Chapter 2

STATE REQUIREMENTS

In response to legislative findings that uncoordinated growth together with a lack of common goals toward land conservation pose a threat to the public health, safety, and general welfare, and especially to the environment and sustainable economic development, the State Legislature in 1990 enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA). To guide the development of comprehensive plans and land use regulations for those municipalities and counties which are required to plan under the act, the GMA establishes the following goals:

1. **Urban Growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

2. **Sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

3. **Transportation.** Encourage efficient, multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and municipalities comprehensive plans.

4. **Housing.** Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

5. **Economic Development.** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

6. **Property Rights.** Property rights shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of land owners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

7. **Permits.** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

8. **Natural Resource Industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

9. **Open Space and Recreation.** Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.

10. **Environment.** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

11. **Citizen Participation.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

12. **Public Facilities and Services.** Ensure that 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.

13. **Historic Preservation.** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

The principal focus of the Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive plan, which the applicable counties and municipalities must adopt. The Town of Eatonville adopted its GMA Comprehensive Plan on 27 December 1993. In the year 2002, the Town began a major review of the adopted Comprehensive Plan with a view to have it updated before the legislatively established deadline of December 2005. In addition to updating the Comprehensive Plan, counties and municipalities must also update their land development regulations and critical areas ordinances. The Act specifies mandatory plan elements as follows:

- critical areas
- land use
- housing
- transportation
- utilities

- parks and recreation
- rural environment (counties only)
- economic development
- capital facilities
- siting essential public facilities

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One of the most important tenets of the GMA is the ***consistency,*** meaning consistency between:

1. comprehensive plans and the planning goals identified in RCW 36.70A.020

2. municipal and county comprehensive plans

3. the comprehensive plans of each municipality and county with those of neighboring municipalities and counties

4. the elements within comprehensive plan (internal consistency)

5. the comprehensive plan and development regulations

6. the comprehensive plan and capital budgets

7. state agency actions and municipal and county comprehensive plans

This "consistency doctrine" has its beginnings in the State Planning Enabling Act of 1935 (there they say "in accordance with" instead of "consistent with"), and has been continually strengthened by state statutes and court decisions.

A second tenet of the GMA is ***concurrency,*** meaning that public facilities and services must be developed concurrently with the land uses they are intended to serve, so that adopted level of service standards are consistently maintained. Regarding transportation, the concurrency requirement is especially forceful:

... local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service to decline below the standards adopted in the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development.

Taken together, the various requirements of GMA suggest a strong relationship between urban growth and the public facilities and services necessary to serve that growth. This relationship is further cemented by the concept of *Urban Growth Areas,* wherein land development and public infrastructure improvements are programmed concurrently. To accomplish these planning requirements, the GMA expressly authorized the use of innovative techniques, including impact fees.