

RCW 36.70A.200 Siting of essential public facilities—Limitation on liability. (Effective until January 1, 2026.) (1)(a) The comprehensive plan of each county and city that is planning under RCW 36.70A.040 shall include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, regional transit authority facilities as defined in RCW 81.112.020, improvements to high capacity transportation systems as defined in RCW 81.104.015, bus rapid transit routes and stops or improvements to such routes and stops, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, opioid treatment programs including both mobile and fixed-site medication units, recovery residences, harm reduction programs excluding safe injection sites, and inpatient facilities including substance use disorder treatment facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, community facilities as defined in RCW 72.05.020, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020.

(b) Unless a facility is expressly listed in (a) of this subsection, essential public facilities do not include facilities that are operated by a private entity in which persons are detained in custody under process of law pending the outcome of legal proceedings but are not used for punishment, correction, counseling, or rehabilitation following the conviction of a criminal offense. Facilities included under this subsection (1)(b) shall not include facilities detaining persons under RCW 71.09.020 (7) or (16) or chapter 10.77 or 71.05 RCW.

(c) The department of children, youth, and families may not attempt to site new community facilities as defined in RCW 72.05.020 east of the crest of the Cascade mountain range unless there is an equal or greater number of sited community facilities as defined in RCW 72.05.020 on the western side of the crest of the Cascade mountain range.

(d) For the purpose of this subsection:

(i) "Bus rapid transit" means a fixed route bus system that features assets indicating permanent, high capacity service including, but not limited to, elevated platforms or enhanced stations, off-board fare collection, dedicated lanes, busways, or transit signal priority; and

(ii) "Harm reduction programs" means programs that emphasize working directly with people who use drugs to prevent overdose and infectious disease transmission, improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of those served, and offer low threshold options for accessing substance use disorder treatment and other services.

(2) Each county and city planning under RCW 36.70A.040 shall, not later than September 1, 2002, establish a process, or amend its existing process, for identifying and siting essential public facilities and adopt or amend its development regulations as necessary to provide for the siting of secure community transition facilities consistent with statutory requirements applicable to these facilities.

(3) Any city or county not planning under RCW 36.70A.040 shall, not later than September 1, 2002, establish a process for siting secure community transition facilities and adopt or amend its development regulations as necessary to provide for the siting of such facilities consistent with statutory requirements applicable to these facilities.

(4) The office of financial management shall maintain a list of those essential state public facilities that are required or likely to be built within the next six years. The office of financial management may at any time add facilities to the list.

(5) (a) No local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

(b) A city or county precludes an essential public facility when the city or county imposes conditions or costs that the city or county cannot demonstrate are reasonably necessary to mitigate adverse impacts directly caused by construction or operation of the essential public facility. A city or county with permitting authority shall commit to reasonable timelines to ensure timely issuance of permits without unnecessary delay. The essential public facility shall provide the city or county with the information needed to make timely permitting decisions. This subsection (5) (b) is limited exclusively to those essential public facilities that are improvements to high capacity transportation systems as defined in RCW 81.104.015.

(6) No person may bring a cause of action for civil damages based on the good faith actions of any county or city to provide for the siting of secure community transition facilities in accordance with this section and with the requirements of chapter 12, Laws of 2001 2nd sp. sess. For purposes of this subsection, "person" includes, but is not limited to, any individual, agency as defined in RCW 42.17A.005, corporation, partnership, association, and limited liability entity.

(7) Counties or cities siting facilities pursuant to subsection (2) or (3) of this section shall comply with RCW 71.09.341.

(8) The failure of a county or city to act by the deadlines established in subsections (2) and (3) of this section is not:

(a) A condition that would disqualify the county or city for grants, loans, or pledges under RCW 43.155.070 or 70A.135.070;

(b) A consideration for grants or loans provided under RCW 43.17.250(3); or

(c) A basis for any petition under RCW 36.70A.280 or for any private cause of action. [2025 c 417 s 603; 2023 sp.s. c 1 s 12; 2021 c 265 s 2. Prior: 2020 c 128 s 1; 2020 c 20 s 1027; 2013 c 275 s 5; 2011 c 60 s 17; 2010 c 62 s 1; 2002 c 68 s 2; 2001 2nd sp.s. c 12 s 205; 1998 c 171 s 3; 1991 sp.s. c 32 s 1.]

Expiration date—2025 c 417 ss 603 and 902: "Sections 603 and 902 of this act expire January 1, 2026." [2025 c 417 s 1405.]

Findings—Intent—2025 c 417: See note following RCW 82.38.030.

Retroactive application—2020 c 128: "This act applies retroactively to land use actions imposed prior to January 1, 2018, as well as prospectively." [2020 c 128 s 2.]

Effective date—2020 c 128: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 25, 2020]." [2020 c 128 s 3.]

Effective date—2011 c 60: See note following RCW 29B.20.030.

Purpose—2002 c 68: "The purpose of this act is to:

(1) Enable the legislature to act upon the recommendations of the joint select committee on the equitable distribution of secure community transition facilities established in section 225, chapter 12, Laws of 2001 2nd sp. sess.; and

(2) Harmonize the preemption provisions in RCW 71.09.250 with the preemption provisions applying to future secure community transition facilities to reflect the joint select committee's recommendation that the preemption granted for future secure community transition facilities be the same throughout the state." [2002 c 68 s 1.]

Severability—2002 c 68: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2002 c 68 s 19.]

Effective date—2002 c 68: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 21, 2002]." [2002 c 68 s 20.]

Intent—Severability—Effective dates—2001 2nd sp.s. c 12: See notes following RCW 71.09.250.

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(c) A basis for any petition under RCW 36.70A.280 or for any private cause of action. [2025 c 417 s 604; 2024 c 164 s 511; 2023 sp.s. c 1 s 12; 2021 c 265 s 2. Prior: 2020 c 128 s 1; 2020 c 20 s 1027; 2013 c 275 s 5; 2011 c 60 s 17; 2010 c 62 s 1; 2002 c 68 s 2; 2001 2nd sp.s. c 12 s 205; 1998 c 171 s 3; 1991 sp.s. c 32 s 1.]

Effective date—2025 c 417 ss 104, 105, 107-110, 201-206, 301-303, 604, and 903: See note following RCW 46.17.355.

Findings—Intent—2025 c 417: See note following RCW 82.38.030.

Intent—Construction—Rules remain valid—Effective date—2024 c 164: See notes following RCW 29B.10.010.

Retroactive application—2020 c 128: "This act applies retroactively to land use actions imposed prior to January 1, 2018, as well as prospectively." [2020 c 128 s 2.]

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Intent—Severability—Effective dates—2001 2nd sp.s. c 12: See notes following RCW 71.09.250.