

# Board of County Commissioners

## Workshop Read Ahead



Community Development • 125 NW Chehalis Avenue, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

**Date:** August 15, 2025  
**Staff:** Mindy Brooks, Community Development Director  
**Re:** **Lewis County Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update**  
**Attachments:** [Volume 1 – Comprehensive Plan](#)  
[Volume 2 – Zoning Designations](#)  
[Volume 3 – Development Regulations](#)

### BACKGROUND

Every 10 years all counties in cities in Washington State are required to update their comprehensive plans, and implementing ordinances, to address new population allocations and changes in state law since the previous update (RCW 36.70A.130). This is called Periodic Update. Periodic Update is also an opportunity to consider local priorities for managing growth and development.

Lewis County began Periodic Update on January 1, 2024, and is required to complete all updates by December 31, 2025. The Lewis County Planning Commission has made recommendations and is forwarding to the BOCC for consideration the following documents:

- Volume 1 – Comprehensive Plan: goals, policies and land use designations
- Volume 2 – Zoning Designations: zoning that implements the land use designations
- Volume 3 – Development Regulations: regulations that implement the goals and policies
- Volume 5 – Supporting Documents: materials adopted as further findings of fact

The Volume 4 – Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), which is also required to be updated during Periodic Update, is under development. The delay is to ensure adequate coordination with partner agencies and other stakeholders. It is anticipated that the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the CAO in October and the BOCC will hold a hearing in December.

The staff report provides a very high-level description of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations. A second staff report will be provided on August 22 that provides a very high-level description of the development regulations. Staff encourage everyone to review the documents in detail.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### SUMMARY

The Lewis County Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year plan. It sets the policy direction for future growth (jobs/economic development, housing, population), protection of critical areas and both rural and resource (agricultural, forest, and mineral) lands, and planning transportation, capital facilities, and utilities needed to support growth (RCW 36.70A.070).

The updated comprehensive plan must be consistent with state law and regional policies, which are shared between the county and cities within the county. Adopted policies in the comprehensive plan are implemented in a number of different ways. For example, it can occur through development regulations, coordination with partner organizations to meet regional goals, or through the capital facility planning, just to name a few.

### MAJOR CHANGES

Below is a summary of the major *changes* to the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan. This is not an exhaustive list, and does not summary all of the goals and policies.

#### **Urban Growth Areas**

- Urban Growth Areas. Establish clear policies for boundary changes and administration of Urban Growth Areas and Urban Reserve.
- Small Towns. Expand housing, transportation, and services in Lewis County's UGAs, which are Onalaska and Packwood.
- Master Planned Resorts. Designate two new Master Planned Resorts – one at TransAlta and one north of Packwood, and support development of these areas to support the local economy.
- Major Industrial Developments. Support transition of TransAlta from mining to other energy production and distribution facilities, as well as other industrial development opportunities.

#### **Rural Areas**

- LAMIRDs. Clarify the rural character of Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development.
  - Type I, encourage housing and economic opportunities, provide service and protect small town character.
  - Type II, promote small scale recreation and tourism centers.
  - Type III, promote small scale industrial and commercial to grow the rural economy.
- Rural Services and Facilities. Ensure that services and facilities are adequate to support rural communities.

#### **Housing**

- Affordable Housing. Plan for and accommodate housing for people in all income brackets, focusing new housing in UGAs and Type I LAMIRDs.
- Natural Hazards. Reduce opportunities for new homes in areas at high risk for natural hazard and address natural hazard mitigation for existing homes.

## **Economic Development**

- Resilient Economic Activities. Make infrastructure investments, create opportunities for new industries, support existing industries response to changing conditions, explore impacts of natural hazards (e.g., wildfire) to tourism industry.

## **Transportation**

- Resilient Systems. Improve transportation system that minimizes impacts from flood, wildfire, and other natural hazards.
- Airports. Preserve existing airport infrastructure and its benefit to emergency services.
- Rail. Preserve and improve existing rail routes that minimize vulnerability and risk from hazards.
- Multi-Modal Transportation. Expand multi-modal options in limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs) and UGAs.

## **Capital Facilities and Utilities**

- County Buildings. Continue efficiently using existing County buildings and focus County resources geographically.
- Broadband. Strengthen coordination and funding allocation for continued broadband expansion.
- Fire Districts. Continued coordination, data sharing and support between the fire districts and the County.
- Energy. Support transition of TransAlta to alternative forms of energy production and distribution.

## **Environment**

- Natural Hazards. Implement the Hazard Mitigation Plan to address flooding, wildfire and other natural hazards.
- Water Quality. Protect aquifers from risks from development, uses and natural hazards.
- Fish and Wildlife. Use Best Available Science. (Note – This will be further discussed with the Critical Areas Ordinance.)

## **Climate and Resiliency**

- Prepare Buildings. Increase fire resilience, make utility improvements for subdivisions, and improve existing utility infrastructure to buildings.
- Enhance Emergency Preparedness. Map infrastructure vulnerable to hazards, provide education, outreach, signage, and establish communication systems.
- Evaluate Evacuation Systems. Assess vulnerability, bolster infrastructure, and seek funding for new projects.
- Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources. Provide education and outreach and protect significant historic sites.

## **ZONING DESIGNATIONS**

### SUMMARY

There are few zoning changes across Lewis County as a whole; however, there are some areas of significant change. Rural zoning, including the Rural Development District (RDD), Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL), Forest Resource Lands (FRL) and Mineral Resource Lands (MRL) are maintained. These areas account for over 95% of the land located outside of UGAs. In addition, FRL are increasing based on reclamation occurring at TransAlta. Overall, this maintains rural character and ensures resource-based industries can thrive in Lewis County.

### MAJOR CHANGES

#### **Packwood and Onalaska**

Onalaska is a UGA and Packwood will have a UGA applied as part of Periodic Update. New zoning has been created for these UGA – Small Towns, to implement the goals and policies of the Onalaska Subarea Plan and Packwood Subarea Plan, see Map 1 and Map 2. Overall the new zoning consolidates and focuses commercial development along the major roadways: SR508, Carlisle and Leonard in Onalaska, and Highway 12 in Packwood. In Packwood, a new Commercial Business District is create on a portion of the historic mill's property. In both towns, areas are designated for high density residential development, where new housing will need to be triplex, quadplex, townhomes or small scale apartments. This is intended to increase more affordable housing options. Areas further from the downtown core of both small towns are preserved for larger scale single family residential uses.

Noth of Packwood, on Thompson Road, a new Master Planned Resort (MPR) overlay is designated. See Map 3. The underlying zoning, RDD-10, allows for hotels, motels, restaurants, retail stores and other non-residential uses, to develop on each parcel. The MPR requires that for any parcel within the overlay to have lodging accommodation, such as a hotel, it must be approved through a Binding Site Plan that includes all of the parcels in the overlay zone. Through the Binding Site Plan, the services such as water and sewer and impacts of traffic must be addressed comprehensively. Employee housing must be provided. And 40% of the area must be preserved as open space. Note – Each parcel can develop individual with non-lodging uses and without the need for a Binding Site Plan.

#### **TransAlta/IPAT**

TransAlta is decommissioning from coal and much of the land is under reclamation with Department of Natural Resources. Staff worked closely with TransAlta and Economic Alliance to update the Major Industrial District (MID) boundary, which is a type of non-residential UGA, to reflect the areas TransAlta plan to redevelop, focusing on transition to other forms of energy production and distribution. The reclaimed areas are rezoned to Forest Resource Land and a MRP overall is applied to a lake that will remain and the surrounding forest. The MPR overlay is intended to support a new resort and recreation. See Map 4.

#### **Toledo Urban Reserve**

Two urban reserve areas were previously applied in South Lewis County. The boundaries have been combined into one and shifted to include area along SR505 from Toledo's UGA to Interstate 5. The

intention if to support the City of Toledo in evaluating future expansion of their UGA. There is no change to the underlying zoning which remains RDD-5 and RDD-20. Development in the urban reserve may continue according to County development regulations. If the City of Toledo determines that UGA expansion is warranted, that would be considered by BOCC in the future. See Map 5.

### **City of Centralia UGA Reduction**

There are two areas that City of Centralia has asked BOCC to remove from the UGA because the city will be unable to provide urban services to those areas within the 20-year planning timeframe. See Map 6.

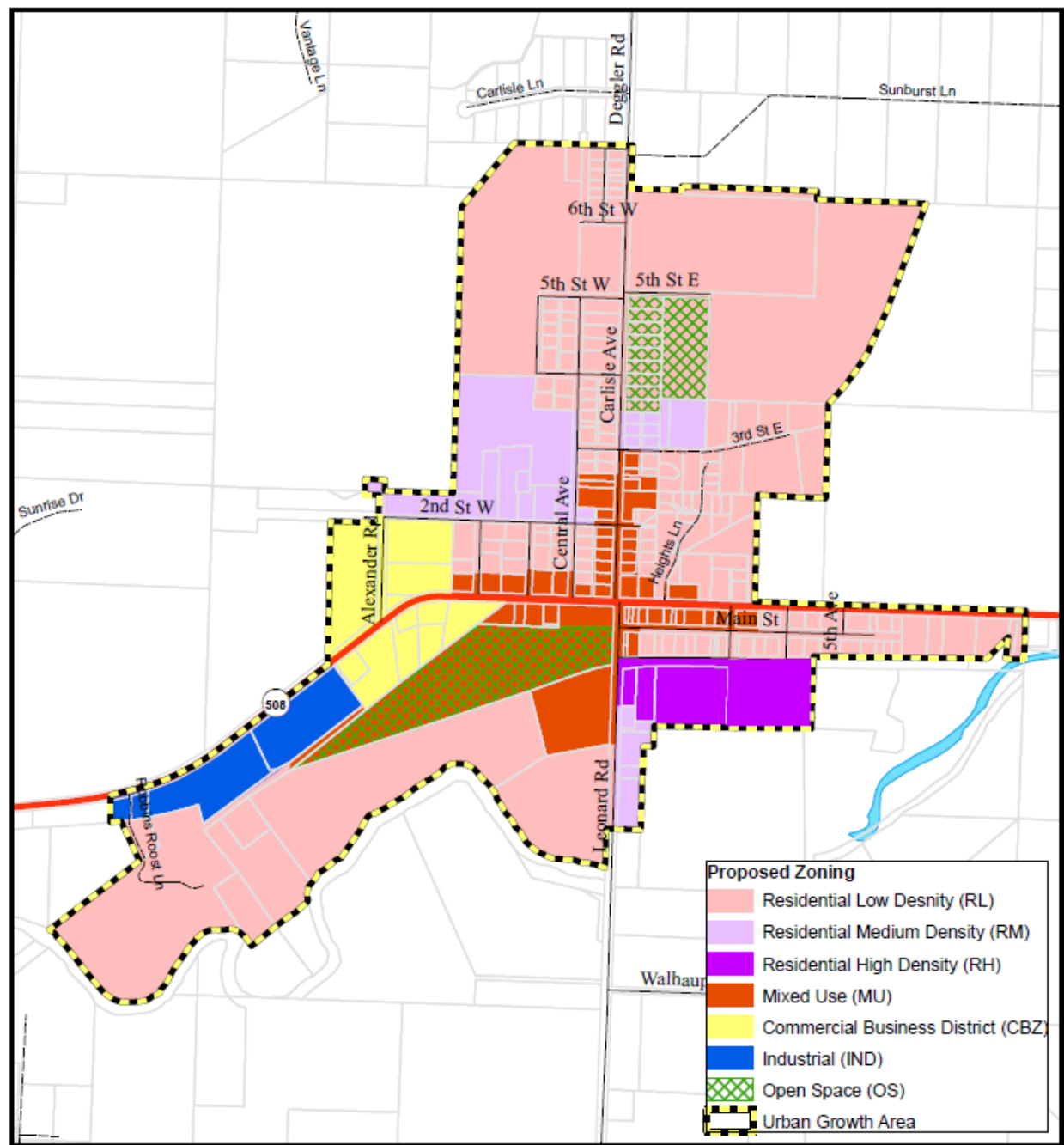
### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will present the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning designations to the BOCC on August 20. A separate staff report on the recommended development regulations will be provided in advance of the staff presentation to BOCC on August 27. A final staff report on the recommended short-term rental regulations will be provided in advance of the staff presentation to BOCC on September 8. All materials are available online <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/comprehensive-plan-periodic-update/>.

It is anticipated that the BOCC will hold a public hearing in September 23 to received testimony no Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Periodic Update. A Notice of Hearing will be published at least 14 days in advance of the hearing.

Questions regarding Periodic Update and the documents should be directed to Mindy Brooks at [mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov](mailto:mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov) or 360-740-2610.

Map 1: Onalaska Recommended Zoning Designations



Onalaska Subarea Plan

Attachment C2  
Zoning and RH

- Subarea
- Highway 12
- Roads
- Parcels

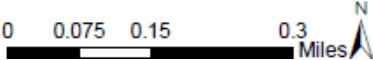
The areas in white on this map have no proposed changes to the existing zoning designations.



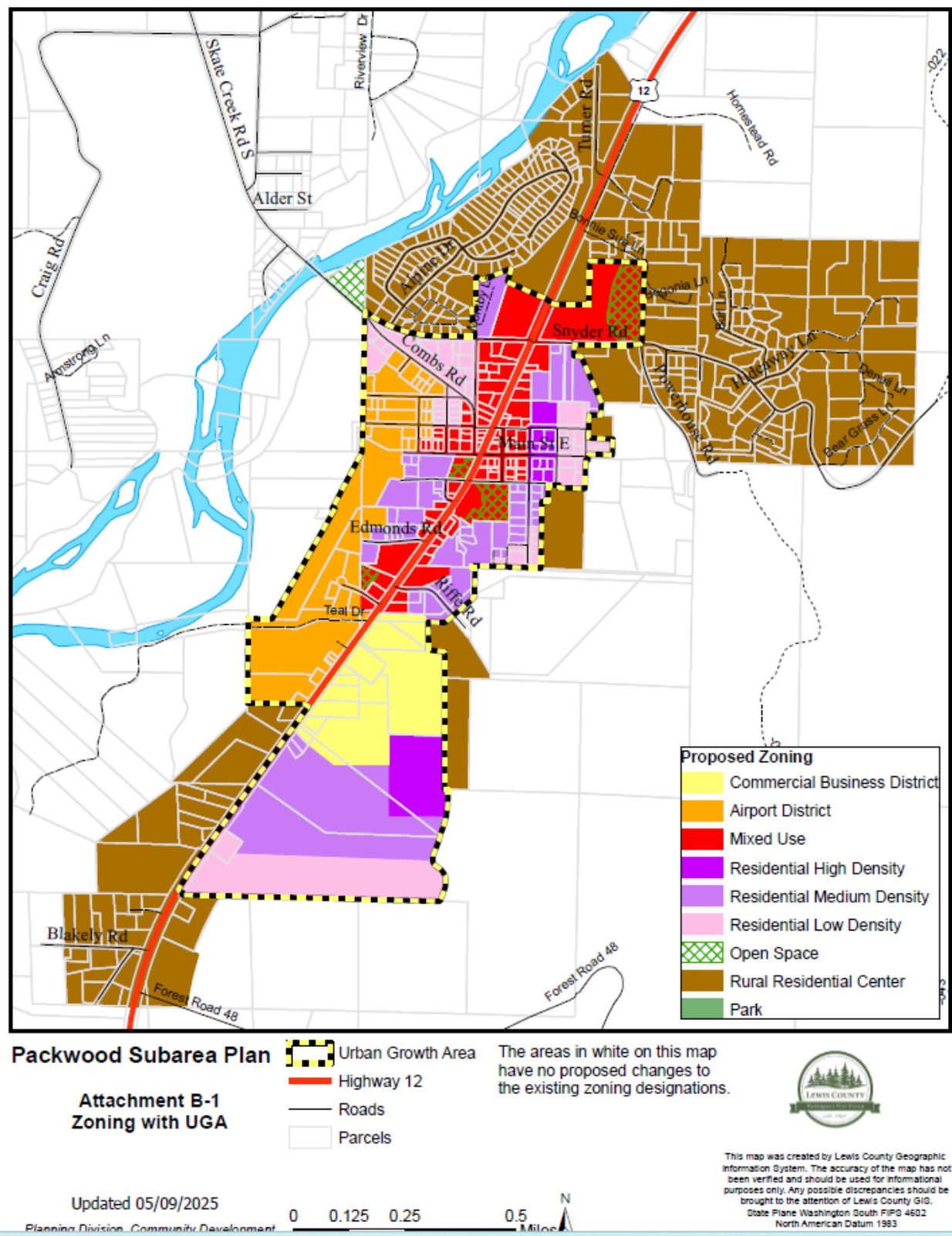
This map was created by Lewis County Geographic Information System. The accuracy of the map has not been verified and should be used for informational purposes only. Any possible discrepancies should be brought to the attention of Lewis County GIS.  
State Plane Washington South FIPS 4602  
North American Datum 1983  
North American Vertical Datum 1988 (Tide gauge)

Updated 05/09/2025

Planning Division, Community Development

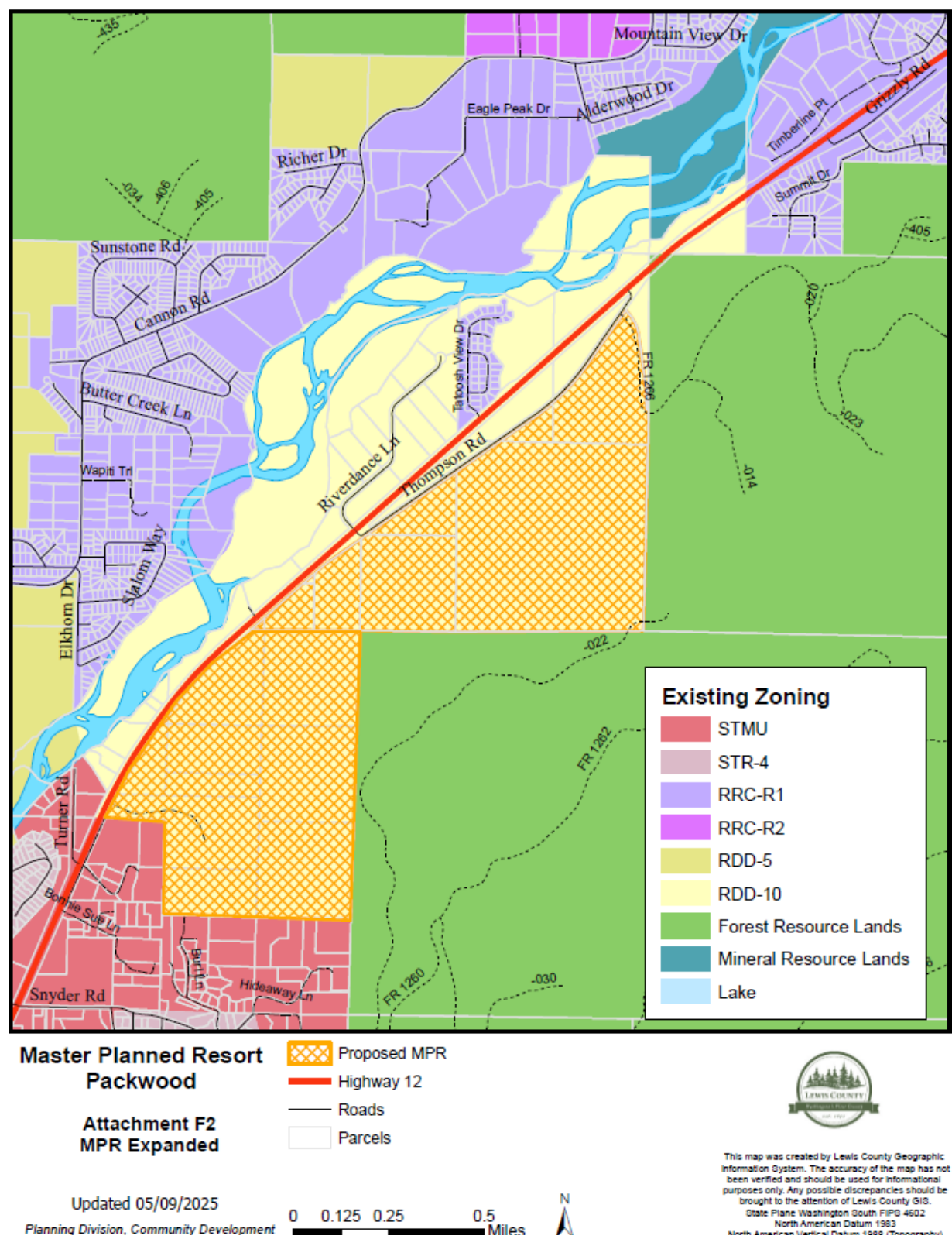


Map 2: Packwood Recommended UGA & Zoning Designations



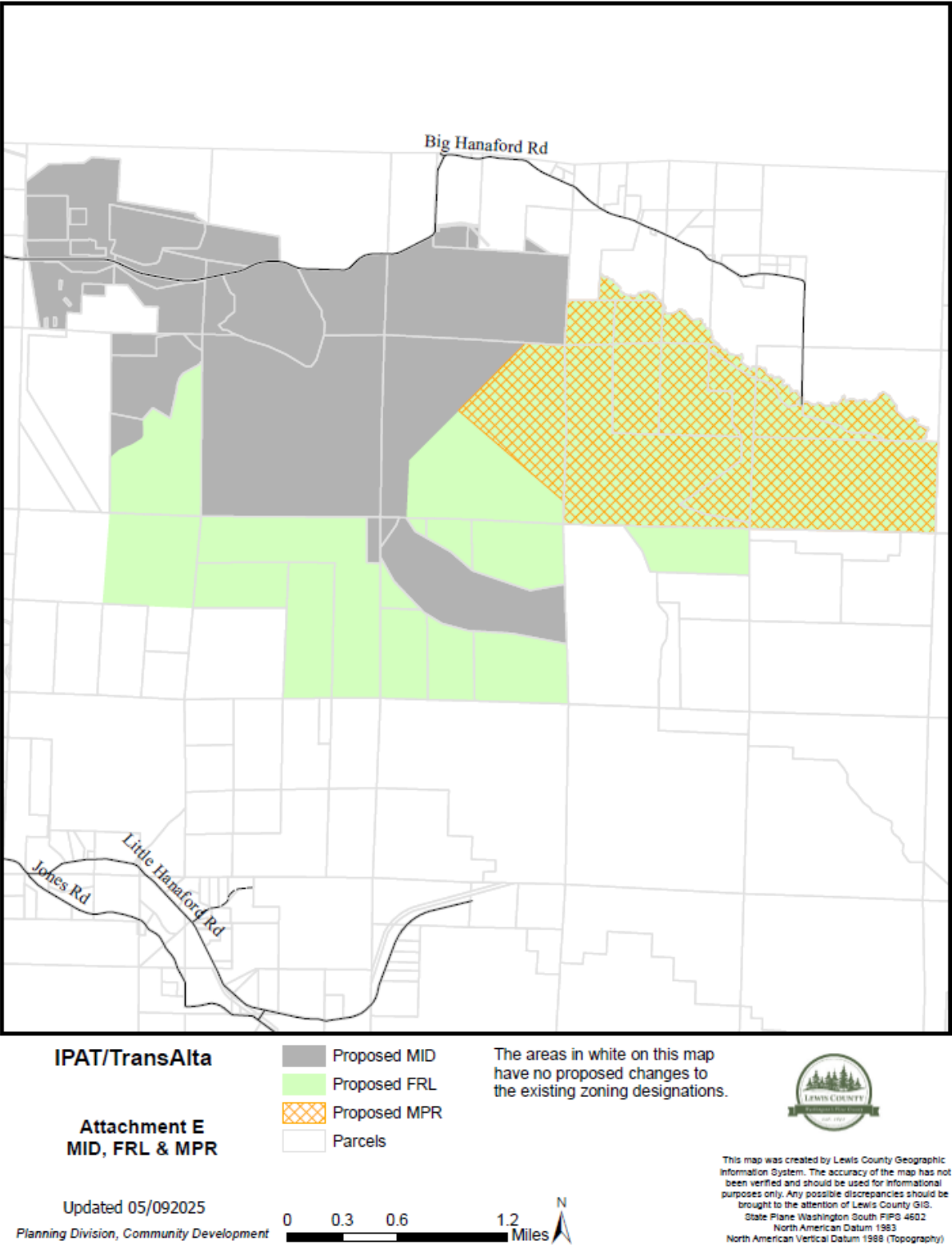


Map 3: Thompson Road Master Planned Resource Overlay Zoning Designation

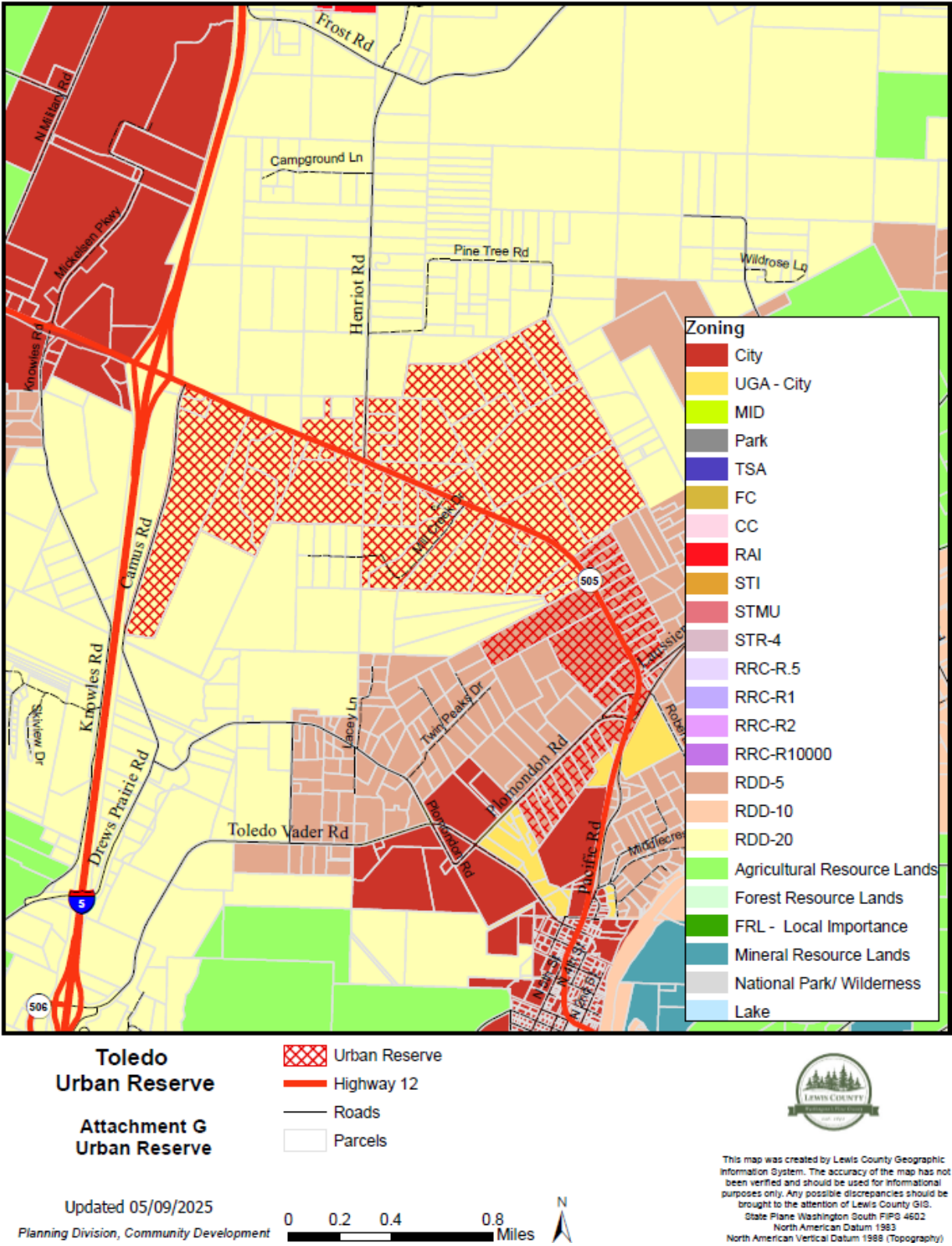




Map 4: TransAlta/IPAT Zoning Designations



Map 5: City of Toledo Urban Reserve Area Zoning Designation



Map 6: City of Centralia UGA Reduction

