



# Growth Management and Comprehensive Plans

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## What is the Growth Management Act (GMA)?

Passed in 1990, the Growth Management Act, or GMA as it is referred to, was adopted by the State of Washington to guide the development and adoption of Comprehensive Plans and development regulations for the various Counties and Cities in the State.

Spokane County, as well as all the incorporated cities within it, began planning under GMA in 1993. All the Jurisdictions within the County were required to begin planning under GMA rules and, most significantly, to create new Comprehensive Plans that met the specific requirements of the Act.

GMA is organized into fourteen Goals, including:

- Urban Growth
- Reduce Sprawl
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Property Rights
- Permits
- Open Space & Recreation
- Natural Resource Industries
- Environment
- Citizen Participation
- Public Facilities & Services
- Historic Preservation
- Shoreline Management

For more information on GMA and the fourteen Goals, go to [www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/)

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a community's long-range plan for growth. The plan contains a set of goals, policies, maps, illustrations, and implementation strategies that state how the city should grow physically, socially, and economically. This plan is intended to guide decision making by a City or County for 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan provides the overall scheme of city development – the major land uses, transportation systems, parks and open spaces, and centers of shopping and employment. By law, decision makers and managers in city government must follow the direction of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Why do Communities Plan?

Planning is a part of everyone's life. We make plans for our careers, vacations, families, and housing. Planning is how we increase the likelihood that these things will occur in ways we desire. Without plans, we face never-ending uncertainty about future events.

For similar reasons, communities make plans. Our City is constantly changing, and our community plans shape the future in desirable ways. Cities are a place where police and fire protection, sewers, water, transportation, recreation, and many other services must be provided.

## What is in the Comprehensive Plan?

The GMA requires that certain elements be addressed in every City's plan those elements are:

- Land use
- Housing
- Capital Facilities
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Shorelines

The City of Spokane has opted to include additional elements to ensure we are truly taking a comprehensive approach to planning for our community. Those additional elements are:

- Introduction
- Urban Design and Historic Preservation
- Natural Environment
- Social Health
- Neighborhoods
- Leadership, Governance, and Citizenship



## What is Shaping Spokane?

**Shaping Spokane** is the 2017 Update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. GMA requires that the City update it's Comprehensive Plan every eight years. Shaping Spokane will be the the second update to the Comprehensive Plan. Like the update completed in 2006, this one won't be a major update.

Even without the GMA requirement to update the Comprehensive Plan, it's a good idea to take a critical look at the Comprehensive Plan from time to time. Why does the City do this? Because communities change over time. So too do the people who live there. Also, State law is constantly changing, forcing Cities and Counties to address issues that weren't thought of until now.

## What has changed?

For the most part, **Shaping Spokane** is a minor update to the Comprehensive Plan. No major policy changes have occurred and the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan remains unchanged. However, there are two notable exceptions:

### LINK Spokane

LINK Spokane is the name for the detailed effort to study and revise the Transportation Chapter. This effort has been ongoing for some time and involved input from many City departments and outside stakeholders. Accordingly, the most significant changes to the Comprehensive Plan can be seen in Chapter 4 - Transportation.

### Implementation Chapter

A new chapter has been added to the Comprehensive Plan, giving insight into the direct actions called for in the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter includes discussion of future plans and efforts that will accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

Overall, the Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed for consistency with State law, with minor changes made when necessary. Any language that was excessively descriptive or unnecessary was removed. Redundant policies were removed and, in some cases, two or more related policies were combined. All in all, the Comprehensive Plan has been streamlined and is now easier to read and understand.

## What hasn't changed?

The vision and values of each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan have not been modified in any way. These were developed for the 2001 Comprehensive Plan following a massive public participation effort. Shaping Spokane honors all that work by not changing a thing. Similarly, the Shorelines chapter was recently updated following a similarly complex and exhaustive public process. Therefore, that chapter has likewise not been changed. It will be reformatted to look like the rest of the Comprehensive Plan, but no changes to the text will occur.

