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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission
FROM: Christina Chaput, Associate Planner
DATE: August 1, 2018
SUBJECT: Capital Facilities Plan and Capital Improvement Program, Chapter 6 of the Comprehensive Plan

Background

The GMA requires the County have a Capital Facilities Element as part of its Comprehensive Plan (RCW 36.70A.070). GMA provides statutory requirements for capital facilities, the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-196-415 and the Growth Management Hearings Board provide guidance to meet the requirements. By planning ahead to determine what its needs are, the County can prioritize projects, coordinate related projects, and be ready to apply for funding. The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) can help the county use its limited funding wisely and most efficiently to maximize funding opportunities. Additionally, the CFP is a way for the County to be transparent with its capital improvement planning. The public has an opportunity to be informed of and comment on the county's capital improvement plan.

This year, in addition to the traditional annual amendment of the financial plan, staff completed a more comprehensive review of Chapter 6 as part of the comprehensive plan update. Staff is recommending changes to streamline the chapter and removes redundancies. Additionally, these changes will allow easier alignment of the CFP with other required plans, such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the county capital budget.

GMA Requirements

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(3)) requires planning for capital facilities to:

1. Ensure public facilities necessary to support growth are adequate at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
2. Include the following components:
 - a. Level of Service Standards and recommended changes
 - b. An inventory of existing public facilities with locations and capacities

- c. Forecast of future capital needs by department
- d. A financing plan for at least six years showing how the facilities will be paid for 20-year summary of capital project projections

The draft CFP and the six-year capital improvement program are designed to provide the facilities needed to keep pace with the population growth over plan period, to maintain or implement the level of service standards shown in the comprehensive plan and clearly identify potential funding sources. In addition, major maintenance and repair work on facilities is also included, as well as facilities needed to provide safety or preservation improvements, or to catch up with the needs of prior growth.

The CFP is used to implement the County's mission and vision that the Comprehensive Plan more fully details through goals, policies, programs and/or actions. The CFP maintains consistency with the Comprehensive plan, the six-year capital improvement program, and the county budget.

Projects listed in CFP are for planning purposes only. All projects listed in the CFP will need future Board approval and where required appropriate permits and SEPA review prior to implementation.

What's Changing in the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

Staff are proposing several overarching changes to the CFP:

- Streamline background, goal, and policy language, and cross-reference relevant information in other chapters
 - Information relevant to transportation will be moved to Chapter 5, Transportation
 - Information relevant to stormwater, water, and sewer utilities and solid waste will be moved to Chapter 7, Utilities
 - Information relevant to parks will be moved to Chapter 9, Environment and Recreation
- Reference the 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as an appendix that can be updated annually in coordination with the County budget, rather than as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment

In past years, Chapter 6 has contained general policy information, policy information for specific capital programs, a 20-year plan, and the 6-year financing plan. The CFP has also referred to a large supplement that contained specific project details. This structure duplicated information, both within the CFP itself, and with information in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Because the 6-year plan is updated each year in coordination with the county's budget, the previous structure has meant that Chapter 6 is required to go through a full update annually, rather than as other chapters on an 8-year periodic cycle. In addition, Thurston County's Transportation Division is required to create documents with similar information for other regulatory entities.

The proposed revised CFP extracts the 6-year financial plan from the body of Chapter 6 and places the financial and project information into a separate, but simplified appendix (Capital

Improvement Program). This structure is similar to that used by other counties such as Snohomish and Whatcom.

The proposed updated structure will enable information about county proposed projects to be in one location (Capital Improvement Program), eliminating duplication the supplement created. This also allows the County to more efficiently coordinate with other requirements with similar information needs and integrate the financial plan with the capital budget. Overall, the revised and simplified chapter should be more accessible and understandable to both internal county departments and the public, and better enable a thoughtful and coordinated approach to capital facilities planning in future years.