

**WAC 365-196-305 Countywide planning policies.** (1) Purpose of countywide planning policies. The act requires counties and cities to collaboratively develop countywide planning policies to govern the development of comprehensive plans. The primary purpose of countywide planning policies is to ensure consistency between the comprehensive plans of counties and cities sharing a common border or related regional issues. Another purpose of countywide planning policies is to facilitate the transformation of local governance in the urban growth area, typically through annexation to or incorporation of a city, so that urban governmental services are primarily provided by cities and rural and regional services are provided by counties.

(2) Relationship to the act. Countywide planning policies must comply with the requirements of the act. Countywide planning policies may not compel counties and cities to take action that violates the act. Countywide planning policies may not permit actions that the act prohibits nor include exceptions to such prohibitions not contained in the act. If a countywide planning policy can be implemented in a way that is consistent with the act, then it is consistent with the act, even if its subsequent implementation is found to be out of compliance. RCW 36.70A.210(4) requires state agencies to comply with countywide planning policies.

(3) Relationship to comprehensive plans. The comprehensive plans of counties and cities must comply with both the countywide planning policies and the act. Any requirements in a countywide planning policy do not replace requirements in the act or any other state or federal law or regulation.

(4) Required policies. Consistent with RCW 36.70A.210(3) and 36.70A.215, countywide planning policies must cover the following subjects:

- (a) Policies to implement RCW 36.70A.110, including:
  - (i) Designation of urban growth areas;
  - (ii) Selection of population projections, employment forecasts, and growth allocations between cities and counties as part of the review of an urban growth area;
  - (iii) Procedures governing amendments to urban growth areas, including the review required by RCW 36.70A.130(3);
  - (iv) Consultation between cities and counties regarding urban growth areas; and
  - (v) If desired, policies governing the establishment of urban service boundaries or potential annexation areas.
- (b) Promoting contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development;
- (c) Siting public facilities of a countywide or statewide nature, including transportation facilities of statewide significance;
- (d) Countywide transportation facilities and strategies;
- (e) The need for affordable housing such as housing for all economic segments of the population and parameters for its distribution;
- (f) Joint city/county planning in urban growth areas;
- (g) Countywide economic development and employment;
- (h) An analysis of fiscal impact; and
- (i) Where applicable, policies governing the buildable lands review and evaluation program.

(5) Recommended policies. Countywide planning policies should also include policies addressing the following:

- (a) Procedures by which the countywide planning policies will be reviewed and amended; and

(b) A process for resolving disputes regarding interpretation of countywide planning policies or disputes regarding implementation of the countywide planning policies.

(6) Framework for adoption of countywide planning policies. Prior to adopting countywide planning policies, counties and cities must develop a framework. This framework should be in written form and agreed to by the county and the cities within those counties. The framework may be in a memorandum of understanding, an intergovernmental agreement, or as a section of the countywide planning policies. This framework must include the following provisions:

(a) Desired policies;

(b) Deadlines;

(c) Ratification of final agreements and demonstration; and

(d) Financing, if any, of all activities associated with developing and adopting the countywide planning policies.

(7) Forum for ongoing coordination. Counties and cities should establish a method for ongoing coordination of issues associated with implementation of the countywide planning policies and comprehensive plans, which should include both a forum for county and city elected officials and a forum for county and city staff responsible for implementation. Cities and counties should review adopted countywide policies to determine whether they are effectively achieving their objectives. These forums may also include special purpose districts, transit districts, port districts, federal agencies, state agencies, and tribes.

(8) Multicounty planning policies.

(a) Multicounty planning policies must be adopted by two or more counties, each with a population of 450,000 or more, with contiguous urban areas. They may also be adopted by other counties by a process agreed to among the counties and cities within the affected counties.

(b) Multicounty planning policies are adopted by two or more counties and establish a common region-wide framework that ensures consistency among county and city comprehensive plans adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070, and countywide planning policies adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.210.

(c) Multicounty planning policies provide a framework for regional plans developed within a multicounty region, including regional transportation plans established under RCW 47.80.023, as well as plans of cities, counties, and others that have common borders or related regional issues as required under RCW 36.70A.100.

(d) Multicounty planning policies should address, at a minimum, the same topics identified for countywide planning as identified in RCW 36.70A.210(3), except for those responsibilities assigned exclusively to counties. Other issues may also be addressed.

(e) Because of the regional nature of multicounty planning policies, counties or cities should use an existing regional agency with the same or similar geographic area, such as a regional transportation planning organization, pursuant to RCW 47.80.020, to develop, adopt, and administer multicounty planning policies.

(f) In order to provide an ongoing multicounty framework, a schedule for reviewing and revising the multicounty planning policies may be established. This schedule should relate to the review and revision deadlines for county and city comprehensive plans pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.050 and 36.70A.190. WSR 23-08-037, § 365-196-305, filed 3/29/23, effective 4/29/23; WSR 10-03-085, § 365-196-305, filed 1/19/10, effective 2/19/10.]