Frequently Asked Questions

Shelton 2015-2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

What is the Shelton Urban Growth Area (UGA)?

The Shelton UGA is unincorporated area located immediately outside of the City limits. The City and County have been planning in the Urban Growth Area for over 20 years. Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), counties, in consultation with cities, may designate areas abutting municipal limits, characterized by urban growth and able to receive city services, as urban growth areas (UGAs). In 1995, the City of Shelton and Mason County established an UGA around the City in accordance with the principles of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The UGA by itself totals approximately 4,900 acres (the city contains about 3,900 acres by itself). The UGA boundaries were last amended in 2007, and was sized, in consideration of natural and manmade topographical constraints, to accommodate the anticipated population growth through 2025.

Due to the prolonged recession and slow economic recovery, the anticipated population growth rate for the Shelton UGA has been lower than projected. Mason County, consistent with GMA, has provided the City of Shelton with a new population growth target. That target equals 5,xxx new persons between 2016 and 2035. The Shelton Comprehensive Plan is being updated to accommodate this projected growth in a 20-year horizon.

Why is the City of Shelton preparing a UGA plan?

The City is required to comply with the State GMA to plan for land adjacent to the City that may someday be served by the City. In addition the UGA plan process allows the City to:

- Understand current and future demands on City resources
- Ensure growth does not overwhelm the City’s infrastructure or public services
- Plan for the appropriate size and location of future facilities
- Better coordinate growth and development
- Make informed choices about future land use decisions
- Provide greater certainty regarding future development potential
- Coordinate planning with Mason County

Is the City proposing an annexation? What is the process for an annexation?

The UGA plan does not require annexation and the City is not proposing an annexation of the UGA at this time. Annexation is largely a citizen/property owner driven process. To comply with the GMA, the City must plan for growth on land adjacent to the City that may someday receive City services, such as water and sewer.

The most common reasons property owners might want to be annexed include: access to City water and sewer services, alternative police and fire protection services, accessible elected officials, the opportunities to serve on boards and commissions, and potentially other reasons.

Annexations may occur only within the City’s jurisdiction’s designated UGA. By addressing its city limits and UGA in its Comprehensive Plan, the City is responding to the GMA mandate to accommodate future growth, provide efficient services, and meet community needs in the broader Shelton community.

If annexation is desired, there are currently several possible methods all of which are provided for in state law. Some methods are based on petition of property owners, some rely on elections by voters in the proposed annexation area, and some are initiated by local cities. No matter the method, there are public participation opportunities. The most frequently used method of annexing unincorporated territory is by petition of the owners of at least 60 percent of the property value in the area, computed according to the assessed valuation of the property for general taxation purposes. For more information on annexation methods, please see:


What is the schedule for the UGA plan?

The City has been working on the UGA plan since 2004 and has held prior public open houses and meetings through 2005. As of 2007, the schedule for the UGA plan includes:

- January 2007
  - City Commission Study Sessions
Public Open Houses

February 2007
- Land Use Plan Refinement
- Goal and Policy Refinement
- SEPA Documentation

March 2007
- Public hearing and City Commission deliberation
- Adoption anticipated by April 2, 2007

Please see the City of Shelton website for further information on upcoming public meetings: www.ci.shelton.wa.us.

Why is the City proposing adoption by April 2007?

The City is currently not in compliance with the GMA in part due to the lack of an adopted UGA plan that accommodates projected growth. This means that state agencies such as Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) that must verify the City of Shelton is growth management compliant will not accept applications for loans or award grants and loans the city has secured.

For example, CTED manages a low interest loan program through the Public Works Trust Fund. This fund is limited and highly competitive in the number of applications received. In other words, many communities such as Shelton apply for a limited amount of money for public work projects such as the Goldsborough Creek Sewer Mains Removal Project. A funding requirement is to be compliant with the GMA at the time applications are received. Applications for construction of projects are accepted only once a year, the first week of May. The City hopes to apply for loan money for various projects including street and water projects in May if we can adopt a UGA plan in time. These projects may be as much as 3 million dollars, and would otherwise be deferred or delayed until next year's application cycle.

DOE recently announced that three city projects will be recommended to the Legislature for approval. These projects include $2.9 million for Goldsborough Creek Sewer Mains Removal Project; $1 million for the design of the next sewer basin (5) to continue to meet our compliance order from DOE for the removal of inflow and infiltration of ground or storm water into the sewer mains that fills capacity and expensive treatment at the wastewater treatment plant. The final project is to design the upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant that will cost $1.9 million. This project is required by the state since our discharge permit of highly treated effluent into Oakland Bay requires renewal. These projects and the nearly $5.3 million in grants and low interest loans will be available on July 1st for draw by the City, provided the City is GMA compliant.

What will happen after the City adopts the UGA Plan?

The City and County are working together, consistent with a 2003 Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Shelton and Mason County, which outlined a joint planning process for Shelton’s UGA.

The County is ultimately responsible for establishing the UGA boundaries, with City input. After the City Commission adopts a UGA Plan it will be forwarded to the County for their consideration and action.

The County will also hold public hearings on any modifications to the UGA boundary and land use designations.

To implement the goals, policies, and recommended actions of the UGA plan, the County will then revise and implement zoning designations taking into consideration the UGA planned land use designations to help ensure consistency.

How can I find more information?

The city contact is:
Steve Goins
Community and Economic Development Director
City of Shelton, (360) 432-5136
Steveg@ci.shelton.wa.us

The City’s website contains additional information at: www.ci.shelton.wa.us.

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