



Grants Pass Urban Growth Boundary

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information about the UGB Expansion Review

What is an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)? In short, an urban growth boundary is the line that separates areas planned for urban vs. rural land use. There is detailed state law governing UGBs, and Oregon law requires every city to have a UGB with a 20-year land supply. Cities and counties must adopt comprehensive plans for UGBs that address a variety of issues described in state law. Plans must address land use, transportation, public facilities and services, natural resources and open space, etc. In general, certain urban services such as sewer, water, etc. are only provided to urban or urbanizable lands within UGBs (and some other designated unincorporated community boundaries). Also, in general, cities can only annex those lands within UGBs, since they are the lands planned for urban development and provision of urban services.

State law allows for local control of how UGBs are managed. Grants Pass and Josephine County have an intergovernmental agreement that governs coordination for planning and development for the UGB.

Once an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is established, why is it changed? Establishing a UGB isn't a one-time event. The UGB and land use plans must be periodically evaluated to maintain sufficient lands to meet needs for the next 20-year period. If there isn't enough land, plans must be changed to meet the needs - within the boundary, through a boundary expansion, or a combination.

Why is the UGB review occurring? Why now? Plans must be reviewed and updated periodically. State law requires each city to have a UGB with a 20-year land supply.

- The city's first UGB was established in the early 1980s. It has continued to meet the land needs beyond the estimated needs for the original twenty year period (1980-2000) with only a few small changes over time.
- In the mid-1990s, the city began "periodic review", and completed review and updates to the Comprehensive Plan. At that time, it was not necessary to change the UGB to meet needs through 2010.
- In 2006, the current review of the Urban Growth Boundary and Comprehensive Plan began. The first part of the review determined that much of the need through 2030 can still be met within the current UGB, but there is also a need for additional land in the UGB to meet needs through 2030. Therefore, the next steps are underway to determine how to best meet the needs.

Regardless of the state law, planning is important to ensure issues are pro-actively identified and planned for to protect our quality of life. Planning isn't done overnight—it takes time. There are several steps and this occurs over a period of years. We want to plan for important issues before they become urgent, and allow time to get it right.

This work isn't just about the size of a boundary, but what will occur over the next 20 years. The plan will address the needs for adequate lands for employment and family-wage jobs, housing needs for the workforce and an aging population, and quality of life to ensure Grants Pass retains the sense of hometown and remains a desirable place to live, work, raise a family, and retire.

What are some of the major trends and issues? Many community issues, including planning issues, relate to the retirement of the Baby Boom, geographic challenges including the Rogue River, hilly terrain and the railroad.

Between 2000 and 2050, the ratio of working Americans to retired Americans will decline from 5:1 to 2:1. This trend has major implications for how communities will be planned over the next several decades to meet the needs of an older population. On average, Grants Pass and Josephine County already have a higher median age than the state or country. Household size and composition is changing. Most growth in Grants Pass and Josephine County is due to people moving here, despite the large number of people also moving to other areas. Many are near retirement and many are families with children.

As people who are already here begin to retire from all parts of the workforce, it will be necessary to ensure there are people to fill those jobs and new jobs if the community is to remain economically vital and provide family-wage jobs and services desired by residents. As with other sectors, many people will retire from the health care sector at a time when there is growing demand for those services. Quality of life is important to those who live here now, and it is also important to employers and employees deciding where to locate. Quality of life makes good economic sense.

The area has some challenges created by its geographic setting. The natural topography that contributes to the beauty also makes it challenging to find enough large, flat sites to attract some new businesses and to enable existing businesses to expand.

The Rogue River, the natural hilly terrain, and the railroad also create some challenges in creating a well-connected transportation network that allows for traffic to be distributed. While most of the system has that connectivity, there are obvious bottlenecks that concentrate traffic which don't have easy solutions.

What are the needs? We have completed work that identifies the need for future residential, commercial, employment, and other lands. About half of the need can be met within the current UGB, and there is a need for about 1,400 additional (buildable) acres for future growth to be added to the UGB. This is about 16% of the current UGB. This additional need accounts for a balance to meet some of the need in the current UGB and some through expansion. Feedback from the community indicated that meeting the need entirely within the current UGB would result in building too densely, but that some measures are needed to reduce the size of a UGB expansion and avoid sprawl.

What is the process? The process includes three major phases: (1) What are the needs? (2) What are the different options to meet the needs? (3) What is the best option to meet the needs? We are now seeking public input to help look at the different options and evaluate which of those are the best options. The process includes work with a volunteer committee representing a variety of perspectives. They serve as the first level of public involvement. The Committee looks at technical issues as well as public input before considering and making recommendations at each step. They have hosted a public workshop and public open houses, and made recommendations. The committee's recommendations are considered and final decisions are made through the public hearing processes with the Urban and Rural Planning Commissions, Board of

County Commissioners, and City Council. The work is then “acknowledged” by the state and becomes part of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

What has been completed and what’s next? The needs determination work has been completed and adopted through local public hearings, and this has been approved by the state. We are now looking at alternatives to meet that need, and we have developed a range of concepts as a starting point for preliminary evaluation and public input. We want to know what you think about these concepts, and whether you think one of these, some variation, or a different concept represents the best growth pattern. We will then use that input together with technical data to develop a preliminary preferred alternative. We will then seek input on the preliminary alternative to help refine it.

How can I learn and participate? How will my participation be used? You can learn and participate in several ways: through public workshops, open houses, surveys, the website and printed information, public hearings, and by contacting staff and your elected officials. Your participation will help identify issues with different ideas, identify common areas of agreement and preference, and to help understand important quality of life issues in addition to technical considerations. All of the input received will be considered to help formulate recommendations as different concepts are evaluated, selected, and refined. Please check the project website or contact staff if you need additional information or have questions.

How will this affect existing infrastructure and public facilities? As part of this planning work, it will also be necessary to consider the effects on existing public facilities, and plan to address those needs through updates to public facility plans. Public facility issues are reviewed as different possible growth patterns are considered. In addition, once a boundary location has been decided, detailed work will begin to update the public facility plans that will specify what improvements are needed as new growth occurs.

What will be the immediate changes as result of UGB amendment? Most changes won’t be immediate. The planning work will provide a general blueprint that guides future development. As part of this work, there will be important discussions and decisions about how and when urban zoning would be applied to properties newly included in the UGB. It is important that you provide input in each phase of this work.

If you have additional questions, please contact **Tom Schauer** at the **City of Grants Pass Community Development Department, (541) 474-6355** extension **6418**.

www.GrantsPassUGB.com



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Frequently Asked Questions

Inclusion of Property

This *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* sheet provides answers to common questions about the UGB expansion and properties that may be included in the UGB. For more detailed information, please see the *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* section of the website at www.GrantsPassUGB.com.

Does inclusion within the UGB mean my property is part of the city? What's the difference between a UGB expansion and annexation? No, a UGB expansion is not the same as annexation, and inclusion in the UGB does not mean property is part of the city. The UGB is the location where future growth is to occur over the next 20 years. 20-year plans must be developed for the UGB, including plans to ensure adequate public facilities and services as growth occurs. Annexation is when properties come into the City limits. Generally, only areas within a UGB are eligible for future annexation.

Does inclusion in the UGB mean property will be annexed in the future? It is likely, but that depends on voters and property owners. Generally, only land within a UGB is eligible for annexation. Over time, it is expected that many property owners will develop their properties within the UGB and that additional lands in the UGB will be considered for annexation over the next 20 years or more. A majority of both city voters and voters and/or property owners in areas considered for annexation must approve annexation. State law provides a limited exception for annexations when necessary to abate a danger to public health.

By City Charter, any annexation requires a city-wide vote of the people. In addition, state law now provides more opportunity for direct democracy by electors in areas considered for annexation. Together, state law and the City Charter require annexation by a majority vote of City voters and a majority, by vote or written consent, of voters and/or property owners in areas considered for annexation.

As future growth occurs, it is expected that the City will place annexation proposals on the ballot and that property owners may petition for annexation which would also need to be placed on the ballot for a vote.

How does this affect property ownership? Not at all. You still own your property just as you always have.

How does inclusion in the UGB affect how I can use my property? Use of property is mostly governed by nuisance law, zoning, and city and county ordinances. (State and federal laws also apply directly to certain activities on properties, which generally apply the same whether or not property is within a UGB).

- **Nuisance.** Regardless of zoning, you can't use your property in a manner that causes a public nuisance, danger, or hazard, whether or not it is within a UGB.
- **Zoning.** By local law, any existing lawfully established use of property is "grandfathered" and can continue as it is, even if zoning changes in the future. As zoning changes in the future, there may be changes to

what new uses may be started, restarted, or expanded on properties and the standards for dividing land. Within a UGB, after new zoning is applied, land can generally be divided into smaller lots together with urban services. The property owner still decides whether or not to develop or change how his or her own property is used.

- **Other Ordinances.** City ordinances regulate some other property issues, but these don't apply when property is included in the UGB. They would only apply if or when property is annexed in the future. (Examples include open burning, etc.)

When will new zoning be applied? For most properties, zoning will NOT change at the time the UGB amendment is adopted. At the time of the UGB amendment, there will be a plan map that shows what future zoning will be. There are still important decisions that must still be made in this process about exactly how and when the transition from rural to urban zoning will occur. Any consideration of rezoning would occur through upcoming public hearings with notification to property owners.

Initially, it is likely that properties in expansion areas will retain the current rural zoning. (Properties already within the current UGB will retain their existing urban zoning). Urban zoning can't be applied in expansion areas until plans are in place to show how adequate public facilities such as streets, sewer, and water will be provided as growth occurs. After the UGB location is approved, the next step will be to update all of the plans for these public facilities. Most of that work is expected to begin just after the boundary location is established and to take at least 18 months. It is possible that current public facility plans may be sufficient to allow some limited zone changes before all facility plans have been updated

For new UGB areas, major policy options will also be reviewed about whether the changes from rural to urban zoning would occur throughout the expanded UGB all at once after the facility plans are completed, or whether that zoning transition will occur gradually over time. This will need to be determined through public hearings with notifications to property owners.

Does inclusion in the UGB affect my real property taxes? No. Property taxes are determined by a tax rate multiplied by the property's assessed value. Inclusion in the UGB doesn't change the tax rate or the assessed value.

- **Tax Rate.** Inclusion in the UGB isn't the same as inclusion in the city, so you won't pay city taxes for the property. In other words, your tax rate won't change. Only if or when property is annexed in the future would city taxes apply. The City has a permanent tax rate that can't be increased without a vote of the City voters.
- **Assessed Value.** For most people, the assessed value of real property is going up 3% per year if there isn't new construction on the property. This would not change just by inclusion of property in the UGB.

How does inclusion in the UGB affect property value? Your property value (the real market value) is likely to increase. Actual property values depend on actual market conditions and the price someone is willing to buy or sell for at any given time. You might consider contacting a private property appraiser if you would like information specific to your property.

Will my school district change? No. School district boundaries are separate from and unrelated to the UGB and will not change.

Can I continue to have farm animals if my property is included in the UGB? Yes, if the use is legally established and allowed by your current rural zoning. Until any future zoning changes occur, the same rural zoning laws that apply to your property now will continue to apply. If you have a “grandfathered” use, it can continue as allowed by the current rural zoning and future urban zoning as long as the use is in continuous operation and doesn’t constitute a nuisance.

Will I get city services if my property is included in the UGB?

- **Will I get city police and fire protection if my property is included in the UGB?** No, not unless property is annexed or has a service agreement. City police and fire protection are funded with city property taxes or service agreements. City police and fire services are only provided to those properties within the City limits or with service agreements that pay for those services. Until then, the City’s Public Safety Department will continue to provide fire response assistance to other fire protection providers through mutual aid and response agreements, and the County Sheriff’s Department will continue to be the police provider.
- **Will I get other city services if my property is included in the UGB?** No, not until urban zoning is provided. In general, city services will not be provided until urban zoning is provided and/or property is annexed. Further, services such as sewer and water are usually extended to a property by a developer when property is developed, and the City doesn’t just extend these services. In general, this can’t occur until urban zoning has been applied and the property is either annexed or has a service and annexation agreement.

Some properties outside the current UGB are within the Redwood Sanitary Sewer Service District (RSSSD) that was established prior to the current UGB, and these properties already receive Redwood sewer service. This doesn’t change.

Will I have to abandon my well and septic system and connect to sewer and water lines?

No. A UGB expansion won’t affect this. Further, most people aren’t aware that even after a property is annexed to the City, it is “grandfathered” and can continue to use the existing well and septic system unless it is further developed. In addition, some small scale developments that aren’t near city water can still have new wells.

Who will I go to if I want to develop and need a land use approval or building permit?

This must still be decided, and this question will be answered through this process before a UGB amendment is approved. It is expected that properties with rural zoning added to the UGB will continue to obtain land use approval and building permits from Josephine County, and those with urban zoning already in the UGB will continue to obtain them from the City of Grants Pass. This will be decided through a public hearing process.

If you have additional questions, please contact **Tom Schauer** at the **City of Grants Pass Community Development Department, (541) 474-6355** extension 6418.

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