

2022 Task Force Topic Sheet

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Category: Integrating planning

Topic: Human Health and Wellbeing in the Growth Management Act

Issue Overview: Fully planning cities and counties across Washington State must engage in comprehensive planning that addresses several [required](#) and [optional](#) elements. A Road Map to Washington's Future (Road Map I) called for creation of a new goal in the GMA focused on human health and wellbeing that every city and county would use as a guidepost when developing policies and development regulations.

Problems:

- **Elevation of issue.** Human health and well-being is impacted by virtually every decision jurisdictions make on managing growth but is not formally identified as a goal.
- **Previous recommendations:** The Road Map to Washington's Future (Roadmap I) identified the recommendations below. The Task Force has an opportunity to develop specific language and outline the approaches that state agencies could take when developing guidance. However, adding new goals does not result in implementation.

Preliminary recommendation options:

1. **Consider developing a new planning goal to the GMA on human health and well-being.** If a goal is put in place, the Task Force could identify where in the GMA human health and well-being could be implemented.
2. **Consider encouraging human health and well-being focus in Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).**
3. **Provide option for Departments of Health and Commerce to develop guidance and tools.** This could include a guidebook and potential for state agency assistance with analysis and implementation.

How these problems are impacting people/groups:

- As the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown, human health and wellbeing is tightly linked to every aspect of how our communities are planned and developed. There is also a tight link between equity and human health and well-being, so the equity and human health issues should be examined in conjunction with each other.

Statutory changes:

- [RCW 36.70A.020](#) – planning goals
- [RCW 36.70A.210](#) – countywide planning policies

Budgetary impacts:

- Adding Commerce and/or Health assistance and collaboration would have a budget impact.

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P. 62: Land use, transportation, economic development, and human health are interconnected and therefore require integrated planning, regulations, and implementation actions. For example, the region's transit and trail systems can provide access to both jobs and to the region's open spaces, which support rural economies and the health of urban residents. Trees and vegetation provide habitat for pollinators, which in turn support the region's farm economy and food systems.