



Douglas County, Washington Regional Policy Plan

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Introduction

The Growth Management Act requires counties planning under the Act to adopt a countywide planning policy in cooperation with the cities located in the county. The countywide planning policy is to be "a written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted pursuant to this [GMA] chapter." The purpose for the Douglas County Regional Policy Plan is to meet this requirement of the Act. This document is a tool that will provide the necessary guidance to achieve consistency during the updating of comprehensive plans for the county and the cities/towns.

Preparation of the revisions to the Regional Policy Plan were prepared under the direction of the Douglas County Regional Council, which consists of one elected official from each of the cities/towns and the three County Commissioners. The Regional Council will review the policies and cause a final proposal to be transmitted to the cities/towns for ratification and ultimately to the Board of Commissioners for final action.

The Regional Policy Plan will be considered adopted when ratified by four of the cities/towns and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Cities/towns agree to take action within 45 days of the transmittal of the Regional Council proposal and to submit resolutions of ratification to the county to document the action taken by the city/town. The Board of Commissioners agrees to adopt the ratified policies without modification upon receipt of notice that at least four cities/towns have acted affirmatively. The Regional Council will reconvene to consider possible modifications to these policies if ratification is not accomplished.

Future amendments to the Regional Policy Plan may be considered when proposed by the county or a city/town. Amendments will be processed through the Regional Council following the procedure outlined above.

A. Policies on Implementing RCW 36.70A.110 regarding Urban Growth Areas

The Growth Management Act (GMA) encourages development to occur in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services either already exist or can be provided in an efficient manner. Reducing the inappropriate or premature conversion of undeveloped land into low-density development, and ensuring that public facilities and services are adequate at the time of development are accomplished, in large part, by establishing urban growth areas. Urban development will occur inside an urban growth area. Development may only occur outside of the urban growth area boundaries if it does not require urban levels of service.

The legislative act of establishing urban growth area boundaries is delegated to counties, who work cooperatively with cities to identify sufficient areas and densities to accommodate projected growth and development over a 20-year planning horizon.

Urban growth areas will generally include areas for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses, including greenbelt and open space areas. The GMA states that cities and counties have the discretion to make choices about accommodating future growth based on local circumstances, including the consideration of a reasonable land market supply factor and the provision of a range of urban densities. The policies in this document describe the process and criteria that Douglas County and the cities will consider when establishing urban growth area boundaries.

POLICY A-1: Based upon an analysis of the most recent population projections provided by the Office of Financial Management, the Regional Council will agree to the methodology and allocation of the distribution of the county's population growth.

POLICY A-2: The county and cities/towns will cooperatively and jointly designate urban growth areas. The designation of urban growth areas beyond the existing limits of incorporation should be based on a demonstration that public facilities and service capacities either already exist or are planned for and can be efficiently and economically provided by either public or private sources.

POLICY A-3: Urban growth areas should include sufficient area to accommodate anticipated growth and to avoid market constraints that induce leapfrogging development. This will assist in retaining the overall rural character of the county and in preserving farmland for agricultural activities.

POLICY A-4: The size/area of urban growth areas will be based on the following considerations projected over a 20-year planning period:

- Projected population for the 20-year planning horizon, based on the population figures provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management;
- Projected land use needs for residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses for the 20-year planning horizon;
- Existing and forecasted public facility and service capacities;
- Land with physical constraints, such as critical areas;
- Recognize the potentially reduced rate of conversion on land with active agricultural activities, and other land that may not be available because of ownership constraints;

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- Greenbelts and open spaces;
 - Maintaining an adequate supply of developable land, considering market forces;
 - Existing land use and subdivision patterns;
 - Status of existing developments that are still in the “review” stages;
 - Build-out of existing developments and/or neighborhoods;

POLICY A-5: The delineation of the boundaries of urban growth areas will be coordinated and established based on the following considerations:

- Geographic, topographic and man-made features;
- Existing jurisdictional boundaries, including special improvement districts;
- Public facilities and services availability, limits and extensions;
- Designations of resource lands of long term commercial significance and critical areas;
- Potential urban/rural interface conflicts.

POLICY A-6: There are two types of Urban Growth Areas within Douglas County that serve different functions throughout the area:

1. *Urban Growth Areas:* Areas inclusive of municipal city limits, generally providing a full range of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land uses within a range of urban densities.
2. *Industrial Service Areas:* Areas characterized by a significant amount of manufacturing, industrial and advanced technology uses, where an extensive land base and the exclusion of non-industrial uses are essential features. An example of such an area is the vicinity surrounding the Pangborn Memorial Airport.

POLICY A-7: On or before December 1, 2009 and every 7 years thereafter, Douglas County and the cities/towns will cooperatively review the urban growth areas and the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the urban growth areas based upon the criteria described above. At the request of an individual jurisdiction, this review may occur on a more frequent basis.

POLICY A-8: Urban growth boundary amendments to the City of East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area shall be processed in accordance with Policy C-6 of the Douglas County Regional Policy Plan. Urban growth boundary amendments to the urban growth areas of the cities of Bridgeport, Mansfield, Rock Island, and Waterville shall be processed in accordance with Policy C-8 of the Douglas County Regional Policy Plan.

POLICY A-9: In addition to the criteria for establishing the size and location of an Urban Growth Area, the following findings will be made in approving amendments to an established urban growth area:

- The proposed change to the urban growth area will not adversely affect the existing and/or forecasted capacities of the public facilities and services such as domestic water, sewer, streets, etc.
- The proposed change to the urban growth area is adjacent and/or connected to the existing urban growth area, and will not create irregular boundaries;
- The proposed change to the urban growth area will be to: 1) further the economic conditions of

the community and be related to commercial, industrial and/or recreational activities; 2) is related to municipal responsibilities for providing public facilities and services such as domestic water systems, sewer systems, storm drainage systems, solid waste activities, emergency and/or law enforcement services, etc.; 3) is related to the need for an additional supply of vacant land for residential development.

POLICY A-10: Proposals for amending existing Industrial Service Areas shall also demonstrate the following:

- The availability for continued growth in the area is limited due to build-out of existing lands;
- The designated resource lands in the area will not be negatively impacted;

POLICY A-11: Proposals for establishing new urban growth areas will only occur in compliance with the criteria in RCW 36.70A.350 for new fully contained communities, and major industrial developments, RCW 36.70A.365 and RCW 36.70A.367.

POLICY A-12: Prior to commencing a 60-day review period for an expansion of an existing urban growth boundary each jurisdiction shall request that public service providers including sanitary sewer, public water, and electrical, provide written comments that urban services can be provided to the expansion area within the planning horizon of the comprehensive plan. Comments should identify whether existing infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate the planned growth. Where existing capacity is insufficient, comments should address necessary infrastructure improvements, funding sources and the steps necessary to plan and provide infrastructure improvements.

B. Policies on Promoting Contiguous and Orderly Development and Providing Urban Services to such Development

Once urban growth areas are established, it is important to maintain the integrity of those areas through incremental, efficient and coordinated development within those areas. One of the most important factors that distinguishes urban areas from rural areas is the provision of urban levels of service such as those for domestic water and sewer systems. The provision of these services is very costly and constitutes a long-term investment for the utility purveyor. It is therefore important that long-term plans that are developed are implemented through coordinated, efficient extensions.

POLICY B-1: In developing the comprehensive plans for the established urban growth areas, the county and cities/towns will adopt policies and/or measures to ensure that growth and development are timed and phased consistent with the provision of adequate public facilities and services.

POLICY B-2: Developments within urban growth areas will be coordinated among the county, the cities/towns and other utility service purveyors, where applicable.

POLICY B-3: Comprehensive plans for the county and cities/towns will establish urban densities that are appropriate in scale for each community, based on the community vision, the cost and efficiency of urban development and the ability to provide government services and facilities at urban levels.

POLICY B-4: The county and cities/towns will adopt comprehensive plan policies to ensure that development within urban growth areas uses land efficiently, provides for a wide variety of uses and requires the provision of urban services.

POLICY B-5: The comprehensive plans of the county and cities/towns will generally require new urban governmental services to be provided only within, and not beyond, urban growth areas. If urban governmental services such as sanitary and storm sewer collection and treatment facilities and public water systems are necessary outside of urban growth areas to serve essential public facilities, to address a threat to the public health, safety or the environment, the comprehensive plans will ensure those facilities are provided only to serve the specific project/area and that they will not promote new, sprawling development into the surrounding areas.

POLICY B-6: Comprehensive plans and development regulations shall require that all new residential subdivisions, multi-family projects and commercial development within an urban growth boundary that includes a public sanitary sewer system be connected to that system.

C. Policies on Joint Planning in Urban Growth Areas

The Growth Management Act is structured in a way that not only encourages but also requires local governments to work together to address common issues. Coordination and consistency among the different jurisdictions' comprehensive plans and development regulations are required components. The county and cities/towns participated in joint planning efforts, to different degrees, during the initial GMA processes, and the policies in this document will describe how the entities will strive to continue achieving positive results through joint planning work in the future.

POLICY C-1: The cities/towns and the county will strive to coordinate long-range planning efforts, including capital facilities and utilities planning, within urban growth areas.

POLICY C-2: To achieve the most efficient use of resources and to take advantage of partnering opportunities, the county and cities/towns will seek to coordinate and collaborate on applying for available grants/loans for items such as infrastructure improvements and planning efforts whenever possible.

POLICY C-3: The county and cities/towns will collaborate on and adopt consistent regulations and development standards for areas located within the urban growth areas.

POLICY C-4: During the review process for development proposals within the urban growth areas the county and the cities/towns will participate in that review process, with the final approvals continuing to reside with the agency with jurisdiction. The county agrees to implement each city's/town's water, sanitary and storm sewer and street requirements for any development within an urban growth area.

POLICY C-5: The county and cities/towns agree that Douglas County will be the clearinghouse and storage area for background data such as land use, transportation and population information, with each city/town contributing by forwarding information to the county in a consistent format and manner. To accomplish this practice, the county and cities/towns agree that the way in which the county data is stored and maintained will be designed and organized to serve the needs of all the jurisdictions involved, and to maximize the compatibility among the county, cities/towns and other agencies and/or organizations.

POLICY C-6: Proposed revisions to the City of East Wenatchee Urban Growth Boundary and accompanying amendments to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan and/or implementing development regulations shall be reviewed through the following process:

- a) The City of East Wenatchee shall process proposed amendments to the city's comprehensive plan and implementing development regulations in accordance with the city's established procedures.
- b) The City of East Wenatchee will initiate the sixty day review process required by RCW 36.70A.106, and combine environmental review required by RCW Chapter 43.21C. The review will be jointly sponsored by the City of East Wenatchee and Douglas County.
- c) Early in the joint sixty day review process the City of East Wenatchee shall schedule a joint workshop of the city's planning commission and the Douglas County Planning Commission where the city will present the proposed amendments. The city may choose to have their representative present the proposed amendments to the Douglas County Planning Commission, in lieu of a joint planning commission workshop.
- d) Upon conclusion of the joint sixty day review process, the City of East Wenatchee and Douglas

County shall hold a joint planning commission hearing for the purpose of developing a recommendation for each jurisdiction's legislative body.

- e) The Douglas County Board of Commissioners and the City of East Wenatchee Council shall hold a joint public meeting to consider the proposed amendments and planning commission recommendations. At the public meeting, (or public hearing which may subsequently be set by the jurisdictions), the Douglas County Board of Commissioners shall take action on the proposal, followed by the City of East Wenatchee Council.
- f) The City of East Wenatchee shall issue a joint notice of adoption to the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development. Publication of the joint notice of adoption shall be the responsibility of Douglas County.

POLICY C-7: Map amendments to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Plan/implementing zoning map within the unincorporated portions of the City of East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area shall be reviewed through the following process:

- a) Douglas County shall process proposed map amendments for the Greater East Wenatchee Area Plan/implementing zoning map within the unincorporated portions of the City of East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area in accordance with the county's established procedures.
- b) Douglas County will initiate the sixty day review process required by RCW 36.70A.106, and combine environmental review required by RCW Chapter 43.21C. The review will be jointly sponsored by the City of East Wenatchee and Douglas County.
- c) Early in the joint sixty-day review process, Douglas County shall have a representative present the proposed amendments to the City of East Wenatchee Planning Commission.
- d) A Douglas County representative shall present the county's adopted changes during a hearing before the City of East Wenatchee Planning Commission.
- e) Unless inconsistent with the Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan or RCW Chapter 36.70A, the City of East Wenatchee agrees to ratify the amendments adopted by Douglas County.

POLICY C-8: The following two categories of city comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments shall be addressed under the process listed below.

1. Proposed amendments to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Plan and /or implementing development regulations that:
 - i. Are not associated with a change to the urban growth boundary for the City of East Wenatchee; or
 - ii. Do not include map changes to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Plan/implementing zoning map within the unincorporated portions of the City of East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area.
2. Proposed amendments to the urban growth boundaries of the cities/towns of Bridgeport, Mansfield, Rock Island, and Waterville, as well as these jurisdictions' comprehensive plans and/or implementing development regulations within each respective jurisdiction's urban growth area.

The process for these amendments includes the following steps and components:

- a) The city/town shall process proposed amendments to their comprehensive plan and implementing development regulations in accordance with the city/town's established procedures.

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- b) The city/town will initiate the sixty day review process required by RCW 36.70A.106, and combine environmental review required by RCW Chapter 43.21C. The review will be jointly sponsored by the city/town and the county.
 - c) Early in the joint sixty-day review process, the city/town shall have a representative present the proposed amendments to the Douglas County Planning Commission.
 - d) Adopted changes to the city/town's comprehensive plan and/or development regulations must be submitted to Douglas County no later than the fourth Monday of October, in order to be considered during Douglas County's amendment process that calendar year.
 - e) A city/town representative shall present the city/town's adopted changes during a hearing before the Douglas County Planning Commission.
 - f) Unless inconsistent with the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan or RCW Chapter 36.70A, Douglas County agrees to ratify the amendments adopted by the city/town.

D. Policies on Siting Essential Public Facilities of Countywide or Statewide Significance

Essential public facilities (EPF) of a countywide or a statewide nature are those that have inherent characteristics that make them difficult to site. These characteristics may include facility size, land consumption uses, traffic impacts, noise, odor, safety concerns and utility needs. As a result of these characteristics, many EPF are considered “locally unwanted land uses” or LULU’s, while still other types of EPF may be desirable. The Growth Management Act is clear that cities, towns and counties cannot prohibit EPF placement in their communities despite potential public objections.

Multiple permit processes are acknowledged as being confusing to applicants for EPF and to citizens that have an interest in the siting process. It is the desire of the county and the cities/towns that plans and regulations address EPF in a consistent and coordinated manner. Comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations must be prepared in the context of the following policies.

POLICY D-1: Comprehensive plans and development regulations must consistently define essential public facilities by December 31, 2002 to include the following as essential public facilities: airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correction facilities, solid waste handling facilities, secure community transition facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes. The county and the cities/towns may classify other essential public facilities based on local circumstances.

POLICY D-2: No comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

POLICY D-3: The county, cities and towns must amend comprehensive plan policies and development regulations by December 31, 2002 to articulate consistent EPF siting processes and standards. Policies and standards must assure that:

- a) EPF are served the full range of services necessary to support the use;
- b) EPF located outside of an urban growth area must be self-contained or are extended services in a manner that does not promote additional development or premature conversion of lands to other uses;
- c) State-mandated siting criteria be incorporated where applicable;
- d) EPF are not located on resource lands or critical areas if incompatible.

POLICY D-4: Single local decision-making processes for EPF environmental review and permitting should be established where practical. This would be accomplished through cooperative agreements among the county, cities, towns and the health district that is managed by the county, cities and towns. Agreements would be supported by comprehensive plan policies and development regulations. The central components of this process are the incorporation of standards from the various agencies with jurisdiction and one decision-making process.

POLICY D-5: It is acknowledged that the county, cities and towns do not have authority over activities within the jurisdiction of the Washington State Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council. However, the siting of major energy facilities in Douglas County that are designed to extract, store, transport, process or refine fossil fuels should not be permitted without extensive preliminary environmental and public review.

Nuclear power generating facilities should also be prohibited from locating in Douglas County until all environmental risks associated with the production, storage, disposal, and long-term liability of radioactive or hazardous wastes can be eliminated.

Siting issues for all energy facilities that should be reviewed include, but are not limited to: placement of short-term construction employees, placement of long-term employees, types of facilities necessary, directing impacts towards enhancement of existing facilities, and utilization of best available contract technology to preserve physical and social environmental quality.

POLICY D-6: The Regional Council will periodically monitor the establishment of essential public facilities to assure that jurisdictions are not receiving a disproportionate share of EPF. Future amendments to the countywide planning policy may direct jurisdictions to revise their plans and policies to be more receptive to EPF establishment in order to balance EPF siting countywide.

E. Policies on Countywide Transportation Facilities and Strategies

The Growth Management Act requires that transportation planning be coordinated among local and state agencies. The Act further requires that transportation planning be coordinated with the land use elements of local comprehensive plans. Coordination of land use and transportation plans will serve to reduce sprawl while enhancing efficient movement of people, goods and services at an optimum level of safety, economy and energy efficiency. The intent of the following policies is to encourage inter-regional and intra-regional coordination among transportation and land use planning agencies.

POLICY E-1: The county and cities/towns will plan for a balanced transportation system that provides for a variety of mobility options for differing land use needs and promotes the mobility of goods and people. The transportation system shall address the following minimum components as appropriate:

- Highways, arterials and collector systems
- Non-motorized facilities
- General aviation airports
- Transit systems
- Transportation Demand Management actions

POLICY E-2: Each comprehensive plan must contain a transportation element, prepared in coordination with affected agencies including neighboring jurisdictions, Link and the Washington State Department of Transportation. Transportation elements must address level of service standards, street and road standards consistent with the area and a functional classification scheme established by the Regional Council that is consistent throughout the county.

POLICY E-3: The preparation and content of transportation elements must promote the relationship between the efficient movement of people, goods and services and the economic well being of the county.

POLICY E-4: Comprehensive plans and implementing regulations must address concurrency management to assure that transportation systems continue to support growth throughout the county.

POLICY E-5: Douglas County and the City of East Wenatchee will actively participate in the Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council, which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the area. Participation will include assuring that local facilities of region wide significance are acknowledged in the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and that the MTP is reflected in local plans. The county and the cities/towns will actively participate in the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) to assure consistent and coordinated transportation planning throughout the greater region.

F. Policies on Affordable Housing

Adequate housing, for all economic segments of the population, is a basic need of Douglas County's residents and an issue of countywide concern. Local governments working in cooperation with the private sector and nonprofit housing agencies must address affordable housing needs. The Growth Management Act requires countywide planning policies to address the distribution of affordable housing, including housing for all income groups.

Providing sufficient land for a variety of housing types and densities is an essential step in promoting affordable housing. Affordable housing can be encouraged by zoning additional land for higher residential densities, which helps provide needed capacity for growth, reduces land development cost per unit, and allows for lower cost construction types such as attached dwellings. Higher density housing includes a range of housing types: small-lot single-family, attached single family, manufactured home parks, apartments and condominiums. In addition, land use designations and implementation guidelines that permit additional housing in established areas, such as accessory units, and residences built above commercial uses, increases affordable housing opportunities.

The county and cities/towns need to provide for housing types that meet the intent of the Growth Management Act and at the same time recognizes the limitations within some cities/towns, communities, and areas in the county to provide infrastructure necessary to support higher density housing developments.

POLICY F-1: Comprehensive plans and implementing regulations shall make adequate provisions for emergency housing, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing taking into account recommendations from the Chelan and Douglas County Homeless Housing Plan and population and housing allocations adopted by the Douglas County Regional Council.

POLICY F-2: In developing comprehensive plan land use designations, the county, cities and towns should provide appropriately designated lands and/or location criteria to provide opportunity for housing that accommodate individuals with special needs (elderly, low-to-moderate income families, etc).

POLICY F-3: Comprehensive plans should stress that housing developments that require urban levels of governmental services should be located within urban growth areas.

POLICY F-4: Implementation guidelines in the comprehensive plans should encourage development standards and permitting procedures, as needed, to provide opportunities for a range of housing types including seasonal agricultural and recreational housing of a permanent and/or temporary nature, accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, multi-family buildings, townhouses, cottages and attached single family housing.

POLICY F-5: To facilitate capital facilities planning and comprehensive plan review, the county and cities/towns will monitor new and existing housing to ensure an equitable and rational distribution of low-income, seasonal, and affordable housing throughout the county in accordance with land use policies, infrastructure planning, transportation systems, and employment locations. The monitoring program should include:

- A process to monitor residential development within all jurisdictions and determine annually the total number of new and redeveloped units receiving permits and units constructed, housing types, affordability (identify median rent or housing unit market value) densities and remaining

capacity for residential growth.

- Evaluate each jurisdiction's existing resources of subsidized and low-cost non-subsidized housing and identify housing that may be lost due to redevelopment, deteriorating housing conditions, or public policies or actions.

POLICY F-6: The county, cities and towns should work cooperatively to draft model development standards that may be used by all jurisdictions for the provision of housing types appropriate for the jurisdiction. Housing types considered may include seasonal housing, accessory housing, cluster developments, attached single-family developments, and a process to provide land use incentives or density bonuses for the development of low to moderate income housing.

POLICY F-7: The county, cities and towns:

- Recognize the countywide economic importance of providing housing for agricultural workers.
- Support a dispersed pattern of owner-provided agricultural housing.
- Recognize the limitations in the rural and agricultural areas for the provision of services to support higher density housing and encourage cooperation with the agricultural community, state and local agencies to develop criteria and a process for siting agricultural housing.

G. Policies on Economic Development

The county and city/towns have historically partnered with each other and other communities and organizations for economic development throughout the region. It is the intention of the county and municipalities to more actively pursue mutually beneficial partnerships that promote growth in the areas of agriculture, agri-business, industrial, commercial, recreation and tourism. Key strategies will include promoting family-wage jobs, increasing income and reducing poverty, increase business formation, expansion, and retention, and creating jobs that add to the economic base of our communities

POLICY G-1: An economic development element will be integrated into the comprehensive plan of each jurisdiction. The economic development element should establish goals and policies that address local economic concerns of each jurisdiction; actively promote employment opportunities for family-wage jobs; support the retention and expansion of businesses and industry within Douglas County; encourage the development of tourist-related businesses, particularly those that capitalize on area resources; and accommodate appropriate scales of home-based employment.

POLICY G-2: Comprehensive plans should foster and promote a natural environment that will contribute to economic growth and prosperity, and a business environment that offers diverse economic opportunities for businesses of all types and sizes in the region.

POLICY G-3: The county and cities/towns should encourage public and private agency cooperation and participation in the comprehensive planning process. These agencies should cooperatively evaluate trends and opportunities to identify strategies meeting the long-term economic needs of the county region.

POLICY G-4: The county and cities/towns agree that Douglas County may establish economic development strategies and implementation criteria for siting major industrial and resource based development within rural areas of the county in accordance with RCW 36.70A.365. Policies should be based on a regional assessment of industrial land and the availability of transportation and other infrastructure to serve it.

POLICY G-5: The provision of utilities and other supporting urban governmental services to commercial and industrial areas should be coordinated and assigned a high priority by utility purveyors and service providers.

POLICY G-6: A countywide land use inventory should be established to monitor commercial and industrial land supply.

H. Policies on Resource Lands

The Growth Management Act requires local communities to designate agricultural, forest and mineral lands of long-term commercial significance and protect these lands in accordance with the Act. Although all jurisdictions have resource lands, most are within the unincorporated areas of Douglas County. Further, the Act prohibits the designation of long-term commercially significant agricultural and forestlands in an urban growth area unless a program has been established for the transfer or purchase of development rights. These regional policies are for guidance in developing comprehensive plans and local policies for resource lands of long-term commercial significance.

POLICY H-1: The protection of resource lands designated as having long-term commercial significance under Growth Management Act minimum guidelines, should be a priority in the development and revision of comprehensive plans.

POLICY H-2: The continuation of historical land uses, using best management practices, on designated resource lands will be encouraged whenever possible as long as they are not in direct conflict with the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

POLICY H-3: The forestlands of Douglas County are a unique resource because of the support they lend to wildlife as habitat, for grazing of domestic animals, and the selective cutting of trees primarily for personal use. However, there are no forestlands of long-term commercial significance in Douglas County.

POLICY H-4: Agricultural lands are protected primarily for their long-term productive resource value. However, these lands, and forested lands, also provide secondary benefits such as open space, scenic views and wildlife habitat. All jurisdictions should encourage utilization or development of natural resources through methods that minimize the impacts on these secondary benefits.

I. Policies on Critical Areas and Shorelines

The Douglas County region contains many environmental sensitive areas. Land use activities can have serious impacts upon these types of areas. The preservation of basic resources, such as groundwater, wildlife habitat, shorelines, and other sensitive areas, is vital. Although all jurisdictions have critical areas, most are within the unincorporated areas of Douglas County. Critical areas include wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, geological hazards, aquifer recharge areas and frequently flooded areas. Shorelines include those areas designated as Shorelines of the State (see RCW 90.58). These regional policies are for guidance in developing comprehensive plans and local policies for all of types of land.

POLICY I-1: All jurisdictions will protect and enhance the natural systems through comprehensive plans and policies, and develop regulations that reflect natural constraints and protect sensitive features. Land use and development will be regulated in a manner that respects fish and wildlife habitat in conjunction with natural features and functions, including air and water quality. Natural resources and the built environment shall be managed to protect, improve and sustain environmental quality while minimizing public and private costs.

POLICY I-2: Best available science will be used when developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas and special consideration will be given for conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries. The inclusion of the best available science in the development of critical area policies and regulations is especially important to salmon recovery efforts, and to other decision-making affecting threatened or endangered species.

POLICY I-3: The protection of critical areas shall be a priority in the development and revision of comprehensive plans.

POLICY I-4: Shorelines of the State will be protected and enhanced through consistent goals, policies, and regulations. This policy will be accomplished by having a unified shoreline master program for the cities of Bridgeport, East Wenatchee, and Rock Island and the county.

POLICY I-5: Natural drainage systems including associated riparian and shoreline habitat shall be maintained and enhanced to protect water quality, reduce public costs, protect fish and wildlife habitat, and prevent environmental degradation. Jurisdictions within shared basins will coordinate regulations to manage basins and natural drainage systems that include provisions to:

- a) Protect the natural hydraulic and ecological functions of drainage systems, maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore and maintain those natural functions;
- b) Control peak runoff rate and quantity of discharges from new development to approximate pre-development rates; and
- c) Preserve and protect resources and beneficial functions and values through maintenance of stable channels, adequate low flows, and reduction of future storm flows, erosion, and sedimentation.

J. Policies on Rural Land Use and Development

Counties are required by RCW 36.70A.070 to include a rural element and identify lands that are not otherwise designated for urban growth, as resource lands of long-term commercial significance or as critical areas. The rural element is required to provide a variety of rural densities, uses, essential public facilities and rural governmental services needed to serve the permitted densities and uses. In order to achieve a variety of rural densities and uses, counties may provide for innovative techniques such as clustering, density transfer and design guidelines that will accommodate densities and uses that are not characteristic of urban growth and that are consistent with rural character.

Policies and standards governing rural development shall include measures that protect the rural character, assure visual compatibility with surrounding rural areas, and reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density, urban- scale development.

POLICY J-1: The rural element within the comprehensive plan should recognize existing development patterns, traditional values and support a wide range of uses, densities, and essential public facilities that are not characteristic of urban growth.

POLICY J-2: The county and cities/towns agree that Douglas County may establish strategies and implementation criteria for siting major industrial and resource based development within rural areas of the county in accordance with RCW 36.70A.365.

POLICY J-3: Development in rural areas should be sustained by minimal rural infrastructure improvements and governmental services. The county and agencies providing service to rural areas, should adopt standards for facilities and services that protect the public health and safety at a scale consistent with rural levels of service.

Urban facilities and urban levels of service will not be planned for or provided in rural areas.

POLICY J-4: Rural Service centers (RSC) provide significant support to rural residents in the county and in some instances the traveling public. RSC typically exist in locations within the county that have historically developed in a relatively compact manner with a variety of uses with a defined boundary that is distinguishable from surrounding undeveloped lands. They may provide a range of housing choices, recreation, public facilities, commercial and industrial uses at a scale and type that serves the local residents, the surrounding community, and the traveling public. Developments within a RSC should be designed to discourage low-density sprawl and must have an identified boundary established on the comprehensive plan map.

POLICY J-5: Proposals to amend existing Rural Service Center and Rural Recreation boundaries shall only be approved upon demonstrating compliance with RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).

POLICY J-6: Master planned resorts (MPR) and new fully contained communities (FCC) may be authorized within the county when it is demonstrated that a specific proposal can be located in a manner that creates the least impact to resource lands, critical areas and governmental services. A new FCC is created as a new urban growth area via amendment of the comprehensive plan. A new FCC must be assigned a portion of the forecasted urban population allocation for the county.

K. Analysis of the Fiscal Impact

The Growth Management Act, in RCW 36.70A.210, requires that each county mandated to plan under the Act develop and adopt countywide planning policies in cooperation with the cities/towns in the county. These policies will establish a framework for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and development regulations. These policies are not the equivalent of a regional comprehensive plan. The legislative direction is to develop policy statements to be used solely for the purpose of attaining consistency among plans of the county and the cities/towns.

It is therefore the conclusion of the Douglas County Regional Council that these countywide planning policies, in themselves, have no fiscal impact and are an agreed- upon method of guiding the planning activities required by the Growth Management Act. The fiscal impacts of implementing the Growth Management Act itself are not addressed herein.

Appendix A

Douglas County Regional Council cooperatively prepared the Regional Policy Plan in 1992. The Plan and its subsequent amendments are considered adopted when it is ratified by four cities/towns and is approved by the Board of Commissioners. Since adoption, the plan has been amended as follows:

First Amendment:

Adopted by Douglas County Board of County Commissioners on March 19, 2002, through Resolution No. TLS 02-13B, following ratification from the following cities and towns:

Name of Jurisdiction	Date of Ratification	Resolution Number
Town of Waterville	January 07, 2002	02-01
City of East Wenatchee	January 22, 2002	02-02
City of Bridgeport	January 23, 2002	02-01
Town of Coulee Dam	January 23, 2002	2002-01
Town of Mansfield	February 12, 2002	2002-01
City of Rock Island	February 28, 2002	02-038

Second Amendment:

Adopted by Douglas County Board of County Commissioners on October 06, 2009, through Resolution No. TLS 09-46B, following ratification from the following cities and towns:

Name of Jurisdiction	Date of Ratification	Resolution Number
Town of Mansfield	August 11, 2009	2009-07
City of Rock Island	August 13, 2009	09-098
City of East Wenatchee	August 25., 2009	2009-13
Town of Waterville	September 08, 2009	2009-08
City of Bridgeport	September 09, 2009	09-12

Third Amendment:

Adopted by Douglas County Board of County Commissioners on June 03, 2025, through Resolution No. TLS 25-28 , following ratification from the following cities and towns:

Name of Jurisdiction	Date of Ratification	Resolution Number
Town of Mansfield	May 06, 2025	2025-27
City of Rock Island	May 11, 2025	2025-7
City of East Wenatchee	May 21, 2025	25-03
Town of Waterville	May 28, 2025	2025-06

Appendix B

The allocation of population projections provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) is considered adopted upon approval by the Douglas County Regional Council. In accordance with this policy, the Douglas County Regional Council formally adopted the population projection and growth allocations for the period 2026 through 2046.

These allocations direct the distribution of expected population growth between designated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and the rural unincorporated areas of Douglas County as follows:

Douglas County Population Projection 2026-2046

	2026	2028	2030	2032	2034	2036	2038	2040	2042	2044	2046
Population	46,409	47,668	48,927	50,186	51,445	52,705	53,964	55,223	56,482	57,741	59,000

*Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management
Adopted by Douglas County Regional Council on February 25, 2025.*

Douglas County Population Growth Allocation 2026-2046

Geographical Area	Population Allocation (% of Total County Population Growth)
Bridgeport UGA	1.00%
Coulee Dam UGA	0.10%
East Wenatchee UGA	68.50%
Mansfield UGA	0.15%
Rock Island UGA	15.60%
Waterville UGA	0.10%
Rural Douglas County	14.55%
Total	100.00%

*Source: Douglas County Land Services Department
Adopted by Douglas County Regional Council on March 10, 2025.*