

WAC 365-196-440 Parks and recreation element. (1) Requirements.

(a) The park and recreation element of the comprehensive plan must contain at least the following features:

(i) Consistency with the capital facilities element as it relates to park and recreation facilities;

(ii) Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period;

(iii) An evaluation of facilities and service needs; and

(iv) An evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.

(b) The requirement to include a parks and recreation element is null and void until sufficient funds to cover applicable local governments costs are appropriated and distributed at least two years before the due date for the periodic review and update required in RCW 36.70A.130(1).

(2) Recommendations for meeting requirements.

(a) Consistency and integration with other plan elements. Counties and cities should pay particular attention to consistency with the land use element, approaches to protecting critical areas and conserving natural resource lands, and identification of open space corridors and lands useful for public purposes. Planning policies and implementing regulations in each of these elements should complement each other to achieve adopted community goals.

(b) Visioning process. Counties and cities should start with a visioning process. This process should engage the public in the process of identifying needs, evaluating their satisfaction with existing recreational opportunities, and developing goals to guide the development of the parks and recreation element.

(c) Establishing level of service standards.

(i) The visioning process should be used when establishing levels of service for the parks and recreation element. Select levels of service or planning assumptions that reflect local priorities.

(ii) Methods used to establish levels of service should reflect community goals, and may be adapted from approaches recommended by the Washington state recreation and conservation office or the National Recreation and Parks Association; facilities and services. Level of service standards should reflect local priorities.

(iii) Level of service standards should focus on those aspects that relate most directly to factors influenced by growth and development, to allow for counties and cities to more clearly identify the impact on the demand for park facilities resulting from new development.

(d) Evaluation of facilities and service needs.

(i) Counties and cities should ensure consistency with the land use element when identifying existing and future public facilities and services.

(ii) Counties and cities should prepare an inventory of all existing park, recreation and open space lands, and related services. The inventory should describe the location, size and type of each facility or service, its current condition and capacity, and its intended service area. It should include a description of the park and recreation facilities and services of other private and public entities, including state park and recreation services.

(iii) Counties and cities should estimate demand for parks, open space and recreational services. Estimates must be for at least a planning period of ten years, and jurisdictions should consider a

planning period that matches that used for other comprehensive plan elements (e.g., twenty years). In preparing estimates, factors that should be considered include, but are not limited to:

- (A) Population forecasts and other demographic projections;
- (B) Levels of service selected for each type of facility or service to be provided;
- (C) User information and participation rates from current facilities and programs;
- (D) Surveys or other means of assessing community priorities for park and recreational services;
- (E) National and local trends in recreational demands and services;
- (F) Facilities and services provided by other private or public entities; and
- (G) Review of statewide recreation plans, assessments and recreation trends made available through the department, the Washington state department of fish and wildlife, the Washington state department of natural resources, the recreation and conservation office, and the state parks and recreation commission.

(e) The parks and recreation element should identify future facilities and services needed to meet the estimated demand for parks, open space and recreational programs, consistent with levels of service or planning assumptions and the projections for distribution of growth in the land use element. Consistency with the capital facilities and land use elements should be ensured when identifying existing and future public facilities and services to meet the estimated demand. The parks and recreation element should provide for an integrated parks, recreation and open space system. The system should consist of a complementary set of parks and open spaces that, considered together, meet the needs of a full range of community interests.

(f) Opportunities for intergovernmental coordination.

(i) When preparing the parks and recreation element, counties and cities should review other local, statewide, and regional recreation and land use plans to identify any future facilities that may help in meeting the future demand for parks and recreation facilities.

(ii) Counties and cities should evaluate opportunities for intergovernmental or public/private partnership approaches to meeting regional demand for park and recreation services including, but not limited to:

- (A) Joint facility use agreements or contracts;
- (B) Interlocal agreements for land acquisition or facility construction to serve region-wide needs;
- (C) Contracts with private service providers;
- (D) Formation of a single, large regional service provider such as a park and recreation district (chapter 36.69 RCW), park and recreation service area (RCW 36.68.400 through 36.68.620), or metropolitan park district (chapter 35.61 RCW); and
- (E) Partnerships with nearby state parks and recreation facilities and services.

(g) Strategies for achieving adopted goals.

(i) Counties and cities should prepare strategies for achieving the adopted goals, policies and objectives, and for meeting the future facilities and service needs. Strategies may include:

- (A) Developing needed facilities and programs;
- (B) Coordinating intergovernmental efforts to provide needed facilities and programs; or

(C) Adopting development regulations that require provision of needed facilities as a condition of development.

(ii) When creating plans for new park facilities, counties and cities should develop site selection criteria to enable strategic prioritization of acquisition and development opportunities.

(iii) Strategies for financing must be consistent with the financing plan in the capital facilities element. If a local government intends to adopt impact fees as a strategy, it must identify those facilities as necessary for development and should identify them in:

(A) The parks and recreation element;

(B) A separate parks plan; or

(C) In the capital facilities element.

(iv) Counties and cities should evaluate if the identified strategies are sufficient to meet the adopted levels of service. If not, counties and cities should use the priorities set in the visioning process to realign the level of service standards with available resources.

(v) A county or city should also develop protocols to monitor and evaluate the parks and recreation element. These protocols should be consistent with the policies adopted in the capital facilities element regarding reassessment. See WAC 365-196-415. The protocol should include plans to monitor the community's changing recreation needs, evaluate progress toward implementation, and adapt to new information, such as changes to plans of other public or private park and recreation service providers.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.050 and 36.70A.190. WSR 10-03-085, § 365-196-440, filed 1/19/10, effective 2/19/10.]