Siting Facilities

Regional capital facilities are transportation, recreation, education, human services, water, sewer, and similar facilities. While capital facilities are essential to our communities, our commerce, and our quality of life, they often affect the environment and adjacent areas.

It is often difficult to locate major facilities, such as airports and landfills, due to the potential for substantial impacts on residences and other nearby uses. Less intensive facilities, such as libraries and schools, are not always located in a manner that supports key growth management principles.

VISION 2040 calls for strategically locating major capital facilities so that they support the Regional Growth Strategy. It stresses the importance of investment in capital facilities and amenities to support urban centers and manufacturing/industrial centers. For example, adding amenities that attract people, such as performing arts centers, plazas, parks, and other recreational facilities, is an excellent way to support the vitality of urban centers. VISION 2040 discourages the placement of urban facilities in rural and resource areas.

VISION 2040 stresses equity to ensure that the benefits of regional capital facilities are shared by communities throughout the region. Facilities that generate adverse impacts should not be sited in a manner that unduly burdens certain communities or population groups. Reducing adverse impacts can be addressed not only by avoiding them, but also by providing amenities, such as collocating parks with wastewater treatment plants.

Siting School Facilities. In the central Puget Sound region, school districts own, operate, and maintain the public schools. School district boundaries have been long established and, in many instances, districts that were historically rural have become major suburban education providers, with a host of buildings, facilities, and programs. As a result, there are some districts throughout the four counties that provide school services to both urban and rural populations.

A careful examination of resources and their optimal allocation could lessen adverse effects of — and to — schools. In some cases, this could mean reassessing current school district boundaries. Schools should be encouraged to become the cornerstones of their communities by locating in more urban settings and designing facilities to better integrate with their urban neighborhoods.

Other Institutions and Community Facilities. Other cultural, civic and religious facilities — including libraries, performing arts centers, sports facilities, and houses of worship — also contribute to creating a sense of community. They better serve their populations when they locate in more centralized places, which people can reach by walking, biking, or using transit. In the long-term, there is increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness by siting and operating facilities that serve a primarily urban population within the urban growth area. At the same time, those facilities and services that primarily benefit rural populations provide a greater benefit when they are designed and scaled to fit within an adjacent town or established rural community.

SITING FACILITIES POLICIES

**MPP-PS-21:** Site schools, institutions, and other community facilities that primarily serve urban populations within the urban growth area in locations where they will promote the local desired growth plans.

**MPP-PS-22:** Locate schools, institutions, and other community facilities serving rural residents in neighboring cities and towns and design these facilities in keeping with the size and scale of the local community.

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School Siting and Transportation

Over the past several decades, it has been the practice of many school districts in suburbanizing areas across the United States to site new schools on large, undeveloped acreages that are neither easy to walk to nor accessible by transit. Districts then either operate large programs to transport students to school sites, or end up requiring students to drive or be driven to school.

Source: Issue Paper on Rural Areas
**MPP-PS-23:** Site or expand regional capital facilities in a manner that (1) reduces adverse social, environmental, and economic impacts on the host community, (2) equitably balances the location of new facilities, and (3) addresses regional planning objectives.

**MPP-PS-24:** Do not locate regional capital facilities outside the urban growth area unless it is demonstrated that a non-urban site is the most appropriate location for such a facility.

**VISION 2040 Public Services Actions**

The following VISION 2040 actions have been developed to help implement the public services policies. Detailed information on specific measures that will be used to monitor implementation and performance is contained in Part IV: Implementation.

**REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICES ACTIONS**

**Communication with Legislature Regarding Special Service Districts: PS-Action-1**

The Puget Sound Regional Council, on behalf of its member jurisdictions, will communicate to the Legislature that special service districts should be required to comply with the Growth Management Act.

- Short-term \ MPP-PS-4 through 6, 21 through 24
- Results and Products: letter (or other reporting) to Legislature

**Water Issues: PS-Action-2**

The Puget Sound Regional Council will determine its role in addressing regional water issues — including water supply.

- Mid-term \ MPP-PS-17 through 20
- Results and Products: report and recommendations to Growth Management Policy Board and Executive Board

**Communication with Energy Providers: PS-Action-3**

The Puget Sound Regional Council will relay to energy providers the goals and objectives of the regional vision. Providers are encouraged to identify tools and practices to address energy supply and conservation for local jurisdiction planning purposes.

- Short-term \ MPP-PS-12, 13
- Results and Products: letter (and/or other correspondence) to energy providers

**Telecommunications Report: Action-PS-4**

The Puget Sound Regional Council will work with its member jurisdictions and telecommunication providers to monitor the availability of high-speed data communication services.

- Mid-term \ MPP-PS-14
- Results and Products: report and recommendations to PSRC’s policy boards

**LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES ACTIONS**

**Special Service Districts Planning: PS-Action-5**

Counties, in their review of special service districts’ plans, will identify any inconsistencies with local growth management goals and objectives, as well as the regional vision. As part of this review, counties, in consultation with pertinent cities, will work with special service districts to provide guidance for facilities and service planning to ensure that districts develop long-range plans that implement the regional vision.

- Short-term \ MPP-PS-4 through 6, 21 through 24
- Results and Products: (1) consistency report (or similar) to special districts, (2) recommendations and examples to districts concerning the regional vision

**Facilities Siting and Design: PS-Action-6**

Counties and cities will collaborate with special service districts to review district location and design criteria for new schools, libraries, and other such public facilities — to ensure that growth management goals and the regional vision are addressed.

- Short-term \ MPP-PS-21 through 24
- Results and Products: report (or similar) and recommendations on siting and design criteria