

Chapter 10 → Urban Growth Area

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) plays a significant role in planning for Oak Harbor's future. Oak Harbor's UGA also assists the City in meeting State planning Goals; such as encouraging development in urban areas where public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner, reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low density developments, and protecting the environment and enhancing the state's high quality of life.

Consistent with the County-Wide Planning Policies, the term UGA includes both the incorporated land and the surrounding unincorporated area that is planned to accommodate future urban development. For a complete outline of urban governmental service standards, the reader is referred to the Government Services Element.

Goals and Policies

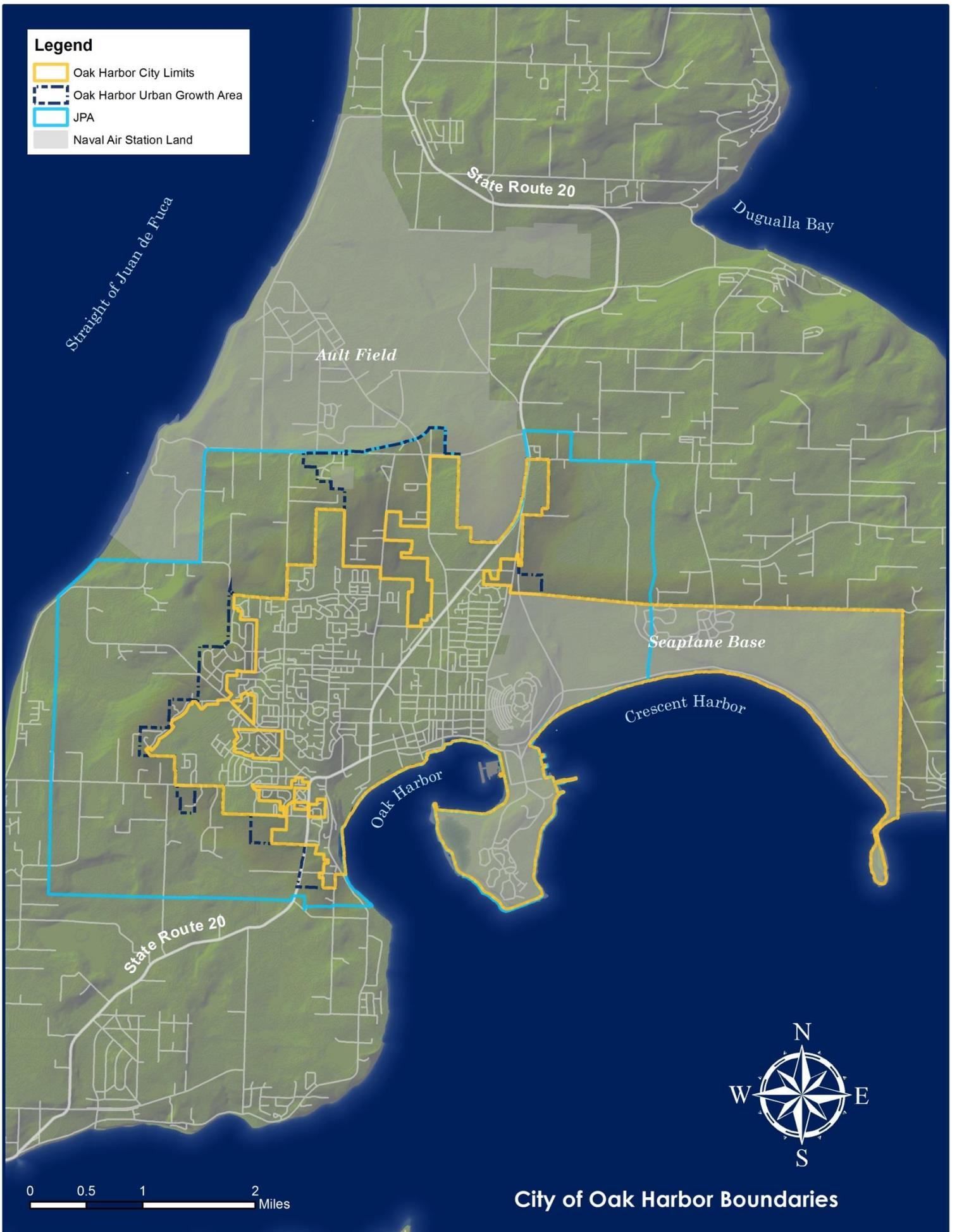
Goal 1 - Support and encourage urban uses and densities to occur within the UGA boundaries.

Policies:

- I.a. Include urban density growth, and municipal public facilities serving that growth, only within the UGA boundary, as mandated by the Washington State Growth Management Act.
- I.b. Ensure that sufficient land in the UGA is available to provide reasonable development opportunities to accommodate twenty years of population and employment growth.
- I.c. Progress toward eliminating unincorporated enclaves in order to provide for the most efficient provision of urban services within the UGA.

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City of Oak Harbor Boundaries

Goal 2 - Engage the County cooperatively in determining expansions to the UGA boundary in accordance with the County Wide Planning Policies.

Policies:

- 2.a. The UGA boundary expansion may be activated by a proposal from either the City or County. Both governments must agree on the boundary as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act.

- 2.b. Base proposed expansion of the UGA on the percentage of developable land existing within the UGA as determined by the City Council as well as changes in the city or amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion – The City may choose to initiate discussion with the County for a UGA boundary change when the city reaches a threshold of approximately 15% undeveloped acres of any one major land use category, i.e. residential, commercial and industrial land use categories, within the city UGA as defined in the Land Use Plan.

Goal 3 - The City and County shall adopt inter-jurisdictional cooperation policies regarding land within and surrounding the UGA.

Policies:

- 3.a. Joint planning should identify, in advance, the priority areas of future boundary expansion.

- 3.b. Ensure regional growth capacity issues are a part of the consideration of the boundary expansion by the City and County.

Discussion - The City and County base their comprehensive plans on official population forecasts developed by the State of Washington Department of Financial Management. The forecasts are allocated to the four regions of Island County, with Oak Harbor located in the North Whidbey Island region.

- 3.c. Continue to use and amend as necessary the Interlocal Agreement between Oak Harbor and Island County as the primary means of implementing compatible land use policies, procedures, public facility planning and development standards and regulations within the UGA.

- 3.d. Plan development within the UGA for future annexation to the City by ensuring uses are compatible with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

- 3.e. A portion of Ault Field should be included in the Oak Harbor UGA in the event the base is closed, lands are surplus, or the base's mission is changed and joint use becomes possible. The City shall coordinate with the County, the Department of Defense and other agencies involved to develop a Master Plan for reuse of the air

station should any of these events occur.

Discussion - Portions of Ault Field which could be included in the UGA are airfield functions such as operation areas, runway, structures, and clear zones (see Land Use map). These areas are urban in character and served by water systems interconnected with the City.

Goal 4 - Annexations to the City will occur in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act and the following policies.

Policies:

4.a. Land to be annexed should include only areas seen as logical extensions of the City, located adjacent to existing urban development.

Discussion - This policy is to be used solely as a guide to prevent leap-frogging and not as a means of preventing growth.

4.b. The City should avoid annexations that would result in unincorporated enclaves within the UGA.

Discussion - An unincorporated enclave is an area completely surrounded by incorporated parts of the city. However, the City may make exceptions to this policy in cases where the potential enclave is already characterized by urban density. In such cases, the City should first encourage petitioners to work with property owners inside the potential enclave to include them in the annexation area. Failing this preferred option, only then should the City consider whether the annexation would further other Comprehensive Plan goals, such as economic development, and otherwise be consistent with annexation policies.

4.c. Annexations to the City should be based on evidence that public facilities and service capacities already exist or are planned for and can be efficiently, economically, and practically provided by either public or private sources.

4.d. Annexations should not diminish the present LOS or create an excessive financial burden to existing and prospective property owners in the City.

- 4.e. Ensure property owners within an annexing area are aware of foreseeable obligations or requirements that may be imposed upon them by the City at the time of annexation.

Discussion - Provide foreseeable cost estimates where possible.

- 4.f. Require existing buildings, within annexed areas, to meet the City's fire and safety requirements.

Discussion - Public safety shall be ensured by the following:

- * An inspection will be conducted of all properties within the proposed annexation area. The Fire Department will identify deficiencies of fire and life safety codes to property owners and City Council. Actions for addressing the deficiencies within specified time frames as recommended by the Fire Department and subject to approval by City Council, will be in the annexation agreement.*
- * Upon annexation, existing buildings will be required to have minimum fire-flow within three years for mobile home parks, and two years for all other buildings, or by annexation agreement. Smaller, individually developed properties should not be burdened by excessive costs of utility improvements beyond their normal proportional share of costs. Costs should be proportionate to benefit.*
- * Existing buildings not conforming to the City's requirement for fire sprinkler systems, will not be subject to retrofitting until the building is remodeled, modified or has an occupancy reclassification. Occupancies or portions thereof classified as hazardous and/or required to have fire suppression systems in accordance with the Uniform Building Code will be required to install an approved system within one year.*

- 4.g. Assure that the City's fire rating is not reduced because of annexation.

Discussion - The intent is to preserve the City's current fire rating and LOS and protect public welfare by providing a water supply of sufficient quantity and pressure for fire protection. In all instances, areas to be annexed should be analyzed for their potential effect on the City's fire rating. Programs should be established to assure improvements are made in the annexed area or to correct identified deficiencies made elsewhere in the City to balance rating deficiencies in the annexed area. Property owners in the annexing area may be required to pay all or a portion of the cost to correct the deficiencies in their area.

- 4.h. Maintain the existing level of police service when annexing new areas.

Discussion - The intent is to protect the residents of the City from a reduced level of police services due to annexation. In all instances the areas to be annexed should be analyzed for their potential effect on the City's current level of police protection. Increases in police personnel may be necessary in order to remain at its present LOS. The City should have a method for analyzing the fiscal impacts of annexation on police services.

- 4.i. Annexation proposals should describe the method and level of funding for capital facilities needed to serve the annexed area.

- 4.j. Proponents of annexation in developed or partially developed areas should pay their fair share of the costs of urban services and public improvements required to meet the City's LOS standards.

Discussion - This commitment to meet the City's LOS standards should be identified by all annexation agreements, including pre-annexation agreements.

- 4.k. The City may require the preparation of a fiscal impact study which addresses long and short-term economic impacts to the City.
- 4.l. Annex, when possible, areas of sufficient size that square off City boundaries and enhance circulation.

Discussion - This policy makes subarea planning for local roads and utilities more efficient.

- 4.m. Proposed annexations shall not result in the long-term reduction of the City's established LOS standards.

Goal 5 - New neighborhoods annexed into the City should contribute in a positive manner to sustain and enhance the quality of life for all Whidbey Island citizens while promoting a strong sense of place for Oak Harbor.

Policies:

- 5.a. Annexation agreements should include a preliminary plan for a transportation network that emphasizes connections to existing neighborhoods, streets and pedestrian facilities.
- 5.b. Where topography allows, new annexation areas should develop in the traditional lot and block grid pattern that typified early Oak Harbor development and enhances the provision of public facilities and services.
- 5.c. The City should consider the desirability of acquiring potential new public facilities, such as trails, parks or open space lands, during the annexation review process with the cooperation of the petitioners.
- 5.d. In annexation requests where the surrounding land uses could be significantly affected by the potential land uses in the annexing area, the City should require a greenbelt designation of an appropriate width to ameliorate the negative impacts.

Discussion - This policy would apply to the annexation of new industrial lands that abut properties that have historically been used for residential purposes.

- 5.e. The City should adopt standards that support the Comprehensive Plan annexation policies.

Legend

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