4. Capital Facilities Element

This chapter is a required element of a comprehensive plan developed to meet the provisions of the GMA. This element is crucial because it serves as a gauge of the practicality and feasibility of the other elements. Essentially, this element reveals which public facility projects are required in order to accomplish the development described in other elements, and also proves that the city has the financial resources to undertake those projects.

The GMA defines public facilities as "streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks and recreational facilities, and schools." (RCW 36.70A.030(12)) This element includes a discussion of each of these categories, although the transportation-related categories are all grouped together. In each section, the existing status of the system will first be described, and future needs will then be discussed. Preceding these sections is a presentation of Sumas's goals and policies related to capital facilities, as well as a discussion of the planning assumptions developed in other chapters that are pertinent to the analysis presented in this chapter.

Goals and Policies

Sumas adopts the following goals and policies pertaining to capital facilities:

Goal: To provide capital facilities consistent with statutory requirements and with the other elements of this plan.

- The city shall accord highest priority to those projects required by statute or necessary for the preservation of public health and safety.
- The city shall develop capital facilities in a manner that directs and controls land-use patterns and intensities in accordance with the land-use element of this plan. As required by RCW 36.70A.070, the city shall reassess the land-use element if funding is unavailable for the capital projects needed to support a planned use. Development shall be allowed only when and where there are facilities and services available to serve that development.

Goal: To allocate the cost of a facility fairly among those that benefit from the facility.

- Long-term borrowing should be used to pay for facilities that will benefit more than one generation.
- General governmental revenues should be used to pay only for facilities of general benefit. Other financing methods such as connection fees, utility rates, LIDs, and revenue bonds should be used to pay for facilities that benefit a narrower group.
- Facilities providing benefit only to a new development should be paid for by the developer.
- Facilities providing benefits to both existing residents and newcomers should be paid for by both groups, with each group paying a share proportional to their corresponding benefit. Connection fees and impact fees shall be based upon this principle of proportional benefit.

Goal: To build and operate facilities as efficiently as possible.

- A planning process should precede all major capital expenditures. This capital facilities element should be the cornerstone of that process. This element should be updated every other year and, with the exception of emergency projects, the capital budget for any given year should include only those projects identified in this element.
- The city should coordinate the projects in a given location in order to reduce costs.
- The city should aggressively pursue low-cost funds such as grants and subsidized loans.
- Major developments should have a full range of facilities, including streets, water, sewer, storm sewer, sidewalks, and neighborhood parks. These facilities should be installed and paid for by the developer and thereafter dedicated to the city.
- The city should adopt and enforce sensible design and construction standards for capital facilities systems.
- Existing facilities should be adequately maintained, because maintenance is usually more cost-effective than replacement.

Sewer System

The following discussion is based on a 2007 study, *Wastewater Treatment Alternatives*, prepared by the engineering firm Wilson Engineering LLC. Map 9 accompanies this discussion.

Existing conditions

Collection. Prior to 1972, sewage disposal in Sumas was handled by on-site septic systems. In 1972 a sewage collection system and treatment plant were built. As shown on Map 9, the sewage collection system now consists of over 10 miles of pipe spanning 300 acres, less than half of the incorporated area. The system provides service to 366 single-family residential, 37 multifamily, 66 commercial, and 11 industrial customers. Approximately twelve residences are still on septic tanks.

The system is divided into seven drainage basins, each basin served by a lift station. Generally, gravity mains carry sewage from south to north within each basin, and a lift station then pumps the sewage past a barrier such as a creek or highway. Sewage ultimately reaches lift station 1 in the northeast (i.e., the lowest) corner of town. Lift stations 1, 2, and 3 were rehabilitated in 1998 as part of the project to connect to the Abbotsford sewer and are in good shape. Station 5 was installed in 1997 in order to serve the western part of the industrial zone and is in good shape. Station 4 was installed in the mid to late 1980s, at the time that the Sumas industrial park was developed, and has received a major upgrade in 2005. Station 4 is in good condition, with a design capacity sufficient to accommodate new growth through the planning period. Station 6 is located adjacent to Hovel Road and was designed to serve the City as it expands to the south. It was constructed in 2007 in conjunction with development of the new ball fields and is in good condition. In addition, Station 7 is located at the west end of town near Barbo Road. This station is capable of handling anticipated flows from residential development at the west end of the Moe

- Build a wetland park with trails.
- Existing sidewalks need to be kept clean and passable.

Goals and objectives

In consideration of local capacity, existing facilities, and community vision/preferences, the following goals and objectives are adopted.

- Goal 1. Provide sidewalks and trails in support of the Comp. Plan vision of easy pedestrian access to all downtown amenities.
  - Objective 1.1. Provide pedestrian access from major neighborhoods to the downtown core.
  - Objective 1.2. Provide pedestrian access to major public facilities such as schools, churches, and libraries.
  - Objective 1.3. Provide pedestrian access to the rodeo grounds and new ball fields.
- Goal 2. Provide neighborhood parks consistent with the overall City vision of convenient pedestrian access.
  - Objective 2.1. Provide a neighborhood park in the Garfield Street subdivision.
  - Objective 2.1. Ensure that adequate land for neighborhood parks is acquired through developer dedication when processing major new subdivisions.
- Goal 3. When economically feasible, support the recreational needs of the Nooksack Valley community.
  - Objective 3.1. Continue to assess the need for additional community facilities to serve city residents and the surrounding area.
  - Objective 3.2. Allow access to City recreational programs and facilities by residents of the Nooksack Valley.
  - Objective 3.3. Develop a skateboard/BMX facility.
- Goal 4. When economically feasible, provide facilities and events targeted to the County and the region.
  - Objective 4.1. Continue to provide a facility for rodeo events.
  - Objective 4.2. Develop a recreational center targeted at a regional user-group, including amenities such as a rock-climbing wall, jogging track, weight room, exercise room, gymnasium, and/or pool.
- Goal 5. Provide recreational facilities and opportunities to residents of all ages.
  - Objective 5.1. Continue to provide a senior center facility and program.
  - Objective 5.2. Enhance the program currently offered at the Youth Center, to include more operating hours and structured summer classes and activities.
  - Objective 5.3. Maintain existing facilities such as the basketball and tennis courts that are used by people of all ages.

- Objective 5.4. Develop a trail system for recreational walkers.

- Goal 6. Provide facilities that are compatible with and capitalize upon Sumas's rural setting.
  - Objective 6.1. Develop trails that link downtown with planned open spaces, including wetland mitigation areas.

Project feasibility analysis

The feasibility of developing various facilities was explored by ranking each facility against a number of criteria. Four projects were omitted from further consideration based upon their poor showing in the survey: horse trails, sidewalks, civic auditorium, and conversion of the rodeo ground to an alternate use. The following matrix shows the results of the feasibility exercise.

	Soccer fields	Recreation center	Playgrounds	Recreation program	Pool	Baseball fields	Trails	Skateboard/BMX park	Fishing pond and nature trail
Ranking in survey (L, M, H)	M	H	L	H	H	M	H	H	-
Capital cost (L, M, H)	M	H	L	L	H	M	L	M	M
Operating cost (L, M, H)	M	H	L	M	H+	M	L	L	M
Staffing requirement (L, H, Zero)	L	H	0	M	H+	L	0	0	L
Grant funding likelihood (L, M, H)	M	L	L	L	L	M	H	L	H
Revenue from user fees?	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	?	Y
Risk (L, M, H)	M	H	L	L	H	M	L	M	M
Target market (City, Local, Region)	R	R	C	C	R	R	L	R	R
Competition	Sumas, Lynden, Everson	Lynden Y, Everson private gym	-	Lynden Y, Church, misc. leagues	Lynden Y, Bellingham, Abbotsford	Sumas, Lynden, Everson	-	Bellingham	Saxon