

Capital Facilities

NOTE: This Draft Plan includes a new Parks and Open Space Element, and the Capital Facilities Element no longer addresses open space issues.

Introduction

Seattle has a comprehensive network of capital facilities that is critical for providing a high quality of life, particularly as the city grows. The facilities governed by this element include City-owned and managed facilities, such as police and fire facilities, libraries, Seattle Center, neighborhood service centers, and City office space; and other facilities that the City funds or otherwise supports, such as schools and health clinics. While non-City organizations and agencies, such as the Seattle Public Schools and Public Health Seattle & King County, are not required to meet the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the City works with these groups to encourage them to strive for similar goals. Though this section applies to buildings occupied by a variety of departments, it does not apply to transportation infrastructure, utility infrastructure, or affordable housing projects, which are all discussed in other elements.

Overall, the City's network of capital facilities is generally sufficient to accommodate forecasted housing and job growth through 2035. Unlike utilities and transportation, demand for capital facilities is determined largely by factors other than population, such as by service areas or response times. However, the City continues to invest in existing and new facilities to improve the system and ensure that it remains relevant and useful to changing populations. Over the next twenty years, the City will aim to ensure that Seattle's capital facilities and programming:

- Contribute to a high degree of personal and public health and safety
- Are equitably distributed based upon the different needs of individuals and communities
- Provide services that are relevant to neighborhoods throughout the city and are consistent with the community priorities
- Support the City's goals of protecting and restoring the natural environment, particularly reducing the impacts of and adapting to climate change
- Encourage the healthy physical, educational, and cultural development of children and adults
- Respond to increasing diversity, changing use of technology, and increased demand on limited facilities
- Are resilient to the effects of natural and man-made disasters

To meet this vision, the City will have to act strategically and leverage finite resources in order to create a capital facilities system that is an exceptional resource for all Seattleites.

Strategic Investment

Discussion

The City has finite physical and financial resources available to maintain and improve our capital facilities network and investment decisions that we make will have long-term implications for our ability to serve a changing population. Consequently, it is critical to think strategically about how we invest our resources. This section describes the overarching goals and policies that apply to all aspects of capital facility development and management in order to guide our actions across maintenance, acquisition, design/construction, and service provision operations.

GOAL

- CFG1 Develop and manage capital facilities to maximize the long-term environmental, economic, social, and health benefits of available money, land, and facilities.

POLICIES

- CF1.1 Assess the policy and fiscal implications of potential major capital facility investments as part of the City's capital decision-making process. The evaluation should include consideration of a capital project's:
- Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and functional plans
 - Effects on Seattle's environmental, social, economic, and human health over the lifetime of the investment
 - Contributions to an equitable distribution of facilities and services
 - Ability to support urban centers and villages that are experiencing or expecting high levels of residential and employment growth
 - Total costs of ownership over a project's life including construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning
- CF1.2 Prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities, making efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.
- CF1.3 Provide capital facilities that are models of environmental, economic and social stewardship and that demonstrate a high standard for private development.
- CF1.4 Provide capital facilities that will keep Seattle attractive to families with children.
- CF1.5 Encourage the protection, enhancement and adaptive reuse of City-owned historic facilities.

- CF1.6 Develop resilient capital facilities by considering the potential impacts of changing demographics, conditions, and events—such as climate change, technological changes, and natural and man-made disasters—in planning and investment decisions.
- CF1.7 Structure user fees and scholarships to mitigate disproportionate cost burdens on low-income households.
- CF1.8 Leverage investments to create training and living wage job opportunities, particularly for low-income and local residents.

Facility Operations & Maintenance

Discussion

Given the substantial investments that have been made to develop existing facilities, the operation and maintenance of those facilities is a key aspect of making efficient use of resources. This section applies to daily operations, monitoring, and minor improvements.

GOAL

- CFG2 Operate and maintain existing capital facilities to reduce ongoing resource consumption and day-to-day costs and to ensure their long-term viability, while serving the needs of the people that use them.

POLICIES

- CF2.1 Use maintenance plans for capital facilities to make efficient use of limited financial and physical resources.
- CF2.2 Manage existing facilities in an overall effort towards resource conservation with the specific aims of continuously reducing energy use, water use and stormwater impacts, as well as lowering utility costs.
- CF2.3 Seek to achieve 20% energy savings from a 2008 baseline across the City's portfolio of buildings by 2020 and achieve net carbon neutrality by 2050.
- CF2.4 Manage existing facilities to maintain healthy environments for occupants and users.

Facility Siting

Discussion

New capital facilities represent substantial long-term investments. Since the location and design of these facilities can have major impacts on the long-term cost of providing services, as well as benefits for local communities, it is important to consider a wide range of perspectives in making these decisions. This includes how potential locations may impact the efficiency of operations, equity of service provision, environmental consequences, and our ability to serve a growing population.

GOAL

- CF3 Locate capital facilities to achieve efficient citywide delivery of services, support an equitable distribution of services, minimize environmental impacts and maximize facilities' value to the communities in which they are located.

POLICIES

- CF3.1 Encourage the location of new capital facilities in urban centers and villages to support future growth and attract both public and private investments.
- CF3.2 Encourage the location of new capital facilities where they would support equitable distribution of services and address the needs of underrepresented communities.
- CF3.3 Locate capital facilities so that the majority of expected users can reach them by walking, bicycling and/or taking public transit.
- CF3.4 Seek to avoid siting new facilities in areas known to be prone to the effects of natural or man-made hazards, such as earthquake liquefaction-prone areas.
- CF3.5 Encourage the joint-use, reuse and repurposing of existing City-owned land to further the City's long-range goals.
- CF3.6 Consider future climate conditions during siting, particularly sea level, to help ensure capital facilities function as intended over their planned life-cycle.

Facility Design & Construction

Discussion

The design and construction of capital facilities has a profound impact on long-term cost of service delivery, environmental impact, and site usability. By considering a range of perspectives and desired outcomes, the City can design facilities that better suit the needs of Seattleites, now and in the future. The following policies address design and construction of the City's capital facilities, including major improvements and rehabilitations.

GOAL

- CFG4 Design and construct capital facilities so that they are considered assets to their communities and act as models of environmental, economic and social stewardship.

POLICIES

- CF4.1 Seek to make all capital facilities accessible and relevant to people of all abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and cultures.
- CF4.2 Maximize facilities' energy and water efficiency.
- CF4.3 Use materials efficiently, prioritize local and environmentally preferable products, and minimize waste.
- CF4.4 Create healthy indoor and outdoor environments for both users and occupants.
- CF4.5 Provide building design strategies that promote active living through the placement and design of stairs, elevators, and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- CF4.6 Encourage a wide range of transportation options by promoting car sharing and by providing bicycle, transit and electric-car-charging facilities.
- CF4.7 Consider future climate conditions during design, including changes to temperature, precipitation, and sea level, to help ensure capital facilities function as intended over their planned life-cycle.

Relationships with Non-City Entities

Discussion

In addition to directly providing services, the City works with many other entities including Seattle Public Schools, Public Health Seattle & King County, Washington State, King County, other jurisdictions, and non-profits to improve service provision. This includes joint planning, funding other service providers, and allowing use of City-owned property.

GOAL

CFG5 Make efficient use of resources when investing in facilities and service delivery that involve other agencies and organizations.

POLICIES

- CF5.1 Collaborate with other public and non-profit entities to include location within urban villages as a major criterion for selecting sites for new or expanded community-based facilities or public amenities.
- CF5.2 Work with other public or non-profit agencies to identify and pursue new co-location and joint-use opportunities in public facilities for community programs, services, and meetings.
- CF5.3 Partner with Seattle Public Schools to plan for expected growth and to encourage the siting, renovation, and expansion of school facilities in or near urban centers and villages.
- CF5.4 Join with other jurisdictions in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties to explore regional funding strategies for capital facilities, especially those that serve or benefit citizens throughout the region.
- CF5.5 Use non-traditional strategies for service delivery, such as the leasing of City-owned buildings or funding of non-City facilities, where they would provide greater benefit to the City.