



2024 Issue Paper: Growth Management

Position Statement

The League of Women Voters played a significant role in adoption of the state Growth Management Act in 1990 and in monitoring its implementation thereafter. LWVWA positions support comprehensive land use plans that address urban growth and long-range land use goals, and use of these goals, plans and policies by other agencies. Protection of areas of critical concern are of special importance in planning. The League position also states that state planning assistance to local governments should include uniform guidelines, information, technical assistance and adequate financial resources.

Summary of Recent Legislation

Significant changes have been made to the Growth Management Act over the last couple of years, as the update period approaches. Local Comprehensive Plans are due at the end of 2024 for several Puget Sound counties; and over the following two years for other counties in the state. Because of the affordable housing shortage and the need to manage climate change, a number of requirements for local planning were added in recent sessions. These included more specific planning for housing to accommodate the entire range of income levels, plus emergency shelter; missing middle housing requirements; and the addition of requirements to plan for climate mitigation and resilience.

Anticipated in the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session

Bills that did not pass during the 2023 legislative session are expected to be reconsidered in 2024, including the following, among others. In addition, a proposal to allow co-living, prohibiting excessive restrictions on the number of unrelated individuals who can share a housing unit, is anticipated.

Transit-oriented Development. There are a number of approaches to guiding housing development near major transit stops, and one of the most controversial is the restriction on parking requirements for units within a certain distance of those stops. Transit-oriented development will continue to be a topic for legislative consideration.

Equity and Environmental Justice. How to prevent additional impacts on marginalized communities and provide restorative justice for over-impacted communities remains an issue to be addressed further in the Growth Management Act. Last year, the bills that would add environmental justice and equity as a goal in the Growth Management Act and as an element in local comprehensive plans were not passed but may be reconsidered in the upcoming session.

Net Ecological Gain. [HB 1735](#), Adding net ecological gain as a voluntary element of comprehensive plans under the growth management act, did not move out of the House but may be reconsidered in 2024.

Issue Chair: Cynthia Stewart, cstewart@lwvwa.org