

**City of Rainier
Planning Commission Meeting
April 21, 2025
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall**

Chair Erin O’Connell called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Nick Gratzer, Erin O’Connell and Nina Pogue

Commissioners Absent: Dena Nordstrom and Jan Rich

City Staff Present: City Recorder Sarah Blodgett, City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen and City Planner Skip Urling

Visitor Comments—Elizabeth Guisinger said she’s not in favor of the proposed urban growth boundary (UGB) land swap. She doesn’t want her property in it and neither do her neighbors. Dan Leno said he’s in favor of the land swap. The city needs to grow. There needs to be a place for new generations to buy property and live. There is no choice now and the price is out of reach. Roberta Dewey said that the regional Department of Land Conservation and Development representative Laura Kelly asked her to ask if a meeting is going to be scheduled with the city council and the citizens in the proposed new UGB. She claims that the state is against the swap. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen clarified that the state is neutral. It’s a local process at the city and county level and then goes to the state afterwards. The recent open house was part of the citizen engagement required for the process. O’Connell explained that it hasn’t gone to the state. The city and county would have to agree, then it goes to the state.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the December 18, 2023 and January 22, 2024 Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes—Commissioner Nic Gratzer moved to approve the December 18, 2023 meeting minutes. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Nina Pogue. Gratzer, Pogue and O’Connell all voted in favor.

Gratzer moved to approve the January 22, 2024 meeting minutes. That motion was seconded by O’Connell. Gratzer, Pogue and O’Connell all voted in favor.

New Business

- a. UGB Land Swap Discussion—City Planner Skip Urling gave a brief overview of the materials that were included in the meeting packet. There were memos dated February 21 and March 21. The February 21 memo was a summary of the findings performed by Winterbrook Planning and its consultant. State law requires properties of more or less equal amounts to be taken out and put into the UGB. The properties in the UGB should be ones that can be serviced by public utilities and not constrained. Long-term, the property owners can choose to develop or leave it as is. It would be the owner’s choice. There is a lack of housing, but land and infrastructure are needed for that. Pogue asked for confirmation that it would be the owner’s choice and the City wouldn’t be forcing it. Urling confirmed. He said it would increase the owner’s range if options if they want it. O’Connell said the zoning was established in the

1980s and wasn't practical. Many of the lands within the current UGB isn't buildable. There aren't many options now. Urling said the same tools that are available now weren't available when the UGB was established. Jorgensen said one of the main concerns that was brought up at the open house was the lack of infrastructure. That's because there was a lack of planning back then. Ideally, you build infrastructure to accommodate future growth. But you have to have a plan in order to do that. Gratzer said UGBs are unique to Oregon and create problems by artificially constraining land. He wouldn't support moving the UGB but would support eliminating them outright, because they shouldn't exist. O'Connell said there had been a proposed project in West Rainier a couple of years ago. A company was looking to relocate. They were interested in a property in West Rainier, but it wasn't in the UGB, so it wasn't eligible for City services. Planning enables you to forecast your infrastructure needs. It's a mechanism to accomplish that. The state's goal is to concentrate urbanization and preserve resource areas by keeping them out of UGBs. Gratzer said less than three percent of Oregon's land mass is occupied. It's an artificial problem created by UGBs and it's unique to Oregon. It addresses a problem that doesn't exist. There's no shortage of land in Oregon. Price per square foot is the issue. Leno said people want five-acre tracts. Gratzer said the state is the problem. O'Connell reiterated that this is the mechanism. Much of the land in the current UGB is not practical. It's easier to split property in the UGB if you want. The value could go up because it can be urbanized. Leno said the county wouldn't let him split his 80-acre property. The City should encompass the high school. That would enable the school to sell some of its land for housing. It can't break any of it off right now under the current zoning. Dewey said the city should fix its sewer and water infrastructure before expanding. Jorgensen reiterated that this is part of long-term planning, for decades into the future. O'Connell said the UGB doesn't subject anyone to anything. It doesn't commit the City to anything. It simply shows where future growth can occur. Leno pointed out that parts of the existing UGB are the side of sheer cliffs. He understands the goal of trying to trade unbuildable parcels for some that are buildable. Jorgensen asked if the commissioners have any recommendations for council at this time. He said that some issues came up in a meeting with county staff before the open house. There's a trailer park included in the areas for removal, but it's not eligible for it. And another property has split zoning, so that's a problem. That would limit the number of acres that could be swapped. He can engage the county at the staff level to work through those issues. Connie Budge spoke as a private citizen. She said there is an agreement between the City and the county about the UGB and the responsibilities both entities have for it. Jorgensen said he can include that agreement in the packet for the next meeting.

There was a discussion about the next meeting. It will be some time in June, but Jorgensen has to pick a date that doesn't conflict with budget meetings.

O'Connell adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Erin O'Connell, Chair

Sarah Blodgett, City Recorder

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM

To: Scott Jorgensen, City of Rainier

From: Grace Coffey, AICP Winterbrook Planning

Date: February 21, 2025

Re: **Task 2: Potential areas to be swapped out of the UGB**

This memorandum includes an analysis of properties within the Rainier Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) that are potential candidates for removal from the UGB based on The Rainier 2024 Residential Buildable Lands Analysis (RBLI) and information on area serviceability and landslide risk¹This memorandum documents initial conversations with Columbia County regarding the potential areas to be swapped outside of the UGB.

This memorandum provides a Task 2 deliverable for the Rainier UGB Land Exchange project.

Swap Eligibility Criteria

Rainier has 579 acres of residentially-designated land within its Urban Growth Area (UGA)². Much of this land has remained unannexed for decades, and some land is highly constrained by natural features, including slope, floodplain, and landslide risk. In the interest of providing more suitable residential land for development, Rainier is considering pursuing a UGB “Swap” consistent with ORS 197A.320 and OAR 660-024-0070 to remove some areas from the UGB in exchange for more suitable areas to bring into the Rainier UGB. The following analysis identifies

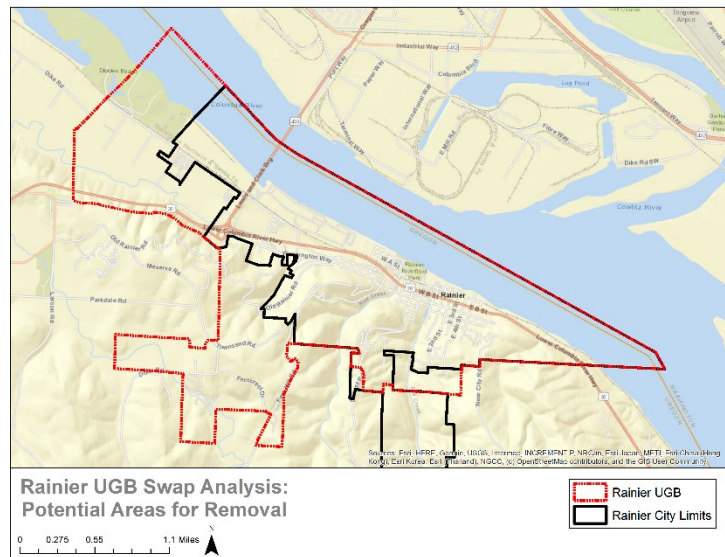


Figure 1: Rainier UGB and City Limits

¹ Landslide Susceptibility based on DOGAMI Oregon Statewide Landslide Susceptibility Overview Mapping. Serviceability information based on discussions with Rainier contract Engineers, West Yost Engineering on 12/12/24.

² Area within the Rainier Urban Growth Boundary and outside of Rainier City Limits.

properties that could be removed from the Rainier UGB.

In collaboration with Scott Jorgensen (Rainier City Administrator), Winterbrook analyzed properties within the Urban Growth Area that were unlikely to be annexed into Rainier to be developed for residential purposes based on the following criteria:

- **Highly Constrained Land.** Much of Rainier’s Urban Growth Area is highly constrained by floodplain and steep slopes. This area is generally less suitable for the extension of public facilities and development of urban levels of density. Figure 2 shows steep slopes and floodplains in the Rainier area.
- **Landslide Risk.** In addition to the hazards that high landslide susceptibility zones represent, these areas contribute to common issues for water and sewer infrastructure in the Rainier area, including pipe leaks³. Figure 3 shows landslide susceptibility in the Rainier area.
- **Proximity to Roads and Urban Services.** Established roads provide easier extension of urban services; areas without convenient access to existing roads may be less likely to develop to urban densities.

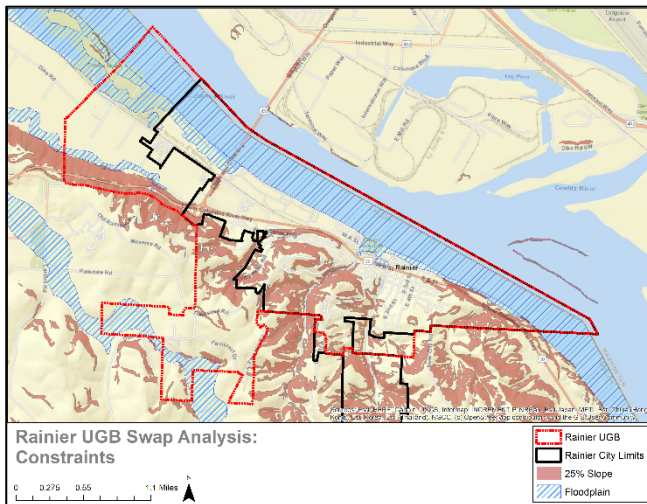


Figure 2: Constrained Land

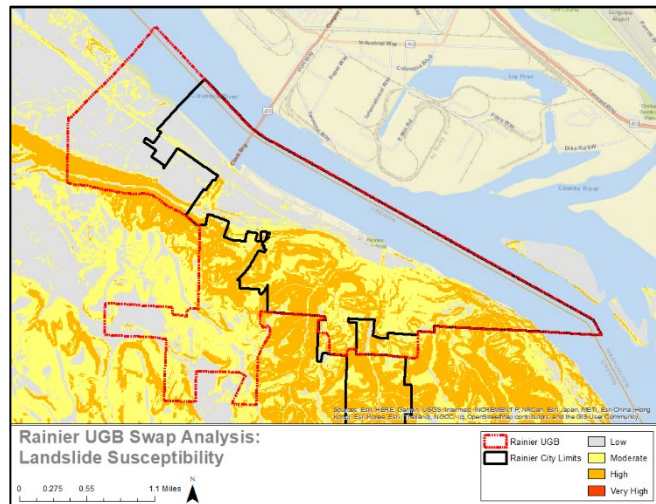


Figure 3: Landslide Susceptibility

Based on the factors listed above, Winterbrook identified the areas shown in Figure 4 below for potential removal from the Rainier UGB. The Old Rainier Road Slopes area has high landslide susceptibility and large areas of steep slopes. The Beaver Creek Floodplain area has large areas of floodplain. These areas are less proximal to existing urban services and roads. The potential areas to be removed represent a total of 299 acres made up of 38 tax lot parcels, all of which are designated Residential⁴ on the Rainier Comprehensive Plan Map. Any property being served by city services, including water and sewer, should not be considered for removal from the UGB.

³ Serviceability information based on discussions with Rainier contract Engineers, West Yost Engineering on 12/12/24.

⁴ Residential - R. This comprehensive plan designation is intended to provide for lower density housing. This designation is implemented by the following zoning districts:

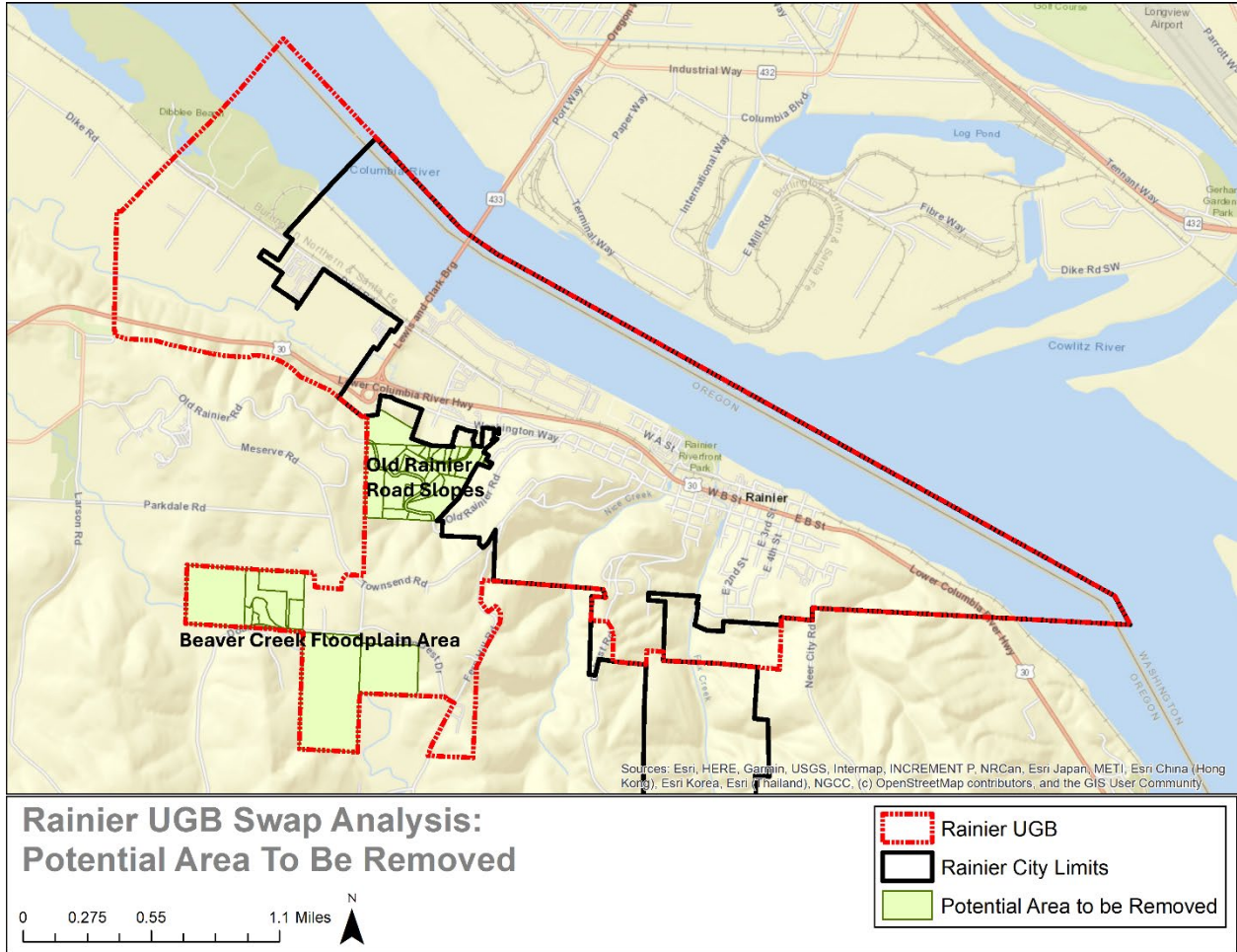


Figure 4: Potential Area to be Removed

Buildable Land Analysis-Potential Area to Be Removed

As defined by OAR 660-008-0005(2), “Buildable Land” is residentially designated land within the UGB, including both vacant land and developed land likely to be redeveloped, that is suitable, available, and necessary for residential uses. Publicly owned land is generally not considered available for residential uses. Land is generally considered “suitable and available” unless it:

- Suburban Residential (SR) District: a very low-density single family residential zone for areas with steeper slopes and other site constraints and which has a minimum lot size of 2 acres;
- Low Density Residential (R-1) District: a single-family residential zone that allows two family dwellings as conditional uses, with minimum lot sizes of 10,000 square feet for single family and 15,000 square feet for two-family; and
- Medium Density (R-2) District: a single family and two-family zone with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet for a single-family dwelling and 7,000 square feet for a two-family dwelling.

Development Status.

In the 2024 Rainier Residential Buildable Lands Inventory (RBLI), Winterbrook analyzed the development status for each parcel within the Rainier UGB⁶. Parcels were assigned a development status based on the following criteria:

- **Vacant Residential Land:** Tax lots that are at least 3,000 square feet with a real market improvement value of less than \$10,000 are considered vacant, excluding land with mobile homes.⁷
- **Partially Vacant Residential Land:** Partially vacant tax lots are occupied but contain enough land to have infill potential. Tax lots with existing development on a half-acre or more are considered partially vacant. One quarter-acre is subtracted from each tax lot to account for the existing house, and the remainder of the lot is counted as buildable land.⁸
- **Developed Land:** Developed tax lots are occupied and do not contain enough land to have infill potential. Developed tax lots are less than 0.5 acres with a real market improvement value of greater than \$10,000.

⁶ Winterbrook did not include ROW parcels in this analysis, ROW lots accounted for roughly 8 acres within the potential removal area.

⁷ OAR 660-038-0060 outlines the simplified urban growth boundary method for a BLI for residential land with the UGB. In the rule, vacant lots are defined as parcels of at least 3,000 square feet with a real market improvement value of less than \$10,000. As a proxy for determining vacant land, Winterbrook used these measures even though the minimum lot sizes for residential zones within the Rainier city limits (described in Step 1) are much larger. Since lots smaller than the minimum lot sizes for residential development are counted, the methodology used may lead to a slight overcounting of buildable land within the Rainier UGB.

⁸ As outlined in OAR 660-024-0050, the following assumptions may be used to inventory the capacity of buildable lands to accommodate housing needs: (a) The infill potential of developed residential lots or parcels of on half acre or more may be determined by subtracting one-quarter acre (10,890 square feet) for the existing dwelling and assuming that the remainder is buildable land; and (b) Existing lots of less than one-half acre that are currently occupied by a residence may be assumed to be fully developed. Notably, this methodology can have imperfect estimations and may not capture accurately undevelopable areas within a parcel or areas such as RV parks, and schools.

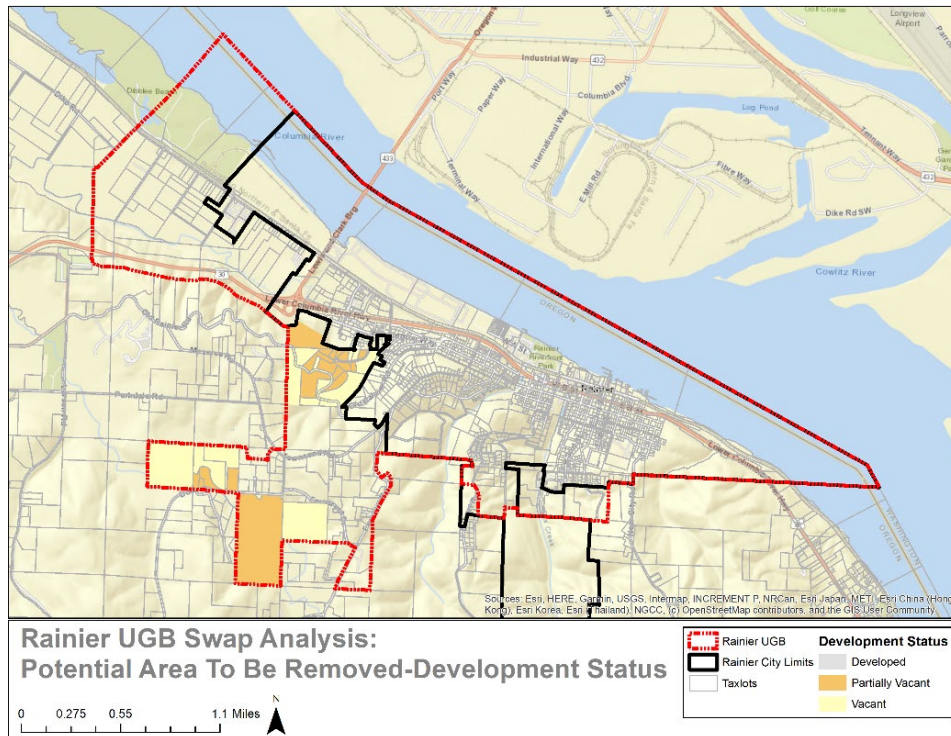


Figure 6: Potential Removal Area: Development Status

Figure 6 shows the development status of the potential area to be removed, most of which is either vacant or partially vacant land. Much of the vacant and partially vacant land intersects with steep slope constraints. The development status for this area is summarized in the table below. This analysis removes tax lots with a “road” designation.

Development Status	Number of Tax Lots	Acres
Vacant	17	150
Partially Vacant	18	123
Developed	3	1

Gross Buildable Acreage

To determine the amount of “suitable buildable land” in the potential removal area, Winterbrook removed one-quarter of an acre per partially vacant tax lot to account for the land occupied by existing residences, amounting to 4 acres removed. Additionally, Winterbrook removed 20 acres from Tax Lot 72W190001101, to account for an existing manufactured home park established on the parcel. This results in 249 “undeveloped” acres in the potential removal area.

Winterbrook then removed constrained land from the total acreage, resulting in 120 “suitable and buildable” acres that could be removed from the Rainier UGB.

Table 4 summarizes tax lots, development status, constrained lands, and resulting gross buildable residential acres.

Development Status	Total Acres	Number of Tax Lots	Undeveloped Acres	Constrained Acres	Suitable and Buildable Acres
Vacant	150	17	150	87	63
Partially Vacant	123	18	99	42	57
Developed	1	3	0	0	0
TOTAL	275	38	249	130	120

The following is a table with the above information broken down by County Zone.

County Zone	Total Acres	Tax Lots	Development Status	Undeveloped Acres	Constrained Acres	Suitable and Buildable Acres
PF-80	40	1	Vacant	40	29	11
R-10	154	33	Varies	150	74	75
MHR	79	2	Partially Vacant and Vacant	59	28	33
EC	0.4	1	Developed	0	0	0
RR-5	0.3	1	Developed	0	0	0
TOTAL	275	38		249	130	120

Columbia County Coordination

A key element in any UGB Adjustment is coordination with the County. Rainier and Columbia County Staff (Suzie Dahl, Deborah Jacob, Jack Niedermeyer) met to discuss a potential UGB swap on 2/4/25. County staff identified concerns relating to several potential properties to be removed. The County indicated an interest in avoiding:

- Creating parcels with split zoning or divided by the UGB
- Creating islands of non-UGB land surrounded by UGB
- Removing properties served by city public facilities
- Removing land developed to urban densities.

The specific areas Columbia County raised as potential issues are described in more detail below:

Commercial/Residential Property Near Washington Way

The potential removal scenario would have removed the residential portion of the property shown in Figure 7. This tax lot has split zoning, the southern portion is zoned R-10, whereas the area on the northern side is zoned C-3. The R-10 area appears to be undeveloped, the commercial side is developed and owned by Rainier Rock Pit, LLC. The southern area has a Residential Comprehensive Plan Designation, the northwest area has a Commercial designation. The County is concerned the property is already developed to urban-level densities. The area is not served by City water or sewer. Notably, the comprehensive plan designation in this area does not cleanly match where the C-3 zoning is assigned, as can be seen in Figures 7 and 8. Potentially, Rainier could remove the entirety of this property from the UGB.

Property Information:

- Tax Lot 72W1700000200
- Partially Vacant
- 24 acres
- 9 acres C-3 zoning
- 15 acres R-10 zoning (4 acres unconstrained)

Split Parcel

The potential removal scenario split tax lot 72W17C003500 along the east/west line in the middle of the tax lot, and identified the northern portion for potential removal (Shown in hatching in Figure 9). The County wants to avoid split zoning and a scenario where part of this tax lot is within the UGB and part outside the UGB. Additionally, access to the southern area of this parcel would need to be determined to be viable. Townsend Rd passes close to the edge of the lot line on the south, but does not touch. If the entirety of this tax lot were kept within the UGB in addition to the commercial/residential parcel described previously, it would result in an island of properties being removed from the UGB, a scenario the County wants to avoid. Keeping the Old Rainier Road Slopes within the UGB would drastically limit the area that could be brought into the UGB in a potential swap, and would not achieve

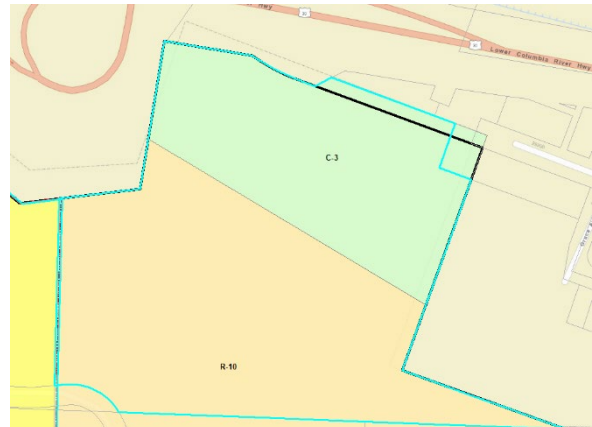


Figure 7: Commercial/Residential Property



Figure 8: Clip of Rainier Comprehensive Plan Map

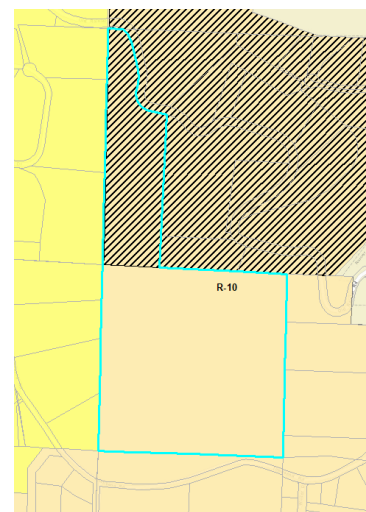


Figure 9: Split Parcel

the goals of removing potentially undevelopable land with high landslide risk.

Property Information:

- Tax lot 72W17C003500
- 52.5 acres
- Vacant
- 39.6 acres to keep in
- 12.9 acres potentially removed (7.7 acres unconstrained)

Potential Water and Sewer Extensions-Hickory Street Properties

The County wanted to ensure that City utilities do not currently serve the properties near Hickory Street. City records indicate these properties are not served by city utilities per an email with City Administrator, Scott Jorgensen on 2/10/25.

Property Information:

- Tax lots 7N2W17DB200, 7N2W17DB204, 7N2W17DB204
- All Vacant
- 0.9 acres
- Total Developable Acres= .2 acres

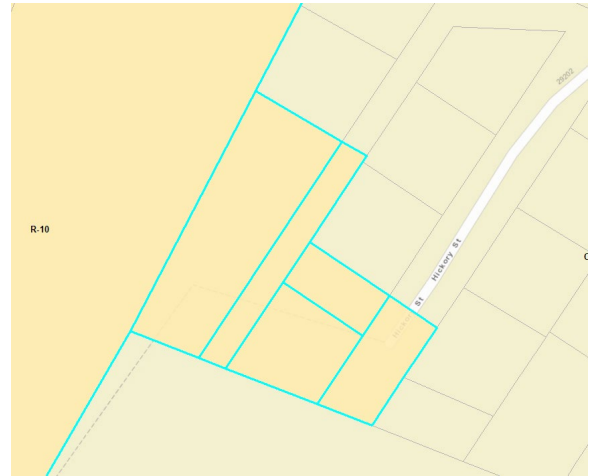


Figure 10: Hickory Street Properties

Manufactured Home Park

The County expressed concern with removing the 80-acre Mobile Home Park property, because it is already developed with roughly 80 mobile homes at the Western Hills Mobile Home Park. This tax lot is bisected by the Beaver Creek floodplain and is not served by city utilities. The lot is zoned Mobile Home Residential⁹, and has a Rainier Comprehensive plan designation of Residential. The Existing Commercial tax lot to the north has a Residential Comprehensive Plan designation. Additionally, Large, combined septic systems often fail and having the ability to provide urban services could prevent a health hazard from occurring. DLCD strongly recommends keeping the park within

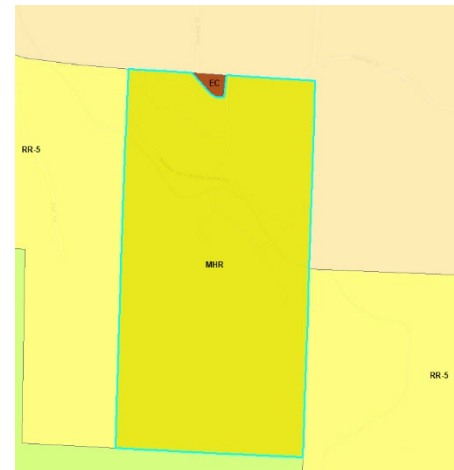


Figure 11: Mobile Home Property

⁹ Columbia County Zoning Ordinance Section 730: *The Mobile Home Residential District is intended to provide minimum development standards for single-family dwellings and medium density mobile home park development in unincorporated urban growth boundaries where public water and public sewer exist, or are programmed, and where resource activities are declining.*

the UGB to retain the option of receiving city services in the future.

Property Information:

- Tax lot 72W190001101
- 80 acres
- 20 acres “ developed”
- 28 acres constrained
- 33 acres unconstrained and developable

Potential Changes based on Columbia County’s Concerns

Figure 11 identifies in yellow all of the properties Columbia County identified above. These properties contain 45 of the 120 buildable acres under discussion for potential removal. Furthermore, keeping the commercial/residential property and the split tax lot within the UGB would result in an island of county land within the Old Rainier Road Slopes Area, if that area were removed from the UGB.

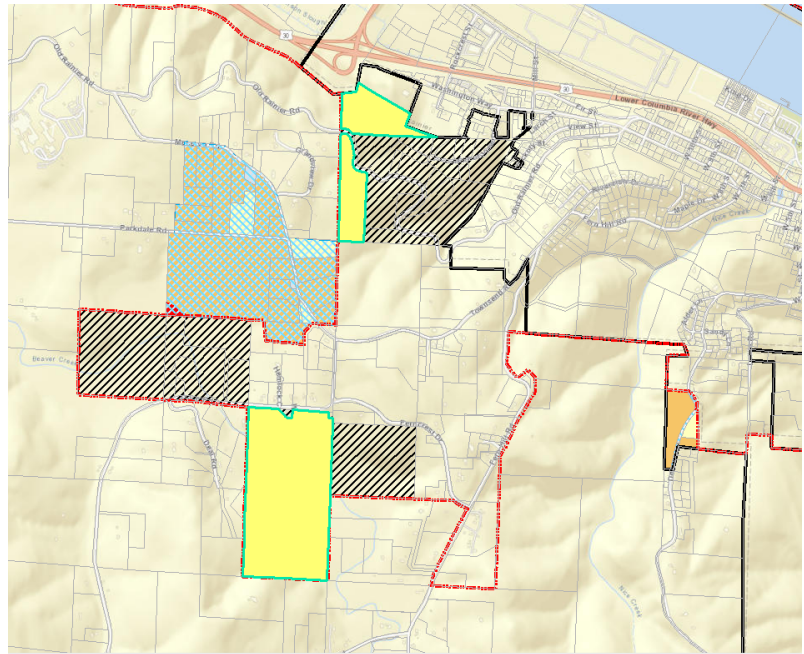


Figure 2: Areas of Concern for Columbia County

Without the Old Rainier Slopes Area (not included due to the creation of an island) and the areas of concern for the county, only 9 tax lots amounting to 46 buildable acres would be available to swap out of the UGB, limiting the area

that could be brought into the UGB in a potential swap. Continued coordination with DLCD and Columbia County is recommended to identify which properties would be acceptable to remove from the Rainier UGB, and if any of the areas of concern identified above are negotiable based on the larger goals of removing land unsuitable for urban development.

Conclusion

In this memorandum, Winterbrook analyzed potential areas for removal from the UGB based on criteria developed in collaboration with Rainier City Staff. Potential areas to be removed are characterized by steep slopes, floodplain, and high landslide risk. The memorandum applies the definition of “Buildable Land” consistent with OAR 660-008-0005(2) and analyzes constraints and development status of the tax lots within the potential removal area to determine the amount of suitable and buildable acres that could be removed from the UGB. This provides the basis for analyzing the amount of land that could come into the UGB with a swap.

The potential areas to be removed contain 120 gross buildable acres, which would allow for 120 gross buildable acres to be included in the Rainier UGB in a swap. However, many of the areas under discussion for potential removal have raised County concerns. Continued coordination with Columbia County is necessary to determine which properties will have County support for removal from the Rainier UGB.

RAINIER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

3. The first priority for future urbanization outside the current UGB is the Beaver Creek Valley area around the Rainier High School Complex because facilities are or can be made available and the topography of the area is suitable for urban uses.
4. Land use designations for the land between the city limits and the UGB have been mutually agreed upon by the City of Rainier and Columbia County. These designations may be changed only when agreed upon by both the City and the County. Procedures for notice and coordination between the City and the County are outlined in the Urban Growth Management Agreement.
5. Any lands within the Rainier UGB may be annexed to the City of Rainier in accordance with state statute. The City will annex lands only when they are contiguous with the City.
6. Annexation procedures and considerations are outlined in the Urban Growth Management Agreement.
7. No new special service districts will be formed within the UGB unless compatible with the plans of the City for the provision of full urban services within the UGB.