

Essential Public Facilities Element

Relationship to GMA

The Snohomish County Council has adopted a series of countywide planning policies to guide the preparation of City and County Comprehensive Plans. Included therein are policies addressing the siting of "local, regional, statewide or federal essential public capital facilities," as specifically required by the GMA. These policies commit the GMA planning jurisdictions of Snohomish County to develop a common siting process for these facilities.

The GMA further requires local governments to develop a process for identifying and siting "essential public facilities" and to incorporate that process into their local Comprehensive Plans. As indicated and defined by WAC 365.195.340, essential public facilities can be difficult to site, and their location in a community may be locally unpopular. Local and state governments are charged by GMA with the task of ensuring that such facilities, as needed to support orderly growth and delivery of public services, are sited in a timely and efficient manner.

Essential Public Facilities (EPF) Goals and Policies

GOAL EPF-1 - To provide a comprehensive and efficient process for siting essential public facilities.

EPF-1.1 Define Essential Public Facilities, consistent with the Growth Management Act, as "those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, secured community transition facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes."

EPF-1.2 Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and Snohomish County by participating in the inter-jurisdictional process adopted by the Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee for siting essential public facilities.

EPF-1.3 Participate as early and as fully as practicable in any hearings, meetings and other decisional processes that preempts the City's jurisdiction with respect to the proposed siting of any state or federal essential public facility perceived to have potential adverse effect upon the Granite Falls community. Such participation may include, but is not limited to:

1. Holding informational meetings independent of the formal siting process in order to obtain local citizen input regarding the proposal,

2. Testifying at relevant state and regional hearings, and
3. Submitting into the administrative record for any such hearing documentation regarding the probable economic, environmental, traffic, visual and other impacts of the proposed facility upon the Granite Falls community.

EPF-1.4 Use the following Siting Process to site essential public facilities.

1. The City shall adopt and periodically update a list of existing and potential essential public facilities (at a minimum, that provided by Washington State Office of Financial Management). In formulating and updating said list, the City shall consider and draw upon the following sources:
 - a. The list maintained by the Office of Financial Management of essential state public facilities that are required or likely to be constructed within the following six years;
 - b. Any list maintained by Snohomish County regarding essential public facilities of a county-wide or regional nature, including facilities made part of or pursuant to the countywide planning policies adopted by Snohomish County in consultation with the City of Granite Falls; and
 - c. Any list of local essential public facilities adopted by the City of Granite Falls, irrespective of the funding source therefore.
2. Essential public facilities shall be classified as “state,” “regional” or “local” facilities, with substantive and procedural standards for each classification provided in the Granite Falls Municipal Code.
3. The policy guidelines herein are intended to ensure the City’s compliance with applicable GMA mandates while simultaneously protecting the local public interest to the maximum permissible extent. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to allow preclusion of essential public facilities in contravention of RCW 36.70A.200.
4. To the extent permissible under RCW 36.70A.200 and any controlling precedent established by Washington courts or the Growth Management Hearings Board Central Puget Sound Panel, the City’s siting process for essential public facilities shall take into account the following considerations:
 - a. The extent to which the proposed facility will exacerbate the community, traffic, environmental, financial and other impacts of any other existing or proposed essential public facilities located in close proximity;
 - b. The proposed facility’s consistency and compatibility with the City’s Vision Statement, Comprehensive Plan, and development regulations;

- c. The project site's compliance with the proposed facility's minimum physical site requirements, including any reasonably projected facility expansion needs;
- d. The facility's compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- e. The extent to which mitigation measures would substantially avoid, reduce, or compensate for any adverse environmental impacts of the facility;
- f. The extent to which necessary transportation infrastructure is or will be made available to ensure safe transportation access and transportation concurrency;
- g. The extent to which necessary infrastructure is or will be made available to ensure appropriate access by public safety responders;
- h. The extent to which the proposed facility will unreasonably increase noise levels in residential areas, particularly at night;
- i. The extent to which visual screening would mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed facility from streets and adjacent properties; and
- j. The financial capacity of the project sponsor to comply with any bonding or other security requirements of the City's land use regulations.

The above list is nonexclusive.

5. The siting process for essential public facilities shall take into account the following considerations:

- a. The public need for the facility;
- b. The extent to which the proposed facility site will reasonably serve the project sponsor's overall service population;
- c. The extent to which the project sponsor has reasonably investigated alternative sites;
- d. The project's consistency with the sponsor's own long-range plans for facilities and operations, as well as the plans of those jurisdictions and agencies that may also be participating in a facilities plan;
- e. The extent to which the project sponsor's public participation plan has allowed for public participation in the siting decision and with respect to appropriate mitigation measures; and
- f. The extent to which the project would result in a disproportionate burden of essential public facilities upon a particular geographic area of the City.

6. The proposed siting and/or expansion of essential public facilities shall be subject to the City's conditional use permit process. Applications for siting essential public facilities shall be submitted to the City Clerk.
7. To the extent legally permissible, it is the policy of the City of Granite Falls that no essential public facility be located within a residential zoning district unless no reasonable alternative sites in other zoning districts are or practicably can be made available.
8. The City's regulations for essential public facilities shall provide a public process that includes, at a minimum, noticing as required by GFMC Title 19, provides for at least one public hearing to be heard by the City's Planning Commission, and approval by the City Council after consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation.

EPF-1.5 Coordinate with Snohomish County in the siting of essential public facilities along common boundaries.

EPF-1.6 Where appropriate in the City Council's discretion, cooperate with sponsors of proposed regional and state essential public facilities through the execution of interlocal agreements regarding the siting, operation and/or expansion of such facilities within the Granite Falls community. Such agreements are encouraged to the extent they would result in locally beneficial siting decisions, facilitate the sponsor's voluntary provision of enhanced mitigation measures exceeding those required by applicable regulatory standards, and/or provide for mitigation of any disproportionate financial burden on the City created by the proposed facility.

EPF-1.7 To the extent consistent with other Comprehensive Plan policies, encourage exceptional, high-quality design standards and the installation, use and operation of state-of-the-art technology. Examples of such design standards and technology may include, but are not limited to: (a) architectural methods that minimize the building footprint and visual impact of the proposed facility, (b) energy-efficient technology and building design, (c) innovative and/or state-of-the-art pollution, noise and odor control measures, and (d) utilization of recycled, reused, or otherwise ecologically-sensitive building materials.

Actions

EPF Action 1 - Identify lands within the UGA that could serve as a location for essential public facilities.

EPF Action 2 - Develop shared site evaluation criteria, which do not preclude the siting of essential public facilities.