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1710.01 General

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has developed a statewide system of traveler stopping opportunities along Interstate highways and state routes. This system includes safety rest areas (see [Exhibit 1710-1](#)), roadside parks, and viewpoints. These services provide universal access for rest, traveler information, and restroom facilities. Benefits include improved safety by reducing driver fatigue and the number of vehicles parked on the shoulders of state routes, refuge from adverse driving conditions, and increased tourism promotion.

Safety rest areas (SRAs) are spaced approximately every 60 miles on the National Highway System and on Scenic and Recreational Highways. Use the Safety Rest Area Program Strategic Plan as a guide when selecting a site location. The link to the SRA Strategic Plan can be found in the SRA Section of the Capital Facilities Office internal web page at: <http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/operations/facilities/>

Safety rest areas are planned and designed by a multidisciplinary team lead through the Facilities Administrator in the Capital Facilities Office, a branch of Maintenance Operations. (See [1710.04](#) for an expanded discussion on team roles and membership.)



Photo: Keith Anderson, VERG

WSDOT Safety Rest Area

Exhibit 1710-1

1710.02 References

(1) Federal/State Laws and Codes

- [23 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 1.23](#), Rights-of-way
- [23 CFR 635](#), Construction and Maintenance
- [23 CFR 752](#), Landscape and roadside development
- [23 CFR 771](#), Environmental impact and related procedures
- [42 United States Code \(USC\) Chapter 126, Section 12101](#) et seq., Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- [20 USC Chapter 6A, Section 107](#), The Randolph-Sheppard Act
- [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 46.17.375](#), Recreational vehicle sanitary disposal fee
- [RCW 46.68.170](#), RV account – Use for sanitary disposal systems
- [RCW 47.01.460](#), Adjustments to recreational vehicle fees
- [RCW 47.06.040](#), Statewide multimodal transportation plan
- [RCW 47.28.030](#), Contracts – State forces
- [RCW 47.38](#), Roadside areas – Safety rest areas
- [RCW 47.39](#), Scenic and Recreational Highway Act of 1967
- [RCW 47.42](#), Scenic Vistas Act
- [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 246-290](#), Group A public water supplies
- [WAC 468-66](#), Highway Advertising Control Act

(2) Design Guidance

As the lead WSDOT organization for SRA project teams, the Capital Facilities Office coordinates design details and standards for SRA-related items.

ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG)

www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, USDOT, FHWA; as adopted and modified by Chapter 468-95 WAC “Manual on uniform traffic control devices for streets and highways” (MUTCD)

www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/mutcd.htm

Highway Runoff Manual, M 31-16, WSDOT

Hydraulics Manual, M 23-03, WSDOT

Plans Preparation Manual, M 22-31, WSDOT

Maintenance Manual, M 51-01, WSDOT

Right of Way Manual, M 26-01, WSDOT

[Roadside Manual](#), M 25-30, WSDOT

[Roadside Policy Manual](#), M3110, WSDOT

Standard Plans for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction (Standard Plans),
M 22-01, WSDOT

Traffic Manual, M 51-02, WSDOT

(3) Supporting Information

Safety Rest Area Strategic Plan, WSDOT Capital Facilities Office

<http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/operations/facilities/>

Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways, AASHTO
Task Force on Geometric Design

Project Management Online Guide, WSDOT

(4) Agreements

Interpretive Signs and Markers Agreement – Washington State Parks Commission

- (GM 869) 1989 Highways and Local Programs Division

Traveler and Commercial Information Services – Private Vendor (StoreyCo, Inc.)

- (AA-1-12097) 2007 Capital Facilities Office

Vending Machines – Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)

- (GCA 10377) Capital Facilities Office

1710.03 Definitions

ancillary services Those secondary services, also considered amenities, provided at safety rest areas that include, but are not limited to, vending machines, picnic areas, interpretive signing, telephones, recreational vehicle (RV) sanitary disposal facilities, trails, scenic viewpoints, commercial and public information displays, and visitor information centers.

Recreational Vehicle Account In 1980 the RV account was established for use by the department of transportation for the construction, maintenance, and operation of recreational vehicle sanitary disposal systems at safety rest areas ([RCW 46.68.170](#)). A recreational vehicle sanitary disposal fee is required for registration of a recreational vehicle ([RCW 46.17.375](#)). Adjustments to the recreational vehicle fee by the department of transportation may be implemented after consultation with the citizens' representatives of the recreational vehicle user community ([RCW 47.01.460](#)).

roadside park A roadside user facility for safe vehicular parking off the traveled way and separated from the highway by some form of buffer. These sites might be equipped with features or elements such as points of interest, picnic tables, and/or vault toilet buildings. Unlike a safety rest area, a roadside park does not always provide a permanent restroom building.

safety rest area (SRA) A roadside facility equipped with permanent restroom building(s), a parking area, picnic tables, refuse receptacles, illumination, and other ancillary services. SRAs typically include potable water and might include traveler information and telephones.

Safety Rest Area Strategic Plan Developed in 2008 under a stakeholder-coordinated effort of executive and advisory team members, this plan provides guidance for current and future management of the SRA program.

traveler information Commercial and noncommercial information that informs and orients the traveling public. This includes access information for food, gas, lodging, local attractions, regional tourist attractions, roadway conditions, and construction schedules.

universal access Access for all persons regardless of ability or stature.

viewpoint A roadside stopping opportunity with a view of some point of interest or area scenery. This area is not typically separated from the traveled way by some form of highway buffer.

Visitor Information Center (VIC) A staffed or nonstaffed booth or separate building that displays and dispenses free tourist travel maps and brochures. These are typically located at border-entry SRAs to provide travel information to highway users as they enter the state.

1710.04 Safety Rest Area Project Team

The Capital Facilities Office has primary responsibility for program oversight and communication and is the primary point of contact for questions concerning SRAs. Duties include planning and programming for capital Preservation and Improvement projects, maintenance operations oversight and policy development, and project delivery.

Exhibits [1710-2](#) and [1710-3](#) outline the many disciplines involved with SRA planning, design, construction, and maintenance. The exhibits outline roles during the different phases of SRA management. Services are provided by internal WSDOT staff, other government agencies, and private consultants.

1710.05 Location, Access, and Site Design

(1) Conformance With the Safety Rest Area Strategic Plan

Regional planners, in coordination with the Capital Facilities Office, will use the Safety Rest Area Strategic Plan as a guide to determine which areas in the state are potential areas of need for a new facility. Verify current locations of SRAs, roadside parks, viewpoints, and undeveloped SRA properties that could be utilized for development of a new SRA. Coordinate all SRA planning and design efforts with the SRA Program located in the Capital Facilities Office.

(2) Highway Spacing Guidelines

It is preferred to space SRAs and roadside parks approximately every 60 miles on the National Highway System and Scenic Byways. Consider the location of other available public facilities when deciding where to locate an SRA. Other public or private facilities may offer stopping opportunities that could mitigate the need for construction of a new SRA. Reference the SRA Strategic Plan for potential areas of need for new stopping opportunities.

WSDOT Office	Planning	Programming & Budget	Design	Construction	Operations & Maintenance ^[1]	Agreements & Partnerships
Capital Facilities	Lead	Lead	Lead	Lead	Oversight	Lead
Maintenance Operations	Support	N/A	Support	Support	Lead	Lead/Support
Capital Program Development	Approver	Approver	Approver	Approver	N/A	N/A
Budget and Financial Analysis	N/A	Approver	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Highways and Local Programs	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	N/A	Support
Design	Support	N/A	Support	Support	N/A	N/A
Construction	NA	N/A	Support	Support	N/A	N/A
Landscape Architect	Support	N/A	Support	Support	Support	N/A
Utilities	NA	N/A	Support	Support	Support	Support
Environmental	Support	N/A	Support	Support	Support	N/A
Hydraulics	Support	N/A	Support	Support	N/A	N/A
Traffic	Support	N/A	Support	Support	Support	N/A
Public-Private Partnerships	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	N/A	Lead/Support
Freight Systems Division	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	N/A	Support
Statewide Travel and Collision Data	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	N/A	N/A
Real Estate Services	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	Support	Support
Emergency Management	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	Support	N/A

Note:

[1] The SRA section in the WSDOT *Maintenance Manual* provides additional information pertaining to daily operations at the rest areas. Operations policy is outlined for all the ancillary services provided at each rest area site, such as the free coffee program, vending machines, literature distribution and posting, site security, seasonal or temporary closures, and other site activities.

WSDOT's SRA Project and Programming Roles

Exhibit 1710-2

Organization	Planning	Programming & Budget	Design	Construction	Operations & Maintenance	Agreements & Partnerships
Federal Highways Administration	Approver	N/A	Approver	Approver	Support	Approver
Attorney General	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Support
Washington State Patrol	Support	N/A	Support	Support	Support	Support
Department of Commerce	Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Support
Washington State Historical Society	Support	N/A	Support	N/A	N/A	Support
RV Citizens Advisory Committee ^[1]	Support	Support	Support	N/A	Support	Support
Association of Visitor Information Centers of WA	Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Support
Washington State Hotel and Lodging Association	Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Support

Note:

- [1] **Recreational Vehicle Citizens Advisory Committee:** The department utilizes a volunteer citizen-based group of recreational vehicle users to help define the RV needs at SRAs. This group provides guidance on the expenditure of funds from the RV account and fee adjustments. The fee adjustments must be preceded by an evaluation per [RCW 47.01.460](#).

Additional Safety Rest Area Resources

Exhibit 1710-3

(3) Adjacent Land Use

Consult local planning offices for information about zoning and expected development in the area of a proposed site to ensure compatibility with a new safety rest area or roadside park. Acquire a buffer area or scenic easement on adjacent lands, if possible, to protect scenic views and existing vegetation. Incorporate any cultural, historical, or scenic points of interest into the site design to enhance visitor experience and area education. For Interstate safety rest areas, vehicular ingress and egress will be from the main line only.

(4) Availability of Utilities

Determine the proximity and availability of water, power, and sewer systems prior to site acquisition. Prepare required legal documents such as well agreements, easements, water rights, and acquisition documents. The Capital Facilities Office uses annual traffic data in the area to estimate the number of rest area users and determine the adequacy of potable water supply, power capacity, parking space needs, and sewage disposal system options. New construction should meet the 20-year projected growth rate based on potential traffic increases.

(5) Level of Development

Roadside facilities have different levels of development and require varying site size and amenity levels. [Exhibit 1710-4](#) shows recommended site sizing and amenities for SRAs, roadside parks, and viewpoints.

(6) Site Conditions

SRAs need large parcels of land to provide adequate space for parking passenger vehicles and trucks, on-site sewage treatment, and on-site water systems if provided. Any selected site should consider the terrain to allow for safe ingress and egress from the highway.

Other considerations are:

- Grades and slopes to accommodate parking, sewage treatment, and the building site.
- High water level, particularly if the site is in a floodplain.
- Soil conditions and soil type for structural designs and the on-site sewage treatment system.
- Vegetation and natural features to understand potential mitigation costs from impacts to existing wetlands or stormwater drainage, etc.
- Prevailing wind direction and typical wind velocities that can affect building siting/design and visitor experience.

(7) Site Security

Design the facility to maximize line of sight for rest area users. Design vegetation for visibility to avoid hiding places on-site. If electrical power is available on-site, provide lighting around all parking areas, buildings, and other site amenities that are made available to the public.

(8) Site Sustainability

During site development, adhere to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards where practicable. Strive for energy efficiency, water conservation, and low operational costs in building designs. Ensure landscaping features will be durable and easy to maintain. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for minimum requirements and standard details.

(9) Stormwater Management

For stormwater management, particularly in areas covered by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, make an effort to minimize the use of storm drainage devices such as catch basins, oil-water separators, and retention vaults. Design the site to accommodate sheet flow off paved surfaces to vegetative areas for on-site infiltration and management of stormwater where practicable. (See the [Highway Runoff Manual](#) for stormwater design information.)

(10) Traffic Ingress and Egress

Design connections to the main line highway in accordance with *Design Manual* chapters in Division 13. Consult with the HQ Access and Hearings Section for establishing new or modifying existing highway access points.

Site Development	Safety Rest Area	Roadside Park	Viewpoint
Site			
Minimum site size – Professional judgment should be used based on site-specific requirements	Up to 30 acres	Up to 3 acres	Up to 1 acre
ADAAG code compliance	Required	Required	Required
Utilities			
Potable water	Optional	Optional	No
Off-site sewage disposal	Optional	Optional	No
On-site sewage disposal	Optional	Optional	No
RV sanitary disposal systems	Optional	No	No
Electrical power	Optional	Optional	Optional
Electric vehicle charging stations*	Optional	No	No
Restroom Buildings			
Permanent building	Required	Optional	No
Toilets and hand cleaning	Required	Optional	No
Portable toilets: vault, chemical, or composting	Optional	Optional	Optional
ADAAG code compliance	Required	Required	Required
Parking and Pavement			
Impervious	Required	Optional	Optional
Truck parking	Optional	Optional	No
RV parking	Optional	Optional	Optional
Site Amenities			
Pedestrian plaza	Optional	Optional	No
Sidewalks	Optional	Optional	Optional
Picnic tables	Optional	Optional	Optional
Recreation trails	Optional	Optional	Optional
Pet walking area	Optional	Optional	No
Bicycle access and/or racks	Optional	Optional	Optional
Historical or area information display	Required	Optional	Optional
Ancillary Services			
Telephone service	Optional	Optional	No
Refuse receptacles	Required	Optional	Optional
Vending machines*	Optional	No	No
Volunteer refreshment area*	Optional	No	No
Visitor information booth*	Optional	No	No
Travel information kiosk*	Optional	Optional	No
Interpretive displays, markers, or memorial signs	Optional	Optional	Optional
Safety and Security			
Fencing	Optional	Optional	Optional
Site illumination*	Optional	Optional	No
Surveillance cameras*	Optional	No	No

*If provided, electrical power is required.

Roadside Facilities Level of Development
Exhibit 1710-4

(11) ADAAG Compliance

You must comply with the *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (ADAAG) for all site components that are made available to the public. Provide at least one accessible route of travel, defined in ADAAG, from the parking area to each on-site amenity or ancillary service.

(12) Parking Area Design

Consider the parking area layout when generating a site master plan. Include stages of construction if applicable. Provide separate parking areas for trucks/RVs/buses and passenger cars. For new designs, locate large-vehicle parking on the far side of the site away from the highway for improved highway visibility and site security purposes. Provide shade for vehicles where practicable. [Exhibit 1710-5](#) shows an example of a truck parking area layout. AASHTO's *Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways* provides parking area design considerations. Consider areas for snow storage needs. Refer to the *Hydraulics Manual* for drainage design. Preserve existing landscape features to the greatest extent possible. Design vehicular and pedestrian routes to be safe, simple, direct, and obvious. Meet local building codes and ADAAG requirements for public parking.

(13) Recreational Vehicle (RV) Sanitary Disposal Facilities

Construct RV sanitary disposal facilities (dump stations) only at sites served by municipal sewage disposal systems, or at sites served by sewage lagoons with adequate capacity. On-site septic systems with drainfields are not an option for RV dump stations because of sewage volume, technical/maintenance requirements, and costs. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for details on RV dump station design and operation.

(14) Walkways

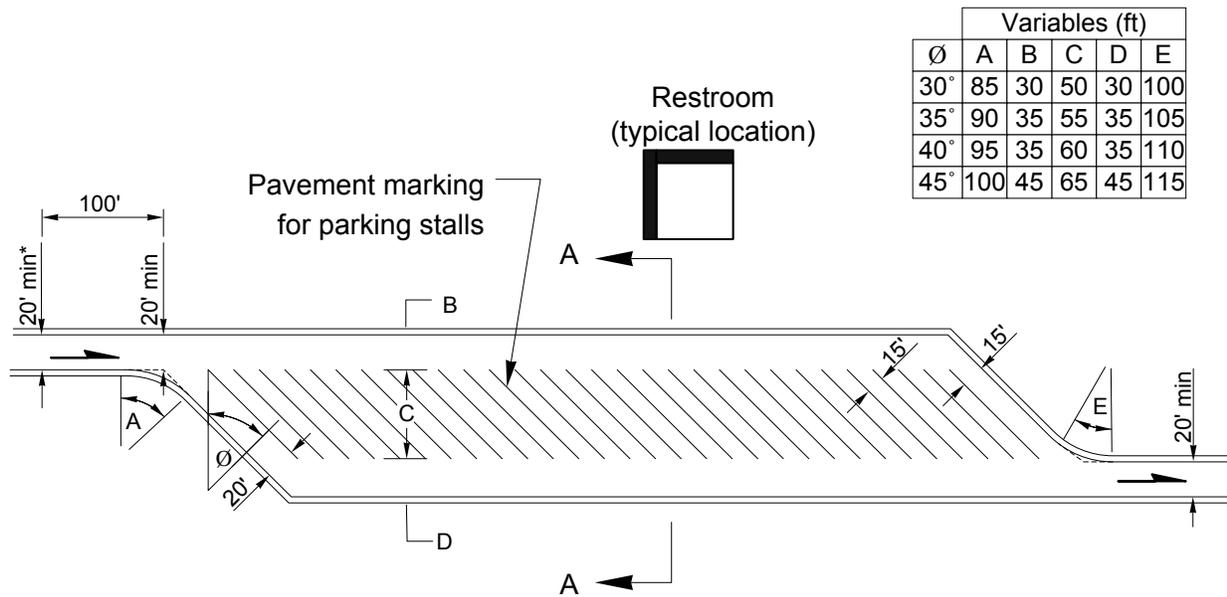
Design walkways for direct pedestrian movement to all facilities and comply with ADAAG requirements. Provide sidewalk width a minimum of 48 inches, which exceeds ADAAG requirements.

(15) Vegetation

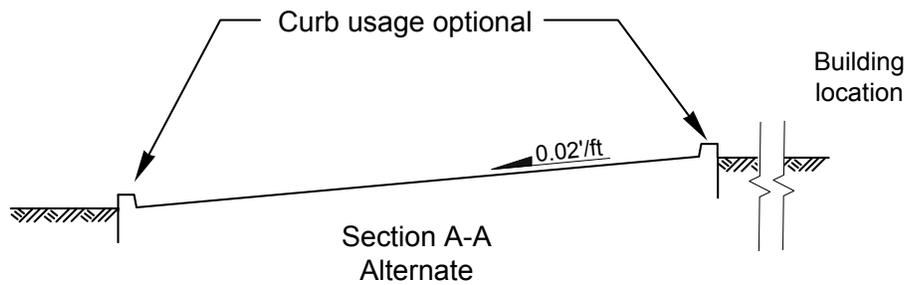
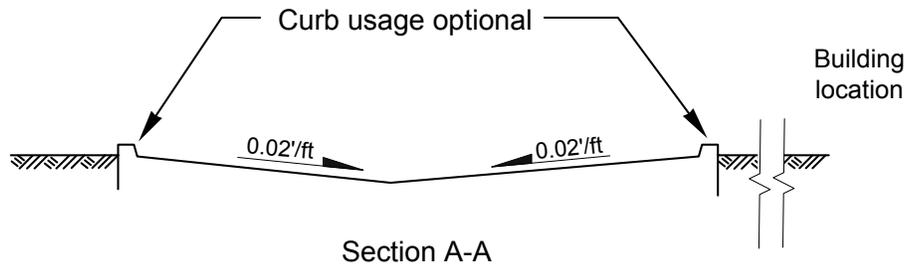
Vegetation enhances the physical environment by providing shade, shelter from wind, visual screening, wildlife habitat, and other benefits. Landscape Architects engaged in the project employ designs that emphasize low-maintenance practices and obstacle-free lawns, and minimize water usage for irrigation and impacts to existing native vegetation where practicable.

(16) Picnic Tables

Provide one picnic table for every ten passenger car parking stalls, with a minimum of four tables per SRA where practicable. Provide shelters for 50% of the picnic tables on-site. Provide windscreens for picnic tables exposed to frequent high winds. Each SRA is required to provide a minimum of one picnic table that complies with ADAAG requirements. Place picnic tables near walkways but also provide privacy from restroom users.



* If exit ramp is tangent or has curve radii greater than 1,000', this width may be reduced to 14'.



Typical Truck Storage

Exhibit 1710-5

(17) Recreation Trails

Provide trails or nature walks where practicable. (See [Chapter 1515](#) for more information about shared-use paths.)

(18) Pet Areas

Provide ADAAG-compliant, well-lit areas for visitors to walk their pets away from kiosks, plaza areas, and moving vehicles. Provide trash receptacles and pet waste bags near pet areas.

(19) Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are provided at select sites. One ADAAG-compliant parking stall with an accessible route is required when EV charging stations are installed. Because EV charging is not the primary purpose of SRAs, locate the EV parking stalls at the ends of the passenger vehicle parking area.

(20) Bicycle Facilities

Provide bicycle racks where this type of active transportation mode is accessible to an SRA. (See [Chapter 1520](#) for more information about roadway bicycle facilities.)

1710.06 Buildings**(1) Codes**

Comply with current versions of the International Building Code, International Plumbing Code, National Electric Code, [Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines](#), and all applicable state and local code requirements.

(2) Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)

You must comply with accessibility guidelines specified in ADAAG for all building components that are available to the public. Design restrooms, ancillary service buildings, picnic benches, and information kiosks to ADAAG standards.

(3) Restroom Capacity

Provide a male/female restroom stall ratio of 40:60, and one unisex restroom that can be opened to allow for daily cleaning operations where practicable. If the unisex restroom is the only ADAAG-compliant toilet stall on-site, it must remain open at all times. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for restroom standards and to verify the number of stalls that should be provided at each site.

(4) Building Security

Design rest area buildings to provide a safe, comfortable experience for the traveling public. Avoid building designs with potential hiding places, and ensure adequate building lighting is provided around the perimeter.

(5) Building Sustainability

Buildings and systems are to adhere to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards where practicable. Design facilities for energy efficiency, water conservation, and low operational costs. Ensure materials are durable and easy to maintain. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for minimum requirements and standard details.

(6) Vandalism Mitigation

Consider vandal-resistant materials as a preferred option for building components such as fixtures, fasteners, and surface coatings.



WSDOT Safety Rest Area Building – Adaptive Reuse Historic Preservation

Exhibit 1710-6

(7) Plaza Areas

Provide paved/concrete plaza areas at all new SRAs, where practicable, to enhance safety, reduce wear and maintenance on heavy-travel areas, and provide unobstructed pedestrian movement. Consider pedestrian movement when designing exterior fixtures such as benches, kiosks, telephones, and vending machines in plaza areas. Avoid creating potential hiding places and ensure appropriate lines of sight for safety.

(8) Building Signage

Ensure building signage meets current standards for rest area signage. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for details.

(9) Kiosks

Install travel information kiosks at all Interstate rest areas and at non-Interstate rest areas as needed. A kiosk is usually equipped with backlit information displays.

(10) Volunteer Refreshment and Coffee Services

Construct volunteer services buildings at all Interstate rest areas and at non-Interstate rest areas as needed. They can usually be incorporated with the travel information kiosks. Wire, plumb, and heat these buildings to meet building codes as an occupied space. Locate these buildings to give volunteers an unobstructed view of restroom entrances and parking areas if feasible.

(11) Rehabilitation and Expansion

Minor renovation projects to address specific building and system deficiencies such as roofs, interior fixtures and partitions, wall and floor surfaces, HVAC, electrical, water, and sewer will extend the usefulness of the building and minimize maintenance and operations costs. When major renovations are needed, consider restroom capacity increases to meet current standards based on expected user volumes.

Other facility components that will eventually need rehabilitation are kiosks, irrigation systems, sidewalks, picnic tables, parking areas, and RV dump stations. All projects must meet current ADAAG building and site requirements. Consider efficiency improvements that can be made to reduce operational costs. Coordinate with the Capital Facilities Office for all renovation or expansion projects.

1710.07 Utilities

Contact the region Utilities Office for acquisition of Utility Service Agreements for any utility needs. Coordinate with the Capital Facilities Office for long-term planning considerations. Telephones are provided at most SRAs and must meet ADAAG requirements. Because of the availability of cellular phones, and due to vandalism and other reasons, public telephone service may be cancelled after coordination between the Capital Facilities Office and region Maintenance.

(1) Power Capacity

A new or upgraded electrical service provided on-site will meet the projected needs of the facility over the next 20 years where practicable. Provide three-phase service where available. Consider building capacity increases, site lighting improvements, electric vehicle charging stations, truck parking electrification, and other potential needs. Contact the Capital Facilities Office for site-specific details or master plans.

(2) Water & Sewer Systems

Refer to the *Hydraulics Manual* for information on water and sewage disposal systems, including reservoirs, long-distance pressure sewers, septic tanks, drainfields, and sewage lagoons. Install separate water meters to quantify irrigation, building, RV dump stations, and source water where practicable. Consider maintenance needs for water and sewer system designs. Coordinate with the Capital Facilities Office for all issues related to water and sewer systems at SRAs.

(3) Stormwater Systems

Stormwater management and treatment systems are to meet the guidelines and requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Ensure runoff from impervious surfaces at SRAs is managed on-site using typical best management practices. Contact the Hydraulics Office for specific design recommendations, and the Maintenance Operations Office for specific site requirements noted in the statewide NPDES permit.

(4) Future Utilities

Provide sleeves and conduits for future utilities in accordance with the site master plan for water, sewer, power, and telephone. Address site-specific agreements by coordinating with region Maintenance, utility companies, the Capital Facilities Office, and others during site design.

1710.08 Documentation

(1) Design Documentation Checklist

For the list of documents required to be preserved in the Design Documentation Package and the Project File, see the Design Documentation Checklist:

🔗 www.wsdot.wa.gov/design/projectdev/

Also, coordinate design documentation with the Capital Facilities Office for any SRA design projects.

(2) Environmental Documentation and Permitting

Coordinate with the appropriate environmental support personnel or region Environmental Office during the planning and design stages of the project to determine what environmental, cultural, or historical documentation will be required. Environmental staff will determine applicable exemptions and required environmental permits for project delivery.

(3) Permanent Safety Rest Area Closures

Safety rest areas may be closed permanently or relocated. Federal Highways Administration approval is required for any closure or transfer of such facilities to other federal, state, or local agencies. Detailed closure procedures are stated in [23 CFR 752](#). Coordinate with the Capital Facilities Office for proposal to close any WSDOT SRA.