

CHAPTER 4 – Capital Facilities

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	4-1	Background Summary	<p>If the adopted level of service cannot be achieved without acquiring major debt, raising taxes beyond acceptable levels or establishing unacceptably high impact fees, then the level of service standard must be adjusted, facility costs must be reduced, or growth must be curtailed until a balance is achieved. <u>When planning major capital facilities, the County should evaluate whether policy, service, or programmatic strategies could influence long-term facility demand, ensuring that capital investments remain consistent with the County's long-term financial capacity.</u></p> <p>Adjusting land use to achieve level of service standards is one means of attaining concurrency. Concurrency, as required by the GMA, means that adequate facilities as defined by adopted levels of service are available at the time that the impacts of development occur or within a specified time thereafter. The GMA, at minimum, requires concurrency for transportation facilities. Concurrency is preferred for all other capital facilities as well in providing for new development while maintaining an acceptable quality of life that people desire.</p>	Boyle	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
2	4-2	Policy 4A-2	<p>“Provide County facilities and services in a manner that supports future urban growth in urban growth areas (UGAs) <u>and facilitates potential city annexation.</u></p>	Galloway	APPROVED TO SEND TO PC 9/9/25 COTW APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
3	4-3	Goal 4D	<p>“Goal 4D: Develop and implement a coordinated program of facility improvements and/or expansion for the departments and agencies which together carry out the county's law enforcement and corrections functions.”</p> <p>Question: Are the law enforcement/jail facilities related goal/policies consistent with the Justice Project?</p>	Galloway	RESOLVED (see #4 below)
4	4-3	Goal 4D	<p><u>Consistent with the Justice Project Implementation Plan, d</u>Develop and implement a coordinated program of facility improvements and/or expansion for the departments and agencies which together carry out the county's law enforcement and corrections functions.</p>	Galloway	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
5	4-3	Goal 4D	<p>Develop and implement a coordinated program of facility improvements and/or expansion for the departments and agencies which together carry out the county's law enforcement and corrections functions. <u>Plan correctional facilities as part of a comprehensive justice system that</u></p>	Boyle	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26

			<u>prioritizes diversion, treatment, and behavioral health services, so that the facilities reflect community needs and align with Whatcom County's long-term financial capacity.</u>		
6	4-3	Policy 4D-2	Maintain Sheriff's Office adult corrections facilities and headquarters to provide a safe environment for the community, staff and inmates. The number of jail beds in adult corrections facilities will be determined after <u>a comprehensive review and analysis</u> of multiple factors, including projected population growth, <u>local criminal justice policies and s</u> State sentencing laws, alternative <u>response</u> programs, <u>prevention</u> , treatment, <u>behavioral health</u> , diversion programs, early release programs, re-entry support, the need to separate violent inmates, the need to separate inmates by gender, the need to separate inmates by other classification considerations, average length of stay, peak inmate populations and available funding. Existing facilities may be expanded, remodeled and/or new facilities developed in response to changing need.	Galloway	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
7	4-3	Policy 4D-2	Maintain Sheriff's Office adult corrections facilities and headquarters to provide a safe environment for the community, staff and inmates. The number of jail beds in adult corrections facilities will be determined after review of multiple factors, including projected population growth, State sentencing laws, alternative programs, treatment diversion programs, early release programs, the need to separate violent <u>inmates incarcerated individuals</u> , the need to separate inmates by gender, the need to separate inmates by other classification considerations, average length of stay, peak inmate populations and available funding. Existing facilities may be expanded, remodeled and/or new facilities developed in response to changing need. <i>Note: Council passed a motion on 3/17/26 to make this change throughout the chapter.</i>	Boyle	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
8	4-4	Policy 4D-3	Maintain juvenile detention facilities and alternative corrections programs to provide safe and secure methods to provide accountability and support for <u>youth involved in the legal system</u> minors who break the law . Existing facilities may be expanded, remodeled and/or new facilities developed in response to changing need.	Boyle	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
9	4-4	New Policy 4D-4 Renumber subsequent policies	<u>Policy 4D-4: Develop, maintain, improve, expand, and operate behavioral health facilities such as the 32-bed crisis stabilization center, behavioral care center, 23-hour crisis relief center, and other facilities aimed at improving opportunities for prevention, intervention, treatment, aftercare, diversion, rehabilitation, and jail alternatives to reduce incarceration rates and use of the criminal justice system.</u>	Galloway	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
10	4-4	Policy 4F-2	Seek non-capital opportunities to acquire, enhance and maintain park lands, trails, and other recreational facilities. Consider partnering with <u>tribes</u> , cities, school districts, park & recreation districts, <u>non-profit stakeholders</u> , and others when planning and implementing park and trail projects. <u>Make a good faith effort to consult with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe on</u>	Galloway	APPROVED TO SEND TO PC 9/9/25 COTW

			<u>relevant land acquisitions and the development of new trails and other recreational facilities that may have an impact on their cultural resources.</u>		APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
11	4-4	Goal 4G	“Coordinate with non-county facility providers such as cities, <u>tribes</u> , school districts, <u>fire districts</u> , and other special purpose districts...”	Galloway	APPROVED TO SEND TO PC 10/7/25 COTW APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
12	4-6	Policy 4J-2	Policy 4J-2: Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program shall not degrade habitat for threatened and endangered species. <u>Where feasible, develop a strategy to mitigate harmful impacts and aim to achieve net ecological gain of salmon and other aquatic species habitat for all public projects and a voluntary incentive driven strategy for private projects.</u>	Galloway	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
13	4-6/7	Add new policy 4J-4	<u>Policy 4J-4: Develop an updated culvert inventory and prioritized list and proposed schedule for the removal of county owned fish passage barrier culverts (consistent with the memorandum of understanding with Tribes). Work with the cities, state, federal and tribal governments, and private landowners, to support investment in removal of fish passage barriers and installation of fish-friendly culverts and bridges.</u>	Galloway	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
14	4-6	Goal 4K	<p>Goal 4K: Enable school districts and fire districts to receive mitigation fees or impact fees to fund a proportionate share of system improvements reasonably related to new development by adopting into this plan their capital facilities plans. Notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable. Establishing mitigation fees or impact fees must carefully balance the need to mitigate against the impacts of new development and fund critical capital facilities and infrastructure with the need for housing that is affordable to all economic segments of the community.</p> <p><i>Note: The Planning Commission voted to add the following sentence to Goal 4K on 7/24/25: “...notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable.” Council voted to remove this sentence, restoring the original language on 9/9/25. On 3/17/26, Council voted to add the last sentence to the paragraph.</i></p>	Donovan Galloway	ORIGINAL EDIT APPROVED TO SEND TO PC 9/9/25 COTW APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26

15	4-9	Add bullets to Policy 4M-5	<p>Consider vulnerability of existing and new County facilities to climate <u>and natural</u> hazards <u>including but not limited to:-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Avoid siting critical facilities in high-risk flood areas where feasible.</u> • <u>Account for future floodplain conditions and sea level rise.</u> • <u>Design facilities for continuity during extreme weather, smoke, heat, and outages.</u> 	Boyle	APPROVED AS AMENDED SCOTW 3.17.26
16	4-7	Add new policy 4K-6	<p><u>Policy 4K-6: The Capital Facilities Plan for Whatcom County Fire District #8, adopted by the District on March 12, 2026, is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.</u></p>	PDS	APPROVED SCOTW 3.17.26
NEW AMENDMENTS FOR 3/24					
17	4-9	New Policy 4M-7	<p><u>Policy 4M-7: Explore opportunities to support alternative infrastructure models and off-grid and distributed renewable energy systems serving low-impact rural residential development, where such systems reduce reliance on public infrastructure and advance the County's climate resilience goals.</u></p>	Galloway	