On August 13, 2002, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Planning Commission Recommendations to amend both the Spokane County Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code relating to Essential Public Facilities and Secure Community Transition Facility. Essential Public Facilities (EPFs) are facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.05.140, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and inpatient facilities, including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020.

Spokane County and all of the cities and towns within the County developed the Spokane Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities to ensure consistency among all the jurisdictions and to provide for the equitable distribution of EPFs throughout the County, as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). Included in the process are requirements for extensive objective and subjective review of alternative sites for any proposed essential public facility, public comment periods, public workshops, and a public hearing. The Comprehensive Plan amendment provides for a new policy that identifies the Spokane Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities as the process to be used for siting EPFs within the unincorporated areas of Spokane County. All of the cities and towns within the County have adopted or are in the process of adopting amendments to their Comprehensive Plans and/or development regulations to include this process.

Secure Community Transition Facilities (SCTFs) are secure residences for persons who are civilly committed after completing criminal sentences and are receiving supervised sex offender treatment services. The Zoning Code of Spokane County now includes development regulations for SCTFs. An applicant seeking to site an SCTF in the unincorporated area of Spokane County will be required, in addition to complying with the Spokane Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities, to proceed with a conditional use permit application, which includes a hearing before the Spokane County Hearing Examiner.