

WAC 365-196-840 Concurrency. (1) Purpose.

(a) The purpose of concurrency is to assure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve that development at the time it is available for occupancy and use, without decreasing service levels below locally established minimum standards.

(b) Concurrency describes the situation in which adequate facilities are available when the impacts of development occur, or within a specified time thereafter. Concurrency ensures consistency in land use approval and the development of adequate public facilities as plans are implemented, and it prevents development that is inconsistent with the public facilities necessary to support the development.

(c) With respect to facilities other than transportation facilities counties and cities may fashion their own regulatory responses and are not limited to imposing moratoria on development during periods when concurrency is not maintained.

(2) Determining the public facilities subject to concurrency. Concurrency is required for locally owned transportation facilities and for transportation facilities of statewide significance that serve counties consisting of islands whose only connection to the mainland are state highways or ferry routes. Counties and cities may adopt a concurrency mechanism for other facilities that are deemed necessary for development. See WAC 365-196-415(5).

(3) Establishing an appropriate level of service.

(a) The concept of concurrency is based on the maintenance of specified levels of service with respect to each of the public facilities to which concurrency applies. For all such facilities, counties and cities should designate appropriate levels of service.

(b) Level of service is typically set in the capital facilities element or the transportation element of the comprehensive plan. The level of service is used as a basis for developing the transportation and capital facilities plans.

(c) Counties and cities should set level of service to reflect realistic expectations consistent with the achievement of growth aims. Setting levels of service too high could, under some regulatory strategies, result in no growth. As a deliberate policy, this would be contrary to the act.

(d) Counties and cities should coordinate with and reach agreements with other affected purveyors or service providers when establishing level of service standards for facilities or services provided by others.

(e) The level of service standards adopted by the county or city should vary based on the urban or rural character of the surrounding area and should be consistent with the land use plan and policies. The county or city should also balance the desired community character, funding capacity, and traveler expectations when adopting levels of service for transportation facilities. For example a plan that calls for a safe pedestrian environment that promotes walking or one that promotes development of a bike system so that biking trips can be substituted for auto trips may suggest using a level of service that includes measures of the pedestrian environment.

(f) For transportation facilities, level of service standards for locally owned arterials and transit routes should be regionally coordinated. In some cases, this may mean less emphasis on peak-hour automobile capacity, for example, and more emphasis on other transportation priorities. Levels of service for highways of statewide significance are set by the Washington state department of transportation.

For other state highways, levels of service are set in the regional transportation plan developed under RCW 47.80.030. Local levels of service for state highways should conform to the state and regionally adopted standards found in the statewide multimodal transportation plan and regional transportation plans. Other transportation facilities, however, may reflect local priorities.

(4) Measurement methodologies.

(a) Depending on how a county or city balances these factors and the characteristics of travel in their community, a county or city may select different ways to measure travel performance. For example, counties and cities may measure performance at different times of day, week, or month (peak versus off-peak, weekday versus weekend, summer versus winter). A city or county may choose to focus on the total multimodal supply of infrastructure available for use during a peak or off-peak period. Counties and cities may also measure performance at different geographic scales (intersections, road or route segments, travel corridors, or travel zones or measure multimodal mobility within a district).

(b) In urban areas, the department recommends counties and cities adopt methodologies that analyze the transportation system from a comprehensive, multimodal perspective, as authorized by RCW 36.70A.108. Multimodal level of service methodologies and standards should consider the needs of travelers using the four major modes of travel (auto, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian), their impacts on each other as they share the street or intersection, and their mode specific requirements for street and intersection design and operation.

(c) Although level of service standards and measurement methodologies are interrelated, changes in methodology, even if they have an incidental effect on the resulting level of service for a particular facility, are not necessarily a change in the level of service standard.

(5) Concurrency regulations.

(a) Each planning jurisdiction should produce a regulation or series of regulations which govern the operation of that jurisdiction's concurrency management system. This regulatory scheme will set forth the procedures and processes to be used to determine whether relevant public facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate a proposed development. In addition, the scheme should identify the responses to be taken when it is determined that capacity is not adequate to accommodate a proposal. Relevant public facilities for these purposes are those to which concurrency applies under the comprehensive plan. Adequate capacity refers to the maintenance of concurrency.

(b) Compliance with applicable environmental requirements, such as ambient air quality standards or water quality standards, should have been built into the determination of the facility capacities needed to accommodate anticipated growth.

(c) The variations possible in designing a concurrency management system are many. However, such a system could include the following features:

(i) Capacity monitoring - a process for collecting and maintaining real world data on use for comparison with evolving public facility capacities in order to show at any moment how much of the capacity of public facilities is being used;

(ii) Capacity allocation procedures - a process for determining whether proposed new development can be accommodated within the existing or programmed capacity of public facilities. This can include pre-assigning amounts of capacity to specific zones, corridors or areas on

the basis of planned growth. For any individual development this may involve:

(A) A determination of anticipated total capacity at the time the impacts of development occur.

(B) Calculation of how much of the total capacity will be used by existing developments and other planned developments at the time the impacts of development occur. If a local government does not require a concurrency certification or exempts small projects from the normal concurrency process, it should still calculate the capacity used and subtract that from the capacity available.

(C) Calculation of the amount of capacity available for the proposed development.

(D) Calculation of the impact on capacity of the proposed development, minus the effects of any mitigation provided by the applicant. (Standardized smaller developments can be analyzed based on predetermined capacity impact values.)

(E) Comparison of available capacity with project impact. For any project that places demands on public facilities, cities and counties must determine if levels of service will fall below locally established minimum standards.

(iii) Provisions for reserving capacity - A process of prioritizing the allocation of capacity to proposed developments. This process might include one of the following alternatives:

(A) Setting aside a block or blocks of available or anticipated capacity for specified types of development fulfilling an identified public interest;

(B) Adopting a first-come, first-served system of allocation, dedicating capacity to applications in the order received; or

(C) Adopting a preference system giving certain categories or specified types of development preference over others in the allocation of available capacity.

(6) Regulatory response to the absence of concurrency. The comprehensive plan should provide a strategy for responding when approval of any particular development would cause levels of service for concurrency to fall below the locally adopted standards. To the extent that any jurisdiction uses denial of development as its regulatory response to the absence of concurrency, consideration should be given to defining this as an emergency for the purposes of the ability to amend or revise the comprehensive plan.

(a) In the case of transportation, an ordinance must prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan unless improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development.

(i) These strategies may include increased public transportation service, ride sharing programs, demand management, and other transportation systems management strategies.

(ii) "Concurrent with development" means that improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six years.

(b) If the proposed development is consistent with the land use element, relevant levels of service should be reevaluated.

(c) Other responses could include:

(i) Development of a system of deferrals, approving proposed developments in advance but deferring authority to construct until ade-

quate public facilities become available at the location in question. Such a system should conform to and help to implement the growth phasing schedule contemplated in the land use and capital facilities elements of the plan.

(ii) Conditional approval through which the developer agrees to mitigate the impacts.

(iii) Denial of the development, subject to resubmission when adequate public facilities are made available.

(iv) Redesign of the project or implementation of demand management strategies to reduce trip generation to a level that is within the available capacity of the system.

(v) Transportation system management measures to increase the capacity of the transportation system.

(7) Form, timing and duration of concurrency approvals. The system should include provisions for how to show that a project has met the concurrency requirement, whether as part of another approval document (e.g., permit, platting decisions, planned unit development) or as a separate certificate of concurrency, possibly a transferable document. This choice, of necessity, involves determining when in the approval process the concurrency issue is evaluated and decided. Approvals, however made, should specify the length of time that a concurrency determination will remain effective, including requirements for development progress necessary to maintain approval.

(8) Provisions for interjurisdictional coordination - SEPA consistency. Counties and cities should consider integrating SEPA compliance on the project-specific level with the case-by-case process for concurrency management.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.050 and 36.70A.190. WSR 10-03-085, § 365-196-840, filed 1/19/10, effective 2/19/10.]