

# I. Introduction

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At the time of the passage of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, the City of Camas was a small community of about 6,800 people in Clark County, Washington, 12 miles east of Vancouver at the confluence of the Columbia and Washougal Rivers.

In the decade of the 1990's, Clark County experienced accelerated growth due to a number of factors, including improved accessibility promoted by the construction of the I-205 Bridge between Oregon and Washington and out of state industries choosing to locate in the county. During this same period, the population of the city grew substantially in size. The 2000 U.S. Census reported the Camas city population at 12,534, while the 2002 Washington State Office of Financial Management reported a city population of 15,401. Accommodating and absorbing an increase of 7.1% annually in population over this short span of time reflects just how important proper planning can guide a city in its future goals.

Planning is choosing what to do, and how and when to do it. A good explanation of what a plan is comes from Michael Chandler in an article from the *Planning Commissioners Journal*:

*“Whether we label our plan comprehensive, master, or general, we are, in most instances, describing the same thing. For most communities, a comprehensive plan is the physical manifestation of putting down on paper the hopes, dreams and goals a community holds for itself.*

*Properly done, a comprehensive plan will describe how, and at what pace, the community desires to develop physically, economically, and socially. The plan functions much like a roadmap; it is a means to an end.”*

The history of comprehensive planning for the City of Camas dates back to 1963 when the first plan was prepared. The 1984 Comprehensive Plan was a

major update to the first plan. In 1988 and 1991, additional revisions to the city's plan were prepared for selected sections due to significant annexations.

The main goal of the Growth Management Act was predicated upon the ideal of reducing urban sprawl, based upon a number of sub-goals and criterion for cities and counties to measure themselves against. Clark County and the cities within were identified as “fast growing” under GMA, which required the City to incorporate these goals and the methods for achieving them into a Comprehensive Plan consistent with the provisions and guidelines of the GMA.

Revisions to the 1991 Comprehensive Plan for the Prune Hill subarea, including ecologically sensitive areas information, and revisions to the city's Comprehensive Parks Plan have been incorporated into this document. This latest plan updates the entire comprehensive planning document based on changes and revisions that have occurred over the last few years and incorporates the elements required by the Growth Management Act, which are described in greater detail further in this document.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Camas provides:

- Policies and recommendations to direct public and private decisions affecting future growth and development;
- A framework of goals and policies adaptable to the changing attitudes and resources of the region;
- A Long-range vision, based on community values and goals, of how citizens want Camas to look and function in the future as well as guidance for achieving that vision; and
- Guidelines for making decisions on growth, land use, transportation, public facilities and services, parks, and open space.

## The Benefits of Planning

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Planning is a part of our every day lives. We plan our vacations, our family budgets, and even our trips to the grocery store. Businesses discovered early on that without planning, mistakes showed up as production lines came to a halt because of missing or inadequate parts. The detailed planning we enact in our daily lives is derived from a set of overall goals that we want to accomplish—in a day, in the next 6 months, or the next 2 years.

The city's plan provides a basis for coordinated action by enabling public and private interests to undertake projects with a consistent understanding of community goals, policies, and objectives. The plan functions as a working frame of reference for government officials and administrators by establishing community policies and by specifying methods and standards for implementation of these policies. Public facilities and infrastructure (e.g. sewer, water, streets, parks, libraries, and fire stations) can be planned and a program for land acquisition and construction prepared in advance, so that the services will be available when and where they are needed.

The plan must also consider and blend the goals of the community with development needs and factors (economic, physical, governmental and the like) and devise a program, which will fulfill the goals. These same community policies help individual property owners and private interest groups as they make decisions in light of community objectives. Individuals and groups can determine how their

own interests can best be served consistent with the plan. They are assured by the plan that once they commit their investment to the land, policies will provide reasonable continuity, which will protect their interests.

The Comprehensive Plan is an important tool to help the city identify problems and take steps to solve them before reasonable and desirable solutions are beyond the community's economic capabilities. Planning is a crucial step to avoiding the pitfalls of uncoordinated policies as the city adapts and changes from existing conditions to a long range, planned future.

The plan is not intended as a rigid system of goals and development policies; rather, it is:

- Long range—looks ahead as far as is practical to anticipate growth and resulting community needs.
- Comprehensive—relates and integrates all types of land uses and all necessary public facilities.
- General—establishes general locations and areas for the elements and indicates their relationships to each other and the population they serve.
- Responsive—adjusts to changes of condition, unforeseen circumstances, or new local and regional trends through regular updates.

## Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

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The City of Camas Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following elements:

**I. Introduction**—Outlines the Camas Planning Area's physical location in Clark County and summarizes the plan, its purpose, and use. The larger context of the plan is also discussed: the State's Growth Management Act, the Urban Growth Area, and consistency with State, County and Local Plans.

**II. Public Involvement**—Describes citizen involvement in the planning process and relationship to the completed plan.

**III. Background Conditions**—Summarizes the history of Camas, physical environment, population and employment trends, and community vision. This background analysis illustrates how physical and environmental factors, and future growth trends will affect development of the Camas Comprehensive Plan.

**IV. Land Use**—Describes land use goals and policies and examines how land will be used: residential, commercial, industrial and open space land uses, as well as public facilities such as parks, schools, government and safety.

**V. Housing**—Examines the factors affecting the provision of housing, such as wages and income, housing costs and types, quality of housing, and social factors. Goals, policies, and strategies are outlined to ensure that citizens from a wide range of economic levels, age groups, and residential needs have a selection of housing available to them.

**VI. Environmental**—Identifies goals and policies for the designation and protection of five critical areas, as defined by GMA. These critical areas include wetlands, frequently flooded areas, aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife habitat.

**VII. Transportation**—Examines the existing roadway system and plans for that system. Includes goals and policies for such things as balanced transportation, safety and livability, and freight mobility.

**VIII. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**—Identifies the need and demands for park and recreation facilities and service. Develops a long-range plan and implementation program for the future. It also integrates the trails and bikeways plan with the parks and open space facilities.

**IX. Public Facilities, Utilities and Services**—Analyzes how these facilities and services, essential to accommodating growth, will need to grow and how they impact other Plan elements. Schools, city administrative facilities, city utilities and utility districts or companies are included.

**X. Capital Facilities Plan**—Contains the six-year capital facilities plans for the city (General, Equipment, Streets, Water, Sewer, Parks and Open Space) and Schools.

**XI. Economic Development**—Outlines the pursuit of a diversified economy and contains goals, policies, and implementation strategies for various economic development opportunities

## Growth Management Act

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The Washington Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in July 1990 and amended it in July 1991. This legislation comprises the primary guidelines that must be followed by communities that are required to plan under the act or choose to plan under the act. The legislation requires an inventory of sensitive areas; an update of comprehensive plans, including a number of specific elements; adoption of regulations to implement the plan; developing countywide planning policies to address issues of a regional nature; and establishing planning deadlines.

This comprehensive plan has three objectives:

- Build on the appropriate provisions of the City's existing plan and development regulations.
- Respond to local and county development trends and pressures.
- Address issues raised in the state Growth Management Acts and Clark County's Countywide Framework Plan.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH STATE, COUNTY, AND LOCAL GOALS**

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Washington's Growth Management Act sets out thirteen statutory goals. The development of a Comprehensive Plan is guided by these overall goals, with the detail outlined in five plan elements mandated by State Legislation—Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Capital Facilities, and Utilities.

For a community's plan to be valid, it must be consistent with the requirements of the GMA. In this context, consistency means that a plan must not conflict with state statutory goals, countywide policies, or the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. This section reviews the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Camas for consistency with these items.

### **STATE PLANNING GOALS**

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The fourteen statutory goals identified in the GMA are:

1. Guide urban growth to areas where urban services can be adequately provided
2. Reduce urban sprawl
3. Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems
4. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population
5. Encourage economic development throughout the state
6. Assure private property is not taken for public use without just compensation
7. Encourage predictable and timely permit processing
8. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries
9. Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities
10. Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life
11. Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process
12. Ensure adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development
13. Identify and preserve lands and sites of historic and archaeological significance
14. Provide consistency between shoreline management and growth management by considering the goals and policies of a shoreline master program for a county or city, approved under Chapter 90.58 RCW, as an element of the county or city's comprehensive plan.

### **COUNTY PLANNING GOALS**

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Clark County's Community Framework Plan provides guidelines and policies for cities within the County in developing their Comprehensive Plans. As the County Community Framework Plan and the city's plan have been developed, representatives of the City of Camas have met with all cities and Clark County officials to coordinate this effort. This level of communication helps ensure that the plans and capital projects of these jurisdictions are consistent.

The Community Framework Plan also addresses thirteen topics:

1. Land use (hierarchy of centers, urban areas, and urban reserves)
2. Housing
3. Resource lands
4. Rural lands
5. Transportation
6. Capital facilities
7. Utilities
8. Parks, recreation, and open space
9. Annexation and incorporation
10. Economic development
11. Critical areas
12. Community design
13. Historic preservation

These topics are addressed by the Camas Compre-

hensive Plan in the appropriate sections. While differences exist over the inclusion of small areas to both the east and the west in the Urban Growth Boundary, the city and its neighbors communicate and share information. Water service, as well as school district boundaries, have been established for some time, and these extend beyond the city limits, reinforcing the need for coordinating services and land uses with the county and other cities.

Camas recognizes the need for on-going communication and discussion of ideas in a larger regional community where collective decisions are necessary to protect and enhance the quality of life we all enjoy. The city will continue to involve itself in regional issues and participate in their resolution.

## **URBAN GROWTH AREA AND ITS IDENTIFICATION**

The Urban Growth Boundary is proposed by the cities and ultimately adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Each community establishes a growth boundary that will: accommodate population and employment growth, allow adequate addi-

tional space for employment centers, shopping, parks, schools, open space, roads, and utilities, and set aside a certain amount of additional land to allow for a competitive real estate market for all of these uses.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT REQUIREMENTS**

The GMA defines the following terms:

“Urban Growth” refers to growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources. When allowed to spread over wide areas, urban growth typically requires urban governmental services.

“Characterized by urban growth” refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.

*Urban Growth Areas* include:

1. Each county that is required or chooses to adopt a comprehensive land use plan under GMA must designate an urban growth area or areas within which urban growth is encouraged, and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature. Each city located in such a county is to be included within an urban growth area. An urban growth area may include more than a single city. An urban growth area may include territory that is located outside of a city only if such territory already is charac-

terized by urban growth or is adjacent to territory already characterized by urban growth.

2. Based on the growth management planning population projection made for the county by the state’s Office of Financial Management, the urban growth areas in the county must include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period. Each urban growth area must permit urban densities, and include greenbelt and open space areas. Within one year of the effective date of this section of the GMA, each county was required to designate urban growth areas and begin consulting with each of its cities. Each city proposed the location of an urban growth area and worked to agree with the county on an urban growth area.
3. Urban growth is to be located in:
  - 1) Areas already characterized by urban growth that have existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development, and
  - 2) Areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served by a combi-

nation of existing public facilities and services and additional needed public facilities and services to be provided by either public or private sources.

Cities should provide urban government services. Urban government services should not be provided in rural areas.

## **CLARK COUNTY REQUIREMENTS**

Clark County has established the following criteria to be used in determining an Urban Growth Area (UGA):

- The UGA must provide sufficient vacant, buildable urban land to accommodate the 20-year population/employment projection. Land is considered vacant and buildable if it is privately owned, is not covered by 75% or more with environmentally sensitive areas, and if it has a structure valued at less than \$10,000.
- The UGA must first encourage growth in areas with existing public services and facilities. Other parts of the UGA will be developed concurrently with or subsequent to the provision of public facilities and services.
- Cities must be located within UGA's and urban services must be provided within those areas. Urban levels of service will not be provided outside UGA's.
- Other lands included within UGA's must be either already characterized by urban growth or adjacent to such lands.
- Existing urban densities should be included within UGA's.
- Each UGA must include greenbelts and open space.
- The UGA must provide a local balance of in-

dustrial, commercial, and residential lands to minimize impacts upon the transportation network resulting in transportation and energy efficiency, less noise pollution, and improved air and water quality.

- The UGA must not contain areas designated for long-term resource-based industries (agriculture, forestry, or mineral production).
- The boundary of a city's UGA should use natural features such as drainage, steep slopes, open space, or riparian corridors and existing and proposed infrastructure such as public services and facility availability, limits and extensions, or jurisdictional and special district boundaries.
- Local jurisdictions must have the anticipated financial capability to provide infrastructure and services needed in the urban growth area over the planning period under adopted concurrency standards.

Clark County also has established an Urban Reserve as an additional element of Urban Growth Areas (land reserved for future development after 20 years). The Clark County Community Framework Plan defines urban reserve areas, where appropriate, to allow orderly conversion of land adjacent to designated urban growth areas to urban densities, as demonstrated by the need to expand the developable land supply or by regional industrial or public facility needs.

## **IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA**

With these definitions and criteria as guidelines for formulating an urban growth area, the following items were evaluated with citizen input during the review process:

*Population Projections:* The county was supplied a range of estimated population growth over the next

20 years. The total, as chosen by the Board of County Commissioners, was then allocated to the various jurisdictions in the county based on historic growth patterns and their potential for future growth. The rationale behind this assumption is that location plays a large part in future growth. Vancouver, Camas, and Washougal are closer to the

Portland metropolitan area and people are more likely to settle there than in more remote areas.

The City of Camas was allocated 7,000 additional people for the next 20 years. The area may be increased for certain uses by a market factor to make sure there is a surplus of land available for employment needs. (Market factor is discussed in more detail below.) Combining the existing population located in Camas, the county's allotment, and an unallocated amount outside the current UGB, the city's Urban Growth Area should accommodate approximately 24,700 people. This total is roughly 10,000 more people than the current population.

**Employment Projections:** An adequate supply of jobs also must be provided for the citizens of Camas. Camas has made large investments in its infrastructure to ensure the existing industry can continue to operate profitably, while continuing to entice new high technology industries into the Business Park on Camas' western edge. This approach will permit Camas to maintain a ratio of at least 40 jobs for every 60 people, and ensure a strong and diversified economic base.

It is estimated that Camas would have the potential of adding approximately 9,205 jobs within the proposed Urban Growth Area.

**Market Factor:** A market factor makes sure the city does not create an artificial scarcity of housing by limiting the amount of land within the urban area, thus artificially driving up the cost of housing. It is important to have a surplus of land so that the housing market remains competitive and healthy. The County Community Framework Plan discusses a target market factor of 25% for commercial, 50% for industrial jobs, and no market factor for residential.

**Housing:** The city's plan results in a mix of single and multi family with an approximate split of 75% single family and 25% multi-family based on existing development, land suitability, and community goals. For the purposes of calculating family size, the city has included duplexes and townhouses in the definition of single family. With those housing types included, the city is consistent with the County Community Framework Plan objective of no more than 75% being one residential type. This results in an average density within the city at six dwelling units per acre. This density meets the

County Community Framework Plan target density of six units per acre for major centers.

**Open Space:** The city requires that critical areas, as defined under the GMA, within a project site be set aside as open space. The Urban Growth Area takes this into account.

The Urban Growth Area also anticipates the retention of open space in the Fisher Swale corridor located between the Camas and Vancouver urban areas.

**Parks:** The city requires that approximately 30 acres per 1,000 population be set aside for open space purposes and five acres per 1,000 population for active park purposes. The Urban Growth Area contains the amount of acreage needed to support the park acreage to population ratio mentioned above.

**Schools:** Allocations of potential school sites have been made based on assumptions utilized in the overall plan and discussions with the Camas School District.

**Capital Facilities:** An integral part of the GMA is the ability of a jurisdiction to service those areas located within its Urban Growth Area. This requirement pertains to schools, transportation, water, sewer, police, and fire. The goal of the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is to demonstrate a city's ability to fund and meet the established levels of service, as well as identify the cost and timing of the improvements and infrastructure that will be required to promote the efficient use of resources.

In each section of the plan, the required capital facilities over the 20-year period have been identified based on the projected growth and plan standards.

The City of Camas' CFP, updated every two years, addresses the needs of the school district and city over a 6-year period. Studies also have been commissioned to address the city's long-term needs, which are then incorporated into the plan. The goals are to provide the most cost-efficient system possible, while maintaining continuity and logistics of the areas serviced. The city has the ability to serve the areas within the Urban Growth Area.

*Natural Features:* Finally, the Urban Growth Area considers such natural features as Lacamas Lake, the Fisher Swale corridor, streams and rivers, and topography.

*Figure 1 (Appendix F)* shows the final proposed Urban Growth Area based on the application of the identification criteria.

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## CONCLUSION

Camas is limited in its expansion potential to the south by the Columbia River and to the east by the City of Washougal, thus the areas to the north and west function as the primary expansion zones. These areas are desirable due to the potential development of large campus-style industrial facilities close to major interstate highways and the Portland International Airport. The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and encourage a strong and diversified economic base and provide for

housing and additional population, while balancing this growth with preservation of Camas' natural beauty and historic value. Vacant land is available for development due to recent annexations and the location of the Urban Growth Area. Existing commercial uses are convenient to the downtown and east Camas areas, but new residential development on Prune Hill and the western portions of the Urban Growth Area would be better served by new commercial development to the west of Prune Hill.

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## Amendments

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### ANNUAL REVIEW

This Comprehensive Plan is based on the best available information. As years go by, new information or changing circumstances—for instance, a revised sewer or water plan—may require changes or amendments to this plan. These changes may in turn trigger requests for zone changes from individual property owners. It is likely that this plan, designed to guide the City of Camas through the year 2023, will be amended before that time. Therefore, the following procedure will be used to amend this Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan shall be reviewed once a year with the following procedure:

- In January of each year, the City of Camas will announce that proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will be received for

30 days. Applicants will be expected to show cause as to why their proposed change should be made.

- In February of each year, the city will evaluate all proposed changes (including any changes initiated by the City of Camas). If no amendments are received, the Chairman of the Planning Commission will report to the Mayor and City Council, and the Annual Review of the Comprehensive Plan will be considered complete. The city may take as much as 60 days from the closing of the application period to complete the initial review of proposals. Environmental determination requirements may lengthen this period.

## PROCEDURE

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will be adopted in accordance with RCW 36A.70.130 as described below:

Each comprehensive land use plan and development regulation shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the county or city that adopted them. A county or city shall take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive land use plan and development regulations to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter every seven years, beginning December 1, 2004. Legislative action means the adoption of a resolution or ordinance following notice and a public hearing indicating at a minimum, a finding that a review and evaluation has occurred and identifying the revisions made, or that a revision was not needed and the reasons therefore. The review and evaluation may be combined with the ten-year review of the urban growth area or areas. The review and evaluation required by this subsection shall include, but is not limited to, consideration of critical area ordinances and, if planning under RCW 36.70A.040 an analysis of the population allocated to a city or county from the most recent ten-year population forecast by the office of financial management.

After preparing any amendment, modification, or alteration to the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will hold at least one public hearing on the proposed amendment. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of such public hearing will be published in the official newspaper of the city at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. The hearing may be continued from time to time at the discretion of the Planning Commission, but no additional notices need be published.

Any amendment of or revision to a comprehensive land use plan shall conform to RCW 36.70A. Any amendment of or revision to development regulations shall be consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan.

Each county and city shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program consistent with RCW 36.70A.035 and 36.70A.140 that identifies procedures and schedules whereby updates, proposed amendments, or revisions of the comprehensive plan are consid-

ered by the governing body of the county or city no more frequently than once every year. Amendments may be considered more frequently than once per year under the following circumstances:

- (i) The initial adoption of a subarea plan that does not modify the comprehensive plan policies and designations applicable to the subarea;
- (ii) The adoption or amendment of a shoreline master program under the procedures set forth in chapter 90.58 RCW; and
- (iii) The amendment of the capital facilities element of a comprehensive plan that occurs concurrently with the adoption or amendment of a county or city budget.

Except as otherwise provided above, all proposals shall be considered by the governing body concurrently so the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be ascertained. However, after appropriate public participation, a county or city may adopt amendments or revisions to its comprehensive plan that conform with this chapter whenever an emergency exists, or to resolve an appeal of a comprehensive plan filed with a growth management hearings board or with the court.

Each county that designates urban growth areas under RCW 36.70A.110 shall review, at least every ten years, its designated urban growth area or areas, and the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of each urban growth area. In conjunction with this review by the county, each city located within an urban growth area shall review the densities permitted within its boundaries, and the extent to which the urban growth occurring within the county has located within each city and the unincorporated portions of the urban growth areas. The county comprehensive plan designating urban growth areas, and the densities permitted in the urban growth areas by the comprehensive plans of the county and each city located within the urban growth areas, shall be revised to accommodate the urban growth projected to occur in the county for the succeeding twenty-year period. The review required by this subsection may be combined with the review and evaluation required by RCW 36.70A.215.

## **EMERGENCY AMENDMENTS**

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The Growth Management Act (GMA) precludes considering amendments to the 20-Year Plan more than once a year. However, emergency amendments may be considered at any time if the following situations arise:

- To attract a large employer of more than 50 workers or retain an existing large employer. Applications of this type requesting an industrial amendment shall include the reasons the amendment needs to be considered outside the annual review process.
- To provide a regional facility/service that is needed to protect the public health, safety or welfare including waste disposal transfer sites, sewer treatment plants, port or airport facilities or significant state or local government facilities that cannot be reviewed through another process.

- In the development of a citywide plan and implementing zoning map it is possible that technical errors in mapping or obvious errors in applying plan map or zoning map designations may occur. These mistakes can be corrected by making an application at any time during the first year following adoption of the *20-Year Plan Map* or zoning map. The applicant needs to demonstrate that an obvious error occurred. The application can be initiated by the city, property owner or interested person(s). After the first year these applications shall be:

- a. Considered once a year.
- b. Limited to correcting an error.

## **REVIEW**

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In conjunction with the county review of the population and employment projections, and the Urban

Growth Area, the city will review its comprehensive plan at least every seven years.

## **Criteria for Annexing Territory**

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The basic criteria for annexations will be established in an Intergovernmental Agreement between the city and Clark County. It will establish the framework for ongoing and consistent responses to annexing future residential, commercial,

and/or industrial properties within the Urban Growth Area. Criteria will be developed regarding applicable regulations and development standards; extension of streets and utilities; provision of services; public information; and administration.