

PROJECT MEMO



TO:	Mike Stevens, City of Richland	DATE:	December 31, 2025
FROM:	Nicole Stickney Pasco - (253)383-2422	PROJECT NO.:	2240885.30
		PROJECT NAME:	Richland 2026 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update
SUBJECT:	Capital Facilities Element Staff Report		

AHBL Planners have worked to prepare a first draft, updating the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with guidance and requirements from the Growth Management Act and the Department of Commerce.

To accomplish this work, we have considered the City's history, goals, and recent developments together with adopted materials such as Ordinances and Resolutions that we consulted (including the most recent 6-year Capital Facility Plan which was adopted on November 4, 2025 by Ordinance 2025-33). There were many gaps that we identified between the adopted City Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies in this subject area, which we have endeavored to resolve and we have called out those changes specifically.

We recommend that you include this memo with the initial draft in the Planning Commission's packet for their review.

Overall, we have endeavored to improve the context and framework behind the Capital Facilities Element and aimed to present more useful discussion and detail as compared to the current Plan (dated 2017, with subsequent amendments). We have shown "tracked changes" for the Goals / Policy portions so that the Planning Commission and other reviewers can easily review the changes we propose for those policy-focused pieces.

When reviewing this Element it is helpful to keep in mind that the Comprehensive Plan has other related elements: Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Utilities.

The following list summarizes the updates we made to the Draft Capital Facilities Element:

- We streamlined introduction language, which briefs readers on the overarching reasoning and requirements behind the Capital Facilities Element.
- Clarification of GMA requirements, including an overview of specific requirements for the Capital Facilities Element; much of this information is presented in graphical form to make the Element more interesting and visually appealing.
- Incorporated background information which was previously organized into a "Volume II" document into the Element, eliminating the "Volume II" document.
- New, updated mapping products using the City's GIS data.
- Expansion of background information that provides context to the overarching Countywide Planning Policies, as well as GMA and Federal Requirements (i.e. sewer system requirements for the Clean Water Act). This section also provides reasoning for the element relating to fiscal responsibility and an overview of public project information that can be found online.
- We moved the section on Inventory, Planning and Funding Strategies to precede Goals and Policies. This section which details a list of current municipal facilities, levels of service, and planning recommendations, has been updated to reflect the City's current inventory and priorities. The following facilities are discussed in that section:



- Municipal Facilities (City Hall, Community Center, City Shops, among others)
 - Police Department
 - Fire and Emergency Medical Services
 - Schools
 - Essential Public Facilities (Horn Rapids Landfill, Richland Airport, Federal and State Highways, Columbia-Snake River System, mental health facilities and Lourdes Counseling Center)
- In addition, discussion of the following facilities have been added since the last Comprehensive Plan Update:
 - Library
 - Museum (and other Richland Public Facilities District amenities and planned facilities)
 - We reorganized Goals CF.4 through CF.15 and their associated Policies; they are no longer assigned to specific Facilities, but rather combined into a generalized list for broader and easier comprehension.

There are some areas where we are waiting for 2025 data, or for clarification from outside entities as to standards. We have included notes in brackets and with a yellow highlight on the text.

Next, the following proposed changes are shown for the Goals & Policies within the Capital Facilities Plan (we did not put comments into the document, but to aid in review we've listed out the rationale / purpose for proposed changes that are most impactful), :

- Policy CF.1b is proposed to be added, identifying that the city should work collaboratively with other agencies on capital needs. (Likewise Goal CF.9 discusses a similar approach with the School Districts).
- Policy CF.1c is proposed to be added, specifying that the city must reassess the Land Use Element if capital facilities funding does not meet existing needs, meeting GMA requirements set out in RCW 35.70A.070(3)(e).
- Policies CF.3b and 3c are proposed to be added to list out approaches the City may take to fund facilities.
- Policy CF.5d is proposed, describing that the city needs to identify programming needs in support of recreational, and cultural programming (including signature events such as the Ironman). This Policy comes from Priority 4 of the City's Strategic Plan. We also added the words "artistic" and "historic" based on feedback from a reviewer with the Richland Public Facilities District, and based on community input via a survey.
- Policy CF.6e is proposed to be added to confirm the City's intent to avoid locating facilities on sites with Environmentally Critical Areas unless no feasible alternative exists.
- Two policies under Goal CF.6 will be moved to the Natural Element portion of the plan, for better organization.
- Policy CF.6c (with the numbering revised to reflect the moved policies) sets out that Capital Facilities should not be located in critical areas, which is a best practice.
- Policy CF.7b is proposed to be added to reiterate a focus on Citywide policies regarding healthy eating and active living.
- Proposed Policy CF.9d is added to Goal 9 which addresses schools (it was previously listed under the first goal) as Goal 9 is a better location for the policy.



- Goal CF12 is rewritten to address “community needs” rather than specify concurrency standards specifically.
- We propose some modifications to the Goal 12 policies; some of the previous text was relocated to the narrative section about Fire Levels of Service. Our aim is to remove redundancies improve reading comprehension. Next, for Policy CF.12d we proposed additional text which is more specific and discusses performance metrics, tied to the City’s Strategic Plan, Priority “Quality of Life” initiative A.
- Details are proposed to be added to Policy CF.13a in order to reflect Priority 4 of the City’s Strategic Plan, which concerns and increased feeling of safety in the community.
- Policy CF.13d is proposed to be added, addressing the development of an integrated Community Safety Plan, an existing initiative within the City’s Strategic Plan. This also relates strongly to the sentiment we heard from the community survey, prioritizing safety as an important part of Richland’s future.

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