

# Planning Commission Workshop



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

## **STAFF REPORT - UGA Boundary Clean-Up Briefing – Scope of work and process overview**

**Date:** March 10, 2026

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**Attachment:** **Attachment A – Map Examples**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Lewis County proposes to conduct a review and technical clean-up of adopted Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries. The purpose of this project is to improve mapping accuracy; ensure consistency with adopted Comprehensive Plan policies, zoning maps, and parcel data; and correct technical boundary issues that have developed over time.

Role of UGA growth should first occur in areas already developed with adequate public facilities, then in areas that can be served by a mix of existing and new infrastructure, and finally in the remaining UGAs. Growth may also take place in designated fully contained communities. Cities are generally responsible for urban services. Expanding these services into rural areas is discouraged, except when necessary for public health, safety and environmental protection, and only when financially sustainable without enabling urban development.

Lewis County has statutory authority under the Growth Management Act to designate and manage the UGA as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan. RCW 36.70A.110 authorizes counties to identify UGAs, establish their boundaries, and ensure that land uses within these areas are consistent with comprehensive planning goals, zoning regulations, and service capacities. As part of this authority, Lewis County may review and update UGA boundaries through the comprehensive amendment process while remaining fully compliant with adopted comprehensive plans and State law. UGA modifications are primarily limited to reductions or swaps and technical corrections.

Several UGAs currently contain boundary irregularities, including instances where UGA lines split individual parcels, resulting in portions of a parcel being located both inside and outside the UGA. Other inconsistencies include misalignments with parcel boundaries, rights-of-way, annexation records, and GIS mapping layers. Correcting these technical issues will provide long-range administrative benefits by streamlining future annexation processes, enhance planning clarity by ensuring that UGA boundaries are accurate, and improve property owner clarity by clearly defining whether parcels are located inside or outside the UGA. This will help reduce confusion for landowners, developers, and decision-makers and facilitate effective land use administration over time. All proposed corrections will be minimis and maintain the intent of the adopted UGA boundaries and will comply with the requirements of GMA and adopted city Comprehensive Plans.

To ensure a comprehensive and transparent evaluation of UGA boundary adjustments, staff began by presenting the Draft Scope of Work to the Planned Growth Committee (PGC) and continues to coordinate with key County departments. Staff have compiled and are reviewing existing data, including Comprehensive Plan maps and policies, current UGA GIS layers, zoning maps, annexation records where applicable, and County parcel and right-of-way information. From this, a preliminary data been created to identify affected parcels and catalog technical issues such as split parcels, misaligned boundaries, and conflicts with annexation records. Consultations with affected cities are ongoing and cooperative to ensure that proposed adjustments are technically accurate, consistent with County policies, and clearly understood by decision-makers and property owners.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE**

The Planning Commission serves as an advisory body in the review of the UGA Boundary Clean-Up project. Staff will prepare reports, findings, and maps to support in the Commission's evaluation. The project will be presented at one or more Planning Commission workshops, as necessary, followed by a formally noticed public hearing to receive oral and written testimony. Based on a thorough review of all staff materials, technical analyses, and public input, the Planning Commission will formulate a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

### **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

To engage the public, letters have been sent to potentially affected property owners, and a project webpage has been established to provide ongoing updates, explanatory materials, and staff reports. Additionally, an open house is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM in the Community Development Hearing Room, located at 125 NW Chehalis Ave, providing an opportunity for the public to review the proposed adjustments, ask questions, and provide input directly to staff. There will also be opportunities for formal written and oral testimony through the SEPA and Public Hearing processes. As needed, more specialized or targeted engagement at the city level can be conducted to address unique local issues or concerns. This combination of technical review, interdepartmental coordination, city consultation, and public engagement ensures a thorough and well-documented evaluation of all proposed UGA boundary adjustments.

### **PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The review and adoption of the UGA Boundary Clean-Up amendments will follow procedural framework of State law and Lewis County Code. This ensures regulatory compliance, public participation, and clear documentation throughout the process.

- **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review** - Environmental review for the UGA Boundary Clean-Up will be conducted in accordance with the *State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)*, Chapter 43.21C RCW and implementing rules in WAC 197-11, requiring preparation of a SEPA checklist, a determination of non-significance, public notice, a comment period, and formal responses to comments.
- **Department of Commerce Review** - Pursuant to the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW), which directs counties to adopt comprehensive plans and designate Urban Growth Areas, staff will submit the proposed UGA boundary amendments and supporting materials to the Washington State Department of Commerce for state review. Compliance with RCW 36.70A.110

and related GMA provisions is required for all comprehensive plan amendments, including technical boundary updates.

- **Board of County Commissioners Review and Action** - Following review and recommendation by the Planning Commission, staff will prepare the Planning Commission Letter of Transmittal and BOCC agenda materials. Staff will present the project in one or more BOCC work sessions, respond to questions, incorporate BOCC direction, and finalize materials in preparation for adopted action.
- **Notice of Adoption** - Upon final adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, a Notice of Adoption will be issued to the County's legal newspaper of record and all parties of record. A Notice of Adoption will also be transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce to satisfy GMA notification requirements. Any adoption or amendment of the Comprehensive Plan, including UGA boundary adjustments, is subject to appeal to the appropriate Growth Management Hearings Board under RCW 36.70A.290.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Planning Commission will hold workshops on September 8 and 22 with the public hearing October 13, 2026. Dates are preliminary and subject to change.