Comprehensive Planning Resources

A comprehensive plan is a long-term guide used by local governments to shape the growth, development, and overall vision of a community. It typically addresses land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental sustainability. In Washington, local jurisdictions planning under the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) are required to update their comprehensive plans at least every ten years (with a five year check-in interval) to reflect changing community needs, emerging trends, population shifts, and new data. Updates ensure that the plan remains relevant and effective in guiding decisions that affect the future of the community.

Relevant links to guidance documents have been included for informational purposes.

Washington State Department of Commerce

- Commerce provides a variety of guidance documents to assist local governments in meeting the requirements of the Washington State GMA.
- Guidance documents are separated into general headers with more specific information contained therein. The headers are as follows:
    - Climate Planning
        - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/climate-planning/
        - Broadly details recent legislation (HB 1181).
        - Includes links to the Intermediate Guidance (linked below)
            - https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/fpg3h0lbwln2ctqjg7jg802h54ie19jx
            - Includes information regarding Resilience and GHG Emissions Reduction sub-elements, planning and engagement, and more.
            - More specific information, including appendices which contain extremely helpful information and useful project materials is present here.
            - Model goals and policies which are provided in the Menu of Measures are present.
        - Information regarding grants including how to apply, and current recipients for the 2023-2025 biennium is available here.

    - Ecosystem Planning
        - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/ecosystem-planning/
        - Includes information regarding:
            - Critical Areas Protection
            - Natural Resource Lands
            - Transfer of Development Rights
        - Funding information available here as well.

    - Housing Planning
        - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/
        - Includes information regarding recent legislation (HB 1220)
            - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/housing-guidance/
        - Planning for Middle Housing
            - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/middle-housing/
            - Model Ordinances are available here.

- User Guide for Middle Housing Model Ordinances
  - https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/hx0itq9b0a3nwefm9lm9wcxqtz9dzsf3
- Cities over 25,000 Population Model Ordinances
  - https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/tfivrrq4t97nggquanr3syaz4zeo8nxd
- Basic information about what Middle Housing is.
- Resources for:
  - Residential parking
  - Co-living guidance
  - Unit lot subdivision guidance
  - Establishing fees
  - Neighborhood infill guidance
  - Manufactured / mobile home communities
  - Middle housing information
  - Middle housing pro forma: Puget Sound Region
  - Objective Design Standards Toolkit

- Tribal Planning
  - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/tribal-planning/
  - Outlines new requirements (HB 1717)
  - Resources:
    - State Resources for tribal planning
    - Background on tribal engagement

- GMA Topics
  - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/gma-topics/
    - Information regarding the periodic update of the GMA
    - Capital Facilities Planning
    - GMA Laws and Rules
    - GMA Grants
    - Transportation Planning
      - More guidance and information is available.

- Education and Outreach
  - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/education-outreach/
    - Education and outreach for local planners in teaching them how to comply with GMA requirements

- Reporting, Data and Research
  - https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/data-research/
    - Requirements are primarily for Puget Sound communities

Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)

MRSC is a non-profit organization that helps local governments in Washington state with legal and policy guidance. MSRC publishes detailed guidance and various resources and example documents.
- Detailed information regarding Comprehensive Planning and GMA compliance:
  - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning

- o Includes guidance on a number of topics, such as:
    - ▪ Purpose of Comprehensive Plans
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#overview
        - • Broad overview of required and optional elements
            - o Required:
                - ▪ Land Use
                - ▪ Housing
                - ▪ Capital Facilities Plan
                - ▪ Utilities
                - ▪ Rural Development (counties only)
                - ▪ Transportation
                - ▪ Climate Change and Resiliency
                - ▪ Ports (mandatory for cities with annual maritime port revenues exceeding $60 million)
            - o Optional
                - ▪ Economic Development
                - ▪ Parks and Recreation
                - ▪ Conservation
                - ▪ Solar Energy
                - ▪ Recreation
                - ▪ Subarea Plans
                - ▪ Ports (optional for cities with annual maritime port revenues between $20 million and $60 million

    - ▪ Comprehensive Plan Updates
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#comprehensive-plan-updates

    - ▪ Coordination with Neighboring Jurisdictions / Countywide Planning Policies
        - • Note: Skagit County is in the process of updating their Countywide Planning Policies. The County ordinance is available at the link below, however, the CPP webpage is not updated.
            - o https://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/Documents/LFDocs/COMMISSIONERS000033/00/00/03/0000033f.pdf
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#coordination

    - ▪ Required and Optional Elements
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#elements

    - ▪ Land Use Element
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#landuse

    - ▪ Housing Element
        - • https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#housing

    - ▪ Capital Facilities Plan

- https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#capital-facilities

  - Utilities
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#Utilities

  - Rural Development
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#rural-development

  - Transportation
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#transportation

  - Climate Change and Resiliency
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#climate-change

  - Ports
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#port

  - Implementation
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#implementation

  - Growth Management Monitoring Program
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#growth-management-monitoring

  - Examples of Comprehensive Plans & Update Processes
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#examples

  - Recommended Resources
    - https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/gma/comprehensive-planning#recommended-resources