

Planning Commission

Public Hearing



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

STAFF REPORT UGA Boundary Technical Clean-up

Date: June 1, 2026
Staff: Natalie Kamieniecki, Senior Long Range Planner
Exhibits: A – Map Exhibits

REQUESTED ACTION

Staff request that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan map amendment to correct urban growth area boundaries associated with cities, as shown in Attachment A.

BACKGROUND

Lewis County is conducting a technical clean-up of Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries. The purpose is to improve mapping accuracy and ensure consistency with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, zoning maps, annexation plans, and parcel data. This effort will correct technical boundary issues that have developed over time. UGAs are designated by the county to include lands that are developed at or planned for urban densities of development with adequate public facilities, including water and sewer. Cities are generally responsible for providing urban services, and expanding these services into rural areas is prohibited except when required to protect public health or the environment.

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 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 outside the periodic update are primarily limited to technical corrections or swaps and may occur not more than once per year.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

UGA boundary amendments are governed by RCW 36.70A.110 and must be processed as comprehensive plan amendments pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130. Minor or technical adjustments that do not increase overall UGA capacity may be considered during the annual amendment cycle, provided they meet the criteria for UGA revisions and maintain consistency with countywide planning policies and infrastructure planning requirements. 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. This will reduce confusion for landowners, developers, and decision-makers.

All proposed corrections are de minimis and maintain the intent of the adopted UGA boundaries and comply with the requirements of GMA, Comprehensive Plans and annexation plans.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the first half of 2026, evaluation of UGA boundary adjustments has included coordinating with individual cities, the Planned Growth Committee (PGC) and key County departments. Community engagement included two mailers, sent on March 2 and April 14, to property owners who would or could be directly affected. The County also hosted a community open house on April 23, which included a brief presentation and discussion at 6:00 p.m. Maps of the areas under consideration for UGA clean-up were available for people to collect and take with them. The presentation was interactive and included opportunities for questions and discussion. Attendees asked questions regarding what the UGA is and what it means both generally and for them as potentially affected property owners.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The proposed amendment consists of minor, technical corrections to UGA boundaries intended to improve mapping accuracy, align boundaries with parcel lines. The amendment does not expand the overall size or capacity of UGA and does not introduce new areas for urban development.

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110, UGAs are designated to accommodate urban growth where adequate public facilities and services exist or are planned. The proposed corrections maintain the existing intent, function and capacity of designated UGAs. As such, the amendment remains consistent with Growth Management Act requirements.

The amendment is processed as part of the County's annual comprehensive plan update cycle in accordance with RCW 36.70A.130. The proposal qualifies as a minor or technical amendment because it is limited to mapping and boundary refinements and does not substantively change land use designations, densities, or development assumptions.

The proposal is consistent with the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan, including:

- **UGA 1.2 (UGA Boundary Delineation)** The amendments follow and align to rights-of-way of public streets, roads, or highways or logical parcel boundaries
- **UGA 2 (Focus Growth in UGAs):** The amendment supports this policy by maintaining development within designated UGAs and ensuring boundaries accurately reflect areas intended for urban services.
- **UGA 2.1 (City/County Coordination):** Lewis County has coordinated with affected cities to review and confirm the appropriate extent of boundary corrections.
- **UGA 2.2 (Annexation Coordination):** The corrected boundaries improve clarity for future annexation planning and jurisdictional alignment.

- **UGA 2.3 (Infill and Efficient Use of Land):** By correcting irregular or inconsistent boundaries, the amendment facilitates more logical infill and efficient land use patterns within existing UGAs.
- **UGA 3 and 3.4 (Urban Growth Capacity):** The amendment does not alter long-term growth capacity or planned expansion areas and therefore remains consistent with policies ensuring adequate land supply for projected growth.

CONCLUSION

The proposed amendments consist of technical corrections to UGA boundaries. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110(8), UGA boundaries may be revised through the comprehensive plan amendment process when consistent with countywide planning policies and growth management objectives, and where revisions do not result in unplanned expansion of urban growth areas. The proposed amendments meet these criteria as they are limited to refinement of existing boundaries rather than expansion or policy change.

The amendment is processed in accordance with RCW 36.70A.130 and has been coordinated with affected cities to ensure consistency with interjurisdictional planning efforts and urban service planning. The proposed corrections do not alter land use policy direction, development intensity, or infrastructure assumptions, and instead improve the accuracy and internal consistency of adopted planning documents.

Based on this analysis, planning staff conclude that:

- The amendment is technical in nature, involving mapping and boundary corrections;
- The amendment does not result in an increase in UGA acreage or urban growth capacity;
- The amendment is consistent with applicable provisions of RCW 36.70A.110, RCW 36.70A.110(8), and RCW 36.70A.130;
- The amendment is consistent with Growth Management Act implementing rules under WAC 365-196-310; and
- The amendment is consistent with the intent of the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and coordinated growth management policies.

Accordingly, the proposed amendment is appropriately characterized as a minor, technical comprehensive plan amendment and is suitable for consideration within the County's established annual amendment process as technical mapping corrections rather than a substantive policy change.

NEXT STEPS

On June 9, after close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission may deliberate and vote to transmit the proposed amendments as set forth in Attachment A to the Board of County Commissioners. After the Board of County Commissioners reviews the proposal, they will hold a public hearing before voting on the recommended the amendments.

Suggested Motion: I move to submit a letter of transmittal to the Board of County Commissioners to recommend approval of amendments as set forth in Attachment A – Maps.

Alternatively, the Planning Commission may choose to recess and continue the public hearing to deliberate further before voting on the proposal. If the Planning Commission decides to continue the public hearing, the date would be set at June 23 2026 at 6:00pm.

Please note, the Planning Commission may also move to recommend changes to the proposal set forth in Attachment A.