



Planning & Development Services

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Planning Commission Public Hearing Staff Report

From: Peter Gill

Long Range Planning Manager

Re: 2021-2026 Capital Facilities Plan and Transportation Improvement Program

Date: October 15, 2020

Summary

This staff report is being issued in advance of the public hearing scheduled with the Planning Commission on November 10, 2020. The proposal updates the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and related documents, and incorporates by reference the County's updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP helps fulfill the County's Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement for transportation planning. The following sections describe the regulatory background of the proposal; provide findings of fact concerning compliance with State and local requirements for environmental review and public comment; and provide the Department's recommendation to adopt the proposed updates. The project proposal website is at: www.skagitcounty.net/cfp.

Background

Goal 12 of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) provides that the County must "ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards." That goal is implemented in Skagit County planning documents in a variety of ways, including Skagit County Code Chapter 14.28, Concurrency, and through this proposal, an update of the Capital Facilities Plan.

The introductory chapter of the proposal provides background information on what the GMA requires of the County for capital facilities planning, and how it is implemented in the Comprehensive Plan. The CFP document has two main parts: (1) county-owned or operated capital facilities, and (2) special purpose district capital facilities.

County-owned or operated capital facilities. The County's plan combines both an inventory of the County's existing capital facilities and the required financing plan for fulfilling unmet needs. The County's transportation financing plan is a separate document called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is incorporated into the CFP by reference.

Special purpose district capital facilities. The second half of the proposal includes the aggregated information from the various special purpose districts throughout the County that provide services necessary for development (fire, water, sewer, etc.). The County does not have authority to manage or approve those inventories or plans, but the GMA requires that the County, in its role as a regional government, to both acquire and present that information for use by the various special purpose districts in coordinating their own planning.

Proposal

Plan Updates

The Department has provided a track-changes version of the new plan on the webpage (www.skagitcounty.net/cfp) for comparison to last year's plan. The changes are largely updates to the projects and values contained in last year's plan. The Anacortes-Guemes Island ferry replacement and update project and project funding sources are included in this plan, and elaborated on within the proposed Transportation Improvement Program. Additionally, the Stormwater Management section has been expanded to include an in depth overview of the department. The remainder of the updates are focused on removing projects that have been completed and updating future projects to better reflect anticipated costs, funding sources, and timing.

Analysis and Consistency

The statute requires a jurisdiction's Capital Facilities Plan to include the following elements: (a) an inventory of existing capital facilities; (b) a forecast of future needs for those facilities [including] (c) the proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities; (d) at least a six-year financing plan using projected funding capacities and clearly identified sources of public money; and (e) a requirement to reassess the land use element.

The proposal amends the Comprehensive Plan to update both the required capital facilities inventory and the six-year financing plan. The capital facilities planning policies in Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10 remain the same. This year's updated document helps continue the County's compliance with the Growth Management Act for capital facilities planning.

Findings of Fact

The following section describes the Department's compliance with both the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the Growth Management Act (GMA) concerning this proposal:

1. *Compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 97-11 WAC and SCC Title 16):*
 - Staff prepared an environmental checklist for the proposed CFP and TIP revisions, and the SEPA official issued a threshold Determination of Non-Significance on October 12, 2020.
 - No agency or public comments have been received as of the writing of this report. Any comments received prior to the close of the comment period will be presented to the Planning Commission at the scheduled public hearing.

Conclusions – The proposed code amendment will meet local and State SEPA requirements at the conclusion of the comment period on November 10, 2020.

2. *Procedural Compliance with the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.106):*

- The County must obtain approval from the Department of Commerce prior to adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.
- The County requested review from the Department of Commerce on October 12, 2020.
- The Department of Commerce has received the 60-Day Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendment on October 13, 2020
- Staff will file the ordinance with the Department of Commerce within 10 days of the County Commission’s action.
- Based on the projects, locations, and levels of service described in the CFP, a reassessment of the land use element of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan is not required.

Conclusions – The proposed code amendment will meet the Growth Management Act requirements.

3. *Public Notice and Comments*

- The County will publish a Notice of Availability, Public Comment, and SEPA threshold determination in the Skagit Valley Herald on October 15, 2020.
- The County posted the staff report, public notice, and threshold determination on the County website on October 15, 2020.
- No agency or public comments have been received for the Capital Facilities Plan as of the writing of this staff report. Any comments received prior to the close of the comment period will be presented to the Planning Commission prior to deliberations.

Conclusions – The County has met the public noticing requirements per SCC 14.08.070.

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Planning Commission issues a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the attached updated Capital Facilities Plan.

Public Comment

The proposal will receive at least one public hearing and written comment period before the Planning Commission, consistent with the process for adoption of plans and land use regulations in SCC Chapter 14.08. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will have its own public hearing and comment period with the Board of County Commissioners on November 24, 2020. The Board of County Commissioners takes action on the CFP and TIP through the budget process in December. Information on how to comment is contained in the Notice of Availability document on the project website.

For More Information

Please visit the project website at www.skagitcounty.net/cfp.