

# JUST THE FACTS: Urban and Rural Reserves, and Stafford

February 23, 2017



The Stafford remand was a request from the Oregon Land Conservation & Development Commission to Clackamas County and Metro to provide additional evidence on why four areas in Stafford were recommended for designation as urban reserves. The remand resulted from a court challenge to the urban reserve designation from the cities of Tualatin and West Linn. Below are some basic facts about the impact of urban reserves designation on the Stafford area.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Rural reserves:** land outside the urban growth boundary (UGB) on which urban development is prohibited for at least 50 years, e.g., working farms, forests or natural features like rivers, wetlands or buttes
- **Urban reserves:** land outside the UGB that may be considered for potential urban development within the next 50 years
- **Undesignated lands:** land outside the UGB that has not been included in an urban or rural reserve; generally may not be used for urban development until a substantial portion of urban reserve lands are already being developed

**FACT 1: An urban reserve designation does not change property zoning, does not bring property into the urban growth boundary (UGB), and does not allow for immediate urban development.** It does identify the property as part of an area in which Metro would be allowed to expand the UGB if it needs to do so in the future. State rules make urban reserves the highest priority for eventually being included inside the UGB. However, in some areas urban development on urban reserve properties may not occur for decades.

**FACT 2: Urban development in an urban reserve cannot take place quickly and cannot take place without the involvement of an adjacent city.** Development is permitted in unincorporated areas of the County to the extent allowed under the County's Comprehensive Plan, and Zoning and Development Ordinance (ZDO). It takes a lot of time and coordinated actions for urban development to take place in an urban reserve area, including all those listed below:

	Task	Responsibility	Minimum Timeframe
Task 1	Create urban reserve preliminary concept plan	City, with county	2-3 years
Task 2	Decision to expand the Metro Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)	Metro	Decisions are scheduled to be made every six years: 2024, 2030, 2036
Task 3	Decisions to expand Metro UGB into the urban reserve area		
Task 4	Plan and adopt area refinement	City with county	2-3 years
Task 5	Hold public hearing and vote to annex the land into the city	City	0.5 – 1 year
Task 6	Approval of development – land use permits, etc.	City	1-2 years

**FACT 3: Neither Clackamas County nor Metro have any plans to increase Stafford's population by 50,000 or 60,000 people. No concept plans have been done and there are no negotiations taking place on the future population of density of the Stafford area.**

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Before *any* Stafford area urban reserves can *even be considered* to be included in the UGB, the county and cities have to create a concept plan that includes the following:

- Specific geographic areas identified for various types and densities of development (including an estimate of the number of new households, population and jobs)
- A requirement that areas added to the UGB will be governed and served by cities
- A finance plan, infrastructure plan, natural resource protection plan, governance, planning principles and other subjects “critical to the creation of great communities”

**FACT 4: There are at least two visions for the future of the Stafford area – one from the Stafford Hamlet called *The Stafford Compromise* and one from the Stafford Landowners Association called *Clackamas County’s Next Great Neighborhood*.** Both were presented to

and discussed by the County Board. Neither was endorsed by the BCC and neither proposed the entire Stafford area as urban reserve.

- The Stafford Compromise, presented in May 2016, splits Stafford into two areas: 1) Borland, for future urbanization, and 2) the rest of the Hamlet, with 5-acre rural residential zoning on all parcels. (This would require a zone change for 1,170 acres of land.)
- Clackamas County’s Next Great Neighborhood, presented in August 2016, focuses urban levels of growth toward Borland, Stafford and Rosemount roads, with employment lands in the Borland area between the river and I-205. The remainder of the area would remain rural.

**FACT 5: The County cannot rezone land in the Stafford area into 5-acre parcels under current county and state goals and guidelines.**

To change the current EFU (exclusive farm use) zoning that is in parts of Stafford would require revisions to the county Comprehensive Plan, a zone change and an exception to statewide planning goals. This is highly unlikely to occur for the following reasons.

- State and local rules specifically prohibit the county from rezoning land to allow for smaller lots or parcels within areas that are already mapped as urban reserves in the County’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Except in extremely limited circumstances, statewide planning goals do not allow Clackamas County to convert agricultural land to urban uses, particularly where new parcel sizes as small as five acres would be allowed.
- It is highly unlikely that the county would be granted an exception from the statewide planning goals for this purpose.

**FACT 6: Clackamas County has received a Community Development and Planning Grant from Metro for a Stafford Area Preliminary Infrastructure Feasibility Assessment, as a first step in strategic planning for the area.** The assessment – which is *not* a concept plan

-- will involve community and business stakeholders and adjacent cities to build a common understanding of the potential impacts various levels of urban growth would have on sewer, water, stormwater and transportation infrastructure in and around Stafford, and the impact on neighboring cities. This project will begin after the reserves issues are settled and will be completed before any concept planning of this area would begin.

**FACT 7: Area transportation needs are recognized.** I-205 expansion from Stafford to Oregon City is the top priority for this area on state and federal lists, and preliminary planning on expansion of the Abernethy Bridge is already underway.

More information at <http://www.clackamas.us/planning/reserves.html>, or from Senior Planner [Martha Fritzie](mailto:mfritzie@clackamas.us) at [mfritzie@clackamas.us](mailto:mfritzie@clackamas.us) or 503-742-4529.