



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Carolina Mejia-Barahona
District One

Gary Edwards
District Two

Tye Menser
District Three

**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission

FROM: Kaitlynn Nelson, Associate Planner
Amelia Schwartz, Associate Planner

DATE: January 11, 2022

SUBJECT: Grand Mound Subarea Plan Update (CPA-7a)

BACKGROUND

The Grand Mound Subarea Plan Update has had 5 work sessions, an Open House, and a public hearing. At the December 7th work session, the Planning Commission made several recommendations on portions of the Grand Mound Subarea Plan Update. Recommendations were made on the draft code amendments, and several land use and zoning amendment requests (Black Lake Quarry, Fire District 14, Tribal Trust Lands, Morgan, Steelhammer, Jackson & Singh, and Deskin).

The remaining portions of the Grand Mound Subarea Plan that require a recommendation are:

- 1) the draft Grand Mound Subarea Plan, and
- 2) the land use, zoning amendment, and UGA expansion request of the Wilmovsky site.

GRAND MOUND SUBAREA PLAN

The Grand Mound Subarea Plan is a standalone document that serves as a guide for growth over the next 20 years in the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area.

Revisions have been made to the Subarea Plan draft based on the discussion at the last work session, and include:

- **Page 5, Introduction (Sidebar):**

Current Draft: "The Urban Growth Areas are established by the Growth Management Act, which requires planning to accommodate population projections made for the county by the Office of Financial Management to ensure that planned growth occurs in urban areas, protecting the surrounding environment and reducing sprawl. The county receives population projections in the form of the Buildable Lands Report from Thurston Regional Planning Council."

Edits: "The County established the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area under the Growth Management Act (GMA), which requires planning and coordinating growth to achieve balance among the goals of the GMA and support the quality of life in rural areas, in addition to the Comprehensive Plan. Goals include reducing sprawl; protecting the environment and open space; encouraging efficient provision of public facilities such as water and sewer systems; supporting agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; promoting affordable housing for all; coordinating efficient transportation of different kinds; and providing economic opportunity. "

- **Page 5, Introduction:**

Current Draft: "The Grand Mound subarea is an Urban Growth Area (UGA) consisting of approximately 982 acres located 15 miles south of Olympia, in southwest Thurston County located along the I-5 corridor just north of Lewis County. The Grand Mound UGA is generally bounded by Ivan Street and I-5 to the east, 193rd Avenue to the north, Old Highway 9 to the south, and about midway between Tea Street and Old Highway 99 to the west. It sits adjacent to the largest area of commercially significant farmland in the county and the Bountiful Byway, a 60-mile loop tour of the region's local farms and locally produced products.

The Grand Mound subarea and UGA was first established by the county in 1995 under the State Growth Management Act to identify areas to direct urban development, in order to prevent sprawling growth in the rural county."

Edits: "The Grand Mound subarea is an Urban Growth Area (UGA) of 982 acres located along the I-5 corridor, 15 miles southwest of Olympia, in southwest Thurston County. The Grand Mound UGA is generally bounded by Ivan Street and I-5 to the east, 193rd Avenue to the north, Old Highway 9 to the south, and about midway between Tea Street and Old Highway 99 to the west. Its location at the nexus of US Route 12, I-5, and Old Highway 99 make Grand Mound attractive for commercial development to serve the traveling public, including a waterpark, hotels, and restaurants. Its population has more than doubled since the original UGA was established in 1995.

Grand Mound sits adjacent to the largest area of commercially significant farmland in the county and the Bountiful Byway, a 60-mile loop tour of the region's local farms and

locally produced products. It is next to the Chehalis River, bisected by a salmon-bearing seasonal stream, and incorporates the natural features of Thurston County prairie lands. Parts of Grand Mound still retain a mixed-use character. "

- **Page 6, Purpose:**

Current Draft: "The purpose of the Grand Mound Subarea Plan is to provide a document that serves as a guide for the growth of the Grand Mound community over the next 20 years."

Edits: Insert after the current draft... "The county identified Grand Mound as an Urban Growth Area under state law (RCW 36.70a, 110), where urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature. Before this, the community had spearheaded a water system and sewer utility to protect the underlying aquifer." and removes sidebar on sprawl.

- **Page 7, History:**

Edits: After, "Grand Mound is distinguished as the area of more development, filled with gas stations and businesses, while Rochester is predominately zoned for low density residential...", add "Planning between Rochester and Grand Mound remain connected in many ways. Grand Mound is part of the Rochester School District; there is interest in creating a shared use trail between them; and the Rochester subarea plan identifies the need to focus growth in Grand Mound."

- **Page 7, History:**

Current Draft: "In 1980, the county adopted new zoning for the area to implement the Rochester Subarea Plan. The zoning applied to the "growth center" was a mixed-use district, which allowed residential, commercial, and industrial land uses to be located throughout the community, which further encouraged the mixed-use pattern that is evident today.

Edits: In 1980, the county adopted new zoning for the Rochester subarea to make the "growth center" a mixed-use district. It allowed residential, commercial, and industrial land uses to be located throughout the community. This mixed-use pattern is evident today in both the Rochester and Grand Mound subareas.

- **Page 9, History:**

Edits: Remove last paragraph "...Corresponding zoning changes...". Add "In 2018, Thurston Regional Planning Council published a Transportation Current Conditions Report for the UGA and administered a Grand Mound community transportation and placemaking survey on behalf of Thurston County. Thurston County and TRPC facilitated community open houses in Grand Mound and Rochester in 2018.

- **Page 11, History:**

Edits: Add to the end of the last paragraph "Newly emergent issues for Grand Mound include traffic conditions that lead to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists; a need for more public parks, open space, and trails; the need for a better balance between fast-food to serve travelers and sit down restaurants and grocery stores to serve the local community; and the desire for better communication among the local residents, the Chehalis Tribe, and the county regarding future development.

- **Page 43: Capital Facilities & Utilities, Sewer and Water Systems:**

Edits: At the end, add "Thurston County plans for over \$7 million in improvements and expansion of the Grand Mound water and sewer systems from 2023 through 2028.

OPTIONS

Option A: Recommend approval of draft.

Considerations:

- Brings plan up to date with other county documents.
- Takes into consideration public comment and community vision.

Option B: Recommend denial of draft.

Considerations:

- Does not bring plan up to date with other county documents and policies.
- Does not update to include new public comment and community recommendations.

WILMOVSKY

The Wilmovsky property requests to rezone from low density residential (RRR 1/5) to medium/high density residential (R4-16/1). The medium/high density residential zoning district is exclusive to the Grand Mound UGA, so the Grand Mound UGA must be expanded in order for the applicant's requested zoning to be applied to the properties. For an amendment to the land use and zoning, and an expansion of the UGA, the proposal must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and County-wide Planning Policies.

Boundary expansions are reviewed by Planning Commission and the UGM Subcommittee of Thurston Regional Planning Council. Both bodies produce a recommendation which is provided to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners makes the final decision for the boundaries and justifies their decision in writing.

County-wide Planning Policy 2.4 states that an expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary must demonstrate consistency with:

- a. All of the following criteria:
 - i. For South County jurisdictions: the expansion area can and will be served by municipal water and transportation in the succeeding 20 years. South County jurisdictions must demonstrate that the expansion can be served by sewage disposal measures that provide for the effective treatment of wastewater in the succeeding 20 years.
 - ii. For North County jurisdictions: the expansion area can and will be served by municipal sewer, water, and transportation in the succeeding 20 years.
 - iii. Urbanization of the expansion area is compatible with the use of designated resource lands and with critical areas.
 - iv. The expansion area is contiguous to an existing urban growth boundary.
 - v. The expansion is consistent with these County-Wide Planning Policies.
- b. One of the two following criteria:
 - i. There is insufficient land within the Urban Growth Boundary to permit the urban growth that is forecast to occur in the succeeding 20 years; or
 - ii. An overriding public interest demonstrating a public benefit beyond the area proposed for inclusion would be served by moving the Urban Growth Boundary related to protecting public health, safety and welfare; enabling more cost-effective, efficient provision of sewer or water; and enabling the locally adopted Comprehensive Plans to more effectively meet the goals of the State Growth Management Act.

In addition to being consistent with the County-wide Planning Policies, properties located outside of the UGA must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Objective B, Policy 10, of the Land Use chapter. Objective B, Policy 10, states that:

Rezoning of any parcel with a rural designation to a different designation should only occur when:

- a. Circumstances have substantially changed since the current land use designation/zoning was adopted and the definition, characteristics or locational guidelines for the current district no longer apply;
- b. The rezone would promote the general welfare of the affected community;
- c. The rezone would maintain or enhance environmental quality; or
- d. Thurston County pursues a legislative rezone.

State law, [WAC 365-196-310](#), (2) Requirements, (e), states that the Urban Growth Area may not exceed the areas necessary to accommodate the growth management planning projections, plus a reasonable land market supply factor, or market factor. In determining this market factor, counties may consider local circumstances.

The growth management projections, plus a reasonable land market supply factor, are determined in the TRPC Buildable Lands Report.

OPTIONS

Option A: No Change

Considerations:

- Maintains consistency with GMA
- Maintains consistency with CWPP
- Does not meet the applicant's request
- Will be reviewed by UGM Committee

Option B: Recommend approval of amending the UGA, and amendment to the land use and associated zoning for the Wilmovsky site.

Considerations:

- The SEPA process would require the applicants to consider environmental and traffic impact
- No evidence that changes are consistent with CWPP
- No evidence to support that changes are consistent with GMA
- Will be reviewed by UGM Committee