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regulations; new restrictions on industrial land banks; and an exemption from GMA urban density requirements for national historic reserves.

As you will find from the rest of this chapter, the amendments above relating to rural development are significant because the GMA changes how local governments address the development of rural areas. The other amendments are significant because they leave many communities with the task of incorporating new information and requirements into GMA plans and regulations. That task is currently a work in progress for many communities through GMA update requirements, identified below.

In 2002 the state legislature enacted a new timeline amendment to GMA by imposing deadlines on cities and counties to update their GMA policies and regulations. The deadlines vary depending upon the location of the city or county, starting with December 1, 2004 for some Puget Sound jurisdictions and ending on December 1, 2007 for some eastern Washington jurisdictions (see Appendix 2 for specific deadlines). City and county planning commissions and boards facing these deadlines will spend the bulk of their time making recommendations on the updates. A large portion of this Chapter (starting at Section E (1)) identifies what communities must do to comply with this update requirement.

B. The Primacy Of The Comprehensive Plan

Adopting a comprehensive plan is a key element in the land use planning process. The comprehensive plan expresses a community's vision of itself, the community it would like to become, its hopes and dreams, and the philosophical underpinning for any planning activity. It is an expression of the "public interest," in the sense of exercising the public authority of a municipality. Since the GMA was enacted, it has become an enforceable blueprint or framework for all subsequent land use regulation activity.

Although the county-wide planning policies (discussed later in this chapter) set the direction for comprehensive planning on a regional level, the comprehensive plan is the starting point for any discussion of the local land use process. It is also the touchstone for measuring community

actions, and the policy framework by which all community planning enactments will be judged. The comprehensive plan is formulated initially by a planning commission (appointed residents with an interest in planning), with technical assistance from the planning staff. Ultimately, the elected public officials (city councils or county commissions) adopt it. Comprehensive plans typically are processed through a series of public hearings. These give the public an opportunity to express their views on community plans. Growth management legislation stresses early and continuous public involvement to validate these planning efforts.¹⁰

Comprehensive planning identifies community or “public” interest through a public and political process. The resulting plans reflect the political compromises needed to forge consensus for a community plan. While not everyone will be satisfied with the end result, the comprehensive plan as adopted should deal with the many conflicting forces that shape a community. It is not the purpose of a comprehensive plan to eliminate conflict. Rather, it provides the framework for considering and resolving conflicting issues in the community.

The comprehensive plan is now the centerpiece of local planning in Washington State. The growth management movement of the late 1980’s led to several changes in philosophy, including a state-directed mandate that all cities and counties accomplish certain objectives.

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C. The Goals of Growth Management Planning¹¹

Growth management, as a legislative policy, is expressed in 14 goals¹², as follows:

- **Urban Growth** - Encourage urban growth where facilities are adequate to meet service needs.
- **Reduce Sprawl** - Eliminate sprawling, low-density development that is expensive to deliver services to and is destructive to critical areas, rural areas, and resource values.
- **Transportation** - Encourage efficient, multi-modal transportation.
- **Housing** - Encourage a variety of affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.
- **Economic Development** - Encourage economic development consistent with resources and facilities throughout the state.
- **Property Rights** - Protect property from arbitrary decisions or discriminatory actions.
- **Permits** - Issue permits in a timely manner and administer them fairly.
- **Natural Resources Industries** - Maintain and enhance resource-based industries.
- **Open Space and Recreation** - Encourage retention of open space and recreational areas.
- **Environment** - Protect the environment and enhance the quality of life.
- **Citizen Participation** - Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process.
- **Public Facilities and Services** - Ensure that adequate public facilities and services are provided in a timely and affordable manner.
- **Historic Preservation** - Identify and encourage preservation of historic sites.
- **Shoreline Management** - The goals and policies of the SMA are added as one of the goals of GMA.