

Excerpts from *Road Map to Washington's Future – Volume 1*

The following actions are drawn from pages 81-102 of Volume 1. The whole report is available at <https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/a-roadmap-to-washingtons-future/>.

Transformational & systemic changes

1.1 – Focus legislative efforts on enhanced state funding and new fiscal tools that enable cities, counties, regions, and state agencies to address needs and manage growth.

- Identify and implement solutions that ensure the fiscal sustainability of counties, and decrease competition for resources among cities, counties, and special districts.
- Explore the creation of a state revenue funding cycle that allows for long-term funding (beyond the two-year biennium).
- Consider changes to the entire state tax and revenue system including the property tax, retail sales tax, real estate excise tax, gasoline tax, road tax, business and occupation tax, impact fees, and open space and multifamily property tax exemption programs.
- Examine potential additional fiscal tools available in other states including tax increment financing, regional tax base sharing, value added, and personal and corporate income taxes, at the statewide or regional scales.
- Increase grant funding to counties and cities for updates to regional policies, growth planning, and development codes.
- Fund the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation for growth management plans

2.1 – Convene a collaborative process to explore how best to achieve the goals of the GMA through the development of an **adaptive management and regionally-based approach** that provides flexibility, coordination, and creates opportunities to address local and changing conditions and needs. Consult with tribal governments, to determine if and how they may want to be involved in such a process.

As part of this collaborative process consider:

- Identifying public, private, and non-profit sector **representatives to participate in the process.**
- **convening urban and rural summits** to dialogue and provide input into how best to design an adaptive management and regionally- based approach that serve the specific growth management, environmental, as well as economic development needs of rural and urban areas;
- identifying adaptive approaches for **counties and cities experiencing no growth or slow growth;**
- restructuring aspects of the growth planning and implementation process such as housing, employment, ecosystem protection and restoration, transportation, and economic development **away from a county-by-county approach, and toward more appropriate regional scales,** such as multi-county planning initiatives, bioregions, ecosystems, and watersheds;
- developing processes **to monitor and evaluate plans and implementation;**

- **establishing alternatives to the current appeals processes** including mechanisms for alternative dispute resolution that minimize the cost of litigation, quicken resolution, and maximize successful outcomes;
- considering options for **expanding and funding the role of RTPOs** in the restructured framework, including the possibility of plan certification, or certification of components of a plan (e.g. housing); and
- developing mechanisms for **integration of regional and state growth planning**.

2.2 – Initiate **government-to-government consultation with tribes** in Washington State to discuss the key questions asked, and guidance detailed, in the Road Map to Washington’s Future Report.

3.1 – Develop comprehensive and integrated strategies, policies, implementation plans, and funding for **climate adaptation and mitigation** on the local, regional, and state level.

- Create a mechanism to **link local and regional planning to the State’s adopted schedule and targets** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Enhance and integrate state-developed climate adaptation strategies, and create a **comprehensive implementation plan** that includes the development of long-term funding mechanisms for **local and state adaptation and mitigation** projects.
- **Coordinate with tribes’** climate action planning, strategies, and initiatives.
- Fund and develop mechanisms for **tracking, reporting, and evaluating climate adaptation** efforts locally, regionally, and statewide.
- **Invest in research** to inform climate adaptation strategies for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in Washington State.
- Consider adding community and infrastructure **resilience as a goal** in the GMA or in an adaptive management regionally-based approach, if developed.
- Fund, and develop opportunities to **support local and regional efforts to strengthen community resilience and adaptation** work at the local level.
- **Integrate regional planning, comprehensive planning and implementing policies with climate action planning**.
- **Support innovation** in climate-friendly and sustainable infrastructure.
- **Identify local and state regulatory barriers** that impede local jurisdictions’ abilities to adapt to changing conditions.
- Incentivize and fund collaborative efforts to enhance local projects that **strengthen resilience, especially for highly-vulnerable people and communities**, including communities on the coast, high fire risk communities, and low-income communities.

3.2 – **Integrate disaster preparedness, and emergency and recovery planning, with growth management planning and policies**.

- **Incorporate hazard analysis** into local, regional, and state land use and transportation plans, policies, and decisions.

- **Convene a working group** to identify how best to integrate emergency preparedness and recovery planning into growth management planning and implementing policies, and into an adaptive management regionally-based approach, if developed.
- **Fund local and regional disaster recovery and mitigation planning** and develop funding mechanisms for prevention and mitigation efforts.

4.1 – Establish a collaborative process to develop a statewide water plan for sustainably protecting, managing, and developing water resources in the state, for current and future generations

- Begin with **government-to-government consultation between the State and the Tribes** to discuss the development of a statewide water plan.
- Commission a **situation assessment conducted by a neutral third party** that engages a diversity of interests in identifying key elements, key issues, and implementation strategies to be included in a statewide water plan.
- Create an **inventory of the State’s water resources**.
- **Incorporate scientific knowledge on climate impacts** to inform the statewide water plan.
- **Engage broad public input** into the plan development and updates.
- **Incorporate existing data, plans, and efforts**, including watershed plans and salmon recovery plans.

5.1 – Integrate equity as a goal in growth planning, policies, strategies, and implementing actions, including adopting it as a goal of the GMA and an adaptive management regionally-based approach, if developed.

- Advance local, regional, and statewide policies and investments that eliminate inequity.
- Develop metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts.
- Develop evaluation tools to determine the impacts of land use, and state and local transportation investments, on vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities.
- Provide model community indicators, performance measures, and policy analysis tools developed by the State to assist cities, counties, and state agencies in addressing race and social equity in their plans, policies, and projects. Use lessons learned from cities and counties that apply a race and social justice lens to policies, programs, and projects.

6.1 – Develop and implement a statewide economic development strategy that builds on the unique assets and needs of the diverse regions of the state. Place **emphasis on improving rural economies and slow-growing cities**. Identify in the strategy what is needed to support local economic development plans, including state agency programs and state investments.

- Escalate efforts to **provide reliable broadband** statewide.
- Increase the capacity of the Department of Commerce, along with its partners, to **provide technical assistance and programs specifically targeted to rural and slow-growing areas**.

6.2 – Integrate the capital facilities and economic development planning of Ports with local and regional capital facilities, growth management, and transportation planning.

Key reforms

- **Integrate State agency planning into the GMA and consider how to improve coordination in the implementation of regional growth management plans.**
- **Increase grants for cities and counties** to plan under the GMA.
- **Align funding of county government** with the realities of implementing GMA
- Fund and develop guidelines and methods for **performance monitoring** and measurement of comprehensive and regional plan implementation
- Incorporate into already existing required **training for elected officials** an understanding of policies in the growth planning framework; the roles of state, regional, and local governments and the responsibilities of elected officials as policy makers, related to growth management.
- Identify opportunities to **strengthen civic education** throughout the state and across all sectors, including K-12, as well as community-based programs.
- **Add a Planning Goal to the GMA - Resilience to climate change and natural disasters.**
- Convene a collaborative process with, at a minimum, representatives of cities, counties, tribes, state agencies, ports, business, development, planning, and environmental organizations to **identify areas of agreement for reforming the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).**
- **Add a Planning Goal to the GMA on Human Health and Well-Being.** Elevate and fund the implementation of human health and well-being as a goal in growth management planning and implementation, including the design and location of transportation and other infrastructure, land use plans, and development regulations.
- **Prepare a “comprehensive planning and civic design for public health” guidebook** to assist state agencies and local governments on ways they could factor human health and well-being into updating their comprehensive plans, and the design and implementation of capital facilities such as state highways, county roads, city streets, and public parks. This could be a joint effort of the Departments of Commerce and Health, in consultation with tribal governments, state agencies, local governments, public health professionals, and county public health departments.
- **Develop** funding strategies and **new fiscal tools for cities and counties to implement the housing elements** in their Comprehensive Plans and **monitor achievement of housing targets.**
- **Address** availability of **middle- income housing, low and middle-income homeownership,** and the impacts of **short-term rentals** and **investment homes** on housing availability and affordability.
- Convene a collaborative process(es) with, at a minimum, representatives of cities, counties, special districts, boundary review board, planning and environmental organizations to **identify areas of agreement for reforming annexation laws** in a way that streamlines the process and removes barriers to annexation of land adjacent to existing cities, maintains the fiscal sustainability of counties, clarifies the role of special districts, and reduces conflicts.
- Support policies and programs that **enhance the economic and environmental viability of agriculture** and identify and develop strategies and programs that address the needs of farmers.

- Undertake an assessment that looks at the **cumulative impacts of laws and regulations on the ability of agriculture and other natural resource-based industries to be economically viable** and to achieve desired environmental outcomes.
- Clarify how the six chief **goals of the Washington State Transportation Plan** can be achieved in context with GMA Planning Goals.
- Provide **funding support for WSDOT, WSTC, RTPOs, and local governments to monitor and evaluate** how well their plans, policies, and systems are working, in order to enable them to consider appropriate course corrections.
- Consider strengthening the requirements and incentivizing the use of **multimodal performance measures within urban growth areas**.
- Consider strengthening and funding local **planning requirements for freight**.
- **Integrate state highways into the GMA transportation concurrency system**.
- **Coordinate planning between federal military installations** and regional, county, and city governments
- Convene multi-sector urban and rural summits to dialogue and help identify priorities for modifications of the GMA that would **improve planning and implementation for rural and urban communities**.
- **Consider revising the update cycle for comprehensive plans from every eight years to every ten years**. Begin this process in phases, starting with moving the next update deadline for the four Central Puget Sound counties from 2023 to 2025, in order to synch with population data from the 2020 Federal Census.
- Convene a collaborative process to identify areas of agreement for improvements to the statewide planning framework's development regulations and permitting processes **to shorten the time needed to issue permits and increase predictability** and achieve better outcomes both for permit applicants and residents in the vicinity of new development.
- Convene a process to gather additional information and research and to identify areas of agreement for **improvements to the GMA provisions for LAMIRDS**.
- **Integrate school district capital facilities planning, including school siting, with the land use policies and capital plans of local governments**.
- **Integrate water and sewer districts, school districts, and port district planning into the GMA**.
- **Initiate a review of State statutes**, beginning with the SMA and SEPA, to identify major conflicts or disconnects with the goals and requirements of the GMA, and undertake efforts to reduce gaps, conflicts, or redundancies.