

City of Battle Ground



Growth Management



Chapter 5: Growth Management

5.1 Introduction

The Growth Management Element provides context for future annexations of unincorporated land into the City of Battle Ground, and establishes strategies to insure these new areas of the city meet the Goals and Objectives found throughout this *Plan*. In addition, this Element is intended to help manage the rate of growth so the city is able to maintain its small town character. Although this Element is not required by the GMA, the GMA does require each city to identify an UGA (RCW 36.70A. 110). Battle Ground's UGA is an area surrounding the city that is characterized by a mix of agricultural and rural residential development, and can accommodate additional urban development (see Figure 5-1). This boundary is a product of negotiations with Clark County as part of their Comprehensive Plan update. This chapter includes state, regional, and local planning policies that relate to annexation, and provides policy guidance for future actions within the city's UGA.

5.2 Policy and Regulatory Context

5.2.1 Growth Management Act

Three of the 13 statewide planning goals contained in the GMA relate directly to UGAs, Urban

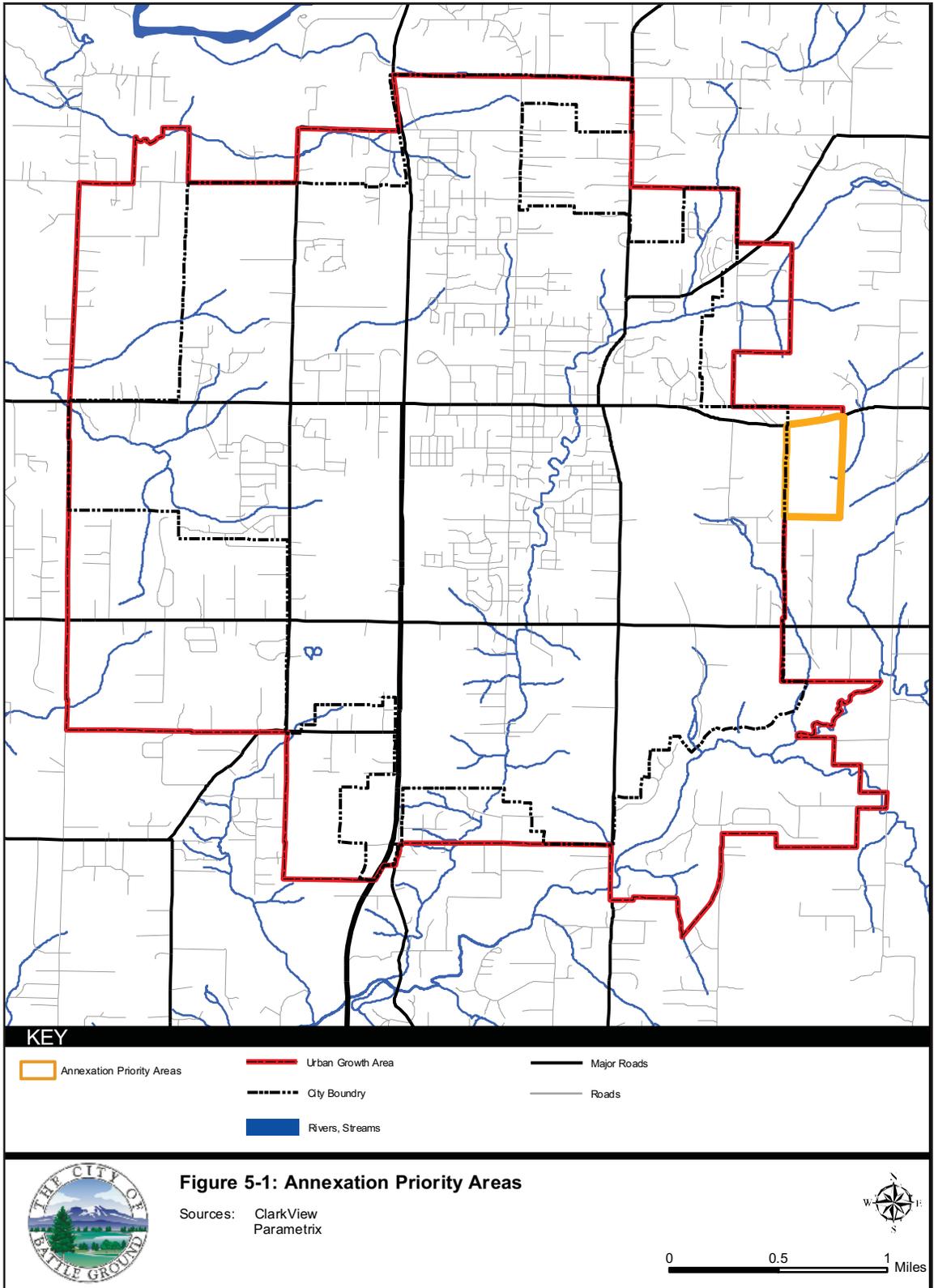
Holding Areas and annexation. The three relevant goals are:

- **Urban growth** - Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist, or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- **Reduce sprawl** - Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- **Public facilities and services** - Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use, without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

5.2.2 County-Wide Growth Management Policies

The Clark County Comprehensive Plan states that Battle Ground's unincorporated UGA may develop for more intensive uses through annexation to the City with a subsequent zone change or through an intergovernmental agreement. The annexation

Figure 5-1: Annexation Priority Areas



must be consistent with the City and County’s comprehensive plans and it must be demonstrated that the following conditions are met for the City to annex land:

1. Full urban services can be provided by the applicable City and other special districts (including schools, fire protection, police protection as well as water, sewer, roads and drainage); and
2. Urban holding zoning cannot be removed unless the City assures that public services will be provided prior to, or in conjunction with development.

In addition, it must be demonstrated that:

- Sensitive environmental resources (including wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat floodplains, shorelines, geological hazards, priority species and habitats) will be adequately protected;
- Open space corridors will be maintained between urban areas; and
- There will no net loss of industrial land.

The relevant Countywide Planning Policies related to annexation are:

- The County and jurisdictions within the County are to define urban reserve areas (land reserved for future development after 20 years), where appropriate, to allow an orderly conversion of land adjacent to designated UGAs to urban densities, as demonstrated by the need to expand the developable land supply or by regional industrial or public facility needs.

- The County, cities and towns are to work cooperatively, to develop policies governing transition of urban reserve areas between the UGA set by the 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plans and the urban areas conceptualized by the longer-term Community Framework Plan. Such policies are to:
 - o encourage urban growth in cities and towns first, then in their UGAs, and finally in the urban reserve area;
 - o ensure that any development permitted is consistent with the level of urbanization of the adjacent areas;
 - o identify major capital facilities and utilities, provide locational and timing criteria for development of these facilities and utilities;
 - o include a mechanism to ensure that major capital facilities and utilities are constructed when needed; and
 - o retain 75% development “trigger” on buildable residential and commercial land, 50% of prime industrial land and other established criteria for determining the need and procedures for amending the UGA boundary.
- Develop criteria for uses within urban reserve areas to allow a reasonable use without preempting future transition to urban growth.
- Techniques that enable the urban reserve to be maintained include but are not limited to:
 - o conservation easements;
 - o tax assessments;
 - o pre-planning of lots and the clustering of units; and
 - o other innovative techniques.

5.3 Growth Management Element Goals and Objectives

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL 1: The City will seek a sustainable rate of growth

OBJECTIVES

- GMO1.1** The City will coordinate its growth projections and growth goals with other jurisdictions.
- GMO1.2** The City will balance its growth with other City goals.
- GMO1.3** The City will strive to grow at a rate that maintains its small town character.
- GMO1.4** The City will work to provide adequate urban services concurrently with development.
- GMO1.5** The City will encourage efficient growth within the existing city limits before pursuing additional annexations.
- GMO1.6** The City will coordinate with Battle Ground School District during annexation processes to maintain District service standards

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL 2: Future growth is to occur primarily to the west and south of the current city limits and in all directions consistent with the 50-year vision

OBJECTIVES

- GMO2.1** The City will primarily focus future planning efforts to the south and west of the current city limits.

- GMO2.2** The City will focus secondary planning efforts for future growth to the north and east.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL 3: The City will encourage the efficient and sustainable expansion of the City through the Urban Growth Areas.

OBJECTIVES

- GMO3.1** The City will seek to achieve desirable growth patterns through annexations.
- GMO3.2** The City will seek to achieve a jobs/housing balance through annexations.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL 4: The City will work with the County and other jurisdictions in determining growth policies for the Area of Influence.

OBJECTIVES

- GMO4.1** The City will seek to preserve the Area of Influence for future urban growth patterns anticipated by the Vision.

5.4 Existing Conditions

5.4.1 Development Trends

Population and corresponding new development within the UGA for the city of Battle Ground have grown significantly since the City's 1995 *Plan* was adopted. The fast rate of population growth has prompted the City to annex approximately 682 acres since 1995 to accommodate new development. The majority of this land has been designated for residential use, though some of this land has been designated for industrial and business park use.



Battle Ground's Unincorporated Urban Growth Area

The availability of vacant and underutilized land is a key driver in shaping development trends and providing information to the City when annexations are being considered. In order to avoid inhibiting economic development, the City of Battle Ground must not allow vacant and buildable land to become overly constrained within the UGA which could cause severe escalations in land costs. At the same time the City must balance the goals of a sustainable rate of growth and maintaining a small town feel. Although the City cannot stop growth, it can plan for it. This Element and others in the *Plan* are designed to balance these competing goals.

Currently, there are approximately 1,262 gross acres of vacant or underutilized land, including land

exempted from the buildable land inventory, within Battle Ground's 1995 UGA. Table 5-1 summarizes the amount of vacant and underutilized land by use category. The 1995 figures are taken from the County's July 2000 Plan Monitoring Report, while the 2004 figures are derived from an updated analysis. It should be noted that the 2000 and 2004 figures reflect the addition of residential land to the city, changes in land classification, changes to the methodology used to calculate underutilized land, and differences in constrained lands.

There has been substantial residential development since 1995, within and immediately outside of Battle Ground's UGA. Within the 1995 UGA, there have been about 2,484 new residential building permits issued from 1995 to 2003. Some of these new developments have occurred within the City's recently annexed areas. Recent residential subdivisions, completed in accordance with the City's Legacy Standards (see the Livability Element) have begun to reflect improved neighborhood planning through the inclusion of parks and better urban design.

There has also been a significant amount of non-residential development since 1995. West of 10th Avenue, a number of larger-scale commercial and retail uses have been added such as Fred Meyer

Table 5-1: Comparison of Gross Vacant Buildable and Underutilized Land by Use Category within the 1995 UGA

	Vacant			Underutilized		
	1995	2000 Plan Monitoring Report	2004 Updated Analysis	1995	2000 Plan Monitoring Report	2004 Updated Analysis
Residential	1274	546	541	548	540	235
Commercial	76	248	79	2	59	4
Industrial	329	219	194	*	*	*
Total	1679	1013	815	550	550	239

Source: Clark County July 2000 Plan Monitoring Report for 1995 figure ClarkView for 2004 figures. Underutilized lands are not defined by Clark County as a component of industrial lands.

and Albertsons. Battle Ground has also recently experienced new industrial development.

5.4.2 Annexation Opportunities and Methods

Battle Ground began its evaluation of potential UGA scenarios during 1999 when the visioning and comprehensive planning processes were initiated. The City's 50-year Vision and Vision Map show future growth primarily to the west and south. This is the direction that City has pursued in its discussions with Clark County; as the County and the City of Battle Ground jointly investigated several alternatives in designating the City's updated UGA. The UGA was designated with consideration to critical areas, projected population growth, anticipated housing densities, and the ability of Battle Ground to supply urban services.

The County's policy is to designate some areas within a new UGA as Urban Holding Areas to prevent land from becoming highly parcelized, or subdivided, until such time as these areas can be annexed by the City. In order for the City to annex these areas, annexation areas must meet the applicable State, County and City goals and policies and they must also be annexed through one of the following methods:

- A new petition method that requires support of property owners representing a majority of the area proposed for annexation and of a majority of the voters in the area
- The 60 percent petition method that requires approval from owners of property representing a certain percentage of the assessed value of the proposed annexation area; or
- The election method, which requires approval of the voters in the proposed annexation area.

Although there are two other methods of annexation - municipal purpose annexations and annexations of "islands" of unincorporated territory - they are available only in limited circumstances.

The methods by which cities may annex territory are governed strictly by state law, and they vary somewhat by city classification. Cities and towns located in counties that plan under the GMA, including Battle Ground, may only annex property that is located within their designated UGA.

5.5 Analysis and Projections

5.5.1 Overall Growth Strategy

The general growth strategy developed for the City of Battle Ground is the result of the 50-year Visioning process, Planning Commission guidance, and a detailed analysis of demographic and future trends. Other influential factors that shaped annexation strategies include the presence of critical areas in and around Battle Ground and planned transportation improvements that will connect the city with the surrounding areas. The City's prioritized growth strategy is to direct growth to occur on:



1. Land within the existing city limits
2. Land to the west and south of the existing City limits
3. Other land within the UGA
4. Land included in the UGA during future *Plan* updates

The City’s policy that ensures the concurrent provision of urban services is a central component of its growth strategy. The City will not permit urban development if adequate urban services cannot be provided concurrently, per GMA regulations. This consideration has a significant effect on the City’s future annexation priorities.

5.5.2 Future Growth within Existing City Limits

The City intends to direct growth within the existing City limits before annexing new areas. The City will provide for the development of capital facilities that enable new residential development to take place. A system of impact fees, exactions, or land dedications will be utilized, enabling growth to be guided within the city according to the priorities established in this *Plan*.

The City will channel new commercial development to its downtown, regional center area, and other centrally located commercial areas focused along SR-502 and SR-503. The City will allow locally serving neighborhood stores to be developed closer to residential areas. The City will take an active role in encouraging industrial development to take place within the City.

5.5.3 Future Growth within the UGA

The City believes that annexation of the UGA is important to adequately serve the area and to plan properly for its continued development. Growth will be encouraged in the UGA outside the current city limits when land inside those limits has been

served by adequate capital facilities is not available for further development, a need has been identified to justify additional development elsewhere, and provisions for annexation have been established.

The City of Battle Ground will ensure that annexation of land within the unincorporated UGA occurs so that sustainable growth patterns are supported and growth does not harm, but actually supports the City’s small town identity. The City has the opportunity to make annexation conditional to implementation of land development actions and/or planning that supports City policy but that is not necessarily required by the City Code. This presents an opportunity for the City to advance land development goals and objectives in innovative ways in areas that will become part of the City, but would not necessarily be possible subsequent to annexation.

Development outside the current city limits should be encouraged by the City, if:

- Less than 25% of residential land or commercial land or less than 50% of industrial land is available for development. These conditions “trigger” the need to add additional developable land into the Urban Growth Area to avoid artificially inflating the cost of land that would result from an overly constrained land supply.
- Standards have been established for the location of public facilities and services in UGAs prior to annexation.
- Developable sites within the City have received adequate access to urban services.
- Arrangements for annexation have been determined.

- Land has been master planned, as appropriate.
- A secure funding plan is in place to provide for the urban services required to facilitate development.

The following strategies direct how the City will annex land in the future:

- The City will phase annexations to coincide with its ability to provide a full range of urban services to areas to be annexed. By facilitating adjustments to the City boundary in a logical and orderly fashion during the next 20 years, the City can ensure that new development receives efficient and adequate services.
- The City will not annex territory outside of its UGA.
- The City will encourage unincorporated areas that are already urbanized to annex to the City in order to receive urban services when a firm financing plan is established. Developing areas within the UGA will be required to commit to annex to the City in order to receive a full range of City-provided urban services.
- The City will provide property owners access to all information needed to evaluate and make responsible decisions relative to the delivery of urban services and City boundary changes.
- The City, in agreement with the annexation policies stated in the County’s Comprehensive Plan, will work in partnership with Clark County to provide a cooperative framework for future annexations.
- The City will continue to work in cooperation with citizens, property owners, business representatives, existing service providers

and other interest groups to develop and implement mutually satisfactory plans for service delivery as annexations occur.

- The City will work with residents and businesses in annexation areas to determine the most appropriate method for annexation as provided by state law.
- The City will give high priority to annexation of areas that lend themselves to master planning. Such areas generally consist of large, intact parcels. These areas also provide for development that will avoid or minimize impact to critical areas, and enable the City to efficiently provide urban services. The City’s annexation priorities are illustrated on Figure 5-1 and are numbered in order of priority (i.e. “1” represents the City’s highest annexation priority, and “5” represents the City’s lowest annexation priority).

The City will assess whether land must be master planned according to the City’s vision, goals, and objectives prior to annexation. A master plan is a long-term physical plan for an area that guides and organizes development of land uses, parks, transportation and other capital facilities, and protection of natural resources. Master planning will lay the foundation for the development of neighborhood units that promote a livable community. Master Planning can ensure that newly annexed areas of Battle Ground support a cohesive identity shared by the rest of the City. The City will establish criteria to determine whether master planning is appropriate for land that is planned for annexation. Criteria will be based on the following guiding principles:

- The area has large contiguous blocks of land that have a small or workable amount of parcels that would provide flexibility during the master planning process.

- The area contains critical areas that can be protected through master planning, while providing creative options for land owners to maximize investment on their property.
- The City has the ability to provide urban services more efficiently through master planning.

5.6 Findings

The City of Battle Ground's annexation plans are consistent with state, county other policies addressed within this *Plan*. The City will annex land in a manner that supports its small town identity, provides for efficient provision of urban services, and is environmentally sustainable. Master planning requirements for areas planned for annexation will be a key tool by which the goals and objectives advanced in the *Plan* will be achieved.

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