

CITY OF RUSTON WASHINGTON

# Chapter 9 Capital Facilities



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Capital Facilities Element is a key part of Ruston's Comprehensive Plan. It evaluates the feasibility of other elements and includes all essential facilities provided by public entities. These facilities support both the current community and its anticipated growth over the next two decades, such as sidewalks, streets, bridges, schools, parks, and emergency services.

Under the state's Growth Management Act (GMA), municipalities must meet specific requirements for capital facility planning. This ensures that public facilities and services facilitate development without compromising current service levels. The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) must include an inventory of existing publicly owned facilities, a forecast of future needs for new or expanded facilities, and at least a six-year financial plan detailing how these future facilities will be funded. This mandate aims to guide comprehensive plan implementation, establish a proactive framework for decision-makers, and ensure transparency in purchasing decisions. It helps municipalities avoid significant expenditure surprises, enhancing the city's quality of life and aligning with community values.

## **CAPITAL FACILITIES INVENTORY AND FORECAST**

Ruston is committed to delivering efficient and satisfactory public facilities to its residents and businesses. New developments must contribute their "fair share" towards the cost of expanding capital facilities, and approval for new development is contingent upon ensuring adequate provision. This section focuses on the existing capital facilities managed by the City of Ruston.

Many of Ruston's capital facilities operate under dedicated functional plans, and the city aims to establish additional functional plans in the future, as noted in the goals and policies of this chapter. Each plan outlines facility needs based on Level of Service (LOS) standards, operational criteria, or performance standards. These plans also include detailed inventories of current facilities, infrastructure, and proposed improvements. Refer to the table below for a list of facility types and references to associated functional plans, where applicable.

The Ruston Capital Improvement Program (CIP) details planned capital facility improvements and associated costs for the upcoming six years. The program is included in the appendix and undergoes periodic updates.

### **Ruston Capital Facilities and Functional Plans**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Functional Plan</b>
General City Services	City of Ruston	N/A
Police	City of Ruston	N/A
Fire & Medical Aid	City of Ruston	N/A
Complete Streets	City of Ruston	Transportation Element & Transportation Improvement Program
On-Street Parking	City of Ruston	On-Street Parking Inventory & Analysis <i>Not Completed - See Transportation Element</i>
Sidewalks	City of Ruston	Sidewalk Inventory <i>Not Completed - See Transportation Element</i>
Parks, Recreation & Open Space	City of Ruston	Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan <i>Not Completed - See Capital Facilities Goals/Policies</i>
Power	City of Ruston	City of Tacoma Integrated Resource Plan
Sanitary Sewer	City of Tacoma	Wastewater Comprehensive Plan
Stormwater	City of Ruston	Stormwater Management Plan <i>Not Completed - See Utilities Element Goals/Policies</i>

Water	City of Tacoma	Water System Plan
Solid Waste, Yard Waste & Recycling	Murrey's Disposal	Pierce County Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan
Schools	Tacoma Public Schools	Strategic Plan

**Civic Life**

Thriving civic spaces strengthen community bonds, while their absence can lead to disconnection. Ruston values its unique public areas, which serve as hubs for community interaction and unity. Civic buildings, sidewalks, and parks are vital features of Ruston, enhancing its beauty and encouraging active use. They serve as platforms for public events, social gatherings, and cultural exchanges, enriching the city's vibrancy. In addition, strategically located civic spaces can attract anchor businesses, increasing Ruston's economic stability.

Ruston sustains its civic life through a range of amenities. These include Winnifred Street Park, where events like the annual Easter egg hunt are held; the Ruston School building, which provides city services, civic engagement, and special gatherings; Rust Park, where recreational activities are held, and a well-maintained grid of sidewalks spanning the entire city. These sidewalks connect to commercial districts, offering diverse options for shopping and dining. Additionally, the scenic Ruston Waterwalk along Commencement Bay provides connections to Dune Peninsula, Point Defiance Park, and the Ruston Way waterfront.

Maintaining parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities are essential for Ruston's future. They enrich the community's quality of life, offer recreational opportunities, and support healthy living. Preserving scenic views and shoreline access of natural landmarks such as Commencement Bay, Mount Rainier, and the Olympic Mountain Range becomes increasingly crucial as the Puget Sound region continues to grow.

## **Ruston School Building & General City Services**

The brick Ruston School building was erected shortly after the original structure was lost in a 1917 fire and served as a school until the mid-1980s. Subsequently, ownership of the Ruston School was transferred to the Tacoma School District before being returned to the City of Ruston following a campaign led by Councilwoman Mary Joyce. The former gymnasium, now renovated into the Ruston Community Center, was dedicated to Joyce for her leadership in the effort. The “new” Ruston School building occupies the same site as the very first schoolhouse that hosted the inaugural town council meeting in 1906. Throughout Ruston’s history and into the present day, this location has remained a focal point of community activity.

Today, the Ruston School building houses Ruston’s administrative offices, the Police department, and the Mary Joyce Community Center, which serves as a venue for City Council and Planning Commission meetings, and special events. Additionally, the school building contains office spaces leased to local businesses. Full-time and part-time staff serve the functions of police, city clerk, utility billing, planning, building, and public works. Ruston utilizes outside consultants for legal, fire marshal, building inspection, engineering, and planning services for fluctuating staffing needs. In addition, Ruston has mutual-aid agreements in place for police and fire and interlocal agreements for court and jail services. Most city maintenance services are performed by full-time employees, and their equipment is stored at multiple city properties. Along with general administrative equipment, Ruston owns police, fire, and public works equipment.

Despite numerous renovations and improvements, the Ruston School building currently has outstanding issues, such as the need for a new roof, and energy efficiency and ADA accessibility improvements. A public works shop, public safety building, and park improvements are all potential capital facility projects to be considered. As Ruston undergoes growth, planning for future staffing, equipment, and community needs should be evaluated. Consolidating municipal services into one or two locations could yield operational efficiencies. Further analysis is advised,

including exploring opportunities for new development on existing city-owned land or acquiring additional properties.

### **Police, Fire, and Medical Aid**

The Ruston Police Department delivers comprehensive law enforcement services led by a police chief and supported by full-time, part-time, and reserve officers.

Situated within the Ruston School building at 52nd and Shirley Street, the department's operational assets include office space and equipment, vehicles, and specialized police equipment.

Ruston's fire and medical aid services operate from the old City Hall on Winnifred Street. The team includes a full-time fire chief and part-time volunteers. The department's operational assets include office space, equipment, and specialized firefighting and emergency vehicles.

### **Parks, Recreation & Open Space**

Ruston residents and visitors value the city's walkability and its proximity to parks, sidewalks, trails, and natural scenery. Nestled in one of Washington State's most stunning regions, Ruston is adjacent to Point Defiance Park, Dune Peninsula Park, and the Vashon Ferry terminal. Quasi-public open spaces required by recent developments include the Ruston Waterwalk and the undeveloped Promontory Hill Park. Ruston also maintains its own parks and open spaces, including Rust Park, Winnifred Street Park, the undeveloped Bennett Street Community Garden, and other city properties, all of which hold untapped potential. As urban development continues, strategic planning for park and recreation facilities, along with open spaces, becomes essential for the community's overall well-being. Ruston's forthcoming Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) will strengthen and facilitate the community's vision for these critical resources.

## **Complete Streets**

Ruston's transportation planning embraces the modern complete streets model, which prioritizes the needs of all road users: pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users, and motorists. This approach seeks to create streets that are safe, accessible, and convenient for everyone. Implementing complete streets can significantly enhance the quality of life for citizens in various ways, including safety, accessibility, health, environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic development.

Ruston's rights-of-way are essential public assets that play a crucial role in meeting the needs of all road users. Facility planning and management encompass a range of elements, including sidewalks, bike facilities, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, public transit facilities, street furnishings, lighting, wayfinding signage, bridges, and driving lanes. These components work together to create safe, accessible, and efficient transportation networks that benefit the entire community. For more detailed information, refer to the Transportation Element.

## **Electricity, Sanitary Sewer, Stormwater, Solid Waste & Recycling**

The Utilities Element of this document contains comprehensive information about various essential utilities such as electricity, sanitary sewer, stormwater, solid waste, yard waste, and recycling. These utilities are also an integral part of the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). This section includes general guidelines for utilities in terms of goals, policies, and the six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

## **Public Education**

There are no schools in the City of Ruston. The Tacoma School District serves Ruston residents. Coordination and involvement with the Tacoma School District are important for community residents. For more information regarding local school facility planning, refer to the Tacoma School District website.

# Existing Public Facilities

- Ruston City Limits
- Buildings
- Parks
- Ruston Parcels



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## CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

Developing a 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a complex process that requires careful planning and adjustments due to the high costs and long-lasting nature of the facilities. It's important to set clear criteria and considerations to guide decisions on investments for the greatest public benefit. For the purpose of this plan, capital facilities are major, non-reoccurring expenditures that meet all of the following criteria:

- It is an expenditure that can be classified as a fixed asset.
- It has a cost of \$50,000 or more.
- It has a useful life of 10 years or more (except for certain equipment which may have a short life span).

The following should also be considered when determining Ruston's 6-year Capital Improvement Program:

**Public Safety:** Projects must address significant safety risks, with a focus on benefiting community safety or the environment. Proposals from departments responsible for public safety (e.g., Fire, Police) do not automatically meet this criterion. Other departments may also propose projects addressing safety concerns. For instance, while most street projects contribute to public safety, intersections with documented safety issues should receive priority treatment.

**Public Health:** Projects must prioritize environmental and community health. This criterion applies when public health is imperative, not a matter of choice. For example, while all water or sewer projects impact public health, only those addressing ongoing health hazards are mandatory.

**Comprehensive Plan Consistency:** Projects must align with the Comprehensive Plan to support its implementation over twenty years. City departments are obligated to propose projects that actively implement the plan's goals and policies.

**Legal Requirements:** Projects may be mandated by state or federal laws, court orders, or judgments concerning annexation, property rights, or environmental protection. These legal requirements influence project prioritization.

**Related Projects:** Projects in one category may be vital to the success of projects in other categories. Savings from related projects proposed by different departments or entities should be pursued.

**Impact on Future Operating Budgets:** The potential cost of a proposed project to the city's future budgets should be carefully weighed before funding. However, in some cases, a project may generate sufficient revenue to cover its own costs.

**Other:** Departments may include additional priority factors for evaluation, such as public support, service level, cost savings, or economic development impact.

## **FUNDING**

**Impact and Connection Fees:** State law allows cities to collect fees from owners or developers as development occurs to fund park acquisition, park development, utility, and transportation capital projects. The fee amount is determined by estimating the appropriate private sector cost of the capital facilities that are required to meet expected demand and achieve the established service level standard. The appropriate private sector cost is allocated to new development based on its estimated impact on demand.

**Systems Development Charges (SDCS):** Like impact fees, SDCs are collected from existing system users to fund improvements to water and sewer utilities. These funds may be expended on projects that expand utility system capacity and can either pay for debt service on bonds or for direct project expenditures.

**Real Estate Excise Tax (REET):** State statute authorizes the cities to impose two taxes of one-quarter percent on the sale of real estate within the city limits. The proceeds of the tax must be used for capital purposes as allowed by State law and as directed by the City Council.

**Federal, State, Local, and Private Grants:** Ruston has been active in applying for grants from various state agencies to fund capital facilities and strives to stay up to date on federal, local, and private grants available. These grants are typically available for a specific purpose and often require the commitment of local funding as a match to the grant.

**General Obligation Bonds:** Funding for capital facilities projects may be provided by general obligation bonds issued for specific purposes. The source for repayment of the bonds can be from general fund revenue or from other revenue sources the City Council dedicates for that purpose. The maximum amount of non-voted debt the city can issue is limited by state law.

**Water and Sewer Utility Revenue Bonds:** Revenue bonds issued by the city's water and sewer utilities have been used to fund specific capital projects for the utilities. The bonds are repaid from user fees charged to the water and sewer utilities customers. Utility revenue bonds are repaid exclusively from utility revenues.

**Voter-Approved Bonds:** Voters can approve a property tax levy to pay for bonds issued to fund capital projects.

**Operating Funds:** The City may allocate operating or general funds for capital purposes. Operating funds have been used in the past to fund capital facility improvements for transportation and parks and recreation. They can be used to pay for projects directly or to pay principal and interest on bonds issued to fund capital projects.

## **FUTURE VISION**

Ruston has planned well for future infrastructure and service needs. The city's population has grown and continues to be a safe, enjoyable, walkable, and healthy community that provides quality public facilities and services. Civic buildings, gathering places, parks, and open spaces are distinct in architecture and character, contributing to the community's vision.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

Capital facilities policies ensure that Ruston plans for maintenance and infrastructure replacement to maintain levels of service. These policies also tie capital facilities planning to land use, making sure that assumptions about future growth are consistent.

**Capital Facilities Goal 1:** Ruston’s capital facilities are located, monitored, coordinated, and maintained in such a way as to provide safe, sufficient, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective public facilities to all residents and businesses, remaining consistent with regulatory requirements and Ruston’s Comprehensive Plan, and meeting demands of growth and economic development.

- CF Policy 1.1** Establish criteria and considerations for identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing capital facility needs.
- CF Policy 1.2** Develop and maintain updated system-wide capital facility inventories and functional plans for the provision of public facilities.
- CF Policy 1.3** Establish level of service (LOS) standards for city-owned public facilities and work with non-city service providers to maintain a LOS consistent with city standards and vision. Periodically reassess and modify all agreements, ordinances, and related documents to ensure Ruston’s public facilities remain consistent with the communities’ vision and needs.
- CF Policy 1.4** Capital facilities should be provided concurrently with or in advance of demand, and new development should be required to pay its “fair share” of the cost of providing facilities.

- CF Policy 1.5** Ensure capital facilities are appropriate for the size and composition of the development and population they serve.
- CF Policy 1.6** Consider the best use and location of civic-owned land for public facilities and services.
- CF Policy 1.7** Emergency service facilities should be strategically positioned to optimize accessibility and minimize response times.
- CF Policy 1.8** Manage parking as a valuable resource and seek opportunities to reconfigure existing parking and underutilized public rights-of-way to create additional on-street parking.
- CF Policy 1.9** Capital Facility infrastructure shall not be designed and situated in locations that negatively impact community character.
- CF Policy 1.10** Coordinate with other public agencies to site essential public facilities.
- CF Policy 1.11** Seek opportunities for collaborative efforts with other entities to achieve public facility and service efficiencies.
- CF Policy 1.12** Reassess the Land Use Element if Ruston cannot provide funding to maintain adopted levels of service for public facilities that it owns.

**Capital Facilities Goal 2:** Ruston develops and manages capital facilities in an environmentally sensitive manner to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote sustainability.

- CF Policy 2.1** Design Ruston with a strong emphasis on biking and walking to foster energy efficiency, sustainability, reduced energy consumption, lower emissions, promotion of healthy lifestyles, diminished noise levels, and conservation of resources.

- CF Policy 2.2** Support energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy-efficient building designs and land uses.
- CF Policy 2.3** Evaluate and plan for future park and recreation needs of the community by creating a parks, recreation and open space (PROS) plan that is consistent with the Recreation and Conversation Office (RCO) guidelines qualifying Ruston for future grants.
- CF Policy 2.4** Design public facilities, to create well-designed links between facilities for pedestrians and bicycles that include lighting, and wayfinding.
- CF Policy 2.5** Pursue a long-term remediation and slope stabilization solution for Rust Park that includes a pedestrian crossing of the BNSF railroad tracks from Commercial Street to 51<sup>st</sup> Street in alignment with Bennett Street.
- CF Policy 2.6** Recognize the Winnifred Street median as a city park.
- CF Policy 2.7** Seek opportunities for collaborative efforts with other entities to achieve environmental and land use efficiencies to protect and enhance the natural environment.

**Capital Facilities Goal 3:** Ruston utilizes sound fiscal management of its capital facilities to provide needed improvements through various funding sources and by requiring new development to pay its fair share.

- CF Policy 3.1** Develop a Capital Improvement Program—a six-year financial strategy outlining the financing of capital facilities and identifying funding sources.
- CF Policy 3.2** Pursue grant funding whenever feasible to assist with capital facility priorities.

- CF Policy 3.3** Require new development to pay its fair share of the cost of new facilities by implementing funding mechanisms such as SEPA mitigation, impact fees, and system development charges.
- CF Policy 3.4** Assess traffic impacts of new development with a Complete Streets approach.
- CF Policy 3.5** Consider the establishment of a fund for parking, pedestrian connectivity, and traffic calming improvements.
- CF Policy 3.6** Anticipate and control demand for services to ensure that Ruston can maintain an appropriate level of service within its financial resources while serving new growth.
- CF Policy 3.7** Seek opportunities for collaborative efforts with other entities to achieve financial efficiencies.

## **POLICY CONNECTIONS**

Capital Facilities must be planned to accommodate future growth with adequate financing available. **The Land Use Element** and **Housing Element** each include policies and information about projected growth and housing.

The **Utilities Element** includes policies demonstrating how public services and utility infrastructure will serve existing and future land uses.

The **Transportation Element** outlines Ruston's Complete Streets approach, covering streets, bike facilities, sidewalks, on-street public parking, public transit facilities, wayfinding, and lighting. Transportation facilities are part of the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), while all other capital facilities fall under the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The **Community Character Element** includes policies to preserve community character while planning for Capital Facilities.

The **Shoreline Element** includes guidance on the placement of Capital Facilities within the shoreline jurisdiction.