



Ridgefield and the Growth Management Act





Why Do We Plan

History of Planning in Ridgefield

Washington experiences rapid growth in the late 1980's that began to change the perceived quality of life.

The Clark County growth rate between 1980 and 1990 was 24%.

The State legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. Clark County was one of the Washington Counties required to Fully plan under GMA.



"We're waiting for the city to come to us..."



History of Planning continued

- First Ridgefield Comprehensive Growth Management plan adopted by Ordinance 666 on January 26, 1995. The Plan was adopted pursuant to the GMA, and in conjunction with Clark County.
- The 2004 update began with the Ridgefield Planning Commission in 2001 in conjunction with the Clark County Growth Management Act (GMA) update process. The population of Ridgefield was anticipated to grow to 9,398 people through the planning horizon (2003-2023).
- 2007 saw another update to the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate the rapid growth Ridgefield and the County as a whole were experiencing. The Plan, adopted in September of 2008, anticipated approximately 26,000 people calling Ridgefield home in 2024.
- In 2016 the most recent version of the Ridgefield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan was adopted. This version anticipates 25,494 people as part of the Ridgefield Community by 2035.



Key Components of the GMA

- The GMA provides the tools to counties and cities to manage and direct growth to urban areas where public facilities and services can be provided most efficiently, to protect rural character, to protect critical areas and to conserve natural resource lands.
- The GMA includes 14 goals and a number of requirements for local comprehensive plans and development regulations.
- Regional coordination between counties and cities is emphasized in the GMA. Counties fully planning under the GMA are required to adopt county-wide planning policies to guide comprehensive plan development. The policies must include guidance for designation of urban growth areas (UGAs) outside of which urban development will not occur. Counties work collaboratively with cities to allocate projected population for the next 20 years. UGAs are designated based upon the need to accommodate population projections.
- County and city comprehensive plans are required to include specific elements, or chapters, to address land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, rural lands (for counties), and shorelines. Development regulations must be consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan.



Plan Basis

- Fully planning communities must analyze the most recent ten-year population forecast by the Washington State Office of Financial Management and incorporate it into their updated plans and regulations. Urban growth areas, which by definition include all cities, must allow development densities sufficient to accommodate the next 20 years of projected growth. If the zoning regulations don't authorize the densities to accommodate this growth, the city will have to increase the allowed densities.
- The first step in developing the initial local plans was to analyze regional population figures. Each county and city had to plan for a 20-year population growth based on figures supplied by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Projected population growth was provided to each county by OFM as a reasonable range developed within a standard state high and low projection. Each county had to work collaboratively with the cities within the county to allocate the population, but it is important to note that the County had the final authority on city allocations, subject to appeal to the Growth Management Hearing Boards



GMA Goals

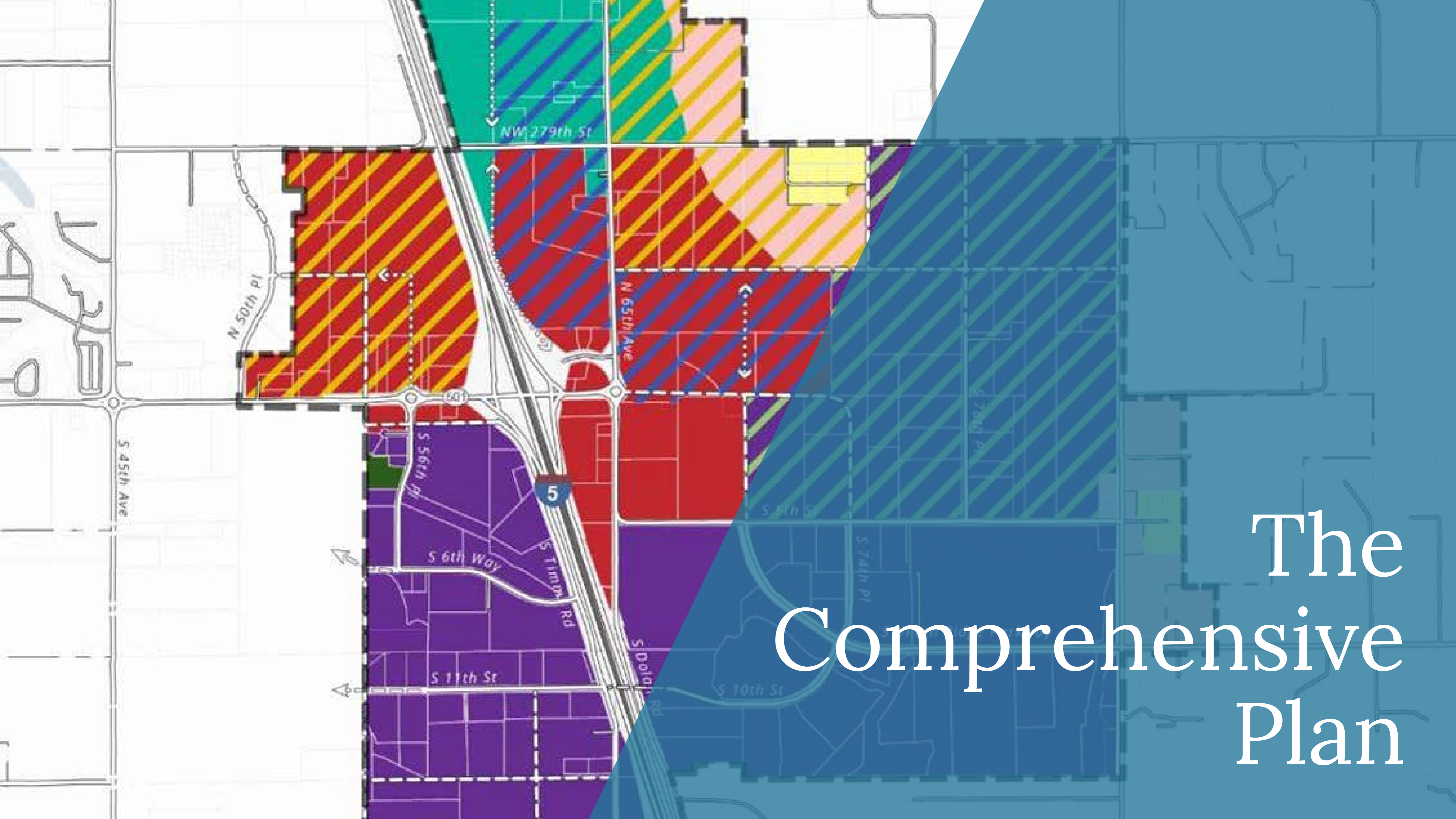
- Urban Growth - Encourage urban growth where facilities are adequate to meet service needs.
- Reduce Sprawl - Eliminate sprawling, low-density development that is expensive to deliver services to and is destructive to critical areas, rural areas, and resource values.
- Transportation - Encourage efficient, multimodal transportation.
- Housing - Encourage a variety of affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.
- Economic Development - Encourage economic development consistent with resources and facilities throughout the state.
- Property Rights - Protect property from arbitrary decisions or discriminatory actions.



GMA Goals

- Permits – Issue permits in a timely manner and administer them fairly.
- Natural Resources Industries - Maintain and enhance resource-based industries.
- Open Space and Recreation - Encourage retention of open space and recreational areas.
- Environment - Protect the environment and enhance the quality of life.
- Citizen Participation - Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process.
- Public Facilities and Services - Ensure that adequate public facilities and services are provided in a timely and affordable manner.
- Historic Preservation - Identify and encourage preservation of historic sites.
- Shoreline Management - The goals and policies of the SMA are added as one of the goals of GMA.





The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan

- Adopting a comprehensive plan is the starting point for any planning process. The comprehensive plan expresses a community's vision of itself, the community it would like to become, its hopes and dreams, and the philosophical underpinning for any planning activity. It is an expression of the "public interest," in the sense of exercising the public authority of a municipality. Since the GMA was enacted, it has become an enforceable blueprint or framework for all subsequent land use regulation activity.
- Comprehensive plans typically are processed through a series of public hearings. These give the public an opportunity to express their views on community plans. Growth management legislation stresses early and continuous public involvement to validate these planning efforts.



Required Elements

- Land Use - A land use element includes land uses and densities, resource protection, population projections, and public facilities. In addition, the land use element is required to consider protection of public water supplies, storm water (both in the community and in adjacent communities), and "provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state."
- Housing - A housing element addresses the "vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods." It inventories existing and projected housing needs, creates a policy base for encouraging housing, and identifies "sufficient land" for all types of housing, including low income, manufactured, multifamily, group homes, and foster care facilities, while making adequate provisions for all of the economic segments of the community.



Required Elements

- Capital Facilities Planning - A capital facilities plan including inventories of existing facilities showing both "location" and "capacity," a forecast of future needs, the proposed location and capacity of new facilities, and a six-year plan to finance such facilities from identified funding sources.
 - Transportation
 - Schools
 - Parks and Trails
 - Water
 - Sewer
- Utilities - A utilities element includes an inventory and "general" location, "proposed location," and capacity of existing and proposed utilities, including natural gas, electricity, and telecommunications.



Required Elements

- Transportation - A transportation element includes:
 - Land use assumptions used in estimating travel, facilities and service needs, including inventory of existing facilities and capacity;
 - Level of service standards for all locally-owned arterials and transit routes;
 - Corrective actions for all local facilities below established standards;
 - A 10-year traffic forecast;
 - Identification of expansion needed to meet present and future demand;
 - Financial resources and needs assessments, including analysis of capacity to judge need against ability of a multi-year funding plan; if funding plans are inadequate, a discussion of new funding sources or a reassessment of the land use plans;
 - Impact analysis of new plans on adjacent communities to assure coordination demand;
 - Management strategies to reduce travel impact for existing and new development; and
 - A requirement for concurrency or adoption of codes that prohibit development that will cause facilities to fall below established levels of service, unless new facilities are provided or strategies are in place to avoid degradation below established service levels.



Required Elements

- Urban Growth Area - The designation of urban growth areas based on required densities, population allocation, jobs ratios and other variables.
- The Buildable Lands Program – Six counties including Clark county and all their cities are required to collect data and monitor development within their UGAs. They must use this information to determine whether the county and cities are achieving urban densities by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the county-wide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development that has occurred.



Required Elements

- Public Participation - The adoption of all plans, amendments, and regulations requires a concerted effort to involve large segments of the affected populations.
- Lands for Public Purpose and Open Space Corridors - The GMA requires all planning communities to designate lands for public purposes, such as schools, solid waste sites, sewage treatment facilities, and other public uses. Communities must also designate "open space" corridors within and between urban growth areas. Open space areas are to be used for "recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.
- Essential Public Facilities - The GMA requires cities and counties fully planning under the GMA to include in their comprehensive plan a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities.



Additional Information

The link below will take you to the Washington state Department of Commerce guidebook on planning in the state. The guidebook provides a wealth of information on many land use related issues from Shoreline Management to planning enabling statutes, from annexation to infill development.

<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/ajzxwfdf6nuzt950w9c5h6afgiis9x3d>





THANK YOU