



## FINAL PROJECT DESIGN: *Updating Washington’s Growth Policy Framework*

### I. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

To prepare broadly supported legislation to amend state laws that collectively constitute Washington’s growth policy framework.<sup>1</sup> This state policy framework provides the authority, direction, structure, requirements and resources for state agencies, regional and local governments to plan for and serve the state’s needs for environmental, economic, societal, and human health.

### II. DELIVERABLES

The University of Washington Center for Livable Communities (the Center) will deliver to the Legislature draft legislation to implement systemic changes and key reforms to the state’s growth policy framework. A report transmitting the recommended legislation will be delivered before the 2021 session, along with an explanation of the process utilized, the parties engaged, the issues discussed, and any recommendations for continued collaboration after the 2021 session.

### III. APPROACH

This project continues a collaborative conversation about needed reform to the state’s growth policy framework that was begun in 2017 by a project funded by and prepared for the Legislature - *The Road Map to Washington’s Future (Road Map)*.<sup>2</sup> The *Road Map* final report, issued in June 2019, contained findings derived from input gathered from many individuals and groups through interviews, correspondence, and workshops at 26 locations across the state.

From those findings, the *Road Map* final report articulated a desired future for the state and a series of potential transformational reforms to state laws needed to move in the direction of the desired future. Many aspects of the desired future were detailed in the final report; however, recent, dramatic national events make it especially important to focus on two of them - *equity and inclusion* and *adaptability and resilience*. See Attachment #1.

This project will engage over a dozen groups, state agencies, and tribal governments in a structured collaboration to seek agreement on legislative solutions to six issue areas. Between June and December of 2020, the UW Project Team will conduct a series of individual telephone calls and/or zoom conferences with participating groups as well as multi-stakeholder convenings via the University’s zoom platform. The objective of these ongoing, iterative, and inter-active discussions will be to identify and refine areas of agreement.

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<sup>1</sup> Washington state’s growth policy framework includes, but is not limited to, the Planning Enabling Act (RCW 36.70), the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), the Local Project Review Act (RCW 36.70B), the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58), the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), and the Land Use Petition Act (RCW 36.70C).

<sup>2</sup> The Final Report for the *Road Map to Washington’s Future* is online at: [www.ruckelshauscenter.edu](http://www.ruckelshauscenter.edu)

Parties will be asked to begin this collaboration by sharing perspectives, interests, concerns, and ideas, rather than default to pre-established positions or adopted platforms. They may refer to any of the findings, principles, or other material in the *Road Map* final report, but the primary focus should be on the transformational/systemic changes and key reforms generally, and the six issue areas specifically. The potential statutory changes and reforms to state laws are excerpted in Attachment #2. Invited participants to this process are listed on Attachment #3. Commitments and expectations of participants are listed on Attachment #4.

#### **IV. THE SIX ISSUE AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THIS PROJECT**

- #1 - Adaptive and Inclusive Planning at a Regional Scale
- #2 - The cycle and dedicated funding for updates to comprehensive plans and development codes
- #3 – Housing elements, affordable housing, and infrastructure
- #4 - Development regulations and permit processes
- #5 - Climate change
- #6 - Municipal annexation

#### **V. THE UW CENTER FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

##### **A. Identity and Mission**

Located in the UW College of Built Environments, the Center focuses on issues of environmental and economic sustainability, quality of life, and responsible governance. Its mission is to enhance livability of communities through applied research and outreach in the areas of land use planning, policy, healthy communities, public participation, and democracy.

##### **B. Project Team Members**

- Joe Tovar, UW Affiliate Associate Professor, is the Project Manager. He served as co-lead of the *Road Map to Washington's Future* project. Bio: <http://urbdp.be.washington.edu/people/joe-tovar/>
- Branden Born, UW Associate Professor, is the Director of the Center for Livable Communities. He provides university liaison to state agencies and supervises graduate student assistants supporting this project. Bio: <http://urbdp.be.washington.edu/people/branden-born/>
- Peter Dunn, UW Graduate Student Assistant

##### **C. Roles and responsibilities**

- Project design, support, and neutral facilitation governed by university research protocols
- The Project Manager will:
  - Serve as the primary point of contact for all stakeholder contacts, legislators, media, and other interested parties
  - Set agendas for, facilitate, and lead all calls, zoom convenings, and in-person meetings
  - Distill input from all multi-stakeholder convenings; frame alternatives and expressions of emerging agreement; and share such drafts with the primary contacts.
  - Draft preliminary and final project reports and share drafts with stakeholder primary contacts for review and comment.
  - Present the Final project report to appropriate committees of the Legislature.

## Attachment 1

### Seeing the future through lenses of **Equity, Inclusion, Resilience, and Adaptation**

#### **Equity and Inclusion**

According to many participants, social, cultural, racial, gender, and economic diversity is an important aspect of a desired future, as are social equity and social justice. Participants expressed this in a number of ways, including desiring a future that addresses income inequality, distribution of community resources, race and social justice, and gentrification, and that creates a fair and inclusive society, with opportunities for all.

Many Next Generation participants envisioned a future that included safety nets for low-income residents and sanctuary for undocumented persons. Many urban, but especially rural participants, long for a future where youth can stay living and working in the community in which they grew up, and where the community is not only comprised of older people.

Equity was also an important element of a positive future for participants in the Latinx workshop. Their vision of the future included less disparity in addressing their basic needs and allocating community resources including having basic infrastructure, clean water, appropriate street lighting, playgrounds, bike lanes, and sidewalks. For participants in the Latinx workshop, equity included fair wages, absence of workplace abuse, and reasonable working hours. The vision for equity also included a reduction of disparities between communities in eastern and western Washington, and that resources are better distributed from a macroeconomic perspective.

Overall, many participants envisioned a future where equity is at the forefront of policymaking. Many participants desired a future that shifts from a “us versus them” mentality toward relationship-building and understanding. *Road Map Final Report*, p. 26.

#### **Resilience and Adaptation**

Participants often mentioned that in order to have a healthy and desirable future, we need to address how to adapt to changing conditions such as climate change impacts, natural disasters, and economic calamities. Many participants brought up the notion that a desired future is one in which participants and policymakers acknowledge the limits to growth and environmental degradation, and that in order to adapt to changes, participants and policymakers need to strengthen personal, community, and economic resilience. Some participants described this preparation for a desired future as transformational resilience that included having sufficient flexibility in growth management policies to adapt to changing conditions.

Participants often described resilient communities as ones where there are strong social networks, adequate resources for basic needs, fair and transparent governance, and economic diversification. In order to increase resilience, many participants saw the need for intentional planning for adaptation to events such as climate change, natural hazards, and economic recessions., as well as identifying and strengthening the conditions for community resilience. As participants looked to the future, many saw a need to move away from reliance on fossil fuels. *Road Map Final Report*, p. 29.

## Attachment #2

### Transformation Changes and Key Reforms to state statutes

#### **Transformational & Systemic Changes** *Road Map* Final Report, pp. 82-90.

##### **1. Funding and Revenue Generation**

**Action 1.1:** Focus legislative efforts on enhanced state funding and new fiscal tools that enable cities, counties, regions, and state agencies to address needs and manage growth.

##### **2. Adaptive Planning at a Regional Scale**

**Action 2.1:** Convene a collaborative process to explore how best to achieve the goals of the GMA through the development of an adaptive management and regionally based approach that provides flexibility, coordination, and creates opportunities to address local and changing conditions and needs. Consult with tribal governments, to determine if and how they may want to be involved in such a process.

**Action 2.2:** Initiate government -to -government consultation with tribes in Washington State, to discuss the key questions asked, and guidance detailed, in the Road Map to Washington's Future Report.

##### **3. Resilience to Changing Conditions and Disasters**

**Action 3.1:** Develop comprehensive and integrated strategies, policies, implementation plans, and funding for climate adaptation and mitigation on local, regional, and state levels.

**Action 3.2:** Integrate disaster preparedness, and emergency and recovery planning, with growth management planning and policies.

##### **4. Statewide Water Planning**

**Action 4.1:** Establish a collaborative process to develop a statewide water plan for sustainably protecting, managing, and developing water resources in the state, for current and future generations.

##### **5. Equity**

**Action 5.1:** Integrate equity as a goal in growth planning, policies, strategies, and implementing actions, including adopting it as a goal of the GMA and an adaptive management regionally based approach, if developed.

##### **6. Economic Development**

**Action 6.1:** Develop and implement a statewide economic development strategy that builds on unique assets and needs of the diverse regions of the state. Place emphasis on improving rural economies and slow-growing cities. Identify what is needed to support local economic development plans, including state programs and investments.

**Action 6.2:** Integrate the capital facilities and economic development planning of Ports with local and regional capital facilities, growth management, and transportation planning

**Twenty-eight Key Reforms** *Road Map* Final Report, pp. 92-101.

**State Agency Coordination with, and Support for, Regional Plans**

- Integrate State agency planning into the GMA and consider how to improve coordination in the implementation of regional growth management plans.

**Funding and Capacity for Planning and Implementation**

- Increase grants for cities and counties to plan under the GMA.
- Align funding of county government with the realities of implementing GMA.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Comprehensive and Regional Plans**

- Fund and develop guidelines and methods for performance monitoring and measurement of comprehensive and regional plan implementation.

**Education**

Incorporate into already existing required training for elected officials an understanding of policies in the growth planning framework; the roles of state, regional, and local governments and the responsibilities of elected officials as policy makers, related to growth management.

- Identify opportunities to strengthen civic education throughout the state and across all sectors, including K-12, as well as community-based programs.

**Health of the Environment**

- Add a Planning Goal to the GMA - Resilience to climate change and natural disasters.
- Convene a collaborative process with, at a minimum, representatives of cities, counties, tribes, state agencies, ports, business, development, planning, and environmental organizations to identify areas of agreement for reforming the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

**Human Health and Well-Being**

- Add a Planning Goal to the GMA on Human Health and Well-Being. Elevate and fund the implementation of human health and well-being as a goal in growth management planning and implementation, including the design and location of transportation and other infrastructure, land use plans, and development regulations.
- Prepare a “comprehensive planning and civic design for public health” guidebook to assist state agencies and local governments on ways they could factor human health and well-being into updating their comprehensive plans, and the design and implementation of capital facilities such as state highways, county roads, city streets, and public parks. This could be a joint effort of the Departments of Commerce and Health, in consultation with tribal governments, state agencies, local governments, public health professionals, and county public health departments.

**Housing**

- Develop funding strategies and new fiscal tools for cities and counties to implement the housing elements in their Comprehensive Plans and monitor achievement of housing targets.
- Address availability of middle- income housing, low and middle-income homeownership, and the impacts of short-term rentals and investment homes on housing availability and affordability.

## **Annexation**

- Convene a collaborative process(es) with, at a minimum, representatives of cities, counties, special districts, boundary review board, planning and environmental organizations to identify areas of agreement for reforming annexation laws in a way that streamlines the process and removes barriers to annexation of land adjacent to existing cities, maintains the fiscal sustainability of counties, clarifies the role of special districts, and reduces conflicts.

## **Economic viability of Agriculture & other Natural Resource Industries**

- Support policies and programs that enhance the economic and environmental viability of agriculture and identify and develop strategies and programs that address the needs of farmers.
- Undertake an assessment that looks at the cumulative impacts of laws and regulations on the ability of agriculture and other natural resource-based industries to be economically viable and to achieve desired environmental outcomes.

## **Transportation**

- Clarify how the six chief goals of the Washington State Transportation Plan can be achieved in context with GMA Planning Goals.
- Provide funding support for WSDOT, WSTC, RTPOs, and local governments to monitor and evaluate how well their plans, policies, and systems are working, in order to enable them to consider appropriate course corrections.
- Consider strengthening the requirements and incentivizing the use of multimodal performance measures within urban growth areas.
- Consider strengthening and funding local planning requirements for freight.
- Integrate state highways into the GMA transportation concurrency system.

## **Coordination with Military installations**

- Coordinate planning between federal military installations and regional, county, and city governments.

## **Other Growth Management Act Modifications**

- Convene multi-sector urban and rural summits to dialogue and help identify priorities for modifications of the GMA that would improve planning and implementation for rural and urban communities.
- Consider revising the update cycle for comprehensive plans from every eight years to every ten years. Begin this process in phases, starting with moving the next update deadline for the four Central Puget Sound counties from 2023 to 2025, in order to synch with population data from the 2020 Federal Census.
- Convene a collaborative process to identify areas of agreement for improvements to the statewide planning framework's development regulations and permitting processes to shorten the time needed to issue permits and increase predictability and achieve better outcomes both for permit applicants and residents in the vicinity of new development.
- Convene a process to gather additional information and research and to identify areas of agreement for improvements to the GMA provisions for LAMIRDs.
- Integrate school district capital facilities planning, including school siting, with the land use policies and capital plans of local governments.
- Integrate water and sewer district, school district, port district planning into GMA.
- Initiate a review of State statutes, beginning with the SMA and SEPA, to identify major conflicts or disconnects with the goals and requirements of the GMA, and undertake efforts to reduce gaps, conflicts, or redundancies.

## Attachment 3

### Participating stakeholder groups and governments

Many groups, organizations, associations, state agencies, and tribal governments participated in the *Road Map* project. The specific groups, state agencies, and tribal governments shown below participated in that process through interviews, workshops, and correspondence. They are participating in this current project because of their familiarity with the collaborative policy-making process and their commitment to seek agreement for needed statutory reforms.

#### 1. Stakeholder groups

American Planning Association, Washington Chapter (APA WA)

Association of Washington Cities (AWC)

Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW)

Futurewise

Washington Association of Realtors (WAR)

Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts (WASWD)

Washington Environmental Council (WEC)

Washington Farm Bureau (WFB)

Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA)

Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC)

#### 2. State agencies coordinated by the Department of Commerce through the Inter-Agency Work Group (IAWG)

Department of Commerce (Commerce)

Department of Ecology (Ecology)

Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

Department of Health (Health)

Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

#### 3. Tribal governments

Twenty-nine tribal governments in Washington are signatories to the Centennial Accord<sup>3</sup> (the Accord). Consistent with the Accord's aspiration of building government-to-government relationships, each of those tribal governments are invited to participate in this project.

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<sup>3</sup> The Centennial Accord was originally adopted by the Office of the Governor and tribal governments in Washington in 1989. See <https://goia.wa.gov/relations/centennial-accord>

#### Attachment #4

##### Commitments and expectations of project participants

1. Each participating group or state agency will identify a primary contact whose responsibility will be to solicit and organize the policy and technical inputs within its group. For purposes of this project, the policy and technical groups within a stakeholder group constitute its "caucus."
2. Each primary contact is responsible for communication and coordination directly with the UW Project Manager, including the scheduling of phone calls, zoom meetings, and in-person meetings.
3. Each primary contact is responsible for forwarding to his/her caucus the project materials that are distributed by the UW Project Manager.
4. Each primary contact is responsible for leading and/or coordinating the presentations and responses of its caucus members at any multi-stakeholder convening.
5. All participants will make a good faith effort to seek understanding and agreement.
6. All participants will approach this collaboration with an open mind, starting from expressions of interests, concerns, and ideas, rather than adopted platforms or traditional positions.