

Thurston County
COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES
August 16, 1993

These policies were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 8, 1992. They were ratified earlier by each of the seven cities and towns within Thurston County. Those seven cities and towns are Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino and Yelm. On August 2, 1993, representatives of Thurston County and the seven cities and towns met to clarify intent of policies 1.2 and 1.3 and to affirm long and short term Urban Growth boundaries established in 1988 around Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater.

Background: The Growth Management Act calls for the faster growing counties and cities within their borders to undertake new planning to prepare for anticipated growth. New parts are to be added to the Comprehensive Plans of these counties and cities, and those plans are to be coordinated and consistent. The framework for this coordination are county-wide planning policies, developed by each county, in collaboration with its cities and towns. These are Thurston County's county-wide planning policies which will be used to frame how the Comprehensive Plans of Thurston County and the seven cities and towns will be developed and coordinated.

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I.
URBAN GROWTH AREAS
June 5, 1992
Adopted September 8, 1992

Note: The North County long and short term boundaries established in 1988 with public hearings and incorporation into the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, are affirmed as in effect today. (This clarification added 8/2/93).

Urban growth within Thurston County will occur only in designated urban growth areas. To ensure that urban growth areas are established and periodically reviewed, the cities and towns will work with Thurston County to:

1.1 Designate growth area boundaries that meet the following criteria:

- a. Contain areas characterized by urban growth,
- b. Are served by or are planned to be served by municipal utilities,
- c. Contain vacant land near existing urban areas that is capable of supporting urban development,
- d. Are compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas,
- e. Follow logical boundaries,
- f. Consider citizen preferences, and
- g. Are of sufficient area and densities to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the succeeding twenty-year period.

1.2 Designate and amend urban growth boundaries through the following **process**:

- a. Cities and towns will confer with the county about boundary location or amendment,
- b. Proposed boundaries are presented to the UGM subcommittee of Thurston Regional Planning Council, which makes a recommendation directly to the Board of County Commissioners,
- c. Following a public hearing, the Board of County Commissioners designates the boundaries and justifies its decision in writing,
- d. Cities and towns not in agreement with the boundary designation may request mediation through the State Department of Community Development, and
- e. At least every 10 years, growth boundaries will be reviewed based on updated 20 year population projections.

Note: Section 1.2 applies to the "long term urban growth boundary" in the North County and "the urban growth boundary" in South County. For amendments to the North County urban growth boundary, the Urban Growth Management Committee of Thurston Regional Planning Council will develop criteria to evaluate long term boundary changes and a process for involving area residents and other jurisdictions, through joint planning or some form of the process. The governing body of each of the North County jurisdictions will review the proposed criteria and process. (This clarification added 8/2/93).

1.3 Short Term Urban Growth Boundaries

The establishment of short term urban growth area boundaries is optional. Any existing short term boundaries and their methods of expansion as established under urban growth management agreements will remain in place until such agreements are re-examined.

Note: Joint planning between Thurston County and the affected city, only, is the method for changing the North County short term boundary. (This clarification added 8/2/93).

II. PROMOTION OF CONTIGUOUS AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT & PROVISION OF URBAN SERVICES

August 19, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

In order to accommodate most of the county's population and employment in urban growth areas in ways that ensure livability, preservation of environmental quality, open space retention, varied and affordable housing, high quality urban services at least cost, and orderly transition of land from county to city, Thurston County and each city and town will:

2.1 Concentrate development in growth areas by:

- a. Encouraging infilling in areas already characterized by urban growth that have the capacity and provide public services and facilities to serve urban development;
- b. Phasing urban development and facilities outward from core areas,
- c. Establishing mechanisms to ensure average residential densities sufficient to enable the county as a whole to accommodate its 20-year population projection; *(See process policy on page 10)*
- d. Designate rural areas for low intensity, non-urban uses that preserve natural resource lands, protect rural areas from sprawling, low-density development and assure that rural areas may be served with lower cost, non-urban public services and utilities;
- e. Where urban services & utilities are not yet available, requiring development to be configured so urban growth areas may eventually infill and become urban.
- f. Considering innovative development techniques.

2.2 Coordinate Urban Services, Planning, and Standards through:

- a. Coordinated planning and implementation of urban land use, parks, open space corridors, transportation, and infrastructure within growth areas;
- b. Identification, in advance of development, of sites for schools, parks, fire and police stations, major stormwater facilities, greenbelts, and open space. Acquisition of sites for these facilities shall occur in a timely manner and as early as possible in the overall development of the area;
- c. Compatible development standards & road/street level of service standards among adjoining jurisdictions
- d. Development occurring within unincorporated urban growth areas shall conform to the development standards of the associated city or town;
Explanatory comment: This provision recognized that development short of this requirement may cause the larger society to bear the expense of retrofitting the development to meet urban standards (i.e., water, sewer, stormwater, and roadways) upon eventual annexation. This standard will further enable the larger community to structure how growth will occur to minimize the cost of providing the infrastructure for these service systems.
- e. Phasing extensions of urban services and facilities concurrent with development; and
- f. No extensions of urban services and facilities, such as sewer and water, beyond urban growth boundaries except to serve existing development in rural areas with public health or water quality problems.

2.3 Provide capacity to accommodate planned growth by:

- a. Assuring that each jurisdiction will have adequate capacity in transportation, public and private utilities, stormdrainage systems, municipal services, parks and schools to serve growth that is planned for in adopted local comprehensive plans; and
- b. Protection of ground water supplies from contamination and maintenance of ground water in adequate supply by identifying and reserving future supplies well in advance of need.

2.4 Cooperate on annexations in order to accomplish an orderly transfer of contiguous lands within growth areas into the adjoining cities and towns.

III.

JOINT COUNTY AND CITY PLANNING WITHIN URBAN GROWTH AREAS

August 19, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

Thurston County and the cities and towns within its borders will jointly plan the unincorporated portions of urban growth areas as follows:

- 3.1 Each city and town will assume lead responsibility for preparing the joint plan for its growth area in consultation with the county and adjoining jurisdictions.

- a. The lead city or town and the county will jointly agree to the level and role of county involvement at the outset of the project, including the role of each jurisdiction's planning commission.
 - b. A scope of work, schedule and budget will be jointly developed and individually adopted by each jurisdiction.
 - c. The process will ensure participation by area residents and affected entities.
- 3.2 The jointly adopted plan or zoning will serve as the basis for county planning decisions and as the pre-annexation comprehensive plan for the city to use when annexations are proposed.
- 3.3 Each joint plan or zoning will include an agreement to honor the plan or zoning for a mutually agreeable period following adoption of the plan or annexation.
- 3.4 Nothing in these policies shall be interpreted to change any duties and roles of local governmental bodies mandated by state law; for example, statutory requirements that each jurisdiction's planning commission hold hearings and make recommendations on comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.

Explanatory Comment: Through the joint planning process outlined in these county-wide planning policies, a committee may draft a joint city and county plan and zoning ordinance; and it is possible that there may be no county planning commissioners serving on the drafting committee. However, the County Planning Commission still has the statutory responsibility to hold hearings on the draft plan and zoning ordinance and make recommendations on those documents to the Board of Thurston County Commissioners.

IV. SITING COUNTY-WIDE AND STATE-WIDE PUBLIC CAPITAL FACILITIES

June 5, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

In order to provide a rational and fair process for siting public capital facilities that every community needs, but which have impacts that make them difficult to site, Thurston County and each city and town will:

- 4.1 Cooperatively establish a process for identifying and siting within their boundaries public capital facilities of a county-wide and state-wide nature which have a potential for impact beyond jurisdictional boundaries. The process will include public involvement at early stages. These are facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, terminal facilities, state educational facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes.
- 4.2 Base decisions on siting county-wide and state-wide public capital facilities on the jurisdiction's adopted plans, zoning and environmental regulations, and the following general criteria:

- a. County-wide and state-wide public capital facilities shall not have any probable significant adverse impact on lands designated as critical areas or resource lands; and
- b. Major public facilities that generate substantial traffic should be sited near major transportation corridors.

V.
ANALYSIS OF FISCAL IMPACT

August 19, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

In order to conduct growth management planning that is fiscally realistic and achievable, in recognition of the high costs of providing public services and facilities to meet the needs of existing future population; and in order to provide equity and fairness with respect to who pays those costs, Thurston County and each city and town should

- 5.1 Develop financing methods for infrastructure which minimize the taxpayer's overall burden and fairly divide costs between existing and new development.
- 5.2 Cooperatively explore a method to mitigate the fiscal impact on county government of annexation of significant developed commercial and industrial properties.
- 5.3 Cooperatively explore methods of coordinating financing of infrastructure in urban growth areas.

VI.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

June 5, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

City, town and county governments in Thurston County encourage sustainable economic development and support job opportunities and economic diversification that provide economic vitality and ensure protection of water resources and critical areas. In order to attain an economic base that provides an adequate tax base revenue source, enhances the quality of life of community residents, and maintains environmental quality, the cities, towns and county will:

- 6.1 Provide in their comprehensive plans for an adequate amount of appropriately located land, utilities, and transportation systems to facilitate environmentally sound and economically viable commercial, public sector, and industrial development;
- 6.2 Support the retention and expansion of existing public sector and commercial development and environmentally sound, economically viable industrial development and resource uses;
- 6.3 Provide assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance for the expansion or establishment of environmentally sound and economically viable economic development;
- 6.4 Support recruitment of environmentally sound and economically viable economic development that helps to diversify or strengthen local economies;
- 6.5 Support workforce training that will facilitate desirable economic development that helps to diversify or strengthen local economies;
- 6.6 Improve regulatory certainty, consistency, and efficiency;
- 6.7 Coordinate economic development efforts with other jurisdictions, the prot, the Economic Development Council, chambers of commerce, and other affected groups; and
- 6.8 Encourage the utilization and development of areas designated for industrial use, consistent with the environmental policies in Section IX.

VII.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
August 19, 1992
Adopted September 8, 1992

The cities, towns and county will institute measures to encourage the availability of affordable housing for all incomes and needs and ensure that each community includes a fair share of housing for all economic segments of the population by:

- 7.1 Establishing a process to accomplish a fair share distribution of affordable housing among the jurisdictions.
- 7.2 Working with the private sector, Housing Authority, neighborhood groups, and other affected citizens to facilitate the development of attractive, quality low and moderate income housing that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and located with easy access to public transportation, commercial areas and employment centers.
- 7.3 Accommodating low and moderate income housing throughout each jurisdiction rather than isolated in certain areas.
- 7.4 Exploring ways to reduce the costs of housing.
- 7.5 Examining and modifying current policies that provide barriers to affordable housing.
- 7.6 Encouraging a range of housing types and costs commensurate with the employment base and income levels of their populations, particularly for low, moderate and fixed income families.
- 7.7 When possible, provide assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance for the expansion or establishment of low cost affordable housing for low, moderate and fixed income individuals and families.

VIII.
TRANSPORTATION
April 30, 1992
Adopted September 8, 1992

- 8.1 Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- a. Local comprehensive plans will consider the relationship between transportation and land use density and development standards.
 - b. Local comprehensive plans and development standards should provide for local and regional pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
 - c. Improved transit service will be based on Intercity Transit's plans, the regional transportation plan, and local comprehensive plans.
 - d. Transportation Demand Management plans and programs required by State law will be implemented as key part of the region's transportation program.
 - e. Improvements to the regional road network will be consistent with local and regional transportation plans.
 - f. The regional transportation planning process is the primary forum for setting County-wide transportation policy.
- 8.2 The transportation element of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan will be consistent with the land use element of that jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- 8.3 The transportation element of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan will include level of service standards for all arterials and transit routes and services. Each jurisdiction will coordinate these level of service standards with all adjacent jurisdictions. Transit level of service standards will be consistent with Intercity Transit policies.
- 8.4 Each jurisdiction's transportation element will include an assessment of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions.
- 8.5 As soon as feasible, given existing resources, the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by Thurston County and each city and town in the county will be made consistent with the regional transportation plan adopted by Thurston Regional Planning Council according to the provisions of the Growth Management Act.
- 8.6 The regional transportation plan adopted by Thurston Regional Planning Council will be made consistent with the land use elements of comprehensive plans adopted by Thurston County and the cities

and towns within Thurston County and with state transportation plans as soon as feasible after those plans are adopted or updates under the provisions of the Growth Management Act. At a minimum, the regional transportation plan will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, every two years for consistency with the most recent local comprehensive plans and state transportation plans.

- 8.7 All transportation projects within Thurston County that have an impact upon facilities or services identified as regional in the regional transportation plan will be consistent with the regional transportation plan.
- 8.8 The regional transportation plan should include an analysis of the economic and environmental impacts of land use policies that encourage people to commute.
- 8.9 Local and regional transportation plans will consider maritime, aviation and rail transportation as an integral link to the area's regional transportation needs.

IX.
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
August 19, 1992
Adopted September 8, 1992

In order to fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; and to assure a safe, healthful, and productive environment for local residents, the county, cities and towns will:

- 9.1 Recognize our interdependence on natural systems and maintain a balance between human uses and the natural environment by:
 - a. Establishing a pattern and intensity of land and resource use in concert with the ability of land and resources to sustain such use; and
 - b. Concentrating development in urban growth areas in order to conserve natural resources and enable continued resource use;
- 9.2 Protect ground and surface water and the water of the Puget Sound from further degradation by adopting and participating in comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional program to protect and monitor water resources for all uses;
- 9.3 Protect and enhance air quality;
- 9.4 Minimize high noise levels that would degrade the residents' quality of life;
- 9.5 Maintain significant wildlife habitat and corridors; and

- 9.6 Preserve and promote awareness of our historic, cultural, and natural heritage.
- 9.7 Encourage the reuse and recycling of materials and products, and reduction of waste to the maximum extent practicable.
- 9.8 Provide for parks and open space.
- 9.9 Plan for the amount of population that can be sustained by our air, land and water resources without degrading livability and environmental quality.

COUNTY-WIDE POLICIES WHICH ESTABLISH A PROCESS
TO DEVELOP FUTURE POLICIES

August 10, 1992

Adopted September 8, 1992

Amended July 1, 2002

- 10.1. Process to determine and assure sufficiency of Urban Growth Areas to permit projected urban population:
 - a. The state Office of Financial Management growth management planning population projections for Thurston County will be used as the range of population to be accommodated for the coming 20 years.
 - b. Within the overall framework of the OFM population projections for the County Thurston Regional Planning Council will develop countywide and smaller area population projections, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110 and based on current adopted plans, zoning and environmental regulations and buildout trends.
 - c. A review and evaluation program pursuant to RCW 36.70A.215 (“Buildable Lands Program”) will be established. The evaluation required under the Buildable Lands Program will be completed no later than September 1, 2002, subject to availability of State funding. Subsequent evaluations shall occur at least once every five years. This evaluation may be combined with the review and evaluation of county and city comprehensive land use plans and development regulations required by RCW 36.70A.130 (1), and the review of urban growth areas required by RCW 36.70A.130(3).
 - i. In the event of a dispute among jurisdictions relating to inconsistencies in collection and analysis of data, the affected jurisdictions shall meet and discuss methods of resolving the dispute.
 - ii. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to alter the land use power of any Thurston County jurisdiction under established law.
 - iii. Because inclusion of this policy is as a result of state mandated legislation, implementation of this policy shall be commensurate with state funding.

- d. The Thurston Regional Planning Council will review the smaller area population projections to assure that the 20-year population is accommodated county-wide, and that urban growth areas are of sufficient area and densities to permit the projected urban population.

Explanatory comment: If the smaller area projections under “b” above indicate, for example, that based on existing planning/zoning and buildout trends that one or all Urban Growth Areas would be full before 20 years, the county and cities will be in position through the review that would take place under provision “dē” to identify needed actions, such as enlarging growth boundaries, encouraging more compact development inside growth areas, mechanisms to cut the amount of population coming to the county, etc.

10.2 These county-wide policies will be reviewed upon request of four jurisdictions.