



CITY OF YELM AND THURSTON COUNTY JOINT PLAN

December 12, 2023

2023 CITY OF YELM AND THURSTON COUNTY JOINT PLAN

An element of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and the City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan

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JOINT PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Yelm and Thurston County Urban Growth Area Joint Plan (“Joint Plan”) establishes the vision for the Yelm Urban Growth Area for future development of the community over the next 20 to 25 years. The Joint Plan is a broad statement of goals and policies that direct the coordinated physical development of growth within the Yelm Urban Growth Area into the future. The Urban Growth Area is known as the “areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature” (RCW 36.70A.110). As portions of the Urban Growth Area are annexed by the City, those lands will transition from rural to urban-level development.

The 2023 Joint Plan update is based off of the 2017 Yelm Comprehensive Plan (adopted February 14, 2017 under Ordinance 1018) and includes updated background, goals, and policies to guide development for the Yelm Urban Growth Area. This Joint Plan only includes policies applicable to the Urban Growth Area. Refer to the City of Yelm’s Comprehensive Plan for policies specific to the City.

The Joint Plan is written in the context of the State Growth Management Act, which mandates issues that must be dealt with in a comprehensive plan and County-wide planning policies, which identify how certain aspects of growth management planning are to be met in Thurston County.

The purpose of the Joint Plan is to identify how development is to occur over the next 20 to 25 years for the Thurston County-Yelm Urban Growth Area (UGA), which will eventually be served by City of Yelm public facilities and utilities and may be annexed into the City of Yelm as the city grows.

The Joint Plan is intended to apply to the entire UGA of Yelm. Jurisdictionally, the Joint Plan will be implemented in the unincorporated UGA by Thurston County.

The Joint Plan is organized by subject matter, with each main topic having an objective, general goals, and policies. The maps, goals, and policies provide the basis for the adoption of regulations, programs, and services which implement the Plan.

The Plan is to be revisited not less often than each ten years to review population progress, the effectiveness of the existing plan, and the need for change. The Joint Plan may be reviewed more often to ensure consistency with both jurisdictions’ Comprehensive Plans and any associated ordinances.

Joint Plan 2023 Process

The amendment process began in 2022, as part of the 2022-2023 Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Docket Item, CPA-1. The draft Joint Plan was reviewed jointly by the

Thurston County and City of Yelm Planning Commissions, the Yelm City Council and the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners. The Joint Plan received final approval on November 28, 2023 by the Thurston County Board of Commissioners.

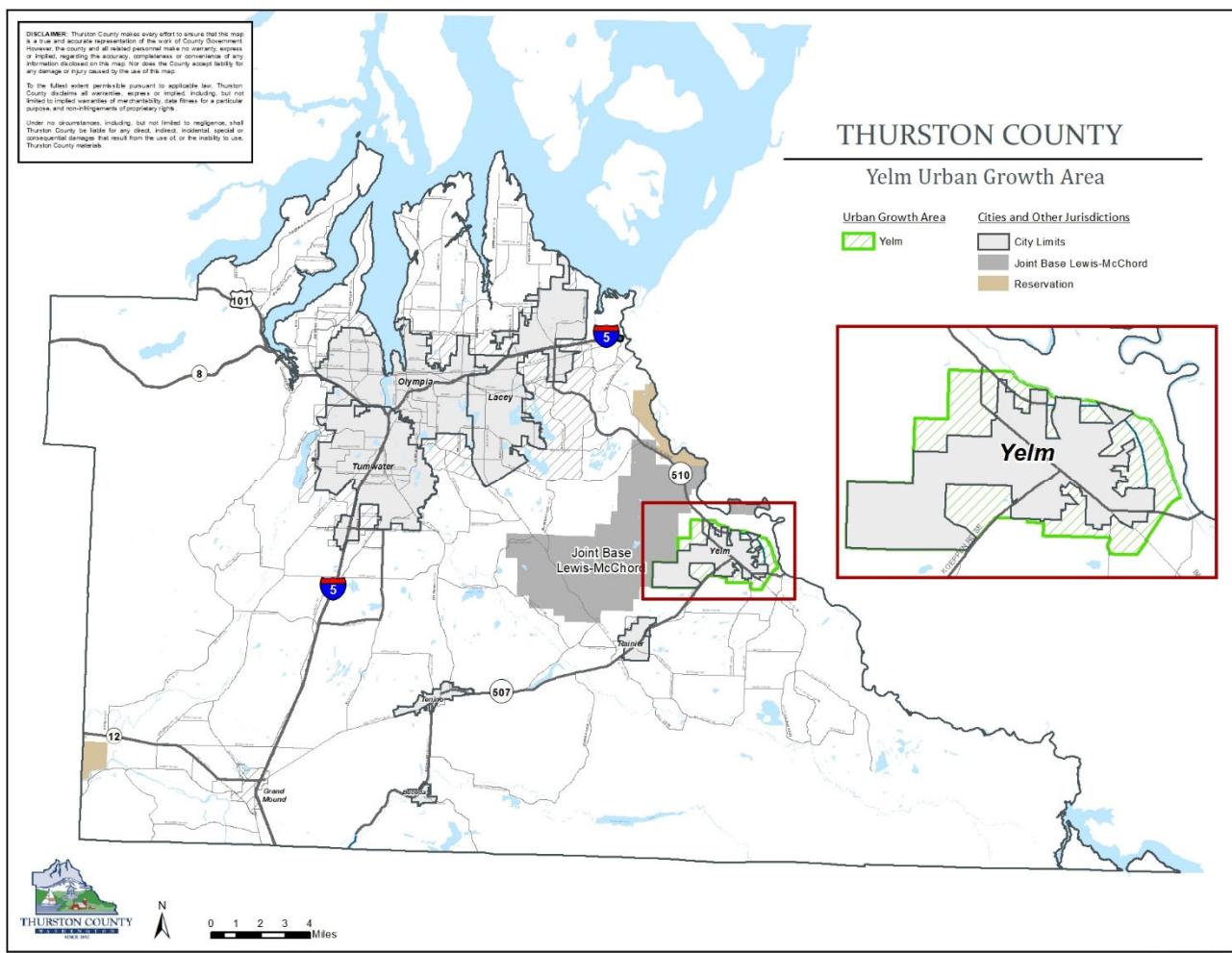
Public Participation

This Joint Plan has been developed to serve as the guideline for future development in the Yelm UGA and to meet the changing needs of the community. The Joint Plan was created through a cooperative process between Yelm and Thurston County Staff, commissioners and councilmembers, as well as interested parties and the public through public meetings, hearings, and public forums that allowed for public comment.

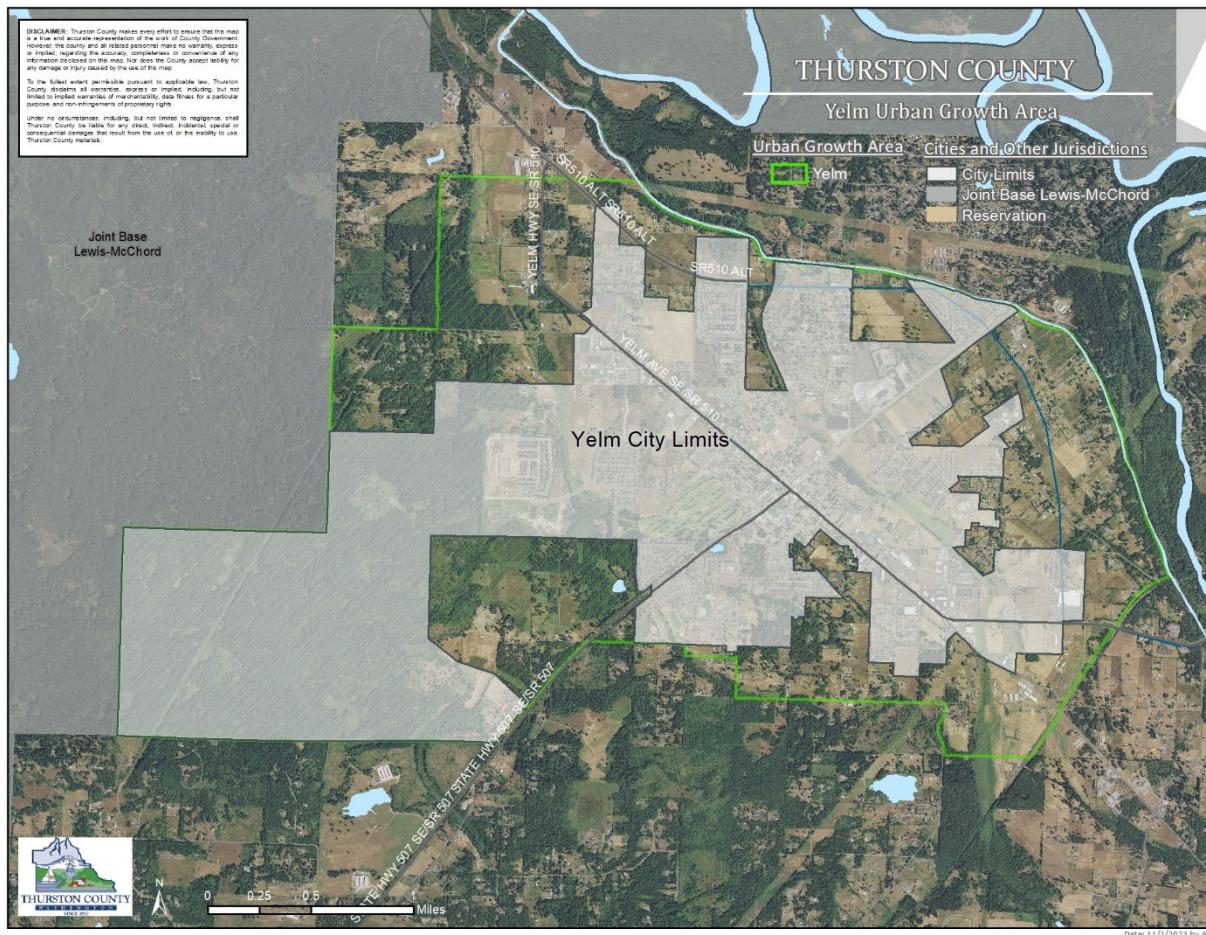
Joint Plan Area

The Yelm UGA surrounds most of the city limits, encompassing approximately 2,300 acres, and is located near the easternmost border between Thurston and Pierce County. Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) lies to the north and west of Yelm, while the Nisqually Tribe's reservation lands are to the north. The entirety of Yelm exists in the Nisqually Tribe's traditional ancestral lands. The Nisqually River runs to the north and east of Yelm, and the city and UGA are intersected by two major highways, 510 and 507. To the south and southeast of the Yelm Urban Growth Area lies some of the County's most prime farmland.

MAP 1 - YELM URBAN GROWTH AREA



MAP 1A - YELM URBAN GROWTH AREA AERIAL VIEW



Source: Thurston County Community Development

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT PLANNING PARAMETERS

Growth Management Act

The City of Yelm and Thurston County participate in comprehensive planning under the provisions of the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW. The purpose of the Act is to promote responsive, responsible local planning to accomplish thirteen identified statewide goals.

The following State Growth Management Act goals are adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations of those counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040. The following goals are not listed in order of priority and shall be used exclusively for the purpose of guiding the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations:

- (1) Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- (2) Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- (3) Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- (4) Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- (5) Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- (6) Property rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- (7) Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- (8) Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
- (9) Open space and recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

- (10) Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
- (11) Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
- (12) 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.
- (13) Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP)

Thurston County, in partnership with the cities and towns in Thurston County, adopted County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP) to aid and focus the Growth Management planning activities in Thurston County. The CWPP are adopted as the policy base for the Joint Plan. The CWPP in effect at the time of the adoption of this document are those adopted as of November 10, 2015 under Resolution 15209.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Goal 1 Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.

Policy 1.1 Support efforts to maintain a rate structure that will incentivize waste prevention, as well as implement policy and support waste reduction programs.

Goal 2 Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.

Policy 2.1 Support a coordinated and streamlined approach to social service planning and funding in Thurston County.

Goal 3 Ensure that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment.

Policy 3.1 Support regional efforts to find resources to create a water systems plan that explores ways to manage water resources in the Thurston Region more holistically.

Goal 4 Move toward a carbon-neutral community.

Policy 4.1 Support regional efforts to find resources to create a balanced Thurston Region climate action plan.

Goal 5 Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.

Policy 5.1 Support regional efforts to find resources to ensure continued focus on sustainability actions, education, and coordination.

Goal 6 Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.

Policy 6.1 Support regional efforts to develop a generic sustainability checklist for modification and use by local jurisdictions.

Goal 7 Support public and private local food systems to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity.

Policy 7.1 Support regional efforts to find resources to create a local food systems plan.

Goal 8 Become a model for sustainability and livability. Identify resources, organizational structure, and educational opportunities to achieve regional sustainability goals.

Policy 8.1 Support regional efforts to identify and secure funding to implement actions to achieve Sustainable Thurston goals and vision.

Policy 8.2 Participate in regional efforts to monitor progress in achieving Sustainable Thurston goals and targets.

Policy 8.3 Support regional efforts to create a regional grant center to provide assistance in identifying and applying for grants.

Policy 8.4 Coordinate and collaborate with outreach and planning efforts that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Policy 8.5 Support regional efforts to find resources for demonstration projects which support innovative community ideas and projects that support Sustainable Thurston priority goals.

Goal 9 Create safe and vibrant South County city and town centers that foster entrepreneurship, active transportation, civic pride, and a sense of place.

Policy 9.1 Encourage commercial and cultural activities in the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

Policy 9.2 Continue to support coordinated economic and community building activities among South County communities.

Policy 9.3 Identify opportunities to support existing and prospective entrepreneurs in the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

Policy 9.4 Support workforce development training in southern Thurston County to promote new industries.

Policy 9.5 Support efforts to develop an infrastructure for tourism in South Thurston County.

Policy 9.6 Build on the quality of place within each of the historic community centers.

Policy 9.7 Minimize the impact of highways on each of the historic South County community centers.

Policy 9.8 Continue coordination between Thurston County and the City of Yelm to ensure that future development that generates pass-through traffic within incorporated communities pays its fair share for necessary road improvements.

Policy 9.9 Promote telework in South County towns and cities to keep workers and their dollars local and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Goal 10 Improve regulatory clarity and predictability to encourage urban infill and redevelopment.

Policy 10.1 Plan for the Urban Growth Area at the local level and involve the community in the planning process.

Policy 10.2 Ensure that housing as envisioned in different areas is feasible to finance and build.

Goal 11 Ensure future development that minimizes risk to public health, safety, and welfare of Yelm Urban Growth Area residents from military training operations, and maintain compatibility with current and foreseeable missions at Joint Base Lewis - McChord (JBLM).

Policy 11.1 Continue to support the unique and vital mission capabilities of JBLM and the significant contribution of the installation, military personnel, families, and civilian workers to the economic base of the community and region.

Policy 11.2 Partner with JBLM and the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership to anticipate and meet community growth and service demands related to the military.

Goal 12 Foster meaningful, ongoing communication among Yelm and its Urban Growth Area, JBLM, the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership and other regional partners to increase awareness of Department of Defense and other federal and state missions and activities and to coordinate on ongoing compatibility planning and management activities.

Policy 12.1 Continue participation in the implementation of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS).

Policy 12.2 Work with JBLM to establish ongoing communication mechanisms for issues of mutual concern, including mission or operational changes that could affect the surrounding community or specific development and infrastructure projects that could affect compatibility with training operations.

Policy 12.3 Partner with JBLM to make information on the potential impacts of training operations available to residents.

Policy 12.4 Review community development and infrastructure proposals for interaction that could produce compatibility challenges with training operations, including: noise sensitive uses in areas of known exposure to aviation and range noise; physical infrastructure that could interfere with low-level flight operations; and sources of electrical emissions that could interfere with military communications or navigation systems.

Policy 12.5 Provide notice to JBLM for review and comment on land use actions such as comprehensive plan amendments, rezones, development regulation changes, and land use permits that occur within the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

Goal 13 Coordinate Planning Activities

Policy 13.1 Continue cooperation between Thurston County and the City of Yelm when updating policies and plans that may affect the residents of the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

Policy 13.2 Notify the Nisqually Tribe during plan reviews and updates and encourage the tribe to participate in local planning activities that occur within the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

Policy 13.3 Communicate with JBLM about planning and permitting actions within the City of Yelm's Urban Growth Area.

LAND USE

This chapter of the Joint Plan describes the vision for land use within the joint planning area of Yelm. The objective of the land use chapter is to establish the Yelm UGA as an area which provides for a variety of housing types and styles for residents in an efficient and sustainable fashion while preserving Yelm's history. Residents of the UGA benefit from local shopping, services, parks, and community centers in the City of Yelm and beyond.

Goal 1 Create a comprehensive plan with goals and policies which fosters balanced sustainable approaches to managing growth within Yelm and its Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Policy 1.1 Adopt comprehensive plan goals and policies that address the statewide Growth Management Act (GMA) goals within Yelm and its Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Policy 1.2 Adopt comprehensive plan goals and policies that implement the County Wide Planning Policies (CWPP) within Yelm and its UGA.

Policy 1.3 Adopt comprehensive plan goals and policies that accommodates projected growth (legally required under the Washington State Growth Management Act) as well as economic forces which will shape the future of the community.

Policy 1.4 Adopt urban growth boundaries for Yelm which encourage urban development at urban densities with urban services.

Policy 1.5 Recognize the property rights of landowners in Yelm and its UGA.

Policy 1.6 Respect property owners legal rights when implementing this plan. Regulations should provide for compensation for the property owner of waivers from requirements if the implementation of the regulation would otherwise constitute a legally defined "taking".

Policy 1.7 Provide public notices, encourage public participation, and allow public input at all phases of the joint plan review process.

Goal 2 Create a sustainable community.

Policy 2.1 Adopt goals, policies, and development regulations designed to foster sustainable development through tools such as Smart Growth and Low Impact Development.

Policy 2.2 Adopt policies and development regulations to implement smart growth principles that:

- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration (public participation);
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- Provide a variety of transportation choices;
- Mix land uses in appropriate scale for the neighborhood. This may include apartments over retail and commercial space, or residential and commercial areas in close proximity;
- Preserve open space, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;

- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- Create walkable neighborhoods;
- Take advantage of compact building design; and
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.

Goal 3 Allow a variety of land uses that complement land use and zoning within the City of Yelm.

Policy 3.1 Adopt land use designations, a land use map, and development regulations that accommodate a variety of uses.

Policy 3.2 The current 1 unit per 5 acre land use category acts as a placeholder until areas are annexed by the City of Yelm. Following annexation, land uses and densities that provide for urban densities will be applied.

Policy 3.3 During a future update, the County should consider adopting future land use designations in the Yelm Urban Growth Area that match the City of Yelm's planned urban densities following annexation, and at that time consider applying the Yelm Development Code zoning designations and development regulations for the corresponding future land use categories

Policy 3.4 Consider the availability of public facilities and utilities in the future when planning for various types of land uses.

Goal 4 Provide guidance for a cohesive city and urban growth area.

Policy 4.1 Adopt development regulations and subdivision standards that require new multi-lot subdivisions to provide a network of connected streets which are integrated into Yelm's existing street system.

Policy 4.2 Adopt development regulations that require new development projects to address public transit, and where necessary to accommodate new and potential transit stops.

Policy 4.3 Development regulations allow for permits to be processed in a timely and efficient manner.

Goal 5 Encourage diverse residential growth.

Policy 5.1 Allow accessory dwelling units within residential areas. These are intended to allow for more affordable and diverse housing choices in the unincorporated area.

Goal 6 Encourage commercial and industrial growth that serves the needs of the City and its UGA.

Policy 6.1 Restrict commercial developments to those lands already zoned for commercial land uses, except for home-based businesses and industries which will be allowed throughout the rural area provided they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential uses.

Policy 6.2 Adopt development and design regulations that encourage compatibility and connectivity between commercial and residential land uses.

Policy 6.3 Industrial areas should be located on major transportation routes, near existing utilities, and where they can be appropriately buffered from adjacent land uses.

Goal 7 Participate in joint planning with the City of Yelm for the urban growth area.

Policy 7.1 Support a joint planning process between the City of Yelm and Thurston County for lands which lie within the Yelm UGA and may incorporate into Yelm's City limits.

Policy 7.2 Identify the goals and policies from the *Yelm Comprehensive Plan* which will apply to the unincorporated land within the Yelm UGA.

Policy 7.3 Review Yelm's UGA boundary during the periodic Joint Plan review.

Policy 7.4 Ensure that any change to Yelm's UGA boundary is consistent with the County Wide Planning Policies.

Policy 7.5 For any proposed change to the land use categories adopted in a Joint Plan concur with the City of Yelm and review through a joint process.

Goal 8 Foster regional coordination.

Policy 8.1 Educate the public and local businesses regarding the planning process which can include comprehensive plan amendments, development regulation updates, and the adoption of functional plans for parks, water, sewer, transportation, and capital facilities.

Policy 8.2 Coordinate and provide notification of proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan or development regulations to adjacent jurisdictions and governmental entities (e.g. Thurston County, Intercity Transit, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and the Nisqually Tribe) providing them an opportunity to comment prior to final action.

Policy 8.3 Support the transfer of development rights (TDR) program to conserve important natural and/or cultural resources (e.g. long-term agricultural lands, historic properties, or significant wildlife habitat) within the rural portion of Thurston County.

Goal 9 Foster historic preservation.

Policy 9.1 Adopt development regulations that provide incentives to protect, preserve, and restore historic properties.

Goal 10 Create safe and vibrant neighborhoods with places that build community and encourage active transportation.

Policy 10.1 Plan at the neighborhood level to increase housing density and diversity while preserving neighborhood character and quality of life.

Policy 10.2 Plan for land use patterns that provide most neighborhood residents an array of basic services nearby.

Policy 10.3 Encourage appropriately scaled home-based business and live/work opportunities in neighborhoods.

Policy 10.4 Support Intercity Transit efforts to expand transit routes and increase service frequency where the density, land uses, street design, and location of neighborhoods between main activity center destinations will result in good service usage.

Policy 10.5 Identify and build street and path connections within existing neighborhoods and design well-connected streets within any new neighborhoods.

Policy 10.6 Increase opportunities for agricultural activities in the urban growth area, and for urban agriculture within the City of Yelm.

Goal 11 Maximize opportunity to redevelop land in priority areas by investing in infrastructure and environmental remediation.

Policy 11.1 Mitigate the additional cost of development in centers and corridors by making public infrastructure investment that adds value, safety and public enjoyment for the entire community and that result in appropriate public return on investment when adjacent properties are developed. Allow for latecomers and other methods of repayment for government outlay for infrastructure.

Policy 11.2 Identify additional funding sources to make building infrastructure as part of a priority infill housing project more financially viable.

Policy 11.3 Do soil and groundwater assessments and evaluate appropriate remediation options where contaminated soils and groundwater exist. Identify funds for assessment and remediation. Apply for grants and loans to complete clean-up.

Goal 12 Support the local production, processing, and sale of local food products.

Policy 12.1 Provide for public and private food processing centers in development regulations provide for a variety of uses that can support local food products.

Policy 12.2 Allow for the location of farmers markets, food cooperatives, and community gardens in development regulations.

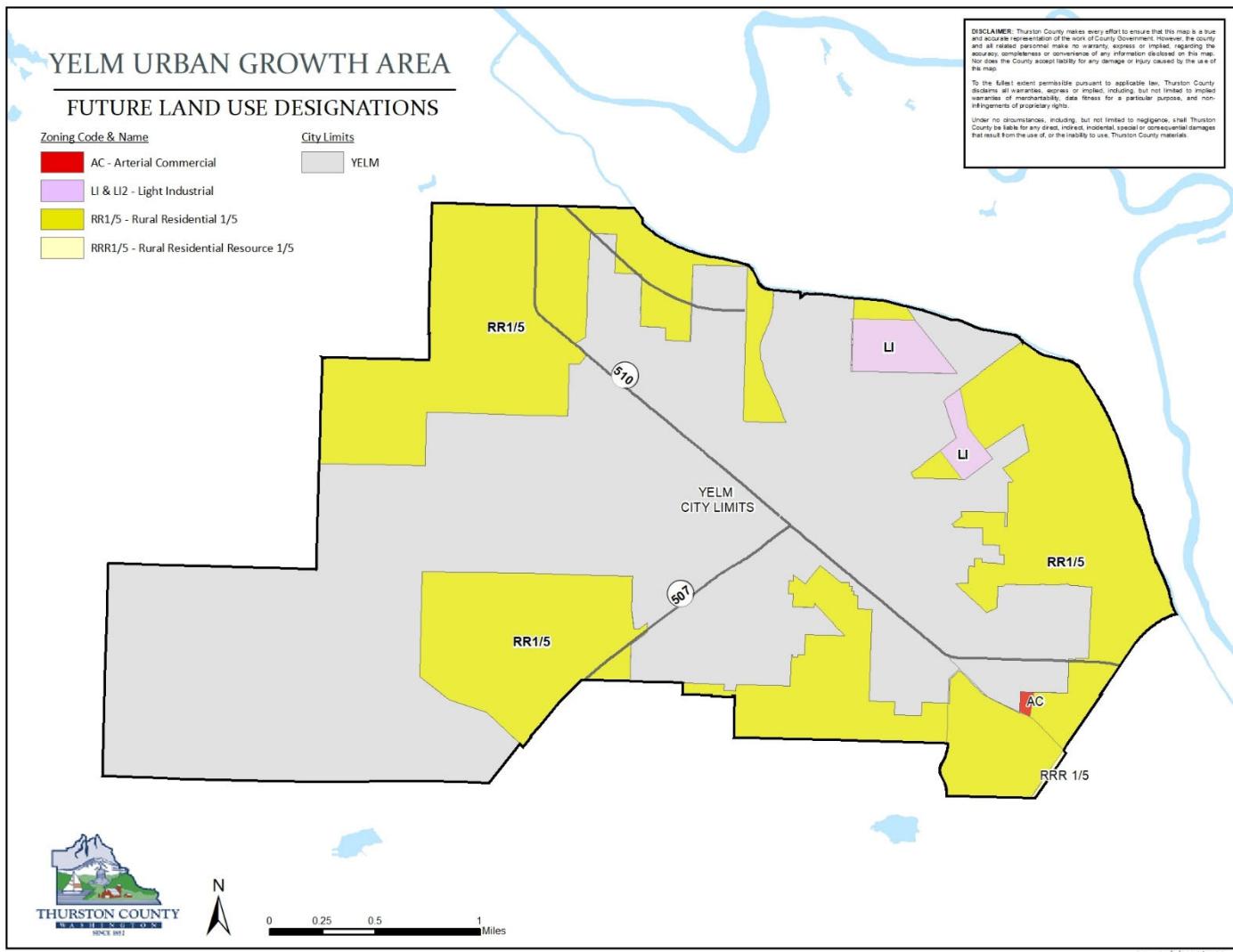
Policy 12.3 Support regional efforts to create a local agricultural economy.

Goal 13 Enhance land use compatibility between JBLM and property in the surrounding area to protect public health and safety.

Policy 13.1 Consider the Military Influence Area as identified in the Joint Land Use Plan prepared by Joint Base Lewis-McChord and the surrounding communities when reviewing and updating plans and policies. Specifically consider compatible land uses based on noise from the Installation Operational Noise Management Plan.

Policy 13.2 Consider the use of open spaces adjacent to Joint Base Lewis-McChord as part of overall compatibility strategies.

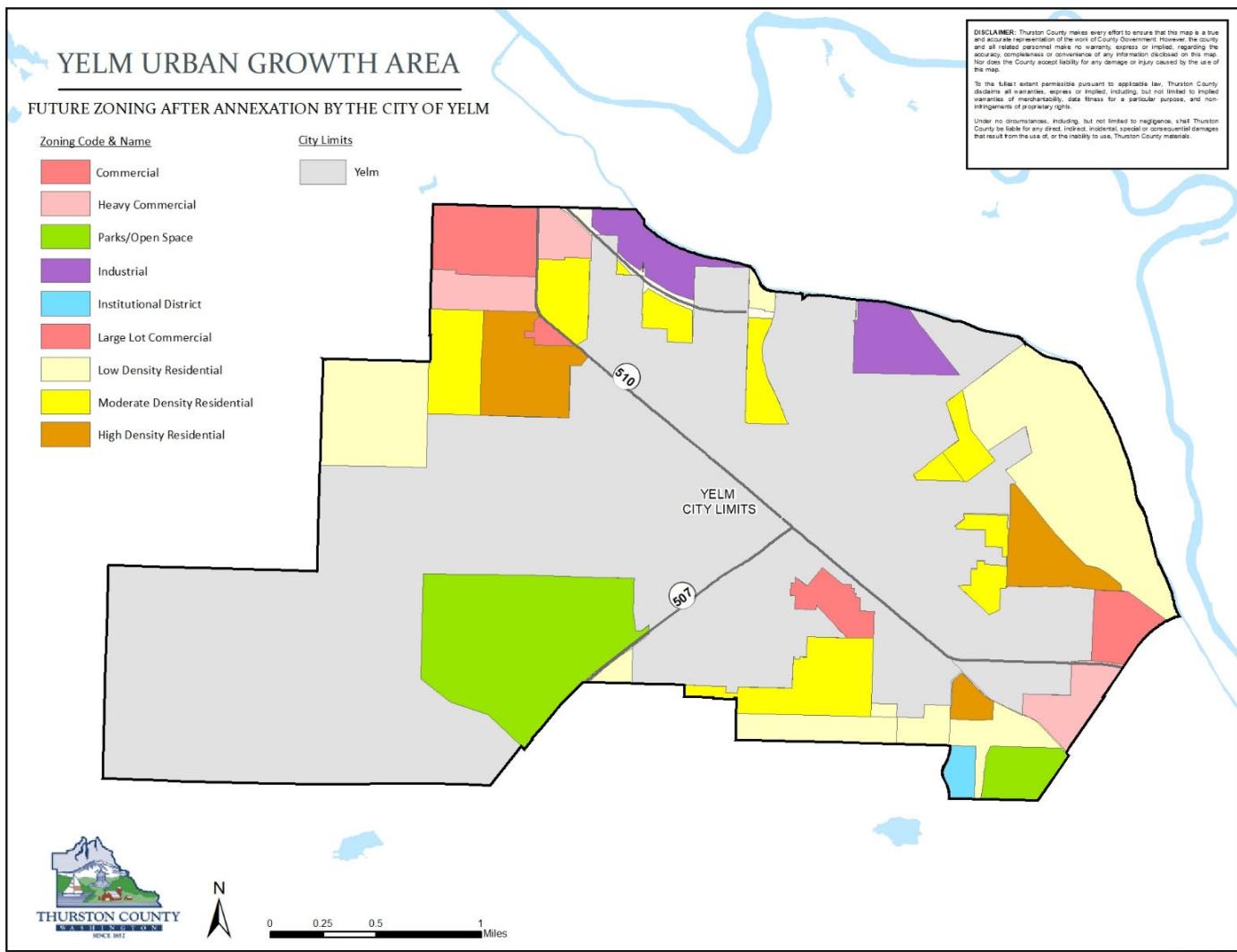
MAP 2 - FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Source: Thurston County Community Development Department

Note: This map reflects existing County Land Use Designations at the time of adoption. The current 1 unit per 5 acre land use and zoning designation acts as a placeholder until annexation. Once land is annexed and it is incorporated into the City of Yelm, the City's zoning will then apply. The assumption is that once these areas are annexed, urban densities will be applied as shown in Map 3.

MAP 3 – FUTURE ZONING AFTER ANNEXATION BY THE CITY OF YELM



Source: Thurston County Community Development Department

Note: Following annexation, it is expected that lands be zoned for urban densities. This map shows the future land use designations that are expected to apply following annexation by the City of Yelm. This map may be modified based on City leadership's decisions.

Population

According to the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) Buildable Lands Report (2021), Yelm is expected to continue to grow through 2045. When using the 2020 to 2045 estimates, The City of Yelm is expected to grow at a 5.7% annual growth rate, while the UGA population is expected to grow at a lower 0.41% annual growth rate. TRPC uses different models when calculating their estimates and projections, such as varying household size and vacancy rates, which can allow for some variation in the totals. Much of the increase in population projected by 2045 is based on the assumption that annexation of existing parts of the UGA into city limits will come with more urban services, such as sewer, and therefore a change to more urban densities and land use types.

TABLE 1 - POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2010 Census	2020 Census	Forecast 2025	Forecast 2030	Forecast 2035	Forecast 2040	Forecast 2045
City of Yelm	6,848	10,617	13,540	17,390	20,910	23,910	25,890
Joint Plan UGA	1,355	1,514	1,380	1,380	1,390	1,420	1,670
Combined Total	8,205	12,131	14,920	18,770	22,330	25,330	27,560

Source: Population Estimates and Forecast, July 2022, Thurston Regional Planning Council

TABLE 2 - RESIDENTIAL SUPPLY VS. DEMAND

	2020 Dwelling Units	2040 Dwelling Units	Future Demand 2020-2040	Future Supply 2020-Plus	Excess Capacity	Percent Excess Capacity
Yelm and Joint Plan UGA	3,820	10,640	6,820	8,630	1,810	21%

Source: Buildable Lands Report, 2021, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Note:

1. *“Future Supply” includes capacity reserved for the market factor plus any additional unused capacity.*
2. *“Excess Capacity” is the difference between future demand and future supply. It includes capacity not available due to market conditions.*
3. *“Percent Excess Capacity” is excess capacity as a percent of future supply. A value between 10 and 25 percent across the urban areas is considered reasonable for a healthy housing market.*

Residential Supply

Residential Supply is measured as the amount of vacant, partially used, and redevelopable (underutilized) land that under current land use and regulations is available to be developed into dwelling units such as single-family homes, duplexes and multi-family apartments, condominiums, assisted living facilities and other living arrangements. This assessment, with the addition of the estimated excess capacity, lets the city and county compare their existing land use availability to what is expected to be needed in the future. For Yelm and the UGA, it is

expected that there will be more supply than demand for all dwelling unit types; the Urban Growth Area will be developed primarily as low-density residential, and areas within the City and that are annexed into the city will be developed at urban densities. This cannot predict the cost of the potential units, as there are too many variable factors to estimate and only compares the total number of dwelling units to the expected need.

Residential capacity is the amount that could be built, based on the existing land use type, and does account for environmentally sensitive areas, as well as possible schools, parks, and churches. For more information about how this information was collected and calibrated, please refer to the 2021 TRPC Buildable Lands Report.

Description of the Joint Plan Area

The land use and associated zoning within the Yelm UGA is primarily low-density residential but also includes some small pockets of industrial and commercial. The vision over the planning period for the Yelm UGA is that the urban growth area will be developed as primarily low-density residential, mostly 1 unit per 5 acres, which also allows for in-home businesses and agricultural uses. Goods and services will primarily be provided within the City limits and includes retail, grocery, parks, community centers, mechanics and more. Residents of the City of Yelm and its UGA may also use goods, services, and parks elsewhere in the County.

There is a small area of Arterial Commercial in the southeast corner of the UGA, located bordering the City of Yelm along Bald Hills Road. This property is envisioned to provide for a variety of small retail uses. There are also two pockets of light industrial east of the city limits near to the Yelm railroad.

Land Use Designations

The land use designations of the Yelm Urban Growth Area are described below. For a full list a land use designations that exist in unincorporated Thurston County, visit the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 2, "Land Use".

- **Rural Residential, One Unit per Five Acres (RR 1/5):** The majority of the urban growth area of Yelm is designated for low density residential under rural residential one unit per five acres. The intent of this area is to maintain existing resource industries and protect public health in areas with severe soil limitations or limited water supply, floodplains, and aquifer recharge in the Nisqually valley. The primary uses are single-family and two-family residential and agriculture and forest practices. This area also accommodates home-based businesses and a variety of other uses through special use permits.
- **Rural Residential Resource, One Unit per Five Acres (RRR 1/5):** Only consisting of a small amount of the Urban Growth Area is land use under the Rural Residential Resource designation. This designation is used to encourage the maintenance of an area's rural character, by allowing low density residential, agricultural, forestry, and other rural land uses that are sensitive to areas that may need environmental protection.

- **Arterial Commercial (AC):** Located along Bald Hills Road, bordering the southeast City of Yelm, this area provides for high visibility and good access to the main arterials. Arterial Commercial provides for a variety of commercial uses that are oriented towards vehicular traffic, such as but not limited to beauty shops, grocery, art stores, greenhouse and plant nurseries, repair shops, and more.
- **Light Industrial (LI):** Two pockets of light industrial are located east of the city limits near to the Yelm railroad. The purpose of this district is to provide for areas where industrial activities and uses involving processing, fabrication, and storage may be located. This district also allows for a variety of commercial uses that serve the industrial district.

TABLE 3 - YELM URBAN GROWTH AREA LAND USE DESIGNATION AREA IN ACRES

Land Use Designation	RR 1/5	RRR 1/5	AC	LI
Total Acreage	2195	4	4	94

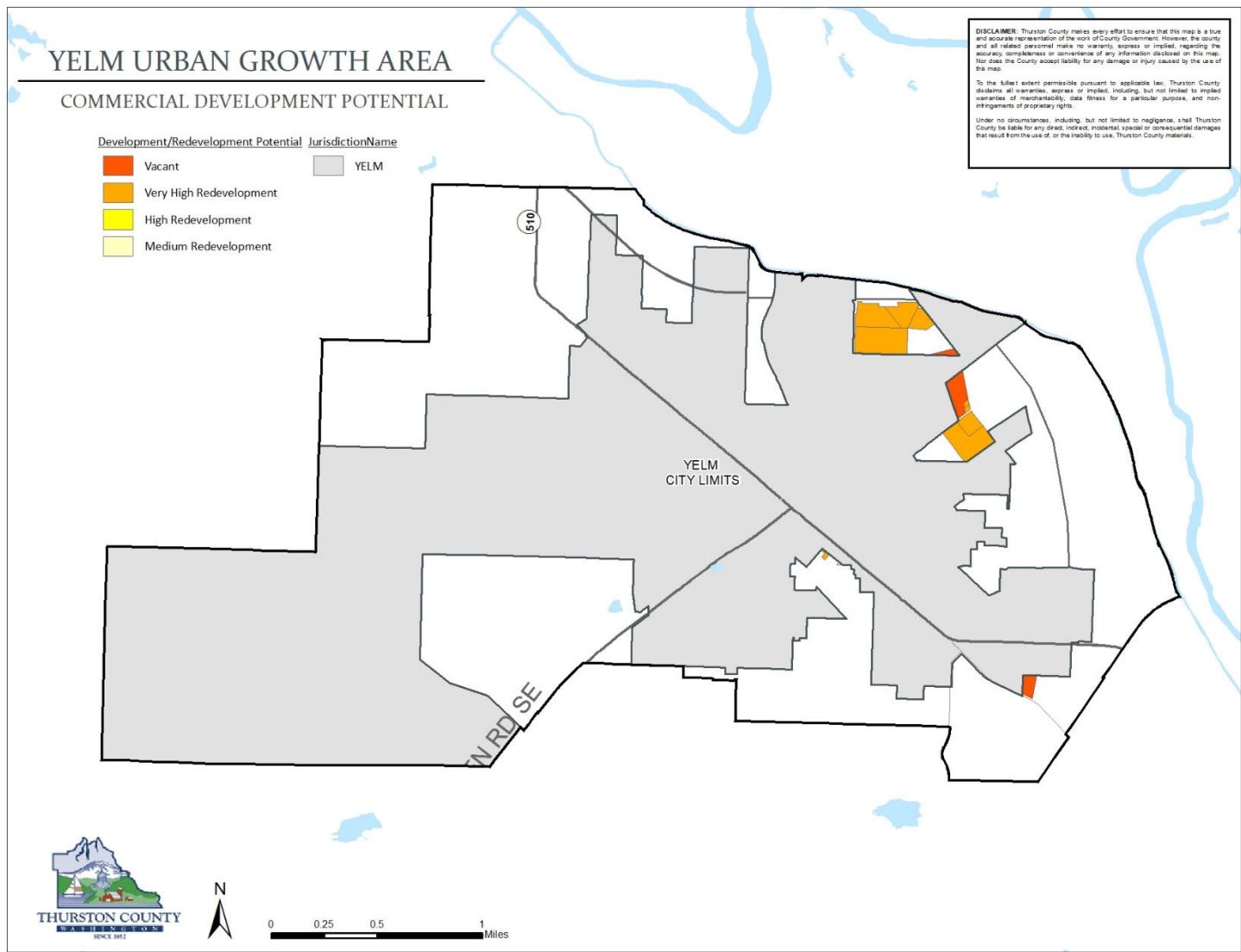
Source: Thurston County Community Development Department

Note:

Totals are rounded to the nearest whole number, and are estimated using existing 2023 GIS data and may not accurately represent exact acreage totals.

The City of Yelm includes a variety of land uses to support the population within the city and its surrounding UGA. Along state route 510 and state route 507 is a commercial corridor and central business district. High density residential is located closest to 510, while housing densities decrease to moderate and then low density as you move outward from 510. There is an industrial designation in the eastern portion of the city, surrounding the railroad. To see a map of the City of Yelm's land use designations, visit the [City of Yelm's Comprehensive Plan](#).

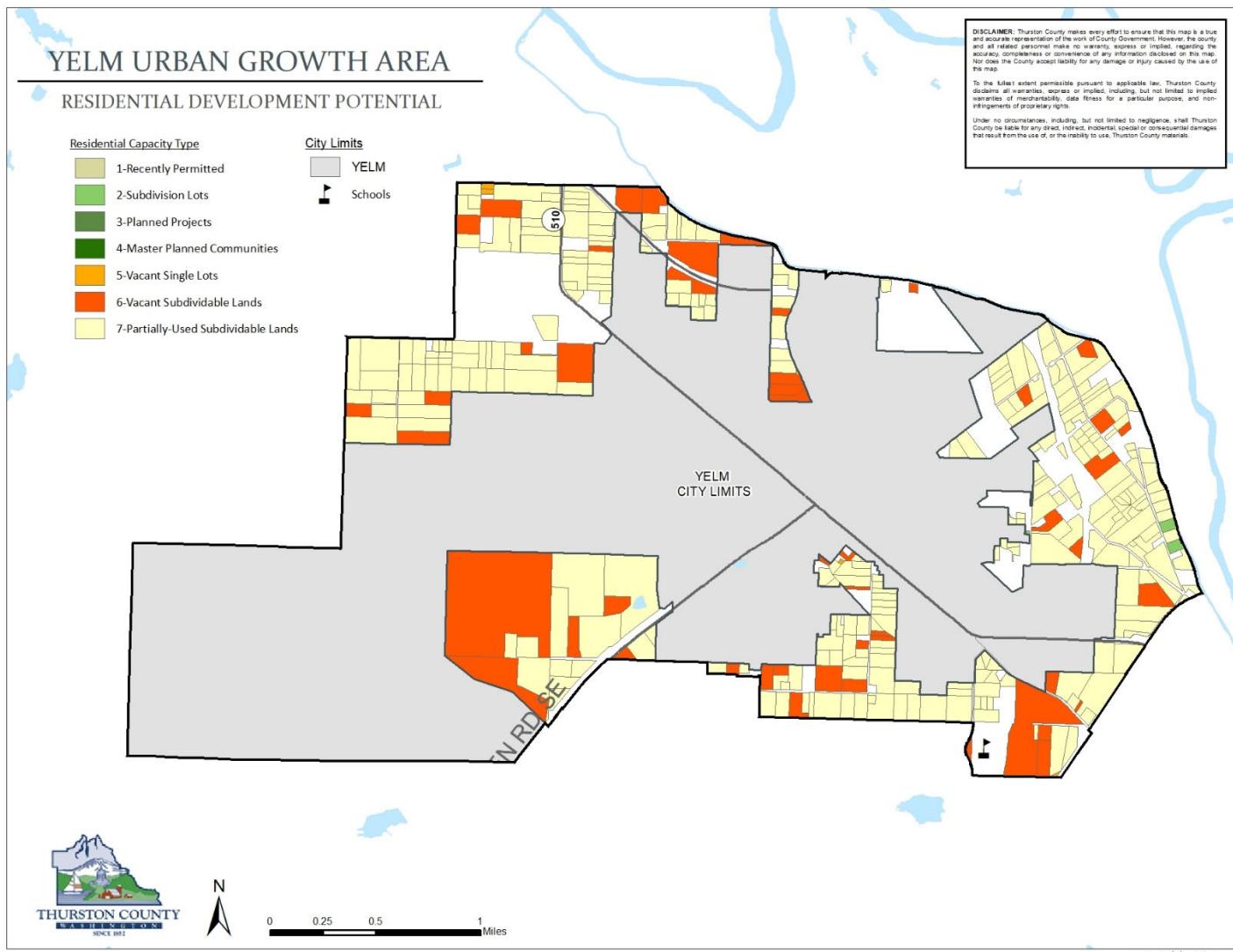
MAP 4 - 2017 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL



Source: Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County, 2017, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Note: In the Buildable Lands Report, Commercial Land Supply evaluates the sufficiency of commercial/industrial lands within areas under the Growth Management Act. To portray “development potential,” the map above shows properties’ estimated potential for commercial or industrial use. The parcels’ zoning, existing building size, lot size, and current building value are considered in the evaluation. This information assists in general planning to provide possible areas of growth for communities to plan for. Actual development capacity must be determined on a site-by-site basis, as this is only intended for general use. As much of the Yelm UGA is rural and residential, the potential for commercial development is lower than it would be within a more urban area.

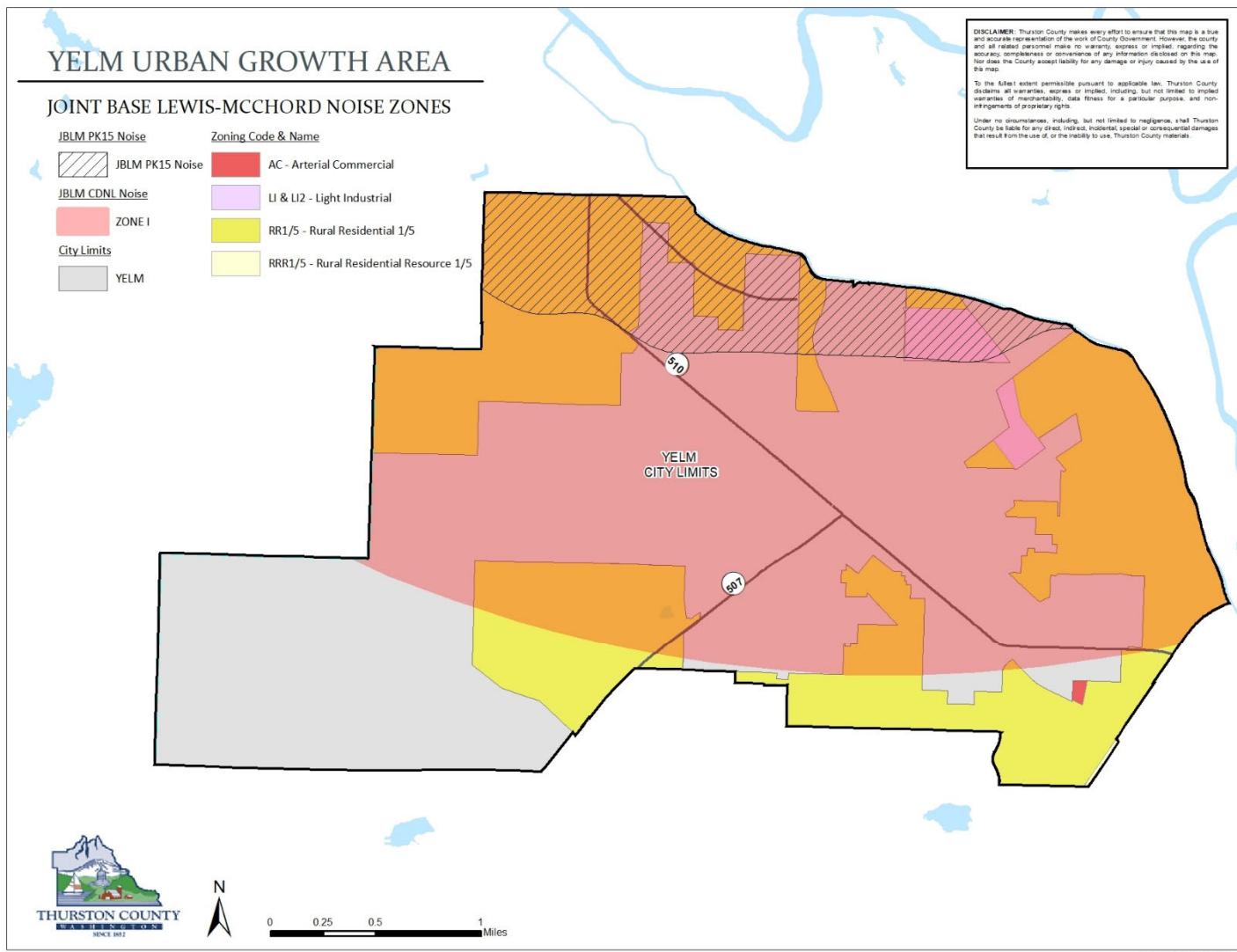
MAP 5 – 2017 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL



Source: Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County, 2017, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Note: In the Buildable Lands Report, Residential Land Supply evaluates the sufficiency of lands within areas under the Growth Management Act. With “development potential,” the map above shows properties with their estimated potential for new residential use. The parcels’ zoning, size, current use, and environmental constraints all are considered in the evaluation. This information assists in general planning to provide possible areas of growth for communities to plan for. Actual development capacity must be determined on a site-by-site basis, as this is only intended for general use. Vacant and partially-used lots are shown above to indicate areas of potential new or expanded development for residential uses. “Vacant Subdividable Lands” are lands not platted for a subdivision and do not currently contain residential, commercial, or industrial structures. The majority of the Yelm UGA in this 2017 study is considered “Partially Used Subdividable Lands,” which are lands that contain an existing structure, but have the potential to be divided into more residential lots.

MAP 6 – JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD NOISE ZONES



Date: 11/1/2023 by AS

Source: Thurston County Community Development Department

Note: As Joint Base Lewis-McChord borders much of Yelm, noises that are emitted from the base impact the nearby communities. JBLM releases data for "PK 15" and "CDNL" noise levels and their affected areas. "PK 15" is the peak noise level normally expected with a single weapon fired once. "CDNL" represents the weighted average noise level for day-night to describe large caliber munitions and detonation noise emitted from the training grounds. The map above shows the expected extent of these noise events, which include most of the Yelm UGA. Noise levels can disproportionately impact various land uses such as residential, which maybe more negatively impacted by loud noises, or industrial, which may tolerate louder sounds.

HOUSING

The objective of the housing chapter is to provide for diverse housing choices, protect the health and livability of neighborhoods, and provide for safe and affordable housing to those within the Urban Growth Area of Yelm.

Goal 1 Ensure enough housing is available to meet the needs of the existing and projected population of Yelm and its Urban Growth Area.

Policy 1.1 Within the City of Yelm, allow a variety of housing types within the residential and mixed use designations to promote a range of housing alternatives within the community. This may include but not be limited to: government assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multi-family housing, and group or foster homes.

Policy 1.2 The current 1 unit per 5 acre land use category acts as a placeholder until areas are annexed by the City of Yelm or until the time at which the County applies a future land use and zoning designation consistent with the City's land use and zoning. Following annexation, land uses and densities that provide for urban densities will be applied.

Policy 1.3 Allow accessory dwelling units in all residential land use categories subject to development standards and design criteria.

Policy 1.4 Encourage opportunities for a range of housing costs to enable housing for all segments of the population.

Policy 1.5 Encourage the provision of adequate affordable building sites through appropriate zoning, infrastructure, and other development regulations.

Policy 1.6 Review development regulations to ensure that a range of housing types is available throughout Yelm.

Policy 1.7 Monitor the need for special needs housing and increase opportunities for such housing.

Goal 2 Meet the county wide planning policy to ensure a fair share of affordable housing.

Policy 2.1 Encourage a variety of housing types in the residential designations to assure choice, opportunity, and availability of a fair share of affordable housing throughout Yelm, its UGA, and adjacent areas of Thurston County.

Policy 2.2 Participate with other jurisdictions and Thurston County in a regional process to monitor Fair Share Affordable Housing targets within the County.

Goal 3 Conserve and improve the existing housing stock and neighborhoods.

Policy 3.1 Maintain up-to-date development regulations for building, housing, mechanical, and other design standards.

Policy 3.2 Support rehabilitation efforts for substandard housing.

Policy 3.3 Encourage local community groups, churches, and businesses to provide voluntary assistance to maintain existing structures for the elderly, low income, and those with special needs.

Goal 4 Promote energy efficient housing to reduce the overall costs of home ownership.

Policy 4.1 Support programs that make existing structures more energy efficient.

Policy 4.2 Periodically review the energy efficiency development regulations to ensure that they are up-to-date.

Goal 5 Provide sufficient housing for low- and moderate-income households within each jurisdiction.

Policy 5.1 Provide sufficient housing for low- and moderate-income households.

Policy 5.2 Provide tenants and landlords information about housing rights and responsibilities.

Policy 5.3 Provide assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance for the expansion or establishment of low-cost affordable housing for low-to-moderate and fixed-income individuals and families.

Goal 6 Provide sufficient service-enriched housing for homeless and high-risk populations.

Policy 6.1 Allow shelters, group homes, transitional housing, and permanent housing with social services in development regulations in locations where these facilities have access to transit, parks, and other amenities.

Goal 7 Encourage the construction, weatherization and operation of homes to boost energy efficiency.

Policy 7.1 Support regional efforts to engage landlords and property managers in energy efficiency efforts.

Policy 7.2 Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in homes and businesses so that energy consumption in buildings is reduced.

TABLE 4 - HOUSING INVENTORY BY TYPE – 2022 ESTIMATE

	Single-family	Multifamily	Manufactured Home	Total
City of Yelm	2,610	840	130	3,570
Joint Plan UGA	350	0	160	510
Combined Total	2,960	840	290	4,080

Source: Housing Estimates by Type, 2022, Thurston Regional Planning Council

TABLE 5 - HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
City of Yelm	3,455	5,310	7,090	8,690	10,070	10,960
Joint Plan UGA	516	540	550	560	570	660
Combined Total	3,971	5,850	7,640	9,250	10,640	11,620

Source: Housing Estimates and Forecast by Jurisdiction, 2022, Thurston Regional Planning Council

CAPITAL FACILITIES

Both Thurston County and the City of Yelm adopt Capital Facilities Plans as part of their Comprehensive Plans. These plans schedule the timing, location, projected cost, and revenue sources for the capital improvements identified for implementation in other Comprehensive Plan chapters. These include parks, transportation, utilities and general capital projects. The 6-year financing plan for capital projects in Thurston County is amended annually. Thurston County adopts a Capital Facilities Plan for capital improvements in the County, including for the Yelm Urban Growth Area.

UTILITIES

The objective of the utilities chapter is to provide city operated utility services in an efficient and cost effective manner and to coordinate with private utilities, both to ensure that urban growth demands can be met with maintaining appropriate levels of service.

Goal 1 Ensure that utilities and public facilities are sized appropriately to accommodate the growth that is anticipated to occur within Yelm and its Urban Growth Area.

Policy 1.1 Rely upon the utility purveyor to determine the sequence of lines and facilities to adequately serve the community.

Goal 2 Ensure that utilities and public facilities are environmentally sensitive, safe, provide reliable service, are available at a reasonable economic cost to the consumer and are compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Policy 2.1 Promote the co-location of new public and private utility distribution facilities in shared trenches.

Policy 2.2 Provide timely notice to utilities of City sponsored construction and road maintenance projects to encourage coordination of public and private utility trenching activities.

Policy 2.3 Promote the joint use of transportation rights of way and utility corridors.

Policy 2.4 Encourage new above ground facilities to be appropriately landscaped and/or architecturally compatible with adjacent land uses.

Policy 2.5 Encourage environmental stewardship through energy conservation retrofits and the use of alternative energy sources.

Policy 2.6 Evaluate opportunities for long-term water availability beyond a 20-year planning horizon.

Goal 3 Process permits for public facilities and utilities in a timely and predictable manner.

Policy 3.1 Encourage the cooperation with other jurisdictions in the planning and implementation of multi-jurisdictional public facility and utility additions and improvements.

Policy 3.2 Make decisions regarding utility facilities in a manner that is consistent with and complementary to regional demand and resources.

Policy 3.3 Review applications for public facility and utility permits simultaneously when feasible.

Policy 3.4 Jointly undertake a periodic review of comprehensive plan utility chapters.

Goal 4 Provide efficient and effective drinking water infrastructure.

Policy 4.1 Continue to advance hydrogeological assessments to better quantify the region's available water resources.

Policy 4.2 Thurston County and the City of Yelm should coordinate water system planning with other agencies to provide drinking water in the area.

Goal 5 Manage wastewater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.

Policy 5.1 Build governmental capacity to address septic system conversions.

Policy 5.2 In areas where onsite septic systems are impacting groundwater pollution or pose significant health risks, the County should work to encourage conversion to sanitary sewers.

Policy 5.3 Ensure septic systems are properly monitored and managed and that failing systems are identified and promptly repaired.

Policy 5.4 Where adequate public sewer services are available within two hundred feet of a property, the Health Officer may require hook-up to the public sewer system when new development is proposed, or when the existing on-site septic system fails, needs replacement, or requires major repairs, or when necessary for groundwater resource protection

Goal 6 Manage stormwater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.

Policy 6.1 Coordinate with the City of Yelm to meet stormwater goals by watershed.

Policy 6.2 Encourage innovative and creative solutions for addressing stormwater runoff.

Policy 6.3 Ensure that retrofits to existing developments with stormwater infrastructure meet current standards or provide a meaningful benefit.

Policy 6.4 Require the use of low impact development standards for the treatment and disposal of stormwater when necessary.

Goal 7 Increase energy generation from renewable resources to reduce the region's carbon footprint.

Policy 7.1 Ensure development codes and permitting practices allow for renewable energy projects.

Policy 7.2 Take action to conserve resources, increase the use of renewable resources, and decrease dependence on non-renewable resources by reducing energy consumption and reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

Goal 8 Enhance the region's electricity distribution, monitoring and storage infrastructure to support adoption of cleaner technologies and practices.

Policy 8.1 Support energy suppliers' equipment upgrades, new programs, and service offerings related to adding information technology to the system or grid.

Policy 8.2 Support voluntary programs for adding vehicle chargers to homes, businesses, and public parking infrastructure.

Policy 8.3 Allow for electric vehicle charging stations in locations where they are needed.

Goal 9 Increase energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the region's carbon footprint.

Policy 9.1 Support regional efforts to adopt uniform energy-efficiency building standards.

Goal 10 Plan and take action to reduce, reuse and recycle as much waste as possible and meet the needs of current and future populations.

Policy 10.1 Support regional efforts to maintain and expand recycling efforts through participation on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

Goal 11 Continue to plan for, educate, assist and offer access to safely and efficiently manage disposal and reduce hazardous waste.

Policy 11.1 Support regional efforts to maintain and expand the collection and safe disposal of hazardous waste through participation on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

The objective of the transportation chapter is to plan for multi-modal improvements to the transportation system that provides for safe and efficient travel through and to neighborhoods and to accommodate future urban growth in a cost effective manner while ensuring that growth pays for growth.

Goal 1 Create a transportation system that is compatible with neighboring cities, Thurston County, Washington State, and other transportation providers.

- Policy 1.1 Encourage the public to participate in transportation related decisions.
- Policy 1.2 Coordinate the planning, construction, and operations of transportation facilities and programs.
- Policy 1.3 Cooperate with the City of Yelm and neighboring jurisdictions, Pierce County, Joint Base Lewis-McCord, and the Washington State Department of Transportation to address regional transportation issues.
- Policy 1.4 Support and participate in the Thurston Regional Planning Council 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Policy 1.5 Coordinate the planning and operation of Yelm's transportation system to provide efficient and varied means of transportation.
- Policy 1.6 Support the creation of a community transfer site and support the expansion of transit service within Yelm, its UGA, and to surrounding communities and employment centers.
- Policy 1.7 Support the development of a regional park-and-ride lot system.
- Policy 1.8 Preserve the existing railroad rights-of-way within Yelm's Urban Growth Area and connections to the national rail network.
- Policy 1.9 Coordinate with service providers on the location of major utility and transportation corridors and the construction of roadway improvements.
- Policy 1.10 For planning purposes, adopt the Washington State Department of Transportation Urban LOS D standard or better within the urban growth boundary. Refer to the County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5, "Transportation", for more information.

Goal 2 Create a well maintained transportation system that provides safe and cost effective movement of goods, services, and people.

- Policy 2.1 Disburse traffic throughout the community rather than concentrating it through the urban core, by providing an interconnected network of streets and trails that offer a variety of travel choices and different ways to get around the community.
- Policy 2.2 Classify Yelm's streets according to federal, state, regional, and local guidelines.
- Policy 2.3 Ensure adequate and safe access to property through a system of public and private roads.

Policy 2.4 Apply design standards, guidelines, and endorsed criteria that result in attractive and functional transportation facilities.

Policy 2.5 Utilize transportation system management strategies to efficiently operate transportation facilities. These could include:

- Signal interconnection systems, signal coordination and synchronization, and other signal systems to ease traffic flow;
- Roundabouts. If a signal intersection is considered, an analysis must be performed to confirm that it outperforms a roundabout for safety and mobility operations;
- Turn lanes and pockets to allow turning vehicles to move out of through traffic lanes;
- Access control for arterials and major collectors to minimize disruptions in traffic flow; and
- Non-motorized infrastructure

Policy 2.6 Encourage travel by means other than the automobile and provide for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout Yelm and its Urban Growth Area.

Policy 2.7 Ensure mobility for all residents, including the elderly and persons with disabilities by providing an accessible and affordable transportation system within Yelm and its Urban Growth Area.

Policy 2.8 Maintain the transportation system at a level that is comparable with the design standards applied to new facilities.

Policy 2.9 Limit and provide access to the street network in a manner consistent with the function and purpose of each roadway.

Policy 2.10 Permit construction of private roads to assist with access to private properties.

Policy 2.11 Manage the demand for transportation systems through strategies mandated by state law.

Goal 3 Develop a transportation system with minimal environmental impact and energy consumption that provides for a high quality of life to be enjoyed by the citizens.

Policy 3.1 Design transportation facilities that minimize adverse environmental impacts resulting from their construction and operation.

Policy 3.2 Design a transportation network that is compatible with the economic and development goals of Yelm and its UGA.

Policy 3.3 Ensure that transportation system improvements are compatible with adjacent land uses and minimize potential conflicts.

Policy 3.4 Allow major land use changes only when those proposals accompany specific documentation or proposed plans showing how the transportation system can adequately support the needs of existing and proposed development.

Policy 3.5 Retain existing public rights-of-way.

Goal 4 Responsibly fund needed transportation system improvements with public and private sector participation.

Policy 4.1 Implement transportation planning and development in the Urban Growth Area as a joint exercise of responsibility between Yelm, the County and the State.

Policy 4.2 Use a standardized, well documented, and objective process to establish clear priorities for transportation expenditures within Yelm and its Urban Growth Area.

Policy 4.3 Ensure that any transportation improvements or strategies that are required to mitigate impacts are constructed or financed concurrent with a development project.

Policy 4.4 Share the responsibility of mitigating transportation development impacts between the public and private sector.

Policy 4.5 Cooperate with private investors to provide for the recovery of facility improvement costs which are attributable to other development projects.

Goal 5 Encourage safe and active school transportation to improve community health, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Policy 5.1 Continue to support and act on the Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan and other programs that are working to build a generation of healthy and safe walkers, bicycle, and bus riders.

Policy 5.2 In new neighborhoods, site and design schools that maximize opportunity for neighborhoods and the community, and encourage travel to schools on foot, by bike or by bus.

Policy 5.3 Participate in public/private partnerships to maximize and leverage revenue for schools and other facilities, including surrounding safe walk/bike routes.

Goal 6 Improve infrastructure around schools that results in safe pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access.

Policy 6.1 Support Yelm Community Schools efforts on funding support for safety education and infrastructure improvements around schools.

Policy 6.2 Support sidewalk and safety improvements around schools — especially those with walk and bike safety education and encouragement programs.

Goal 7 Reduce transportation congestion and environmental impacts.

Policy 7.1 Encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation.

Policy 7.2 Provide for park-and-pool facilities that increase vanpool and carpool options in development regulations.

Policy 7.3 Connect urban and rural bicycle and pedestrian pathways with parks and open spaces to encourage more active transportation and use of natural areas.

Goal 8 Consider freight mobility needs in local and regional planning.

Policy 8.1 Ensure that transportation plans and funding strategies explicitly consider the need to move goods and services within and between local communities, and between the Thurston Region and other markets.

Goal 9 Integrate transportation considerations into land use decisions, and vice versa.

Policy 9.1 Provide for increased densities in urban neighborhoods and activity centers near transportation corridors in development regulations.

Policy 9.2 Development regulations should allow for more compact forms of development to ensure that future land-use patterns will be efficient to serve with transit, freight or other transportation infrastructure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The objective of the economic development chapter is to encourage the location of jobs, goods, and services for the residents of Yelm and Yelm's service area as an urban center serving southeast Thurston and south Pierce counties.

Goal 1 Create a healthy economic base for the community by supporting clean industry, tourism, higher education, vocational education, and retail services.

Policy 1.1 Support the development of retail and commercial services to meet the needs of the community.

Policy 1.2 Encourage new commercial services to locate in existing commercially zoned areas.

Policy 1.3 Support efforts of the Thurston Economic Development Council to identify potential businesses to locate in Yelm's industrial areas.

Policy 1.4 Support efforts of the Thurston Economic Development Council to promote cottage industries within the community.

Goal 2 Coordinate economic development efforts to attract and retain businesses and jobs.

Policy 2.1 Support efforts by the Thurston Economic Development Council and Yelm Chamber of Commerce to develop an intergovernmental collaboration and coordination panel focused on sustainability and aligned with economic development organizations.

Policy 2.2 Coordinate with other permitting jurisdictions to advocate for permitting vision, clarity, and predictability.

Policy 2.3 Support regional efforts to create a community-wide vision and action plan for coordinated and efficient governance that enlists multiple organizations in the implementation of defined community priorities and goals.

Goal 3 Create an innovation culture to encourage entrepreneurship.

Policy 3.1 Support efforts to evaluate the potential for creating a South County telework center, perhaps co-located with a small business incubator, library, or other appropriate use.

Goal 4 Provide robust infrastructure to support economic development.

Policy 4.1 Support/preserve long-term investment in multimodal transportation.

Policy 4.2 Advocate for sustainable funding mechanisms.

Goal 5 Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.

Policy 5.1 Support the Economic Development Councils efforts to implement the Sustainable Economy action plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The objective of the parks and recreation chapter is to ensure that adequate active and passive recreational and community facilities are provided to serve all residents

Goal 1 Create a network of park and open space lands that serve the residents of Yelm and its UGA regardless of their age.

Policy 1.1 Network existing parks, and trails with other parks and community recreation facilities in the Yelm UGA and nearby.

Policy 1.2 Ensure that new linkages are accessible, expandable, and effectively connect sidewalks with on and off street bicycle facilities.

Policy 1.3 Enhance the existing park and recreation network by:

- Meeting the demands of a more diverse population, increasingly aware of the importance of exercise and activity for the mental and physical wellbeing of young and old;
- Continuing to support youth and adult sport activity needs, building new facilities in cooperation with the City of Yelm, schools and other public and private partners; and
- Accommodating community needs for gathering spaces and for events and accommodate - as much as possible - regional and state user needs for special events in park and recreation facilities.

Policy 1.4 Continue efforts toward developing, maintaining and improving current park areas, facilities and programs.

Goal 2 Plan and develop a trail network that serves all parts of the community.

Policy 2.1 Continue to implement the *Thurston Regional Trails Plan* which identifies a trail system that connects neighborhoods, cities, and neighboring counties.

Policy 2.2 Collaborate with adjacent jurisdictions, tribes, and transportation providers on the planning, financing, and development of regional trail facilities.

Policy 2.3 Connect the trail network to major destinations and activity centers including parks, schools, business districts, other public facilities or sites, and park and ride lots.

Goal 3 Encourage public and private efforts to provide parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs to the community.

Policy 3.1 Enhance Yelm's existing park and recreation network by making efficient use of existing facilities.

Policy 3.2 Support partnerships with private organizations to raise funds to develop park and recreation areas.

Policy 3.3 Support a partnership with the Yelm School District to provide, coordinate, and maintain park and recreation facilities.

Policy 3.4 Support new recreational programs on public properties located near residential populations or adjacent to schools.

Goal 4 Conserve open space corridors to provide definition between natural areas and urban land uses.

Policy 4.1 Identify and prioritize natural areas, planned trail routes, and open space corridors for protection.

Policy 4.2 Coordinate and cooperate with other public and private landowners to set aside land and resources necessary to provide high quality open space before the most suitable sites are developed.

Policy 4.3 Protect unique environmental features from development and allow public access provided that it will not degrade the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CRITICAL AREAS

The objective of the environmental protection and critical areas chapter to protect and enhance the natural environment while accommodating urban growth.

Goal 1 Protect Yelm's natural environment by regulating development within critical areas.

Policy 1.1 Work with adjacent jurisdictions, state, federal, and regional agencies to protect and conserve Yelm's critical areas.

Policy 1.2 Protect and restore environmental quality through land use plans, surface water management plans and programs, comprehensive park plans, and development regulations.

Policy 1.3 Adopt development regulations and land use categories that concentrate higher densities and intensities in suitable areas.

Policy 1.4 Protect groundwater and encourage wise management of this valuable resource.

Policy 1.5 Adopt development regulations for wellhead protection areas based upon the best available science and hydrologic modeling.

Policy 1.6 Implement the policies and programs of the sewer and water comprehensive plans.

Policy 1.7 Take action in cooperation with the Washington Department of Ecology to improve areas with degraded ground or surface water.

Policy 1.8 Protect Yelm's aquatic resources, and where possible restore or enhance their natural functions.

Policy 1.9 Adopt stormwater development regulations that prevent turbidity and siltation from construction sites and restrict stormwater runoff to predevelopment levels through the use of low impact development (LID) management techniques.

Policy 1.10 Adopt development regulations for wetlands, streams, and their associated buffers that are based upon best available science.

Policy 1.11 Manage wetlands, rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes as hydrologically interconnected natural systems and not as isolated units.

Policy 1.12 Provide mechanisms within development regulations to allow buffer averaging, enhancement, and other mitigation measures that do not degrade or further impact sensitive areas.

Goal 2 Prevent the loss of life and property in frequently flooded areas.

Policy 2.1 Continue use of the Federal Flood Insurance Program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps for any developments located within a frequently flooded area.

Policy 2.2 Adopt development regulations for frequently flooded areas that prohibits development within a floodway and discourages the filling of floodplains unless necessary to meet a public purpose.

Policy 2.3 Allocate frequently flooded areas to low intensity land uses for which they are best suited.

Goal 3 Prevent the loss of life and property in areas subject to erosion, landslides, or other geologic hazards.

Policy 3.1 Adopt development regulations areas subject to erosion, landslides, or other geologic hazards based upon best available science.

Policy 3.2 Continue to review seismic data to assess the community's risk to earthquake hazards.

Policy 3.3 Preserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Policy 3.4 Preserve native vegetation in riparian areas and enhance this habitat wherever possible.

Policy 3.5 Manage publicly owned aquatic and riparian habitats in a way that enhances its ability to sustain fish and wildlife.

Policy 3.6 Encourage residents and businesses to use native plants in residential and commercial landscaping.

Goal 4 Protect air quality.

Policy 4.1 Support state and federal air quality standards which regulate activities that emit pollutants into the air.

Policy 4.2 Encourage commute trip reduction efforts and the use of transportation demand management techniques to reduce energy consumption and air pollution.

Goal 5 Control excessive noise that diminishes the use, value, and enjoyment of property within Yelm.

Policy 5.1 Rely upon the state noise standards to ensure that excessive noise does not impair permitted land use activities.

Goal 6 Reduce air pollution that endangers human health.

Policy 6.1 Continue to support regional efforts to monitor air quality and take actions to reduce air pollution.

Goal 7 Protect, preserve and restore streams, wetlands, and shorelines to protect water quality.

Policy 7.1 Enforce existing environmental-protection regulations.

Policy 7.2 Allow the use of low-impact development (LID) practices where feasible in development regulations.

Policy 7.3 Continue to support local efforts to identify and restore degraded streams and shorelines of Puget Sound.

Goal 8 Preserve environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands through the development of compact urban areas.

Goal 9 Protect and improve water quality, including groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and the Puget Sound.

Policy 9.1 Support Thurston County's efforts to preserve stream basins that still have the opportunity to function properly.

Policy 9.2 Participate with Thurston County in any watershed-based land-use planning activities in Yelm or the Yelm urban growth area.

Goal 10 Maintain air quality standards.

Policy 10.1 Support regional efforts to continue to focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving the efficient movement of people and goods on the transportation network.

Goal 11 Invasive Species

Policy 11.1 Discourage the use of any invasive species in any landscaping within the City limits and the Urban Growth Area.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

The objective of the essential public facilities chapter is to identify and allow facilities necessary to accommodate urban growth.

Goal 1 Provide for the siting of essential public facilities.

Policy 1.1 Cooperatively establish a fair share process for locating essential public facilities identified by Yelm, Thurston County, and state which are needed for the community and the region.

Policy 1.2 Locate City of Yelm essential public facilities based upon criteria as adopted by the general Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1.3 Accommodate schools within the Yelm Urban Growth Area consistent with adopted development regulations.

Policy 1.4 Locate county-wide and state-wide essential public facilities based upon the following criteria:

- The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed use will not have any probably significant adverse impact on critical areas; except for lineal facilities, such as highways, where no feasible alternative exists; and
- Major public facilities which generate substantial traffic shall be sited near major transportation corridors.

Goal 2 Provide emergency services in a dependable and efficient manner to meet the dynamic needs of a diverse society.

Policy 2.1 Cooperate with regional efforts to provide emergency services.

Policy 2.2 Maintain an emergency management plan.

Goal 3 Create a resilient region by improving disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, as well as by expanding public safety education.

Policy 3.1 Support regional efforts to fund an update to the region's Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan every five years.

Policy 3.2 Identify cost-effective mitigation actions to reduce harm from disaster events.

Policy 3.3 Consider emergency facilities in community planning and permitting.

Policy 3.4 Participate in regional emergency exercises and recovery planning processes.

Goal 4 Promote good health for UGA residents.

Policy 4.1 Support awareness of the Washington Health Plan Finder (Health Care Exchange)

Policy 4.2 Support efforts by health care providers to improve health care availability and services for all within the Yelm area.

Policy 4.3 Identify the health and human services in the Yelm area for disproportionately impacted groups.

Goal 5 Improve community coordination to create schools that use land, tax dollars, and other resources efficiently.

Policy 5.1 Participate in meetings with Yelm Community Schools to share information and discuss issues related to long- and short-term planning for schools, parks, bike/pedestrian/bus network or other facilities.

Policy 5.2 Support efforts by Yelm Community Schools to explore innovative strategies, such as public-to-public land swap opportunities, to create suitably-sized parcels for new schools close to existing neighborhoods or where there is convenient access to good transit service.

Policy 5.3 Allow schools to locate within walking distance of large student populations or near available transit routes through development regulations.