uses.
Smart Choices Award
Implementation of a Comprehensive Plan
City of Tacoma
Mixed-use Centers Update Project
Smart Partnerships Award
Development Project to Implement a Comprehensive Plan

City of Vancouver
Waterfront Development Master Plan
Puget Sound Regional Council

- Formed by Interlocal Agreement
- Board representatives appointed by members

General Assembly
Votes on major regional decisions, approves budget, elects new officers

Executive Board
Carries out delegated powers and responsibilities

Transportation Policy Board
Makes recommendations on key transportation issues

Growth Management Policy Board
Makes recommendations on key growth management issues

Economic Development District Board
Regional economic development planning and collaboration with private and public sector agencies
Integrated Framework for Planning

Integrated Strategy

- **VISION 2040** - Integrated strategy for environment, growth, economy, & transportation; multi-county planning policies

Functional Plans

- **Transportation 2040**
  - Regional transportation plan (*state law*)
  - Metropolitan transportation plan (*federal law*)

- **Regional Economic Strategy**
VISION 2040

- Adopted April 2008
- Multicounty planning policies under GMA
- Regional framework
- Numeric regional growth strategy
- Regional policy direction
  - Growth management
  - Transportation (*Transportation 2040*)
  - Economic prosperity (*Regional Economic Strategy*)
  - Environment
- Designated regional centers

Urban Growth Area, 980 square miles (2540 km$^2$)
16% of total land area in 4-county region
Continuing Challenges

- Consistent regional coordination
- Transportation concurrency
- Infrastructure financing
- Water availability
- Affordable housing
For more information

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