

## RETENTION OF URBAN GROWTH NODES

### Urban Growth Nodes are Urban Growth Areas

- Urban Growth Nodes were developed as part of the original adoption of the Kittitas County Comprehensive plan in the early 1990s
- At the time of the original Comprehensive Plan development it was unclear how to name an Urban Growth Area that was not attached to or expected to be annexed to an existing City. Lacking any guidance from GMA Kittitas County named these Urban Growth Areas “Urban Growth Nodes”.
- In every aspect Kittitas County has treated Urban Growth Nodes as Urban Growth Areas under GMA. These areas have been assigned 10% of the OFM population projections, they have been allowed to expand, they have been treated as Urban Growth Areas during the annual amendment process, they have urban levels of service for water and provisions for public and private sanitary sewer systems<sup>1</sup>, and they have been treated as urban areas for transportation planning.
- The Urban Growth Nodes have been Urban Growth Areas for over 15 years and have experienced significant public and private investment as a result of the urban designation and expected urban levels of development. Examples include utility planning and development by the Snoqualmie Pass Utility District (SPUD), public water districts in the Thorp UGN, the Ronald UGN and the Vantage UGN.
- The Urban Growth Nodes have developed, and continue to develop at Urban Densities consistent with the recognition that they are Urban Growth Areas.
- The EWGMHB failed to recognize the relationship of Urban Growth Nodes to Urban Growth Areas. In fact they are one in the same for the purpose of GMA
- Kittitas Counties’ “Urban Growth Nodes’ are consistent with well established recent case law holding UGAs may include land that is not in a city if such territory is already characterized by urban growth.” *Thurston County V. Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board*. 164 Wn. 2d 329, \_\_\_ P. 3d \_\_\_ (2008). The State Supreme court, in the *Thurston County case*, specifically held the growth boards lack jurisdiction and thus cannot set “bright line rules” on what is and what is not an appropriate UGA size and what is rural and urban density. *Id.* Instead the court explicitly and clearly said these decisions should be made by the local jurisdiction taking into consideration local circumstances. *Id.*

### There is no provision or requirement under GMA to eliminate or reduce the size of Urban Growth Areas once established.

- While there are clear guidelines for establishing an urban growth area and expanding an urban growth area there are no provisions or guidelines for eliminating an urban growth area under GMA.

<sup>1</sup> Sanitary sewer facilities ,as provided for in RCW 36.94, RCW 90.46 or RCW 90.48are not located within the Easton or Thorp Urban Areas.

development and anticipated future development at urban levels for the 20 year planning period assigned under the Growth Management Act.

5. The Board of County Commissioners find that privately owned utilities and public utility districts have developed comprehensive planning documents including capital facilities plans to provide for the development of utilities within the Urban Growth Nodes for growth at urban densities.
6. The Board of County Commissioners find that no expansion of the existing Urban Growth Nodes was proposed as part of the update to the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.
7. The Board of County Commissioners find that there is no requirement under GMA or established case law to require a reduction in the size of an established Urban Growth Area.

### **Comprehensive Plan Policies to support the Urban Growth Nodes**

Existing Policies contained within the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan:

GPO 2.3        The encouragement of urban growth and development to those areas where land capability, public roads and services can support such growth.

GPO 2.5        Kittitas County should encourage residential and economic growth that will minimize the costs of providing public utilities and services.

GPO 2.95       Within the UGAs and UGNs, in the absence of urban utilities, a system of subdivision and development should be encouraged which would produce a pattern capable of re-division to a higher density at such time when utilities are available.

GPO 2.97       The UGN's shall be consistent with the following general goals:

- a. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development;
- b. Provide for the efficient provision of public services;
- c. Protect natural resource, environmentally sensitive areas;
- d. Promote a variety of residential densities; and
- e. Include sufficient vacant and buildable land.

GPO 298A      The UGNs and/or UGAs shall be consistent with the following criteria:

- a. Each UGN and/or UGA shall provide sufficient urban land to accommodate future population/employment projections through the designated planning period;
- b. Lands included within UGNs and /or UGAs shall either be already characterized by urban growth or adjacent to such land;
- c. Existing urban land uses and densities should be included within UGNs and /or UGAs;

- d. UGNs and/or UGAs shall provide a balance of industrial, commercial, and residential lands;
- e. Each UGA shall have the anticipated financial capability to provide infrastructure/services needed in the areas over the planning period under adopted concurrency standards.

GPO 2.100 Kittitas County will act to preserve the viability and integrity of existing business districts within the incorporated and unincorporated county.

GPO 2.107B Promote large scale commercial development within the UGAs by encouraging infrastructure improvements and new business recruitment.

GPO 2.109B Promote industrial development within the UGAs by encouraging infrastructure improvements and new business recruitment.

GPO 2.109C Encourage an adequate inventory of developable property to accommodate the siting of new, and the expansion of existing industrial uses.

GPO 3.2 Designate higher density residential land use zones within Urban Growth Areas

GPO 3.5 Encourage residential development close to employment opportunities and needed services to reduce vehicular traffic and related air quality problems

GPO 3.17 Provide a sufficient number of housing units for future populations while maintaining the rural character of Kittitas County.

GPO 3.18 Provide sufficient housing units while maintaining environmental quality.

Strategy 3.4 Eliminate barriers to infill residential development in Urban Growth Areas and develop strategies.

Chapter 7 Snoqualmie Pass Sub-area Plan

GPO 8.1 Municipal, or public urban services should not be extended outside of urban growth areas in Rural Lands. However, municipal services may be provided to a Master Planned Resort or Fully Contained Community which is approved pursuant to County Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations so long as all costs directly attributable to the extension of such services to the resort or community, including capacity increases, are fully borne by the resort or community.

GPO 8.3 Sprawl will be discouraged if public services and public facilities established under RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d) are limited to just those necessary to

serve the developed area boundaries and are not allowed to expand into adjacent Rural Land.

GPO 10.2 Support the retention and expansion of existing local businesses/industries and recruitment of new business/industries in order to maintain a strong job and wage base.

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