

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - GOVERNMENT ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Government Element is not a mandatory part of the *Comprehensive Plan*, but it does address regulatory issues, which are required to be discussed in the *Comp Plan*. These include property rights and regulatory practices. It also speaks to the Public Process whenever the City goes through an Update or Amendment of the City's *Comprehensive Plan*.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

The *City of Sequim's Comprehensive Plan* includes goals and policies, which address respect for private property rights, while balancing these rights with the need to protect the public's health, safety and welfare. The *Comprehensive Plan*, in conjunction with the County-Wide Planning Policies ensures that property owners and those affected by development proposals have equal opportunity to express their concerns in a series of regulatory processes.

REGULATORY PROCESSES

There is an opportunity for a developer to meet with various City staff to discuss the conceptual aspects of a project before the developer has advanced very far or expended monies. This "pre-application" meeting allows all departments to listen to and to explain to the developer the concerns the City would have with the project according to the *City of Sequim's Comprehensive Plan*, its Sequim Municipal Code, Zoning ordinances, and any affected design and development standards. The developer can come back with a better thought-out project and appropriate mitigations for those issues that cannot be handled otherwise.

The applicant/proponents' documents are reviewed one more time before they are forwarded to the Planning Commission for their recommendation. The applicant has another opportunity to make adjustments, corrections, or reductions in the scope of his project. Then Planning Commission will compare the project to their understanding of what the *Comprehensive Plan* calls for on that site. After a public meeting where the Planning Commission will accept comments from the general public, the Commission will make a recommendation whether to advance the project to City Council (for approval or not); remand it to staff for further information; or deny it altogether.

At City Council, the applicant again is allowed to explain the scope of the project and show how it complies with the *Comprehensive Plan* and conforms to the City's Municipal Code. The City Council will hear testimony from the general public and make a decision to either approve, conditionally approve, deny (with or without prejudice) or remand to staff for more information.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public process, with a “bottoms up” approach to community planning, continues to be encouraged by the State’s Growth Management Act. The development and ongoing amendments of this *Comprehensive Plan* continue to be a community “vision-driven” process.

The importance of public participation in developing this plan continues to be acknowledged by City staff as they continually seek public review in the updating of the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*. The periodic revisions to the City’s development codes and the presentation of development projects through the “open meeting” planning process, also requires significant public involvement through hearings.

It is still important that the community’s citizens have an opportunity to review these projects and to give comment and testimony to those elected officials reviewing these projects. There needs to be substantial evidence that development of these projects encourages appropriate growth and is within the intent of the Growth Management Act.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Growth Management Act requires that each community provide a process whereby essential public facilities and facilities of regional significance can be located. Essential public facilities and facilities of regional significance include those buildings that are essential to the public welfare; make intensive use of land; or have special land use needs that are difficult to anticipate. Airports, fire departments, hospitals, group homes, research facilities, libraries, government offices, electrical transfer substations, parks, police precincts, post offices, solid waste handling sites and other such uses may be considered essential public facilities.

The County-Wide Planning Policies have identified essential public facilities for the region. The City of Sequim has provided a zoning category exclusively reserved for the establishment of Public Facilities (PF) and essential public facilities. The PF Zone is in the Land Use Element, Chapter 3, of this Plan.

It also has created an inventory (*Catalog of Public Facilities*) of every acre and parcel that is either an essential facility or is a property held by some public entity and no longer on the property tax rolls.

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GOVERNMENT GOALS

“Goals” are measurable and observable outcomes that the *Comprehensive Plan* anticipates in conformance with the Growth Management Act.

GOVG-1

Review the City’s development codes and design standards for conformance with the *Comprehensive Plan Update*.

GOVG-2

Evaluate the community’s development periodically for conformance with the *City of Sequim’s Comprehensive Plan Update* and with the Growth Management Act, as amended from time to time.

GOVG-3

Pursue incentives rather than regulations in order to achieve development goals.

GOVG-4

Ensure fair, equitable, consistent, and timely enforcement of development regulations.

GOVG-5

Process development and construction permit applications required by both state and local government in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability (GMA).

GOVG-6

Provide a permit system, which is streamlined, simplified, fair, and consistent.

GOVG-7

Provide a permit system, which informs and educates our citizens on permit requirements.

GOVG-8

Ensure strict compliance with all adopted land use regulations.

GOVG-9

Consider expansion and/or improvement of *existing* essential public facilities prior to approval of *new* essential public facilities.

GOVG-10

Require that the public and private developer of an essential public facility provide infrastructure improvements necessary to support the development.

GOVG-11

Ensure that essential public facilities will be allowed in locations appropriate for the services provided and the people served, while assuring compatibility with the surrounding development and the natural features of the environment.

GOVG-12

Strive to locate essential public facilities equitably. No single neighborhood should absorb an inequitable share of these facilities.

GOVG-13

Strive to ensure early, continuous public participation in all elements of government by all segments of the population.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - GOVERNMENT POLICIES

“Policies” are the guidelines as to how the staff and the readers of the *Comprehensive Plan* shall achieve the goals of the Government Element of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

GOVP-1

Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.

GOVP-2

The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions, caused by the City.

GOVP-3

Respect the rights of property owners to use and/or develop their property, while recognizing the need for regulations to promote responsible development practices.

GOVP-4

Promote the long-range community values while respecting the individual rights and responsibilities of property owners.

GOVP-5

Review the design and location of essential public facilities to guarantee the ability to protect the existing character of the neighborhood.

GOVP-6

Ensure that essential public facilities are coordinated between jurisdictions to provide for the needs of the entire region.

GOVP-7

Locate essential public facilities adjacent to, or in proximity to, appropriate essential infrastructure, including utilities services and arterials, as needed.

GOVP-8

Review the land use implications of providing urban levels of service through establishment of essential public facilities as each project is presented.

GOVP-9

Encourage public participation in adoption and revision of the *Comprehensive Plan*; implement regulations and development proposals through adequate notification; target users and interest groups, encouraging senior citizen and student participation through innovative outreach methods.

GOVP-10

Include a public notification process, which ensures that adjacent property owners and interested citizens have an opportunity to comment on proposed developments.