

**Yelm Comprehensive Plan
and Joint Plan with Thurston County
Population Forecast Update**

Meeting Date: April 1, 2009

Public Hearing Date: April 15, 2009

Proponent/Applicant: City of Yelm & Thurston County

Staff Contact Thurston County: Jeremy Davis, Associate Planner

Staff Contact, City of Yelm: Grant Beck City of Yelm Community
Development Director
Tami Merriman, Associate Planner
Kathy McCormick, AICP, Senior Planner

Action: Amend population figures in the
Joint Plan to be consistent with the Thurston
County Comprehensive Plan

Affected Chapters: Chapter I. Introduction
Chapter II. Growth Management Act
Planning Parameters
Chapter III. Land Use
Chapter IV. Housing

ISSUE:

The population figures in the City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan and Joint Plan with Thurston County are inconsistent with the recently adopted population figures in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND:

On July 28, 2008, the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board (Hearings Board) ruled in *Adams Cove Group and Futurewise v. Thurston County*, Case No. 07-2-0005 that the City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan and Joint Plan with Thurston County (Joint Plan) did not comply with the Growth Management Act. **Attachment B.** Specifically, the Hearings Board held that the population numbers adopted with Thurston County (County) Resolution No. 13734 did not support the size of the City of Yelm (City) Urban Growth Area (UGA). **Attachment C.**

The County and City were initially required to comply with the order by January 28, 2009. However, staffing shortages and the complex timing for an amendment to the Joint Plan prevented the County and City from completing the amendment in the required timeline. The County requested an extension, which was granted. The new compliance deadline is June 30, 2009.

The City of Yelm has prepared a staff report and proposed amendment to the Joint Plan which is outlined in **Attachment A.** The proposed changes will make the Joint Plan and the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan consistent with each other.

ANALYSIS:

On March 3, 2008, the County adopted Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance 14035. **Attachment D.** These actions included amendments to the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, UGA boundaries, and updated future population projections – the result of extensive process within the region. The amendments were in response to a compliance order from the Hearings Board in *1000 Friends of Washington (Futurewise) v. Thurston County*, Case No. 05-2-0002 regarding the sizing of the County's UGAs. **Attachment E.** On May 29, 2008 the Hearings Board issued an order finding that the amendments satisfied the aforementioned compliance order and achieved compliance with the Growth Management Act. **Attachment F.**

However, the aforementioned resolution and ordinance did not amend any of the joint plans applicable to the unincorporated portions of the UGAs, or any of the sub-area plans and special purpose plans. The County intended to update other subordinate plans during the regular annual update process. The amendment of the applicable joint plans, sub-area plans, and special purpose plans was also deemed unnecessary at the time since the County views the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan as the master document and all other plans as subordinate to it. This reasoning is supported in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan in several locations. Chapter 2 Land Use addresses joint plans in section II. Urban Growth Areas, section A. History and Purpose of Thurston County's Urban Growth Areas as follows:

“...Joint plans established with each city and town include planning policies for each UGA. Joint plans are contained in separate documents, but are incorporated as part of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.”

In addition, Appendix C in the Comprehensive Plan discusses the relationship between the various joint plans, sub-area plans and special purpose plans. **Attachment G.**

“II. Thurston County Plans Related to Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan is the umbrella planning document for all of Thurston County's land use related special plans and regulatory documents. It is the “Master Plan” because it contains the vision and direction for the county's future development in the form of statements of goals, objectives and policies for all aspects of the natural and built environment ...

Three categories of plans are described in this section. First are joint plans, which are components of the Comprehensive Plan. They contain policies for urban growth areas in the county.

...

A. City/County Joint Plans

Thurston County's County-Wide Planning Policies require that joint plans be developed for all urban growth around a city or town. Joint plans are adopted within this Comprehensive Plan, although they appear in separate documents. Joint plans serve as the comprehensive plan for the unincorporated portions of each city or town's urban growth area.” (**Attachment G, Page C-2**)

On July 28, 2008, the Hearings Board issued the final decision and order that the City and the County are trying to resolve with this amendment. In their decision, the Hearings Board found that even though

Thurston County's UGAs were compliant with the Growth Management Act (GMA) RCW 36.70A.110 with the adoption of Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035, that decision does not affect the current issue as the resolution and ordinance were not part of the initial petition. The current issue being whether or not the amendment enacted with Resolution No. 13734 in 2006 is compliant with the GMA.

The proposed amendment to the City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan and Joint Plan with Thurston County will bring the population figures in the plan up to date so that they are consistent with the updates adopted by Thurston County on March 3, 2008 with Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance 14035. The proposed changes are outlined in the attached staff report from the City of Yelm. **Attachment A.**

The primary basis for Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035 is the 2007 "Buildable Lands Report" from the Thurston Regional Planning Council. According to County-Wide Planning Policy 10.1 Thurston County and the jurisdictions in the County use the information provided by the Thurston Regional Planning Council through the Buildable Lands Program to ascertain the sufficiency of UGAs. **Attachment E.**

The City of Yelm also provided information specific to their local circumstance in a memorandum dated October 17, 2007 to justify their UGA size that was approved with Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035 and found compliant by the Hearings Board. The "Yelm Retail and Commercial Development Opportunities" study prepared by E.D. Hovee & Company in 2005 was included as an attachment to that memorandum. **Attachment J.**

The 2007 "Buildable Lands Report" differs from the previous report. The report identifies anticipated dwelling unit needs based on population projections as well as the amount of additional dwelling unit capacity. Analysis considers available land but then translates it to dwelling unit capacity and reports capacity that way because land acres absent density, is very misleading. Five acres in rural lands may support one home, and in urban areas 500 apartments. Because of this, Table 2: In Chapter III Land Use is proposed to be stricken from the Joint Plan as it is no longer considered meaningful. .

SEPA:

The proposed amendment to the Joint Plan is a follow-up amendment to the March 3, 2008 adoption of Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035 which provided for new population figures and a revised UGA. Thurston County issued a Determination of Non-Significance for this action on November 27, 2007. The proposed amendment will make the population figures consistent between the Joint Plan and the main comprehensive plan as described in this report.

On February 20, 2009 the City of Yelm issued a memo indicating that no further environmental analysis is necessary pursuant to Section 197-11-600 WAC. **Attachment H.**

SEPA requirements are in the process of being completed. It is anticipated that no further environmental analysis beyond what was done for Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035 will be necessary.

OPTIONS:

Staff for the City of Yelm provided two options in their staff report to address the compliance order. Thurston County staff agrees, and provides the following options for the Thurston County Planning Commission to consider:

Option 1: Approve the amendment as proposed in the attached staff report which would make the City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan and Joint Plan with Thurston County consistent with the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.

Option 2: Do not adopt the amendment as proposed. The population forecast in the Yelm plan and the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan would be inconsistent.

CITY OF YELM RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff:

The staff report and recommendation from City of Yelm staff is **Attachment A** to this report. In summary, staff recommended the Yelm Comprehensive Plan and Joint Plan with Thurston County be updated with the population forecast figures approved by Thurston County with Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035.

Planning Commission:

Following a public hearing on March 16, 2008, the City of Yelm Planning Commission voted to forward the amendment as recommended by staff to the City Council with a recommendation of approval.

City Council:

The City of Yelm Council is tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing on April 28, 2009 to consider the proposed changes and make a recommendation to the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners.

THURSTON COUNTY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Thurston County Strategic Planning Department recommends the Planning Commission forward the draft amendment, as outlined in Option 1, to the Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation of approval with the attached findings of fact. **Attachment I.**

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. City of Yelm Staff Report, the Proposed Amendment, and Other Attachments
- B. *Adams Cove Group and Futurewise v. Thurston County*, Case No. 07-2-0005
- C. Resolution No. 13734 (2006)
- D. Resolution No. 14034 and Ordinance No. 14035
- E. Excerpt of County-Wide Planning Policies on UGA sizing
- F. *1000 Friends of Washington (Futurewise) v. Thurston County*, Case No. 05-2-0002 Order Finding Compliance
- G. Excerpts from the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan
- H. City of Yelm SEPA Memo
- I. Draft Findings of Fact
- J. October 2007 City of Yelm Memorandum and Attachment