Washington State Department of Commerce

Collaborative Roadmap Phase IV: Final report on integrating water, sewer, school, and port districts into the GMA planning process

Pursuant to Chapter 376, Laws of 2024 (SB 5950, Sec. 128(34))

December 16, 2025

Report to the Legislature

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GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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Executive summary

The Collaborative Roadmap is a multi-year research and analysis project led by the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to make recommendations to update the state's growth policy framework. This framework consists of state laws that govern/influence the strategies state agencies and local governments use to plan for, implement, and manage land use policy, permitting and appeals, infrastructure, and environmental protections. This is the final report of the Collaborative Roadmap, Phase IV and the preliminary report was published earlier this year.

Authorizing legislation

Chapter 376, Laws of 2024 (SB 5950, Sec. 128(34)) requires Commerce to continue the Growth Management Collaborative Roadmap. Now in its fourth phase, Commerce must:

> [C]onvene a task force to make recommendations on integrating water, sewer, school, and port districts into the growth management act planning process. The task force shall build upon the findings, concepts, and recommendations in recent reports, including the "collaborative roadmap phase III" report prepared for the department in 2023 and the "roadmap to Washington's future" issued by the William D. Ruckelshaus center in 2019. The task force must involve diverse perspectives including but not limited to representatives of state agencies, cities, counties, special districts, tribal governments, builders, and planning and environmental organizations that have experience with local or special purpose district planning processes. [Commerce] must provide a preliminary report on the task force's activities and progress by June 30, 2025. It is the intent of the Legislature to continue funding the study in the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium, with a final report with recommendations due December 1, 2025.

Past reports and studies, which include the Land Use Study Commission (1998), Governor's Land Use Agenda (2006), A Road Map to Washington's Future (Phase I, 2019), Updating Washington's Growth Policy Framework (Phase II, 2021), and the Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (Phase III, 2023), provide a foundation for Phase IV of the Collaborative Roadmap (2025) and new recommendations to enhance planning and coordination for local governments.

Recommendations

The Task Force's recommendations span over-arching coordination efforts that may apply to all special purpose districts, cities, and counties, and unique recommendations that may enhance coordination efforts for select districts or situations that arise in the existing growth policy framework. They include ideas that would both enhance the existing framework and right-size planning requirements. Recommendations focus on making the laws and code governing growth and development work better and on providing local governments with tools to help them address some of our most pressing issues.

The Task Force provided nine recommendations across a broad spectrum of the growth policy framework for the Legislature to consider. Appendix A contains the full details for all recommendations.

1) Increased comprehensive plan coordination
2) Increased countywide planning policy (CPP) coordination
3) Project permit notifications
4) Tools and technical resources
5) Incentivize coordination and coordinated projects
6) Coordinated water system plans timing
7) School district planning and siting
8) Long-term protection of industrial lands
9) Port and economic development elements

Introduction

Project overview and purpose

The Collaborative Roadmap is a multi-year research and analysis project led by Commerce, as directed by the Legislature, to make recommendations to update the state's growth policy framework. This framework consists of state laws that govern/influence the strategies state agencies and local governments use to plan for, implement, and manage land use policy, permitting and appeals, infrastructure, and environmental protections.

Phase IV focuses on identifying options to increase coordination between jurisdictions and special districts, such as school districts, ports, and water/sewer/public utility districts (PUD). Special districts provide many of the facilities and services necessary for cities to implement their vision for the community as adopted in their comprehensive plan. Special districts also have their own mandates that are affected by the work of cities and counties. Identifying opportunities to increase coordination between jurisdictions and special districts has been a consistent theme throughout the previous Roadmap projects.

A Road Map to Washington's Future (2019) included a recommendation to find ways to integrate water and sewer districts, school districts, and port district planning into the Growth Management Act (GMA). Collaborative Roadmap Phase IV builds upon previous efforts, providing the working groups and Task Force with the historical context necessary to make informed decisions. Past reports and studies, which include the Land Use Study Commission (1998), Governor's Land Use Agenda (2006), A Road Map to Washington's Future (Phase I, 2019), Updating Washington's Growth Policy Framework (Phase II, 2021), and the Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (Phase III, 2023), provide a foundation for the Collaborative Roadmap Phase IV (Phase IV: 2025) project.

The Collaborative Roadmap Phase III project built upon this recommendation and emphasized that the process should focus on:

- Convene a collaborative process(es) with, at a minimum, representatives of state agencies, cities, counties, builders, special districts, Tribal governments, and planning and environmental organizations that have experience with local and/or special district planning processes.
- Focus on increasing planning between jurisdictions and special districts to better implement utility and capital facility planning requirements under the Growth Management Act.
- Focus on methods to help ensure that special districts can more fully incorporate local comprehensive plans as they plan for the utilities and capital facilities necessary to accommodate growth during the planning period.
- Focus on identifying legislative changes that will increase coordination during permitting processes that impact special districts while limiting new planning requirements.

Commerce created a Collaborative Roadmap webpage to allow for convenient and accessible information sharing. All project reports will be made available on the project webpage, as well as the project timeline and project contact information. This report, the recommendations, and recordings or minutes from Task Force meetings posted to the webpage.

Problem definition

Currently, numerous services are required to implement the growth plans of jurisdictions. Despite this, laws and processes do not align. Increasing the challenges jurisdictions and special purpose districts face are limited staffing and time availability, the number of jurisdictions and special purpose districts to coordinate with, and differing needs between jurisdictions and special purpose districts.

Cities and counties are not alone in providing capital facilities necessary to support growth (population, housing, and jobs). School districts, port districts, and water/sewer/PUDs are distinct from cities and counties. In many

cases, special districts work under separate state laws and rules and have separate administrative structures that cross multiple city and county boundaries.

The goal of this project is to find solutions for increasing coordination between jurisdictions and special districts. This includes looking for opportunities to right-size statutes, rules, and processes to ensure that requirements are aligned with the capacity and size limitations of both jurisdictions and special purpose districts.

More coordination may help with:

- Better overall planning.
- Increasing understanding between jurisdictions and special purpose districts.
- Providing opportunities to link resources and support to each other, focusing on better outcomes.

To achieve the project goals and directions from the legislature, the project team established a continuous participation process to engage diverse groups, through working groups and a Task Force, to make recommendations to the Legislature on ways to better integrate capital facility and utility planning efforts of outside service providers with GMA requirements. In addition, the project team engaged with Tribes, other interested parties, legislators, and communities who have been left out of public policy decision-making and who are unevenly impacted by those decisions.

Project schedule

Over the course of a year, the project achieved numerous goals. Professionals and subject matter experts were united in working groups to compile issues to address and provide initial concepts for addressing those issues. Those concepts were presented to the Task Force to workshop into legislative recommendations. The project schedule below outlines key dates when project reports and recommendations are due. The schedule also provides a high-level overview of when the project Task Force and working groups will meet. This is critically important as the Task Force recommendations will be the foundation for future reports.

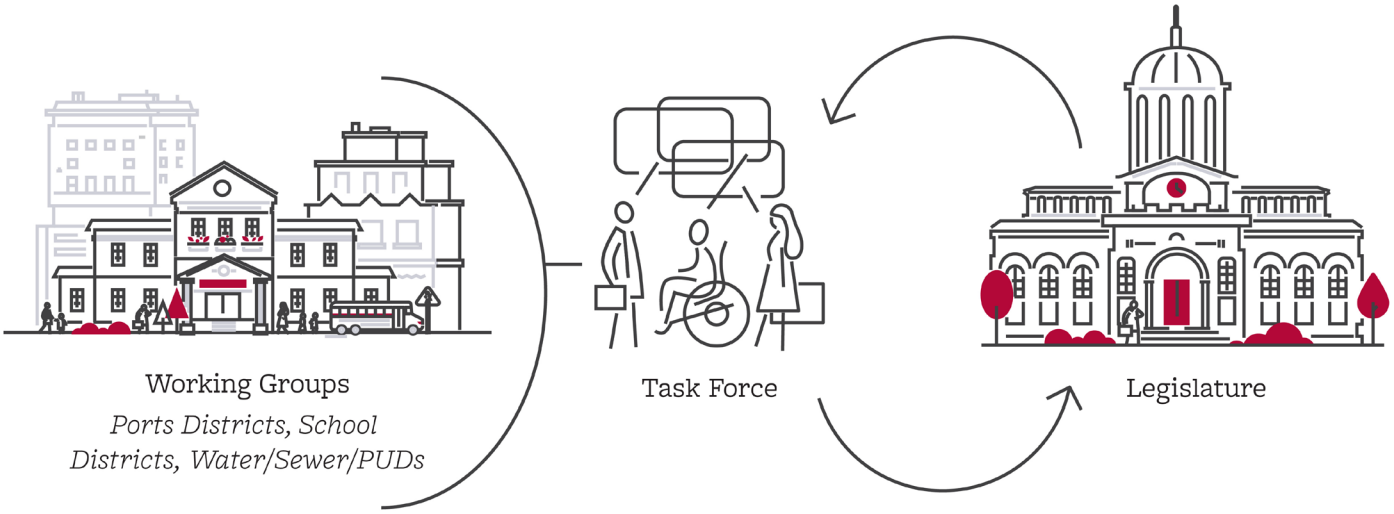
- September 6, 2024: Collaborative Roadmap, Phase IV, begins.
- November 2024 to November 2025: Task Force and workgroup meetings.
- June 30, 2025: Preliminary report to the Legislature.
- December 1, 2025: Final report to the Legislature.
- June 30, 2026: Develop final outreach tools to support best practices recommendations, and project closeout.

Throughout the process, the Collaborative Roadmap Phase IV webpage maintained project updates and reports.

Developing the recommendations

The engagement strategy primarily focused on the working groups and the Task Force. This method enables the project to gather specialized feedback and recommendations from various groups, with the goal of fostering greater collaboration between individual organizations and jurisdictions. The following establishes the process, which begins with the working groups making recommendations to the Task Force, which provides a final set of recommendations to the Legislature for consideration.

Figure one: Process to develop Task Force recommendations



Working groups

Working groups for each special purpose district type were organized to identify recommendations around their unique planning issues. Three separate working groups focused on Ports, Schools, and Water/Sewer/PUD. Each working group met three times between January and April. Working groups comprised 10-15 members from the respective special district types and cities/counties, including diverse representatives from across the state.

After adequately defining the problem with the working groups and Task Force, the project team assembled a library of existing statutes and rules to identify gaps and opportunities in existing legislation, from which to build the recommendations in this report. See the Library of Statutes and Rules in Appendix B.

Working Group meetings identified the following issues, which are also detailed in Appendix C:

- Timing of public and special district participation in growth management planning.
- Assistance from the State of Washington.
- Integration of school siting during growth management planning.
- Coordination of utility relocation and improvements.
- Protection of transition zoning outside of Ports.
- Planning for a variety of employment types.
- Urban service extensions in rural areas for schools.
- Grant incentives.
- Coordination on emergency planning.
- Planning alignment in the fastest-growing communities.

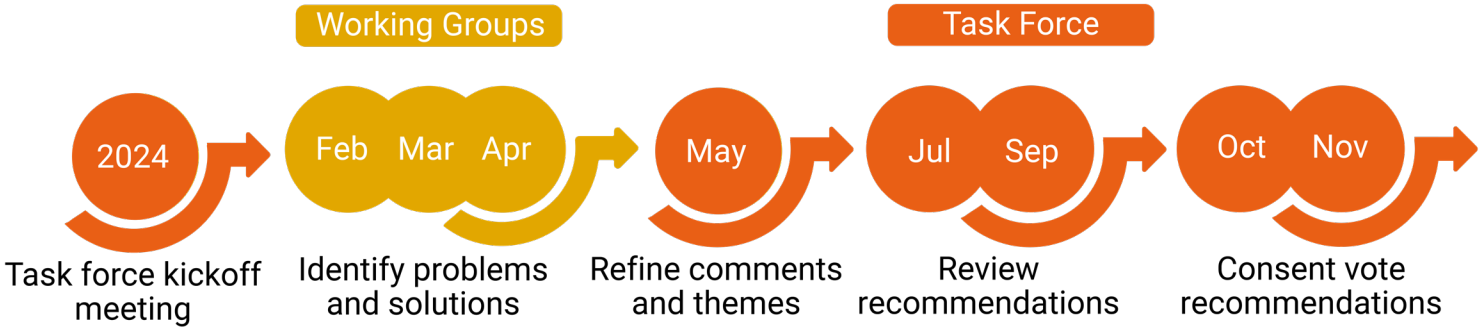
Task Force

The Task Force is made up of cities, counties, state agencies, special purpose districts (school districts, ports, water and sewer districts), planners, and community members often excluded or unevenly impacted by unaligned planning efforts between jurisdictions and special purpose districts. Task Force members are organized below by interest area, member, and organization:

- Builders: Andrea Smiley, Building Industry Association of Washington
- Cities: Carl Shroeder, Association of Washington Cities
- Counties: Paul Jewell, Washington State Association of Counties
- Environment: Bryce Yadon, Yadon Consulting
- Planning: Robin Proebsting, American Planning Association-WA
- Ports: Eric Ffitch, Washington Public Ports Association
- Public utilities: Travis Nelson, Washington Public Utility Districts Association
- School districts: Jeff Mann, Bethel School District
- State agencies:
  - Dave Andersen, Washington State Department of Commerce
  - Brian Sayrs, Washington State Department of Health
- Water and sewer districts: Kathy Curry, Woodinville Water

The Task Force met seven times between Nov. 2024 and Nov. 2025. The first few meetings involved reviewing issues discussed with the working groups. Through an iterative process (see Figure two), the project team filtered the issues and solutions discussed with the Task Force into a series of recommendations, which were reviewed at five meetings. Between Aug. and Oct. 2025, the Phase IV project team also met with Task Force members individually to discuss specific recommendations and evaluate their feasibility and potential impacts.

Figure two: Timeline for task force recommendation development

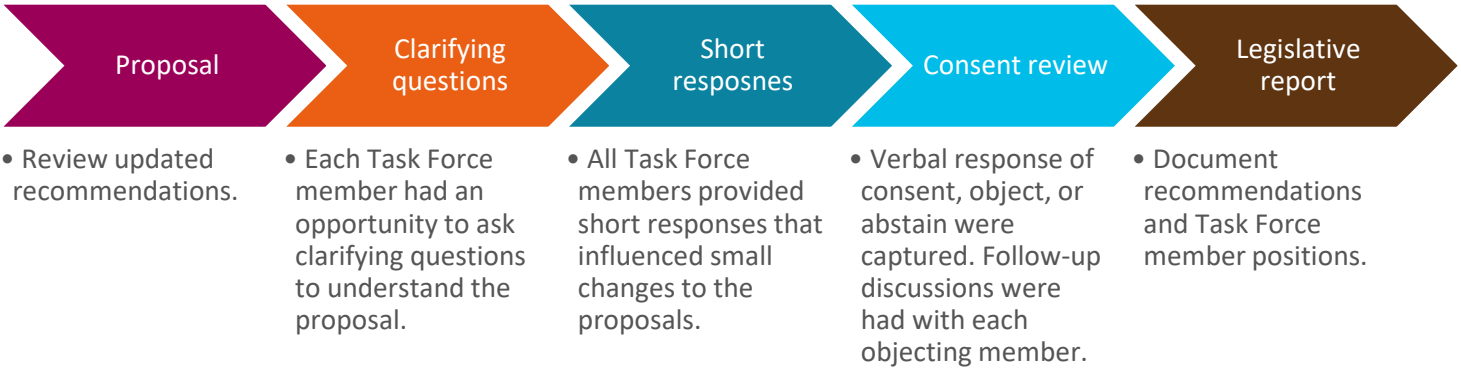


Consent decision-making

To support equity, the project team facilitated Task Force meetings using a consent decision-making process. This process used simple majority rule. It also emphasized the importance of a clear, shared understanding of proposals and the value of input from all members of the group. Using this method, the Task Force reached majority consent on nine recommendations.

Both consent and objections were captured, making it clear who expressed support or concerns regarding the recommendation. As part of the review of the draft recommendations, the project team scheduled follow-up meetings with Task Force members who objected to recommendations.

Figure three: Consent decision-making process



Other engagement efforts

Additional engagement efforts were intended to gather specific feedback from other parties not directly involved with the project, as well as to showcase the project and garner support.

In Sept. 2025, the project team met with representatives from the following groups to review draft recommendations. The purpose was to ensure that the recommendations could be widely accepted and implemented.

- Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
- Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW)
- School Districts
- Commerce Dept. of Health (DOH)
- Commerce Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)
- Commerce staff for the Small Communities Initiative (SCI)
- Commerce staff for the Public Works Board (PWB)

Legislative recommendations

The Legislature charged the Task Force with building upon past work to make recommendations on how to better integrate and improve coordination between water, sewer, school, and port districts with the growth management act planning process.

As detailed above, the recommendations stem from the participation of the working groups and the Task Force, in addition to input from other stakeholders. Each recommendation has undergone significant review and discussion, and includes the following:

- Summary of the topic
- Summary of the recommendation
- Topic overview and background
- Description of the issue
- Statutes to amend
- Anticipated budget impacts
- Connection to a previous study
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

The Task Force's work as part of this Collaborative Roadmap Phase IV includes nine recommendations across a broad spectrum of the growth policy framework for the Legislature to consider. Full details of the Task Force's nine recommendations are available in Appendix A.

1) Increased comprehensive plan coordination
2) Increased countywide planning policy (CPP) coordination
3) Project permit notifications
4) Tools and technical resources
5) Incentivize coordination and coordinated projects
6) Coordinated water system plans timing
7) School district planning and siting
8) Long-term protection of industrial lands
9) Port and economic development elements

Overarching issues

During Task Force deliberations, three overarching issues were apparent, and which crosscut the detailed issue areas outlined in Appendix C. The Task Force recognizes these issues present both challenges and opportunities across multiple recommendations and issue areas.

Governance

Local governments and special districts each operate under their own governing bodies, mandates, and long-term visions. As a result, effective regional coordination requires collaboration and shared decision-making. Both of which can feel, expressed by many Task Force members, like giving up a degree of organizational autonomy. While the recommendations aim to strengthen alignment across jurisdictions, they cannot fully resolve the fundamental question of “who is in charge.” In practice, governance relies as much on relationships and day-to-day interactions among decision makers as on statutory authority. Any successful approach will therefore depend on sustained cooperation, trust-building, and a willingness to compromise across organizational boundaries.

Timing and implementation.

In 2025, local governments are navigating some of the most significant updates to Washington's planning framework since the first GMA plans of the early 1990s. Many jurisdictions are already operating at capacity, managing extensive workloads with limited resources. As the Task Force developed its recommendations, members consistently emphasized this constraint: the ability of local governments to absorb additional complex planning requirements is limited. Implementation strategies must therefore account for timing, bandwidth, and the practical realities facing staff and elected officials.

Organizational capacity differences.

Washington's cities, counties, and special purpose districts vary widely in size, staffing, and technical capacity. This diversity is often even more pronounced among special districts, with some water and sewer districts serving thousands of connections, while others are serving fewer than a dozen. As the Task Force evaluated its recommendations, a central consideration was how to scale expectations to each organization's capacity, growth rate, and service needs. Rapidly growing communities face escalating infrastructure demands, while others focus primarily on maintaining existing systems. Future laws and policies will need to employ thoughtful applicability thresholds to ensure that requirements match both the capacity of each organization and scale of its challenges.

Other identified opportunities without recommendations

The Task Force identified additional barriers to coordination, but related solutions and formal recommendations could not be incorporated at this time. Chiefly, commercial and industrial land capacity likely plays a critical role in future collaboration discussions.

Commercial and industrial land capacity

The GMA focuses on growth (people and jobs) within existing urban growth areas (UGAs). As urbanization occurs, there may be a need to provide more detailed planning around housing and jobs, and the connection between the two. Recent housing element changes (RCW 36.70A.070) have focused the lens on planning for housing types that are affordable to all incomes.

This level of detailed planning could also be important for employment. Given the limited amount of industrial land available, it may be important to ensure that the employment capacity provided as part of the periodic update considers the land needed for commercial and industrial uses during the 20-year planning period.

As part of the Buildable Lands requirements, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, Thurston, Clark, and Whatcom counties and the cities within those counties are already required to consider these issues. However, there appears to be a gap in planning.

The Buildable Lands Program looks back to determine how growth is occurring in relation to what was adopted in the current comprehensive plan. As part of that process, a determination is made as to the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing for the remaining portion of the 20-year planning period. However, there is no requirement as part of the periodic update process to establish growth projections by employment type, which a Buildable Lands report would measure against.

The GMA (RCW 36.70A.115) does require accommodating "*as appropriate, the medical, governmental, educational, institutional, commercial, and industrial facilities related to such growth, as adopted in the applicable countywide planning policies and consistent with the twenty-year population forecast from the office of financial management.*"

However, nothing in the GMA outlines the process to determine what is appropriate. The potential to sync the current Buildable Lands requirements with the larger periodic update process would address the needs for different types of employment proactively, but the Task Force did not have a consensus view on how to achieve that.

Appendix A: Task Force recommendations

Each recommendation summary that follows will provide key details to inform it, including proposed statutory amendments, where appropriate. For accessibility reasons, each recommendation that provides a potential statutory amendment is available online and linked within the recommendation summary of each recommendation table. A list of all proposed statutory amendments for this report is also available online.

Recommendation 1 – Increased comprehensive plan coordination

Topic	Modify notification requirements for comprehensive plan and development regulation changes to increase coordination and communication between cities, counties, and capital facility and utility providers.
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should amend the GMA public participation notification requirements (RCW 36.70A.035). Specific language should be included to ensure special districts, which provide capital facilities and utilities to cities and counties, are invited to engage throughout the periodic comprehensive plan update process and when land use, zoning, or development regulations are proposed within their service area. Public participation plans should also address how cities and counties will communicate throughout the update process. Public participation plan requirements (RCW 36.70A.140) should also be amended to reference the requirements of RCW 36.70A.035 and requirements in RCW 36.70A.110(1), (9)(a) and (b), which require meaningful consultation with federally recognized Indian tribes for Urban Growth Area (UGA) swaps under RCW 36.70A.110(8). Proposed legislative changes for Recommendation 1
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Andrea Smiley, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Travis Nelson, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder **Object** – None **Abstain** – None **No vote recorded** – Jeffrey Mann
Topic overview and background	The GMA requires that each fully planning city and county comprehensive plan include both a capital facility and utility element (RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4)). Proper planning for capital facilities and utilities ensures services are available as growth occurs within communities. While cities and counties plan for growth, implementation requires close coordination and planning with school districts, ports, PUDs, water/sewer utilities, and fire districts. Land use and zoning changes, along with development regulation changes, can impact a provider's ability to provide services. Early communication and coordination is essential as future growth is planned. The GMA requires a full planning county and city to broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation as part of the periodic comprehensive plan update, which is completed every 10 years. The GMA also requires cities and counties to adopt notice procedures that are reasonably calculated to provide notice when amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulations are made. These may be amendments to land use and zoning maps, or development regulations associated with the periodic comprehensive plan update or changes made more frequently.
Issue	The public participation notice provisions (RCW 36.70A.035) currently identify many people and groups who should be provided notice when amendments to comprehensive plans and

Recommendation 1 – Increased comprehensive plan coordination

	development regulations are proposed. This includes affected individuals, tribes, and schools. However, ports and many capital facilities and utility providers are not included. More specific language will ensure all affected capital facilities and utility providers are notified when these changes are proposed by a city or county. Language is also proposed to call out capital facility and utility providers in the section focused on examples of providing reasonable notice. Currently, public participation plan requirements (RCW 36.70A.140) do not require cities or counties to provide capital facility and utility providers opportunities for early coordination on possible land use, zoning, or development regulation changes prior to dissemination of changes to the public. Connecting early in the process could provide opportunities to discuss the impacts of the proposal(s) and the capital facility and utility providers' ability to service future growth. By linking RCW 36.70.140 to noticing provisions in RCW 36.70A.035 and RCW 36.70A.110, opportunities for increased coordination can occur when amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulations are proposed.		
Possible statutes to be amended	RCW 36.70A.035 - Public participation—Notice provisions RCW 36.70A.140 - Comprehensive plans—Ensure public participation		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☐	No ☒	
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Increases focus on providing early coordination with service providers. 2) Increased coordination could result in fewer instances of having disconnects between comprehensive plans and plans by service providers. 3) Many jurisdictions may already take these steps in practice, so the impact to cities and counties should be minimal.		
Disadvantages	1) Could increase city/county staff time and/or resources to implement. 2) It could take additional time to identify which capital facility and utility providers to coordinate with.		

Recommendation 2 – Increased countywide planning policy coordination

Topic	Countywide planning policy (CPP) changes to increase early coordination between cities, counties, and service providers.
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should amend the GMA Countywide Planning Policy requirements (RCW 36.70A.140) to increase early coordination with special purpose districts early in the planning process. Proposed legislative changes for Recommendation 2
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Andrea Smiley, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Travis Nelson, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Carl Schroeder **Object** – None **Abstain** – Dave Andersen **No vote recorded** – Jeffrey Mann
Topic overview and background	CPPs are written policy statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. There are many common planning goals between a county and the cities within a county. CPPs provide a framework to capture those. CPPs focus on issues such as shared goals for planning in unincorporated urban growth areas, economic development strategies, and countywide transportation systems. CPPs are also where many communities adopt population, housing, and employment projections, which serve as the basis for the periodic comprehensive plan update process. Comprehensive plans are required to be consistent with CPPs. King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Pierce counties are required to update CPPs prior to the periodic comprehensive plan update cycle. It is optional in all other communities. Changes currently proposed as part of this recommendation would not change the update requirements. Also note that the process to adopt CPPs is memorialized by jurisdictions. Inviting other groups to participate would not necessarily make them members who would vote on CPP amendments.
Issue	RCW 36.70A.210 states that "*The legislature recognizes that counties are regional governments within their boundaries, and cities are primary providers of urban governmental services within urban growth areas*." While cities may be the primary provider of services, in many cases, they are not the only provider of urban governmental services, capital facilities, and utilities within urban growth areas. Currently, the CPP section of the GMA does not recognize the critical role that non-jurisdictional urban governmental service providers, ports, and school districts play as growth is facilitated. Given that the CPPs are where urban growth area policies are developed and growth is often allocated prior to each community completing a periodic comprehensive plan update, this could provide a great opportunity for enhancing early communication and coordination. Providing an optional opportunity for non-jurisdictional urban governmental service providers, ports, and school districts to be invited to participate in and cooperate with the countywide planning policy development and adoption process. Given that many urban governmental service providers, ports, and school district boundaries cover multiple jurisdictions, this could also provide an efficient way to communicate.

Recommendation 2 – Increased countywide planning policy coordination

Possible statutes to be amended	RCW 36.70A.210 – Countywide Planning Policies		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☐	No ☒	
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Provides opportunity to engage important planning partners earlier in the planning process. 2) Recognizes that urban governmental services are often not provided by cities and counties.		
Disadvantages	1) May require more meetings or processes to update CPPs. This includes costs to update, given that additional coordination may lead to additional CPP amendment requests to consider and/or respond to. Funding for CPP updates is typically not provided by the state.		

Recommendation 3 – Project permit notifications

Topic	Ensuring providers of capital facilities and utilities are notified of project permit applications.	
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should consider changes to city and county notification requirements for project permit applications (RCW 36.70B.110). This is intended to increase opportunities for coordination on project permit applications, such as rezones, subdivisions, and conditional use permits, for example, which are considered outside of the periodic comprehensive plan update. A separate recommendation has been prepared addressing coordination during the periodic comprehensive plan update process. Proposed statutory amendments for Recommendation 3	
Task Force Consent Votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Andrea Smiley, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Travis Nelson, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder **Object** – None **Abstain** – None **No vote recorded** – Jeffrey Mann	
Topic overview and background	RCW 36.70B - Local Project Review guides the process that counties and cities utilize to process permit applications. This statute implements Goal 7 of the GMA, which states that "*Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.*" Permit applications include any land-use or environmental permit or license required by a local government for a project action. This includes applications such as subdivisions and site-specific rezones, for example.	
Issue	Non-county and city service providers, such as special purpose districts, play an important role in providing necessary services to development projects. Some projects, such as rezoning to increase a property's density, could impact a service provider's ability to provide needed services. This is especially true if the use exceeds the densities or uses anticipated by the county or city. RCW 36.70A.110 provides the process that counties and cities utilize when public notice is required for a project permit application. While the current statute states that "*…reasonable methods to give the notice of application to the public and agencies with jurisdiction…*", the statute does not specify that non-jurisdictional capital facility and utility providers are provided public notice. To address this, the notice of application requirements could be modified to ensure the notice of application is provided to capital facility and utility providers. This type of notice is already occurring in many jurisdictions across the State of Washington. However, small modifications to RCW 36.70B.110 will ensure capital facility and utility providers are notified when cities and counties are processing project permit applications.	
Possible statutes to be amended	RCW 36.70B.110	
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☐	No ☒

Recommendation 3 – Project permit notifications

Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Ensures providers of services are provided notice of applications that could impact their services. 2) Many jurisdictions already provide this type of notification. 3) This recommendation does not add new notice requirements. It provides statutory clarity on important groups for whom notification is required.		
Disadvantages	1) Could require jurisdictions to increase those notified of permit applications. It could take time to identify those to send notice to.		

Recommendation 4 – Tools and technical resources

Topic	Under the GMA, RCW 36.70A, cities and counties have varied planning requirements. To better support cities and counties in implementing the GMA, the state provides a variety of resources, tools, and data. Typically, these tools are administered through the Department of Commerce and the department's associated budget for ongoing assistance.		
Recommendation	The State should provide cities, counties, and special districts, especially those with fewer resources, with additional technical resources to assist in meeting capital facility and utility element planning requirements under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4)). If other departments, organizations, or agencies are better suited, the Department of Commerce should coordinate with them to create and publish resource materials. This should include: 1) Templates to gather existing conditions and financial data from special purpose districts for capital facility plans. 2) Provide tools and data to better facilitate coordination. 3) Text templates that explain the purpose of capital facility and utility plans and why gathering information from special districts is critical. 4) Help identify early indicators of growth constraints for cities, counties, and special districts, especially in our faster-growing communities. 5) Develop trainings designed to help cities, counties, and special purpose districts understand each other's roles and collaborate more effectively, such as identifying constraints and limitations in current plans and processes. This could be included as part of the existing local short course on planning.		
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Andrea Smiley, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Travis Nelson, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Carl Schroeder **Object** – None **Abstain** – Dave Andersen **No vote recorded** – Jeffrey Mann		
Topic overview and background	Based on discussions with the working groups and task force, several tools have been identified that may support cities, counties, and service providers in their planning efforts. Templates for capital facility planning may assist county/city staff in efficiently gathering necessary information during the Comprehensive Plan periodic update, consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4). Given the strict timelines associated with the update process, planning staff often have limited opportunities to collect data from service providers, making streamlined tools especially valuable.		
Issue	Mandating additional requirements in statute can strain cities and counties, as well as staff capacity. One way to make planning requirements easier to implement could be funding, through the Department of Commerce, to provide templates, tools, and other resources for cities, counties, and service providers to better coordinate.		
Possible statutes to be amended	No statutes to be amended.		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Although this recommendation has implications for the state budget, it is anticipated that the necessary funding will be provided through existing allocations within the Department of Commerce.

Recommendation 4 – Tools and technical resources

Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Ease and simplicity of coordination and outreach. 2) Efficiency in communication. 3) Assist jurisdictions with fewer resources. 4) Tools such as templates would only need to be created once and would not create recurring costs for the State.		
Disadvantages	1) Providing tools and resources often have ongoing costs that would need to be balanced against other priorities for the Commerce budget. 2) Funding to provide ongoing tools and technical resources may be challenging to provide over a long period.		

Recommendation 5 – Incentivize coordination and coordinated projects

Topic	Incentivize Coordination and Coordinated Projects
Recommendation	Agencies that provide grants and loans to cities, counties, and special purpose districts should implement options to increase early coordination and incentivize (road, water, sewer, power) projects where multiple projects are coordinated together, such as road and sewer improvements. This could include the following recommendations: 1) Requiring documentation as part of grant and loan applications within road rights-of-way, demonstrating notification to other agencies that own roads/utilities within the right-of-way, has occurred. Notification that a grant or loan is being applied for could open early opportunities for project coordination. 2) Requiring documentation as part of grant and loan applications within road rights-of-way, asking if the system improvement supports growth anticipated within the adopted county or city comprehensive plan. 3) Incentivize projects or consider scoring priority for projects where multiple projects are addressed within one grant or loan application and where demonstrated project savings could occur. This could occur even where funding sources are separate. Ensure that priority scoring does not negatively impact the ability of small utilities or those where coordination is not possible (such as not having utilities in the road right-of-way) from receiving project funding. 4) Consider developing a statewide GIS database to collect data from cities, counties, and capital facility and utility providers to understand where there are programmed projects across different jurisdictions and agencies. This data could be collected by the State, in partnership with cities and counties, from capital facility plans, and show where there may be crossover for planned projects. This could increase options to coordinate projects, increase project efficiency, and save project dollars. This database could be limited to urban growth areas or faster-growing areas, and when implemented, grant and loan applications could be contingent or scored higher/lower based on the data being provided.
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Andrea Smiley, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Travis Nelson, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder **Object** – None **Abstain** – None **No vote recorded** – Jeffrey Mann
Topic overview and background	Capital facilities and utilities are often located within road rights-of-way. In addition to a city or county owning the road, water, sewer, and power are often located within the same right-of-way and owned by different service providers. Improvements to capital facilities and utilities may occur to replace systems that have outlived their lifespan. Improvements may also occur to increase the capacity necessary to facilitate development and redevelopment within urban areas. The need to upgrade systems to facilitate urbanization is likely to increase in our fastest-growing communities. Where more than one agency has improvements planned within the same right-of-way within a short period of time, finding ways to connect projects could increase project efficiency, save project dollars, and lessen impacts to businesses and the transportation system, which can occur during projects that impact road rights-of-way during reconstruction.

Recommendation 5 – Incentivize coordination and coordinated projects

Issue	Coordination of projects across different agencies for water, sewer, power, or road improvements within the same geographical area could provide increased project efficiency, save project dollars, and lessen impacts to businesses and the transportation system, which can occur during projects that impact road rights-of-way during reconstruction. However, this is a complicated topic to address for several reasons: 1) There are often several different agencies/private companies that own capital facilities or utilities within a right-of-way. 2) Grant and loan programs for projects are often designed to fund a road improvement or sewer/water improvement but may not support multiple projects. This creates issues with concurrent funding. 3) In addition to cities and/or counties, there are often many capital facilities and utility owners. This makes project coordination more difficult. 4) There are challenges to having multiple agencies working on a project within the same right-of-way. This includes facilitation of grants/loans, grant/loan timing, liability issues, and coordination of contractors, to name a few. 5) While coordination projects across agencies may be efficient, there are no known incentives for agencies to take extra steps to ensure projects are well coordinated. Documenting that coordination has occurred as part of grant and loan programs and incentivizing best practices may provide opportunities to link projects. In a meeting with the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and Public Works Board (PWB), it was noted that application changes can occur administratively. Therefore, no RCW or WAC changes would be required. Creating a state GIS database, linking capital facility plans, could provide even greater opportunities to link projects early in the process and find long-term ways to incentivize these projects.		
Possible statutes to be amended	None proposed		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Recommendations 1-3 listed above are not expected to incur a state budget impact. Recommendation 4 may require funding.
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Recommendations could increase communication and opportunities to coordinate projects across agencies. 2) Recommendations 1-3 do not require statute or rule changes. 3) Recommendations 1-3 do not require additional state funding. 4) Recommendation 4, when implemented, may pay for itself through early identification of projects. This could lead to increased opportunities for co-funding projects.		

Recommendation 5 – Incentivize coordination and coordinated projects

Disadvantages	1) May create additional information and steps for grant and load applicants. 2) Coordinating projects may create project efficiency. However, it could create more work for the agencies coordinating projects. 3) Recommendation 4 would require state resources to implement and maintain.

Recommendation 6 – Coordinated water system plans timing

Topic	The timing of capital facility and utility plan updates by counties and cities as part of the periodic comprehensive plan update and plan updates that inform that process.
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should consider amending RCW 70A.100.050 and the implementing rules in WAC 246-293 to require updating Coordinated Water System Plans (CWSPs) every 10 years, provided funding is available for those updates. The timing of the updated plan should align with the city and county comprehensive plan updates, which utilize CWSPs as part of capital facility planning. Proposed statutory amendments for Recommendation 6
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder, Jeffrey Mann, Andrea Smiley, Travis Nelson **Object** – None **Abstain** – None **No vote recorded** – None
Topic overview and background	**Growth Management Act** The GMA requires fully planning counties and cities to complete a periodic comprehensive plan update every 10 years. The timing for periodic comprehensive plan updates is found in RCW 36.70A.130(5). The periodic comprehensive plan process focuses on planning for the next 20 years of growth (people, jobs, and housing) and includes important goals such as: 1) Update policies and regulations to reflect changes in state law and case law since the last plan update. 2) Update critical area regulations in accordance with the latest Best Available Science (BAS). 3) Implement community vision for the next 20 years. Planning for 20 years of growth requires planning for all the infrastructure to support that growth, including capital facilities and utilities. However, counties and cities do not always provide all the capital facilities and utilities needed to support planned growth. **Coordinated Water System Plans** The Public Water System Coordination Act of 1977 (RCW 70A.100) and implementing rules (WAC 246-293) provide the foundation for coordinated water system plans. The purpose of RCW 70A.100 is to: 1) To provide for the establishment of critical water supply service areas related to water utility planning and development; 2) To provide for the development of minimum planning and design standards for critical water supply service areas to ensure that water systems developed in these areas are consistent with regional needs; 3) To assist in the orderly and efficient administration of state financial assistance programs for public water systems; and 4) To assist public water systems to meet reasonable standards of quality, quantity, and pressure. The development and updating of coordinated water system plans implements this directive by providing "*…a plan for public water systems within a critical water supply service area which identifies the present and future needs of the systems and sets forth means for meeting those needs in the most efficient manner possible...*" (RCW 70A.100.030).

Recommendation 6 – Coordinated water system plans timing

Issue	When a county or city completes the periodic update, capital facility and utility elements are updated. The capital facility plan, which is part of the capital facility element, carries requirements such as having: 1) At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identify sources of public money for such purposes. 2) A requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent. When capital facilities and utilities cannot support growth as planned, the land-use element of a city or county comprehensive plan must be reevaluated. This emphasizes the importance of planning, which occurs to support growth planning. Coordinated Water System Plans provide valuable information that is necessary for cities and counties as they plan for growth. In fact, when plans are updated, the plan is reviewed by the county legislative authority(ies) in the county(ies) in which the critical water supply service area is located, and at least one hearing must be held. (WAC 246-293-300). This emphasizes the importance of Coordinated Water System Planning and implementing jurisdictions. However, pursuant to WAC 246-293-280, "*The coordinated water system plan shall be reviewed and updated by the water utility coordinating committee at a minimum of every five years or sooner, if the water utility coordinating committee feels it is necessary…"* While updating Coordinated Water System Plans is valuable, the lack of funding is a barrier in many communities to updating these plans.		
Possible statutes to be amended	Based upon the GMA and implementing rule language, possible statutes to amend would correspond with the following services: RCW 70A.100.050 - Development of water system plans for critical water supply service areas. WAC 246-293-280 - Coordinated water system plan—Update. (Note that rule changes would be required for consistency with statutory changes.)		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☒	No☐	
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Would result in greater consistency between capital facility planning and coordinated water system plans. 2) Would provide cities and counties with better information when planning for growth and developing capital facility plans. 3) Funding to support a Coordinated Water System Plan will ensure plan updates occur.		
Disadvantages	1) Cost to fund coordinated water system plan updates and determine a consistent funding source.		

Recommendation 7 – School district planning and siting

Topic	Improve coordination and planning between cities, counties, and school districts.
Recommendation	The state's current approach to planning and funding schools has been observed as a barrier to increased planning and coordination between counties, cities, and school districts. The Legislature should consider further studying and working with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to revise funding formulas and approaches to school planning. This effort should focus on modifying processes to allow school districts to anticipate growth, proactively plan, and build infrastructure, such as schools, in alignment with adopted city and county comprehensive plans. This effort should focus on our fastest-growing cities, counties, and school districts.
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder, Jeffrey Mann, Andrea Smiley, Travis Nelson **Object** – None **Abstain** – None **No vote recorded** – None
Topic overview and background	Cities, counties, and school districts across Washington State collaborate under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to align school infrastructure planning with local comprehensive plans. RCW 36.70A.070(3) requires jurisdictions to include school district capital facility plans in their capital facilities element, incorporating inventories of existing facilities, forecasts of future needs, proposed locations and capacities for new schools, and a six-year financing plan with identified funding sources. In many communities, this partnership also supports the adoption and implementation of impact fees to help fund school capacity needs. However, impact fees typically cover only a small portion of the costs and are often reduced or capped, limiting their effectiveness. This recommendation highlights the importance of strengthening coordination to ensure school infrastructure planning supports long-term community development. While cities, counties, and many other capital facility service providers plan proactively for future growth to anticipate capital facility improvements necessary to maintain levels of service, as defined in WAC 365-196-210(26), the process for school districts is much more challenging. To better align school planning with that of cities and counties, several issues would need to be addressed, especially in our faster-growing communities. This recommendation outlines those issues that the Legislature should consider if it wishes to take this up in coordination with the OSPI.
Issues	Cities and counties update comprehensive plans every ten years. One of the primary goals for a comprehensive plan is to plan for and accommodate the next 20 years of people, jobs, and housing, while ensuring transportation facilities and infrastructure, parks, utilities, schools, and capital facilities are planned for and improvements subsequently implemented to accommodate that growth. When growth outpaces the services necessary to accommodate that growth, the GMA includes *"a requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs…"* (RCW 36.70A.070(3)(e)). Measuring the ability to provide capital facilities and services for growth is often expressed through adopted levels of service. While cities, counties, and many other service providers proactively plan for growth, the process for planning schools is often reactive. If the goal, especially in our fastest-growing communities, is to have schools anticipate and plan for growth, and to anticipate the need for schools where growth is planned, planning processes need to change. This includes the following three issues: 1) Land for future schools 2) Land necessary to accommodate schools 3) Process to fund and build schools

Recommendation 7 – School district planning and siting

1. Land for future schools

In Washington's fastest-growing communities, school districts struggle to locate and purchase properties for future school sites. They often cannot compete with the private sector for property purchases, and the number of sites available within existing cities and unincorporated UGAs that are large enough to accommodate future schools is sparse at best. As a result, school districts face the following challenges:

4) They must purchase available properties when acquisition funding is accessible, often requiring long-term holding.
5) They are obligated to acquire and hold land outside UGA boundaries when future development is permissible.
6) They struggle to find suitable sites for schools, limiting their ability to meet capacity demands from previously approved residential developments.

This means that there is often no relationship between where school districts are purchasing properties for future school sites and where cities and counties are planning for the next 20 years of people, jobs, and housing. It also means that growth is permitted without first planning for adequate school facilities. If this trend continues, it is likely that we will often see new schools' facilities, especially in the Puget Sound region, built further away from areas where growth is being focused or not constructed at all. The first issue is evidenced by RCW 36.70A.211and RCW 36.70A.213. These sections of the GMA outline conditions for siting schools in rural areas that will serve urban populations. The latter issue is not addressed.

Puget Sound Regional Council estimates 1.8 million new people and 1.2 million jobs coming to King, Snohomish, Kitsap, and Pierce Counties between 2017 and 2050 alone. This region is also focused on maintaining existing UGA boundaries and focusing growth within existing urban areas. While RCW 36.70A.211and RCW 36.70A.213 provide some short-term options to ensure schools have land to accommodate future students; it is important that this issue is recognized and proactively addressed. If this can occur, it is more likely that future schools will be planned in a consistent manner with where cities and counties are planning for growth.

2. Land necessary to accommodate schools

WAC 392-342-020(2) states that "*The minimum acreage of the site should be five usable acres and one additional usable acre for each one hundred students or portion thereof of projected maximum enrollment plus an additional five usable acres if the school contains any grade above grade six. A district considering the use of a site that is less than the recommended minimum usable acreage should assure that:*
(a) The health and safety of the students will not be in jeopardy;
(b) The internal spaces within the proposed facility will be adequate for the proposed educational program;
(c) The neighborhood in which the school facility is or will be situated will not be detrimentally impacted by lack of parking for students, employees, and the public; and
(d) The physical education and recreational program requirements will be met."
This means that for a new high school with a capacity of 1,500 students, the minimum acreage which should be considered is 25 acres, unless each of the findings in (a)-(d) is met. It is also noteworthy that the current rule utilizes the term "usable acres." This means that for sites that may have critical areas or other encumbrances, the acreage needed to site new schools may be much larger. The current OSPI manual (page 114) references WAC 392-342-020.

The Legislature should consider whether minimum acreage requirements and the criteria to vary from those requirements should be amended. Amendments would recognize that in our fastest-growing communities, large school sites, close to where growth will occur, will be harder to come by, and the cost of purchasing those properties will continue to increase. Future schools in growing communities may need to be built differently, and OSPI standards may need to be updated to recognize this.

Recommendation 7 – School district planning and siting

	3. Process to fund and build schools The OSPI is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state. Working with the state's 295 public school districts and seven state-tribal education compact schools, OSPI allocates funding and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance. OSPI funds new school construction through the State School Construction Assistance Program ("SCAP"). Under current law, SCAP funds cannot be used to purchase school sites. In addition, the SCAP funding formula is based on "unhoused students," meaning that school districts must first demonstrate that existing schools are overcapacity under the OSPI funding formula (which is typically more conservative than locally adopted program standards). In other words, the SCAP formula does not allow school districts to anticipate or plan for new enrollment growth; it only allows them to address it after it has arrived. Importantly, eligibility for SCAP funding requires secured local funds, typically through voter-approved capital bonds, which requires a 60% approval threshold.
Possible statutes/rules/ standards to be amended	RCW 36.70A.070(3)(e) RCW 36.70A.211 RCW 36.70A.213 WAC 392-342-020 RCW 28A.525 OSPI school facilities manual
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☒ No ☐
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☐ No ☒
Advantages	1) Enables school districts to anticipate growth and plan for future infrastructure needs, reducing the lag between residential development and school construction. 2) Encourages new schools where cities and counties are planning for growth. 3) Supports cohesive planning across jurisdictions, ensuring that schools are part of broader infrastructure and service strategies. 4) Aligning school planning with comprehensive plans can lead to more strategic investments and reduce redundant or misaligned expenditures. 5) Ensures that students in growing communities have timely access to adequate school facilities, improving educational outcomes. 6) Fosters partnerships between cities, counties, and school districts, leading to more integrated and responsive governance. 7) Revisiting OSPI's funding formulas could allow for more flexible and forward-looking financial planning, especially in high-growth areas.

Recommendation 7 – School district planning and siting

Disadvantages	1) Aligning multiple jurisdictions and agencies (cities, counties, school districts, OSPI) may require significant time, effort, and resources. 2) Revising funding formulas and securing upfront capital for land acquisition and school construction may face political and fiscal hurdles. 3) Changes to RCWs and WACs may be needed, which can be a lengthy and contentious legislative process. 4) Tying school infrastructure planning more closely to comprehensive plans could slow down residential development if school capacity is not assured.

Recommendation 8 – Long-term protection of industrial lands

Topic	Long-term protection of industrial lands.
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should amend the Growth Management Act (GMA) to modify the notice requirements to better protect industrial zones located adjacent to housing zones. Proposed statutory amendments for Recommendation 8
Task Force consent votes	**Consent** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Kathy Curry, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Carl Schroeder, Jeffrey Mann, Travis Nelson **Object** – None **Abstain** – Andrea Smiley **No Vote Recorded** – None
Topic overview and background	Industrial land plays an important role within the GMA. They provide economic development and employment and assist in fulfilling Land Use element requirements in RCW 36.70A.070(1). In many counties and cities, ports play an integral role and facilitate economic development and employment on industrial lands. Port element requirements contained within RCW 36.70A.085 require: Protection of the core areas of the port and port-related industrial uses within the city. Identification and resolution of key land use conflicts along the edge of the core area, and minimization and mitigation, to the extent practicable, of incompatible uses along the edge of the core area. However, the port element requirements are only required for: Comprehensive plans of cities that have a marine container port with annual operating revenues in excess of sixty million dollars within their jurisdiction must include a container port element. Comprehensive plans of cities that include all or part of a port district with annual operating revenues in excess of twenty million dollars may include a marine industrial port element. Increasing long-term protection of industrial lands may facilitate greater coordination among cities, counties, and ports that are not subject to RCW 36.70A.085. This recommendation may also address conflicts between non-port-owned industrial lands and uses, and zoning, which may create conflicts.

Recommendation 8 – Long-term protection of industrial lands

Issues	The GMA requires cities and counties to plan for employment, including industrial land uses. With the exception of the Port element requirements, the GMA does not address the inherent conflicts that can arise when industrial uses are located near other uses, such as housing. Industrial uses may be loud, operate 24 hours a day, and emit odors incompatible with housing. These realities create tension in land-use planning, especially in areas where growth pressures are high. Some cities and counties have addressed this by implementing buffers and setbacks between zones with conflicting uses. In the most urban counties, the focus is on maintaining UGA boundaries and promoting urbanization and redevelopment. This trend places increasing pressure on industrial lands, which are essential for economic stability and regional functionality. As redevelopment accelerates, the challenge of preserving industrial areas while accommodating other land uses increases. The statutory framework under RCW 36.70A.060(1)(b) highlights how Washington law currently addresses proximity issues for natural resource lands, requiring notices for development near agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands. RCW 36.70A.060(1)(b) states that "*counties and cities shall require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within five hundred feet of, lands designated as agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands, contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration*." Extending this notice requirement under RCW 36.70A.070(1) to include development activities on, or within five hundred feet of, lands designated for industrial use would provide greater clarity for property owners and developers. Such an approach would ensure that parties are informed of the proximity to industrial lands and the potential for evolving industrial operations over time.		
Possible statutes to be amended	RCW 36.70A - New section		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☐	No ☒	
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)
Advantages	1) Increases early communication when residential uses are planned near existing lands zoned for industrial uses. 2) May reduce potential conflict when a new use on land zoned for industrial uses are proposed near existing residential uses.		
Disadvantages	1) Requires cities and counties implement new standards so notice is provided on all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits.		

Recommendation 9 – Port and economic development elements

Topic	Expanding port element requirements for faster-growing cities.
Recommendation and link to proposed statutory amendments	The Legislature should: 1) Amend RCW 36.70A.080 (Comprehensive plans – Optional elements) to make Port elements an optional comprehensive plan element for cities and counties that are not subject to the requirements of RCW 36.70A.085. See attachment A. 2) Provide funding for cities and counties, who optionally decide to develop Port elements, consistent with RCW 36.70A.085. If necessary, prioritize funding for faster-growing communities or those with larger ports. 3) The Legislature should fund the development and implementation of the Economic Development element consistent with the requirements in RCW 36.70A.070(10). Proposed statutory amendments for Recommendation 9
Task Force consent votes	**Consent (to all three parts)** – Brian Sayrs, Paul Jewell, Bryce Yadon, Robin Proebsting, Eric Ffitch, Dave Andersen, Jeffrey Mann, Andrea Smiley, Travis Nelson **Consent (to parts 1-2)** - Carl Schroeder **Object** – None. **Abstain (to part 3)** – Carl Schroeder **No vote recorded** – Kathy Curry
Topic overview and background	Cities that have a marine container port with annual operating revenues of more than $60 million], or that have all or part of a port district with annual operating revenues over $20 million within their jurisdictions, must include a port element in their comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A.085). This element must be consistent with other comprehensive plan elements and developed collaboratively between cities, ports, and tribes. Currently, this element is required only for the cities of Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett (Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, Port of Everett). Where applicable, a port element must include policies and programs that focus on topics, such as: • Defining and protecting the core areas of ports and port-related industrial uses. • Providing reasonably efficient access to the core area through freight corridors. • Identifying and resolving key land use conflicts along the edge of the core area. In developing a port element, a city may use one or more approaches, including a port overlay district, industrial land banks, buffers and transition zones between incompatible uses, joint transportation funding agreements, and more.

Recommendation 9 – Port and economic development elements

Issues	Ports play a vital role in the health and vitality of communities across Washington. However, except for cities currently required to create port elements under RCW 36.70A.085, there are no requirements to ensure consistency between city and county comprehensive planning, and the port comprehensive scheme required under RCW 53.20 and 53.25. Making the port element an optional element and providing funding to create Port Elements could increase opportunities for proactive planning without amending who is subject to Port Element requirements. Where funding is limited, prioritization could be focused on faster-growing communities and ports. In addition, the current requirements in RCW 36.70A.085 apply only to cities. This would provide counties with an optional process for enacting Port Elements. In 2002, the Legislature passed HB 2697, which required cities and counties to include an economic development element in their comprehensive plans. The current language in RCW 36.70A.070(7) focuses on "*An economic development element establishing local goals, policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life*." While creating an economic development element is a requirement, cities and counties have never been required to create a new element because of RCW 36.70A.070(10) which states that "*Requirements to incorporate any such new or amended elements shall be null and void until funds sufficient to cover applicable local government costs are appropriated and distributed by the state at least two years before local government must update comprehensive plans as required in RCW 36.70A.130*." Funding the development and implementation of an economic development element is another way to increase planning and coordination between cities, counties, and ports, given the importance of ports as economic drivers in communities across the state.		
Possible statutes to be amended	RCW 36.70A.080 – Comprehensive plans – Optional Elements		
Do we expect this recommendation to have a state budget impact?	Yes ☒	No ☐	
Did this issue derive from a previous study?	Yes ☒	No ☐	Report or study: Collaborative Roadmap Phase III (2023) and A Roadmap to Washington's Future (2019)

Recommendation 9 – Port and economic development elements

Advantages	1) Expand integration of planning for Ports and comprehensive planning by cities. 2) Provide additional opportunities to coordinate land use, capital facility, and economic development strategies and planning while recognizing that cities, counties, and ports work under separate statutory structures. 3) Increased coordination and planning may have a strong return on investment for ports and cities. 4) Recommendation would provide funding. 5) Recommendation would not apply until the next periodic comprehensive plan update, which provides ample time for cities and ports to consider the best approaches to implement new planning requirements.
Disadvantages	1) Require cities and counties to create an Economic Development element. 2) Funding would be required.

Appendix B: Library of statutes and rules

This appendix provides an inventory of relevant state laws and administrative rules for each local government under review of this report to study and recommend how to integrate select special purpose districts into the state's growth management planning process. It is worth clarifying that not all local entities will have corresponding statues and rules.

Cities and counties

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

- RCW 36.70A.020 – GMA planning goals
- RCW 36.70A.030 – GMA definitions
- RCW 36.70A.070(3) – GMA capital facilities element
- RCW 36.70A.070(4) – GMA utilities element
- RCW 36.70A.130 – GMA comprehensive plan update schedule
- RCW 36.70A.085 – GMA port element
- RCW 36.70A.211 – GMA siting of schools – Impact fees
- RCW 36.70A.212 – GMA siting of schools
- RCW 36.70A.213 – GMA schools – Extension of public facilities and utilities to rural areas

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) implementing rules or state guidance

- WAC 365-196-210 – Additional definitions
- WAC 365-196-415 – Capital facility element
- WAC 365-196-420 – Utilities element
- WAC 365-196-350 - GMA schools – Extension of public facilities and utilities to rural areas

Port districts

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

- RCW 36.70A.085 – GMA port element
- RCW 53 – Ports

School districts

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

- RCW 28A – Common school provisions RCW 28A.150 – General provisions
- RCW 28A.335.090 – Conveyance and acquisition of property
- RCW 28A.335.110 – Real property – Annexation to city or town
- RCW 28A.335.220 – Eminent domain
- RCW 28A.525 – School bonds
- RCW 28A.525.020 - Defines eligibility for state school construction funding
- RCW 28A.530.010 and RCW 28A.530.080 – Allows school districts to issue bonds for construction, but requires voter approval for major capital projects
- RCW 36.70A.020(12) – Public facilities and services
- RCW 36.70A.070(3) – Capital facilities plan
- RCW 36.70A.150 – Identification of lands useful for public purposes

- RCW 36.70A.211 – GMA siting of schools – Impact fees
- RCW 36.70A.212 – GMA siting of schools
- RCW 36.70A.213 – GMA schools – Extension of public facilities and utilities to rural areas
- RCW 82.02.050 to RCW 82.02.100 – Impact fees

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) implementing rules or state guidance

- WAC 365-196-350 - GMA schools – Extension of public facilities and utilities to rural areas
- WAC 365-196-415 – Guidance on long-term school capacity planning under the GMA
- WAC 392 – Superintendent of Public Instruction
- WAC 392-342-015 – Educational specifications
- WAC 392-342-020 – School Site selection – For purposes of school construction assistance
- WAC 392-343-019 – Establishes minimum classroom space per student for state construction assistance
- WAC 392-343-035 – Requires school districts to submit a Capital facilities plan to qualify for state funding
- WAC 392-343-045 – Space allocations – Enrollment projection provisions

Water and sewer districts and public utility districts

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

- RCW 54 – Public Utility Districts
- RCW 57.02 – Water and Sewer Districts
- RCW 57.16 – Comprehensive Plan Local Improvement Districts (including comprehensive plan requirements)
- RCW 90.48 - Water Pollution Control
- RCW 36.94 – Sewer, Water, and Drainage Systems

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) implementing rules or state guidance

- WAC 246-293 (220-300) Coordinated Water System Plans
- WAC 173-240-050 – General sewer plan (includes comprehensive plan requirements)
- WAC 246-290 – Group A Public Water Supplies

Appendix C: Key issues identified by working groups

School districts

Growth projections and forecasting

- School districts need early and accurate growth projections, ideally in 5–10-year increments.
- Forecast data should be aligned across cities, counties, and school districts.
- Assistance from OFM is needed to support short- and long-term forecasting.
- There's no systematic method for improving projection accuracy, especially in rural areas.
- Require service providers to align planning with growth targets, including statutory updates to match county Periodic Update schedules.

Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) and siting

- Improve LCA by incorporating housing, jobs, and public facilities, especially schools, to support siting decisions.
- Zoning and land availability are critical for school siting, especially in rural areas.
- Recommendations are needed for shared facilities, flexible design, and standards that reduce land needs for urban schools.

Rural district challenges

- Rural districts often lack long-range planning expertise and staffing capacity.
- Planning requirements should be lighter for rural counties, focusing on key comprehensive plan components.
- Siting schools in rural areas is difficult due to zoning and land availability.

Coordination with cities and counties

- School districts frequently lag behind cities in planning due to restrictive boundaries and lack of coordination.
- Proactive engagement is needed—receiving a CFP copy is not sufficient.
- Regular meetings between schools and local governments (such as, every two years) help build relationships and share data.
- King County's school siting Task Force is a model for improving coordination.
- Prioritize early engagement with non-city/county service providers, ensuring joint identification of growth opportunities and constraints during updates to countywide planning policies.

Policy and planning thresholds

- Align planning thresholds between school districts and local governments to trigger coordinated planning.
- Consider thresholds for ramping down rural growth and density to address school capacity issues.
- School districts should be included in planning committees and processes earlier to allow for better siting and infrastructure planning.

Port districts

Coordination and engagement

- Ports coordinate extensively with cities and counties through both formal (e.g., container port elements, subarea plans) and informal mechanisms (e.g., regular meetings, stakeholder engagement).
- Coordination varies by region and port size; rural ports need "right-sized" approaches to avoid unnecessary burdens.
- Reject mandatory early engagement requirements, as ports value flexibility and independence in planning.
- Relationships and informal coordination are often more effective than formal mandates, though political leadership can disrupt progress.

Transition zones and land use compatibility

- Ports face challenges from incompatible land uses, such as residential encroachment near industrial areas.
- Transition zones (such as buffers) are critical to protect port operations and maintain land use compatibility.
- Strengthen statutory language to protect ports, requiring cities and counties to implement measures like transition zoning.
- GMA's localized lens can overlook regional impacts of port activity, creating blind spots in planning.

Capital facilities planning

- Ports lack a standardized Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) template; developing one could improve consistency without adding paperwork burden.
- Coordination with other service districts (such as, schools, fire, or others) is essential for infrastructure planning.
- Some ports already estimate job impacts and align harbor improvements with comprehensive plans.

Economic development and job planning

- Ports play a key role in regional economic development, but GMA does not differentiate between types of jobs (such as, industrial vs. service).
- Support targeted siting policies, especially near ports and freight routes, to preserve industrial job centers.
- Economic development elements in comprehensive plans are optional and often delayed; funding is needed to support port participation.
- Regulatory and economic development priorities can clash, requiring better alignment of terms and timelines.

Planning timelines and regional structures

- Timing misalignments between port planning and city/county comprehensive plans create coordination challenges.
- Regional planning bodies (such as the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)) are complex and resource-intensive, even for large ports.
- Increase coordination language in the GMA without adding procedural burdens.

Best practices and tools

- Develop best practices for coordination between ports, cities, and counties, tailored to different port sizes and contexts.
- Examples from Kitsap County, Port of Seattle, and Port of Everett show successful integration of port planning with local and regional efforts.
- Gathering and sharing coordination models and planning structures would help ports navigate GMA processes more effectively.

Water and sewer districts and public utility districts

Urban Growth Area (UGA) coordination

- Increase flexibility around UGA boundaries, especially for utility extensions just outside designated areas, though this raises concerns about encouraging future development.
- Clarify and standardize exemptions, recognizing that some already exist and are typically managed at the city or county level, but may benefit from clearer guidance.
- Request expert input on UGA and GMA policy, indicating a need for further discussion to understand the implications and feasibility of proposed changes.
- Concerns about development in unincorporated UGAs without sewer infrastructure, leading to reliance on septic systems.
- Water and sewer districts should be engaged during UGA land swaps and comprehensive plan amendments.

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- Suggest integrating utility input into capital facilities planning and land capacity analysis.

Planning timelines and synchronization

- Misalignment between Department of Health, Department of Ecology, and GMA planning timelines.
- Suggest staggering planning cycles (for example, a three-year offset) between cities, counties and service providers.
- Outdated planning documents and inconsistent update schedules hinder coordination.

Service area boundaries and capacity forecasting

- Need realistic service area definitions and timelines for extending services.
- Early communication is critical when changes occur.
- Use water quality reports and updated studies to inform planning and public engagement.

Capital facilities and utility planning

- Integrate water/sewer district plans into county capital facilities plans.
- Require consistent timelines and projections across jurisdictions.
- Emphasize planning for infrastructure upgrades aligned with growth and land-use changes.

Coordination and communication

- Cities and counties often plan growth without involving water and sewer districts.
- Recommend feedback loops and coordination guidance (such as through meetings and training).
- Upzoning should trigger communication with service providers to assess capacity.

Smaller districts and resource limitations

- Smaller rural districts face staffing and resource challenges.
- Suggest building networks for training, education, and emergency support.
- Coordination is especially needed in critical aquifer recharge areas.

Population and demand projections

- Encourage real-time sharing of growth forecasts and capacity data.
- Use regional databases (such as the one used by PSRC) for consistent planning inputs.
- Planning should reflect actual growth trends, not just projections.

Disaster and emergency planning

- Develop joint protocols for system redundancies, backup power, and rapid repairs.
- Establish clear emergency contact networks and public messaging strategies.

Challenges and recommendations

- Lack of coordination leads to misaligned infrastructure and growth planning.
- Need for clearer directives and requirements for engaging service providers.
- Consider thresholds for infrastructure capacity when densification occurs.
- Coordination should include both public and private utility providers.